

THE IMPACT OF THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

This article aims to analyse the interactive relationship between the political environment and public administration from a comprehensive perspective by asking the following main question: "How does the political environment affect the nature and characteristics of public administration? This study is organised into two main axes: The first deals with the conceptual framework of the study by defining the main concepts and clarifying the relationship between the variables. The second axis analyses the impact of political environment factors on public administration by examining three main variables: State form, system of government, and the nature of the political system. This study found that the political environment is a crucial factor in shaping the nature and characteristics of public administration and determining its courses of action, as administrative performance cannot be separated from the political context that guides and prioritises it. Thus, public administration is not just a neutral technical apparatus, but a reflection of the political structure and value system within which it operates.

Keywords: Political environment. Public administration. Political factors. Comparative Public Administration. Bureaucracy.

Introduction

The relationship between politics and public administration is one of the most complex in the field of administrative and political sciences; the nature and characteristics of public administration cannot be understood without understanding the political framework in which it operates. Since the establishment of the modern state, administrative performance has proven that it is not merely the result of organisational or technical factors, but a direct reflection of the political context that determines the style of governance, the limits of legitimacy, and the nature of the relationship between the state and society. Every political system - with its institutions, ideologies and values of governance - leaves its mark on the structure of public administration, whether in its objectives and functions or in its working methods and degree of autonomy.

Thus, comparative studies show that different political environments lead to different characteristics of public administration. In democracies, the values of transparency, accountability and participation are clearly visible; in authoritarian regimes, security considerations and political loyalties prevail over efficiency and oversight.

Despite the accumulation of literature on administrative reform and state structure, it remains unclear how the political environment influences the characteristics of public administration and the mechanisms by which it does so, especially in contexts characterised by either the complexity of the state structure, the fragility of the governance system, or the volatile nature of the political system.

Herein lies the importance of this article, which attempts to analyse the interactive relationship between the political environment and public administration from a holistic perspective by asking the following main question: How does the political environment affect the nature and characteristics of public administration? The following sub-questions arise from this main question: What is the concept of political environment? What are the implications of the political environment on public administration?

To answer the main question and the sub-questions, this study deals with two main axes: The first deals with the conceptual framework of the study by defining the main concepts and clarifying the relationship between the variables. The second axis analyses the impact of political environment

factors on public administration by examining three main variables: The form of the state, the system of government, and the nature of the political system.

I- Conceptual framework of the study

1-Public Administration Concept

1.1.Definition of Public Administration

Researchers differ in their view of the definition of public administration. There are those who view public administration as an activity or process, others view it as a tool for implementation, some consider it as an organization, and others view it as a system. A variety of the definitions include the following:

Public administration as an activity or process: It means the activities of the state in providing goods and services to citizens. (Rosenbloom, Kravchuk, & Clerkin, 2022, 2022 ,p 03)

-Public administration as a tool: It is the tool through which the government can apply the general policy of the state and achieve what society requires, which private institutions or the private sector are unable to achieve. It represents government activity directed to the performance of public services and the application of laws; it means the translation of public policies into executive actions aimed at carrying out public services and delivering them to citizens. According to Leonard White's definition, public administration includes all processes aimed at implementing public policy. This definition covers various public activities from distributing the mail to providing services to the citizens to the negotiation of international treaties.(Lounard e,1926 ,pp 2.3).

-Public administration as a systemL: It means the set of laws, rules, regulations, practices, relationships, techniques and customs that appear at any time and in any jurisdiction in order to implement public policy. Thus, we can talk about the British, Russian, French or any other specific organisation's administrative system.

It refers to public administration as a set of functions; this concept is called the school of principles, and the founder is Luther Gulick, who lived both the administration of US President Woodrow Wilson, who asked him to reform administrative practices in the state at the end of the nineteenth century, and also under US President Franklin Roosevelt, who also asked him to suggest the development of government administration. He contributed much to diagnose the components of management, which are the main functions performed by any manager in the top management of any organisation, which include planning, organising, staffing, directing, guiding, coordinating, reporting, and financing, and all these functions come under the acronym posdcorb. (Thomas H. Hammond , 1990,p.143-173)

Public administration is an art: It means directing, co-operating and controlling individuals in order to achieve a particular goal or purpose and/or coordinating individual and collective efforts to implement the general policy of the state.

-Public administration as an art and science: It means the art and science of business management applied in the field of official state affairs.

Therefore, it can be said that public administration means governmental or official administration to distinguish it from other types of administration such as business administration, management of private organisations and projects, and management of international organisations. If the government is the one who makes public policy, implements it and takes care of the rights of citizens, public administration becomes related to this meaning, as it means the group of people and agencies that comply with the directives of the official authorities and public laws to perform public services. Here, public administration can be seen as practices to organise the daily affairs of the state with its different units and citizens under the slogan of justice and equality. When the administration is specialised in public services at the state level, it is a central administration, and when the administration is specialised in specific services in certain areas of the state, it is a local administration. Since the public administration provides services to citizens without discrimination, it becomes official because it provides a service to all citizens, hence the title of public servant, public servant or servant of the

people, as it performs its work on behalf of all citizens and in their general interest. The term public service or civil service also came to describe the official bodies of various layers and administrative levels that implement the general policies of the state.(Mouafak Hadid, ,2007,p 19)

2-Concept of the Political Environment

2.1. Definition of the Political Environment:

The political environment is the general framework in which political power moves in society and its institutions, and includes the set of factors, structures and values that determine the nature of the exercise of power, how decisions are made, and the relations between the state and citizens. This environment includes interlocking elements such as the form of the state, the system of government, the nature of the political system, the level of stability and legitimacy, the prevailing ideologies, and the relationships between political actors and constitutional institutions.

In other words, the political environment is the general climate that surrounds and influences administrative work, and determines the extent to which the public administration is independent from the political authority, and its commitment to transparency, accountability and efficiency. As such, it is an important actor in building organisational culture, and has repercussions in terms of directing the behaviour of employees, and determining the relationship between the executive authority and the bureaucratic administration.

The political environment can be viewed from two angles:

-Structural angle, concerned with the nature of the political system, the distribution of power, and the relationship between the authorities.

-A value-behavioural angle, which emphasises the role of political ideology, the level of participation, and the quality of ruling elites in directing public policies and the nature of administrative performance.

2-2-The environmental theory of public administration:

2.2.1. The use of the comparative environmental approach in comparative studies of public administration:

The first comparative studies began by analysing and comparing the political and legal structure of different governments, by comparing the texts of constitutional and political documents that represent the pillars of political institutions, and thus the focus of the comparison was the elements and characteristics that have the quality of stability and stability and the official character of government institutions as established by official documents.

However, this trend was soon the subject of severe criticism from public administration and political science researchers, as these studies did not go beyond the formal legal structures in their comparisons, did not deal with the activities and actual practices of these institutions, and did not address environmental factors and their effects on the activities and practices of these organisations, and these studies were closer to description than to comparison that adheres to criteria and bases according to which the formal systems of governments are compared, as well as the informal practice systems of these governments.

As a result of these and other criticisms, attention has shifted to studying the environmental factors and conditions of different societies and their impact on the structures and practices of government agencies and public administration in these societies. This contemporary trend in comparative studies is not limited to studying partial aspects of the structures and practices of public administration, but within the framework of the interrelationships between the parts, activities and various aspects of government systems and their interaction with the environmental conditions in which they operate. Thus, most contemporary comparative studies analyse public administration systems and their actual practices in different societies and compare them in terms of similarities and differences in light of the environmental factors within which these systems operate. (Ahmed sakr Achour, 1979.p50)

2.2.2 - Riggs' environmental theory of public management:

Background to the emergence of the theory:

Riggs' environmental theory emerged in the context of his critique of the classical schools of public administration, which assumed that Western (especially American and European) models could be generalised to all countries, regardless of their political and social conditions. Riggs argued that this approach ignores the fundamental differences in the political and cultural environments between developed and developing countries, leading to the failure of administrative reform attempts in the Third World. Therefore, Riggs called for studying public administration in the light of its surrounding environment, considering that every administrative system is a direct product of the factors of the environment in which it arises and develops. Hence the emergence of the Ecological Theory in public administration.

The central idea of the theory:

The theory is based on the basic premise that the relationship between administration and the environment is interactive and reciprocal; the political, social and cultural environment affects the nature of the administrative organisation and the behaviour of its employees, and the administration in turn affects the environment through the implementation of public policies and the formation of power relations. (Fred w Riggs,1980,p 107)

In other words, the structure and characteristics of public administration cannot be understood in isolation from environmental factors such as:

- The form of the state and the nature of the system of government.
- The level of economic and social development.
- Prevailing cultural and religious values.
- Relationships between political and bureaucratic elites.
- The degree of political participation and transparency.

Riggs' analytical model:

Riggs presented his analysis through an ecological-comparative model in which he divided societies into three main patterns according to their degree of social and administrative differentiation:

-Fused Model - Traditional Society:

Where roles and institutions overlap, there is no separation between political authority and public administration, nor between public and private interests. Decisions are made based on personal or family relationships, not according to formal rules.

-Differentiated Model - Industrialised or advanced society:

Characterised by a clear separation between the political, administrative, economic and social spheres. Organisations operate according to clear legal rules, and public office is based on the principle of merit and accountability, with minimal political interference in administrative affairs.

Prismatic Model - Transitional or developing society:

This is the model that Riggs focused on because it represents most third world countries.

In this model, elements of the two previous systems coexist: There are ostensibly modern structures and institutions, but they are run with a traditional mindset.

Its most prominent features:

Value dualism:

Nepotism and clientelism: Relying on personal loyalties instead of official criteria.

Formalism: The existence of advanced laws and institutions on paper, without actual implementation.

Weak administrative cohesion:

Lack of coordination and clarity of responsibilities. (Wen-shien Peng, A Critique of Fred. Rijs' , 2008 .p 03)

Riggs's Approach to Analysis:

Riggs relied on the Comparative Ecological Approach, or comparing administrative systems in different countries in relation to their interaction with their political and social environments.

By using analytical tools drawn not only from management but also from sociology and anthropology, he was able to demonstrate that the success of management depends on the degree to which it is in harmony with the environment, not on the degree to which it applies the ideal Western model. Significance of the theory:

The theory emphasizes that administrative reform cannot be just technical; it is inherently political, social, and cultural. It showed the fallacy of the literal transfer of Western administrative models to developing countries without their adjustment to the specifics of the local environment.

It pointed out the importance of comparative research in public administration in order to determine why countries differ in administrative performance.

It introduced this dynamic concept relating political stability to administrative maturity, stating that good administration required a coherent and balanced political environment. (Souradeep Sen , 2021.p150)

We can say that the environmental theory of Riggs provides an explanatory framework that links the political, social, and cultural environment with the characteristics and performance of public administration.

The more differentiated and sophisticated the environment, the more rational and effective the administration, and vice versa. It is a theory which reminds us that public administration is not a technical machine but a social-political phenomenon, which takes shape within an environment and evolves with this very same setting.

II-The Impact Of Political Factors on Public Administration

1.Form of State

1.1. The simple unitary state

The simple state is a political entity in which the sovereignty of the state is undivided, where the state is subject to a single constitution and a single government that manages its internal and external affairs, without the participation of another government or body. The simple unitary state has a single central government, and this central government exercises its powers and sovereignty, although there may be decentralised administrative departments located in its regions, although there may be decentralised administrative departments located in its regions.

However, the existence of these decentralised administrative departments such as local authorities and decentralised administrative units that exist in the regions does not diminish the sovereignty of the central government, as they act as an assistant to the central government in managing public interests and facilities and in performing the tasks that the central government undertakes in the territorial scope in which these decentralised departments or units exist, and what the decentralised departments or units have in terms of powers, powers or competencies, they possess and exercise at the sole discretion of the central government. (Melinda Cenuse, 2023, p 16)

Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Turkey, France and Italy are examples of unitary sovereign states. Although these countries adopt a decentralised administrative system, this does not detract from the political unity, i.e. the political centralisation of the state. The actions and powers exercised by the decentralised administrative units are exercised by delegation from the central government, and by laws issued by the central authority.

1.2. Composite State

The composite state is a political entity that includes a group of states or states, united to achieve common goals, as the central state is an international unit divided into internal sections, each section of which deserves the name of the state, given its sovereignty and independent powers of governance in many areas, and if these sections or states are joined by a contractual union between them, subjecting them all to a common authority, and the powers of governance of the composite state are distributed between the sections, or the states included in its composition on the one hand, and between the central government of the union on the other hand.

Sovereignty in the composite state is often distributed between the government of the federation, i.e. the central government of the state, and the governments of the units included in its composition, and these units take the form of regions, provinces, states, or states, and they are collectively with the central government that includes them the total political entity of the united or composite state.

Composite states include the following forms

1.2.1. Personal federations: In this type of union, the state consists of several regions or states united in the person of the head of state - the king, emperor, or prince - this union is usually between two or more states, each of which has its own constitution, system, and government, and all that the union entails is that the presidency of the states organised in the union is united in one person. Except for this unification in the person of the supreme head, the exercise of power is actually exercised by the different governments that make up the state, so there is no central government in this type of federation that exercises actual powers of government. (George Tridima, 2021, pp 431–461)

1.2.2. Actual or real federations: In this type of federation, the state consists of a number of independent states that unite through the centralisation of their presidency in the person of one president, and also through the merger of their entities into a single entity, with regard to their external relations, but with regard to their internal affairs, especially the legislative, judicial and large parts of the functions of the executive authority, each state and each government is independent with its own powers, system, and apparatus. The unified entity of the state in this case is not represented in the nominal unity in the person of the head of state, as in the personal union, but rather extends to the entity of the state, with regard to foreign relations and sometimes some defence and financial affairs, so this type of union contains a central government that carries out the tasks of foreign relations, as well as other executive tasks and functions assigned to it .

1.2.3. Autonomous or treaty unions: The composite state is represented in the case of federations that are based on a treaty between the states organising the federation, a treaty pact between a number of states, with each state retaining its sovereignty and independence in both internal and external affairs. In this case, the Union is not a government above the governments of the states organising the Union, and it is not a state above these states, this Union is nothing more than an advisory body, which has no powers or binding powers on the member states, it has no executive body to implement its will and force the member states to respect it, and the governments of the member states have the full right to reject or approve the decisions taken by the Union's conference.

The Arab League and the Organisation of African Unity are examples of this type of autonomous federation. In this type of federation, there is no central government, no unified constitution, but rather a consultative body representing the federation, whose functions and relations are determined by the treaty that established the federation.

In fact, this type of federation, like the personal federation, represents only a nominal entity of the state, and we believe that calling it a composite state is a great excess.

1.2.4. Central or Federal Union: In this type of composite state, the state consists of a number of states that cede their external sovereignty entirely to a central government, which is the government of the union, and the sovereignty and internal powers are distributed between the government of the union and the governments of the units, so the federal state consists of a central state or government, which exercises full external sovereignty and also exercises broad internal powers in the field of legislation, judiciary and implementation, and from states or governments that share with the central state the power and internal powers. (Ronald L. Watts, 2008, p08)

The relationship of the central government with the member governments and the relations of the member governments with each other is governed by the federal constitution and federal legislation, and the central state with its elements of power can gradually reduce the power of member states in some areas, either through its federal legislation, or by introducing amendments to the constitution, but most importantly, the central government with its strong executive bodies and enormous

capabilities can influence the course of the executive work of local governments and affect the territories that represent areas of influence and sovereignty of these governments.

The central executive authority in the federal state is represented by the head of state, the federal government, i.e. the supreme head of state, assisted by a number of ministers.

The head of state is chosen by direct election by all citizens of the federal state, or indirectly through delegates from the states or states within the federation, or indirectly through delegates from the states or states within the federation.

The task of the federal government is to implement the laws of the federation and its decisions throughout the federal state, and there are three main methods in this regard:

-Direct administration method, where the central government of the federation establishes its own departments in the regions or different states that are directly subordinate to the central government, and are independent of the local governments of the different regions or states, and these decentralised administrative units and at the same time subordinate to the central government implement the laws and decisions of the federation through its multiple agencies spread throughout the country and regions, and the United States of America follows this method of administration, as the federal government in the United States of America has employees in its subsidiary agencies spread in various states, and these are subject to

-Indirect management method. In this case, the central government of the federation entrusts the local governments of the regions or states with the task of implementing federal laws, decisions and programmes, so local governments carry out executive tasks delegated to them by the central government, and the local government implements these tasks through its local agencies and local employees, and local governments often receive financial and technical support from the central government to enable them to carry out the executive tasks entrusted to them, and the central government monitors and follows up on local governments to ensure the proper implementation of laws, decisions and central programmes. (Ronald L. Watts, 2008,p10)

-Mixed management method

In this method, the central government of the federation distributes the implementation tasks between its organs and employees affiliated to it and the organs and employees of local governments, as the mixed method of management is based on direct management in some tasks and indirect management in others.

2.The system of government in the state.

There is no doubt that the system of government in this sense is an important factor that affects the structure, relations and functions of public administration bodies in society, as the powers exercised by these bodies, as well as the limits of these powers, the extent to which these bodies are subject to accountability and control, as well as the sources of this control etc. differ according to the system of government prevailing in the country.

When we use this concept in this way and discuss its impact on the effectiveness of the administrative apparatus, we refer to two related dimensions:

- a- The method or mechanism of exercising power by the head of state
- b- The nature of the relationship between the ruler and the governed

As is known, there are various formations of the system of government according to these two dimensions, as these formations extend between the monarchy and the republican system in its presidential and parliamentary forms, and the following is an explanation and demonstration of the effects of comparative systems of government on the performance of the administrative apparatus

First in the monarchical system

The bases and criteria for selection to occupy leadership positions and senior or critical administrative positions, in which more importance is given to the factor of trust, kinship and family relations, with a less important factor being professional benefits.

The powers of the administrative apparatus range between no real tangible powers in monarchical systems in which the ruling king enjoys full executive powers in addition to his other powers, and between full powers in monarchical systems in which the ruling king owns but does not rule, in which case the prime minister is the highest authority in the administrative apparatus of the state.

The administrative apparatus is usually the main tool of the ruling monarch in consolidating his influence by allocating resources and capabilities to support his position, whether on rational objective grounds or subjective personal grounds. (Denis Baranger and Christina Murray, 2013,p05)

Second, the republican system

a- Presidential system

-The head of state is the head of the government and the head of the administrative apparatus and enjoys broad administrative and executive powers.

-In a presidential republic, there is no cabinet and therefore no political ministerial responsibility

-The presidential system is supposed to be based on the principle of separation of powers, and therefore the governmental or administrative apparatus is supposed to be subject to the presidency of the head of state and the ministers are subject to real direct control by the citizens.

-The parliament in the presidential system represents the legislative authority and has no authority over the head of state, who derives his legitimacy from the public, and therefore the parliament does not have the right to withdraw confidence from the head of state. (Hague, R., Harrop, M., & McCormick, 2019.,p 55)

b- The parliamentary system.

-The head of state in the parliamentary system may be a king or president of the republic.

-The head of state in the parliamentary system enjoys nominal powers - appointing and dismissing the head of government.

-Presumably, the head of state does not exercise the powers to dismiss ministers or dissolve parliament except in exceptional and critical cases

-The Council of Ministers is the holder of powers in the executive authority in the administrative or governmental apparatus.

-Ministers in a parliamentary system can combine ministry and parliamentary membership

-Parliament in a parliamentary system has powers:

-Legislative: drafting and issuing laws . Financial: monitoring the work of government agencies and the administrative apparatus through interrogations and questions submitted by members of parliament. (Hague, R., Harrop, M., & McCormick, J,2019,p 53)

3. the political system:

Public administration is greatly influenced by the existing political system in the country, making it in many ways a reflection of it. This is because the administration works through the political systems under which it lives, whether at the level of local administrative bodies or at the level of centralised bodies.

The democratisation of the administration, its openness to citizens' problems and the extent to which it responds to the wishes of the people depend on the type of government and the extent to which the leadership wishes to involve citizens in responsibility and keep institutions subject to popular control expressing the wishes of citizens at the local level. If the political authority in the state is of the type of absolute or centralised rule, it is natural for its administration to enjoy broad and comprehensive powers, and thus dominate the central administrative bodies and take measures that help it control the course of affairs and subject everything to its positions. If the system of government is democratic, in which states allow individuals and groups to. (Peters, B. G,2021,pp1-22)

3.1 Administration under the one-party system:

3.1.1. The One-Party System in Fascist and Nazi Countries

The role of the administration in Italy and Spain was neutral by not changing the administrative apparatus when it took power.

In Nazi Germany, the Nazi Party acquired all important administrative positions in the state and even controlled all facilities. This is with the intention of making it a tool to serve its goals and a means to expand its influence, which led to the erosion of its role mainly through the following:

- Getting rid of high-ranking officials and appointing his supporters in their place
- Creating new departments and public utilities
- Imposing surveillance on administrators by the police, not administrative oversight.
- Assigning ordinary and simple tasks to the administration, with the Nazi Party monopolising the important functions.

One-party system in socialist countries

- Often combining political and administrative functions, the delegation of powers in these systems does not differentiate between administrative and political authority - for example, Algeria
- The powers of the system and its institutions are unified and integrated in the person of the ruler absolutely.

The public administration in this system is completely subordinate to the ruling party.

- Membership in the party is compulsory for civil servants, and failure to do so may lead to dismissal.
- The party monitors the administrative bodies at the national and local levels. (Alexender j.De Grand,2004,p 50)

3.2. Administration under the bipartisan system

The bipartisan system is evident in England and the United States

3.2.1. England

- The relationship between the administration and the political system is characterised by the separation of political and administrative functions, as it is far from political conflict.
- The administration is an autonomous body that is not subject to the authority of either of the two parties, Conservative or Labour.
- The reason for this is that the administration is subject to legal control, not the control of the ruler.
- Summary of all this is that the administration exercises its functions as permitted by the Public Service Act and also respects the principles of democracy and the principle of specialisation.

3.2.2 America

Administrative functions are subject to the political functions of each president of a special administration - high-ranking officials appointed from the same party as the president - and accordingly, officials belonging to the former president's party are removed.

This principle is applied based on the vote-counting system that determines the president and his administration. The reason for resorting to this principle is to adopt the principle of rotation, which gives opportunities for everyone to assume administrative tasks and provide the best of what he or she has, especially for America.

3.3. Administration under a multi-party system

As for the relationship between public administration and a multi-party political system, France can be taken as an example:

- There is an attempt to separate the political authority from the public service, but we find that it is an autonomous body in its own right.
- This does not mean that the public administration is far from political conflicts. If political parties do not influence employees, they will certainly influence the administrative decisions that are made according to the patterns that govern political practice and affect the administrative process - conflict, attraction, alliance-
- Knowing that the assumption of new ministries by new ministers does not mean a major change in the administrative staff body
- A change in the political system may not change or affect the public function - public administration - but may be limited to senior staff. (Vitalino Canas, 2004,p 112)

Conclusion

This research has found that the political environment plays a key determining role in defining the nature and characteristics of public administration and determining the courses of actions of the latter, as administrative performance cannot be distinguished from, and must be set priorities by, the political environment. Indeed, public administration cannot be seen as a mere apolitical apparatus; rather, it reflects the political structure and value system in which it operates.

The findings of this analysis showed that form of state, political structure, and political system all influence distribution of powers, degree of centralization/decentralization, as well as autonomy of administrative institutions. This means that political stability of a country, as well as political rules, are a needed factor for acquiring efficient public administration with a potential for responding to all development demands.

The conclusion of this study is that a stable political setting promotes transparency and accountability in the body of administration, and in cases of political fluctuations, conflict, and a lack of performance as well as the control of administrative clientelism by party loyalty. With regards to recommendations, this study proposes that a high degree of autonomy between the administration and political tensions should be promoted, there should be efficiency and a code of integrity with regards to administrative institutions, as well as a mechanism that ensures a factor of democracy as well as efficiency in administration.

Therefore, it can be ascertained that knowledge of the dialectical relations between politics and public administration has proved to be a fundamental entry point in developing administrative systems that are able to tackle challenges of democratization and sustainable development, with a political environment of enablers rather than constraints in the administrative reform process.

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