

TRENDS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS: ASSESSING THE PAST AND LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE; RATIONALES, APPROACHES, AND IMPACTS

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Introduction: The Spirit and Legacies of Administrative Reforms

Almost all reforms, changes, and development processes carry with them a spirit, either officially/formally, or unofficially/informally. The spirit of reforms raises hopes, enthusiasm, and motivation for improvement of conditions deemed inadequate or in need of upgrades. Yet, there are also conditions that appear perfect with positive future outlooks but are still often subjected to change and reforms for political or irrational reasons. They are initiated and carried out because a “trend” requires changes, or certain politicians in important power positions decide to change a system or organisational processes for the sake of change and following the trends or to be personally identified as a change agent—as his or her legacies. In fact, almost all presidents, rulers, and governments initiate and launch reforms and promote themselves as reform agents.

The desire or impulse for top down initiatives to launch major reforms, driven by various reasons, also leave legacies behind. The history of administrative and social or political reforms has numerous cases of such changes, primarily for the last two reasons. And the literature on public administration reforms is rich and voluminous. Canvassing through the literature, one easily finds several major observations that lead to common threads about reforms in general and public sector administrative reforms in particular.

First, almost all have rationales for reforms, some stronger than others. Varieties of reasons are often offered, and enthusiasts point to the necessities of such reforms. Second, almost all reforms promise much, as ideal heavens, but fall short in delivery and implementation. Third, still another thread to be noted is the disasters and failures with massive destructive consequences, such as environmental pollution or financial losses, or loss of economic independence, or even regime changes. Fourth, almost all reforms leave legacies that provide grounds for evaluation, assessments, and policy learning.

Unfortunately, policy learnings are often ignored or overlooked by new policy actors in power—acting without consideration of past failure or any rational studies. Fifth, almost every administrative reform face change in goals and purposes, and meaning during the process, losing its initial spirit or intentions, and become another reform attempt. Sixth, subsequently, many administrative reforms lose credibility to the eyes of the general public or citizens and rank-and-file bureaucrats, as another fad in the system. This is accentuated by the nature of the political systems that lack broad-based public or citizen support; a common problem among many poor and underdeveloped and developing nations that are highly dependent or threatened by global elite power structures of the West, previously colonial and now imperialist powers.

Last, but not least important, is the common observation of the concept or analogy of Snake and Ladder—snakes climbing up the trees to see farther and get a big picture down on the ground, only to get tired after a while and missing the ground decide to come down for a change again. This analogy is a common observation regarding centralisation and decentralisation, sweeping privatisation followed by disillusion and a desire to public[k]isation or nationalisation, and so on. Path-dependency is also another common

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thread in the theory and practice of administrative reforms—and political, social, and economic reforms. Most of the above observations and common threads are common among the developed industrialised countries of the West as well as in the underdeveloped and developing nations of the world in the East.

This article addresses four major questions and tries to answer them within a limited scope of analysis based on evidence and experiences of the last three decades around the world. First, what trends have characterised the public administration reforms of the last three-four decades worldwide? Second, what are the rationales, nature, and purposes of these reforms? And, third, what have been the consequences or legacies of these major reforms? Finally, what does the future hold, what directions will public administration reforms be moving into in the future? This paper addresses the first three questions and leaves the last/fourth question for further analysis in another presentation and refers the readers to this author's seminal article, "The Future of Public Administration: Challenges and Opportunities," published in *Administration and Society*, in 2012.

The paper proceeds as follows: In section *two*, the rationales for and approaches to public administration reforms are presented, followed by, in section *three*, the theoretical grounding explaining or providing the intellectual foundations for reforms; and in section *four* by a brief discussion of "globalisation and public administration reform," its meaning and consequences. Then, section *five* presents a fairly extensive discussion of the major Trends in public administration reforms with a focus on "civil service reforms" over a long period of time starting in 1883 with a merit system followed by the late twenty century Civil Service Reform Act of the 1978 as an antithesis of the earlier landmark reforms. The section discussion is then followed by the rush to sweeping privatisation and dismantling of the administrative state during the Ronald Reagan era of 1980s and beyond, as well as the introduction and implementation of the New Public Management doctrine to change the culture as well as the structure of public administration with a market-based ideology and practice virtually everywhere in the world. This section covers four decades of civil service and administrative reforms in the U.S. and around the world—from Carter, to Reagan, to Bushes (father and son), Clinton, Obama, and now Trump. Market ideologies, reforms, and their impacts are discussed fairly extensively, and linked to the theoretical grounding as well as rationales and approaches covered earlier in the paper. Part of this section also addresses a host of other reforms such as "new public service," new governance, new public values, and the like that continue with the still NPM and privatisation trends (while mostly abandoned in most parts of the world but still alive in some developing countries). The last section, section *six* offers a few concluding remarks and points to take home for thoughts; followed by a limited number of references at the end of the article.

Rationales for Administrative Reform

Rationales for public administration reform vary. They include improving the system for higher efficiency and effectiveness, upgrading the system institutionally or procedurally and stay on top of the currencies in administrative developments; initiating changes for the sake of change as a dynamic ongoing improvement process; modernisation of the system institutionally, organisationally, culturally, and technologically; and leading changes as part of the trends in administrative reforms. Administrative systems and institutions do need to go through changes from time to time in order to stay dynamic with the people working within it, acquiring new technologies for better communication and operational processes, and anticipatory capacity building for emergency and crisis management as well as routine administrative processes.

Aside from the rationales for launching administrative reforms, several perspectives and elements come to mind when thinking or contemplating administrative reforms. The first is the macro-micro perspectives. Macro perspectives are very important to enable the system actors and processes to view issues and problems from atop by being able to see the big picture, like seeing the “forest,” in which many trees may represent different approaches or ideas for reforms. Seeing the forest well allows the change agents and leaders to have a broader picture of the surroundings, as well as of the core issues under consideration. Yet such a forest picture might overlook unique and important pieces or parts of the forest that are essential to the functioning of the sections or parts of the administrative system. The micro approach or perspective to administrative reform brings to the forefront important details not considered under macro views. Here, an ideal perspective is a combination (Farazmand, 2017).

Applications of macro perspectives to administrative reform include global, regional, and national scale and scope to work with. The micro perspective takes local and national administrative systems in line with the macro or regional reform trends and developments. Other lenses of administrative reforms include philosophical, theoretical, empirical, and cultural glasses. These lenses must be complemented by the whole range of legal, political, social, economic, organisational, managerial, and cultural dimensions. The above outline of rationales for administrative reform is missing one or two more reasons or factors — top-down ordered reforms for political reasons. Normally, this happens in countries under direct or indirect colonial or imperialist powers of the West — do the reforms even mostly for cosmetic purposes in order to gain some legitimacy and stay in power, or they may be removed from power. Such an order or advice coming from the external colonial bosses or imperialist powers is not for altruistic reasons of caring for those people of those countries; it is for the self-interests of the external colonial or imperialist powers. Is it possible that such order or advice be also genuine and out of real consideration? Possible, but historical evidence shows otherwise.

Examples include American pressures on the late Shah of Iran in the 1960s to initiate a so called “land reform,” reforms that were mostly cosmetic and window dressing in nature, creating excitement and confusion among the intellectuals and the educated middle class as to the real intent of the reforms, buying temporary support from peasants for the regime - with illusions though - and preventing potential peasant revolutions in the countryside of the nation (see Farazmand, 1989; Cottam, 1979; Holiday, 1979).

The last reason for administrative reform is prevention of social revolutions, a way of quelling or diverting the explosive situations into minor and hollow reforms with little or no hope while maintaining the status quo and fortifying the regime in power with deceptive forms of “system maintenance” (Farazmand, 1989). Examples of the latter may be found in many Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin American countries with the external powers of the USA, UK, and France directing or dictating the events.

A more recent example is the so-called Arab Spring, which was spreading like a revolution fast and sweeping the reactionary dictatorial regimes one by one but was stopped by the US and UK direct and indirect interventions when the revolution began to bring down the stone-age despotic Arab regimes one by one. It was then that diversions were created by the externally imposed so called protests directed from outside and the terrorism under Daesh (ISIS) in Syria and Libya. They succeeded in removing the Libyan government by violent force but they failed to do the same in Syria even after years of ravaging terrorist destruction and by the US-UK aerial bombings and stealing the oil from the Syrian territories under the flag of American forces — which is continuing to date.

Finally, reforms all over the world, in developed and developing nations, are often launched for two more fundamental reasons: one is to gain legitimacy and support (e.g. through votes in elections) or prolonging otherwise illegitimate governments or administration; and the second has to do with the strategic macro/global paradigmatic goals of structural and cultural changes in government and administrative systems through a corporate globalisation of the world [see more below]. Structural changes in public-private sector institutional and organisational configurations, and cultural changes by changing the attitudes and minds of both public/civil servants against their belief and value systems and in favour of private business, or rather, corporate business sector management systems with market ideologies purportedly superior to public sector management and administration (Farazmand, 2012).

This has been manifested in the last three-four decades of relentless political, economic, and social psychological changes happening via the structural changes of “sweeping privatisation” and the application of “new public management” (NPM) worldwide. The first transferred the massive public assets to private corporate business sectors for profiteering corporate elites’ or promoting few oligarchs’ interests; and the second changed the mind-set and belief systems of not only the general public/citizens but also the public servants — civil servants — and public administrators who had held a strong belief in public values and public interests in their entire careers (Farazmand, 2002; 2012; forthcoming), resulting to a deep identity crisis in public administration and public affairs worldwide. Yet, the very intellectual leaders of the private corporate market systems, such as Milton Friedman and Peter Drucker in America, realised and expressly admitted the fact that they were wrong about the market system to be the answer to everything societies need or governments do (see quotations in Farazmand, 2002; David Korten, 1995, 2001).

Theoretical Perspectives and Approaches to Public Administration Reform

Three broad based theoretical perspectives may characterise much of the administrative reform literature, whatever the rationales may be. Top-down theory, bottom-up theory, and institutional or comprehensive theory (Peters, 2002; 2009; Farazmand, 2009; 2017). The top-down reform and change model as a theoretical approach to reforms assumes that the top organisational or institutional leaders have a broad knowledge of the situation for which reforms are considered. The assumption is that they see the big picture from above, like the Forest Theory, where leaders see the forest well from above. This approach has its own advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include broad knowledge of the organisation, institution, or administrative system of government good enough to devise a reform programme from above. With the support they provide, the top-down reform may have a good degree of success in implementation, given the leaders are genuinely behind that process. The disadvantages of this model or theory is its lack of detailed knowledge of the trees in the forest. The leaders may not have adequate knowledge about the details of the situation on the ground. And people, not having their views considered and respected, may resent and resist the top-down reform and view it as just another “reform fad” they have seen many of in the past.

The bottom-up reform theory holds that people — the general public, organisations, employees, and citizens in general — have a better understanding of the problems and issues and know the better approaches to reforms needed to be launched. This model or perspective has merits in that it embraces the environment in which the system operates and the needs to reform are better felt at the bottom. Therefore, reform designers with the bottom-up approach would be most appropriate and have a better chance getting implemented because people on the ground know the trees better and would make efforts to implement the reform measures.

The advantages are clear, but the disadvantages include an oversight of the big picture from atop, where a whole system must be considered and a forest view observed (Farazmand, 2009; Peters, 2002).

The third theoretical perspective or model combines both the top-down and bottom-up approaches to the reform design and is viewed as “institutional” or comprehensive. This perspective offers the advantages of both, while minimising the disadvantages of the above models (Ibid). Much of the reforms and changes in government and administration systems the last three-four decades have been top-down, but occasionally bottom-up reforms have also been considered and implemented. Much of such reforms have come from environmental pressures on hot issues like sustainability, environmental pollution control, or revolutionary movements resulting in total system collapse and transformations worldwide. Examples of the latter include Iran after the Revolution of 1978-79; Nicaragua, after 1979; Cuba after the 1950s; Venezuela after the 1990s, and other places.

Examples of the former, less substantial and non-system changes — but still important paradigmatic changes - include health care reforms under the Barak Obama Administration, civil service reforms under the Jimmie Carter Administration, and NPM reforms under the Clinton Administration and later in the United States and elsewhere. While the former examples were characterised by almost total system changes and transformation with significant structural and process reforms, the latter cases along with many in other countries of the world like the United Kingdom, France, and elsewhere in developing nations have been more or less as reforms for political-economic system maintenance and continuity — the system of capitalism and its political power elite structures have not been disturbed (Farazmand, 1989, 2009, 2017, forthcoming-2).

Aside from the above theoretical directional models of change and reform, there are several other theories that may explain and guide reforms and change or transformation. One is the “ecological theory,” presenting the view that organisations in a particular field, say the airline or fast food industries, tend to mimic “form” changes that occur out there (Farazmand, forthcoming-1). To stay in the field and do well, others mimic the change and offer similar services to customers. Examples include Burger King, McDonald, KFC, or American Airlines and others. They form an “ecology” and mimic or follow the trends. Similar developments occur in fashion and designer clothing, cars and other industries (Aldrich and Pfeffer, 1976; Carroll, 1988).

Application to administrative reforms is simply the same among governments or levels of governments — they mimic each other, or are forced to do so in central to local relations, or when funding is a conditionality as in the case of the World Bank, International Monetary Funds, or USAID, that give foreign aid to developing or poor countries with “conditions attached”, meaning implementation of market reforms and sweeping privatisation, or cutback on certain public expenditures (Amsden, 2007; Farazmand, 2009). Another model or theory is Modernisation theory. This theory popular in the 1960s was generally prescribed for developing and poor countries by the United States, European Nations, and the World Bank. Samuel Huntington (1968) proposed a modernisation theory through bureaucratic administration reforms along with land reforms that were launched to change the traditional power structures in the rural areas where landowners held not only land power but also exerted political power at the national as well as local government levels. To reduce or curb their power and influence, the modernisation theory, along with land reforms, were proposed aiming for such purposes - bureaucratisation of the countryside, curbing the feudal landowners’ traditional power, migration of surplus peasant or countryside workers to urban

areas as a cheap labour force, and creating a larger middle class that would suit the purposes of capitalism and market system as customers in large numbers. This theory was implemented around the world coercively by the United States –sometimes reluctantly for the fear of unexpected consequences.

However, this theory is not novel, and nothing is new about it. It was perhaps first used in the fifth Century AD in the Persian Sassanid Empire under the King *Khosrow Anushirvan the Just*, who bureaucratized the countryside by expanding its rational administrative system into those areas limiting the power of the feudal landowners who were exerting their traditional powers in their sphere of influence. Similar reforms were implemented during the 16th century Persian Empire under the Safavid dynasty, where the central administration was able to penetrate and control the rural/remote areas of the nation and territories that included around the Caspian Sea countries now independent, including southern Russia/Dagestan.

In the late twentieth century, however, this theory backfired in many parts of the world, as millions of migrant peasant workers jammed the urban slums and later on they transformed into radical forces fuelling a mix of urban-rural uprisings and revolutions in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (see Farazmand 1989 for more details). A major reason for such development was the lack of trust rural people have had in central governments led by rulers they deemed as puppets of the foreign colonial or imperialist powers of the United States, UK, or France, and hence with no legitimacy—reforms in their eyes meant system reinforcement rather than improvement (Farazmand, 1989).

Still another theoretical perspective and approach to reform and change is the Linear Model of Change, meaning a series of reforms induced from above to produce certain pre-determined and expected changes or transformations, with desired results. Most models of reforms, including administrative reforms have been linear in nature—deliberately designed, followed, and implemented with clear goals and objectives to change socio-economic and political conditions on the ground in favour of the capitalist system of economy and governance. However, Non-linear and Dynamic or even Chaotic changes or reforms have also been implemented during the last two-three decades worldwide. Non-linear change and chaos theories are much more complex to explain in a few lines here, but their essence is that nothing is certain in life, everything is subject to sudden and unexpected changes, and that chaos versus stability or disorder becomes a normal way of life in the contemporary world of capitalism.² A new challenge of knowing the unknowable has become a new way of thinking, and all managers and administrators and leaders must be prepared to “do the unthinkable and think the undoable” (Farazmand, 2009; 2003; Handy, 1990; Weick, 2001).

To counter this theory which has many implications in the twenty-first century governance and public administration, Farazmand offers new ways of capacity building, including a “Surprise Management Theory” (see Farazmand, 2009; 2007) for the chaotic and crisis situations. Much of the changes and transformations that have taken place causing anxieties and stress on public employees and institutions of the last three-four decades, have also had an appearance of being chaotic in nature. They have been deliberately calculated and purposefully pursued top-down with designed objectives of obtaining highest profits,

² Capitalism because corporate capitalism and its military and political systems have declared a global victory and righteousness over socialism, and in a quest to force hegemony through its globalisation machine of ‘government-military bureaucracies’ has sought global transformations of the developing world. This has been pursued by both peaceful means such as sabotage, economic sanctions, and then terrorism, invasions, and occupations, directly and indirectly. Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Venezuela, and Yemen are prime examples in the twenty first century, and Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chile, and other places in the twentieth century.

expanding private corporate controlled business markets and resources through sweeping privatisation, and outsourcing, and establishing both a technological and economic, and ideological dominance over the world (Korten, 1995; Farazmand, 1999, 2012; Amsden 2007; Dugger, 1989). Top-down corporate structural changes have swept millions of workers and employees outside the doors through downsizing, privatisation, and outsourcing, that caused changes overnight that would have taken decades to do earlier. The initial shocks and protests were met with coolness and indifference, then more and more such reforms and changes were implemented in designed chaotic ways, to the point that chaos became a normal practice, and yet no revolution nor massive rallies against them have taken place.

This practice then was followed by and prescribed for the government institutions—both global governance institutions like the World bank, IMF, AID, and indigenous governments in developing nations and even some industrialised western countries as well - to follow the corporate model (Korten, 1995; Amsden, 2007; Dugger, 1989). Then institutional ‘mimicking’ began to take effect and other governments followed suit, or forced to do so, or simply did it to follow the trends. Therefore, “isomorphism” began to take a new shape in public, as well as in business administration. Globalisation and technological advancements fuelled the trends and encouraged further transformation into global, as well as national interconnectedness and integration of various systems worldwide.³

Globalisation and Public Administration Reforms

Globalisation as a concept has captured attention of almost everyone in the twenty-first century worldwide. Almost everyone has a view or definition of it, from taxi drivers to teachers, and shop keepers. Although diversity of perspectives from different disciplinary or personal standpoints is quite naturally expected, few truly grasped the essence of this global transformation. Few still know the depth of the concept and its process. Economists, political scientists, management specialists, and business people have different takes of globalisation, each from their own point of view. Some view it as internationalisation and borderlessness (Ohmae, 1995), others view it as more opportunities for trade and business, and still others consider it as a phenomenon of new colonial ideologies (Korten, 1995; Dugger, 1989).

Farazmand has viewed globalisation as “both a phenomenon as well as an ideology, a process through which worldwide integration and transcendence take place,” with corporate globalisation of the world by spreading the wings of the market capitalist systems everywhere through the powerful and large-scale transnational corporations (Farazmand, 1999: 509, 510) that are claimed to be “state indifferent” in nature (Ohmae, 1995; Naisbitt, 1994). Others consider it as a danger to community, democracy, and jobs for workers (Mele, 1996; Korten, 1995; Rifkin 1975), and loss of national sovereignty through expansion of supra-state governance Agencies that are, supplementing, if not supplanting, territorial nation-states (Picciotto, 1989; Cox, 1993). Moreover, technological advancements have made these global transformations easier and faster, and beyond the reach of many ordinary institutional arrangements. Billions of dollars are moved across the world by the strike of a key on the laptop keyboard without a single change of movement or living conditions of workers and employees or change in productivity. Millions would lose jobs, while few may gain billions of dollars in profits (Ibid).

³ Due to space limitation, globalisation as a process and a phenomenon is not discussed in detail in this article. However, readers are encouraged to read Farazmand’s article, “Globalisation and Public Administration” published in Public Administration Review, November-December 1999 edition. The next section of the article provides a brief outline on the subject in relation to administrative reforms.

Generally speaking, three broad perspectives may explain “globalisation”: One is in favour of it, another against it, and the third in between held by realists with various viewpoints of their own. The proponents of this globalisation perspective argue that with the role of the states pushed aside as less or irrelevant, the market system and its giant corporate organisations can do everything governments do, and offer a world in which there will be no wars, no conflict, no poverty, and wealth will be created for all! (Friedman, 1999; Fukuyama, 1992; Huntington, 1996). This was a rosy and overoptimistic picture the proponents of corporate globalisation of the world offered, a “heaven” everyone could not wait to see! The Anti-globalisation, on the other hand argued against this rosy worldview and called it naïve at best and dangerous to the world at worst. In their view, such a globalisation would bring more miseries for the working class, cause more poverty - not less, more violence and exploitation or looting of natural resources by corporations and more wars would follow to satisfy the corporate thirst for more profits and exploitation; accordingly, a “race to the bottom” would follow by millions of not only working class but also middle class workers, and virtual slavery develop with new forms — they rejected globalisation (Korten 1995; Mele, 1996; Brecher and Costello, 1994; Dugger, 1989).

The third perspective considered as “realists” with variations, offers a different view that opposes both the overoptimistic and the rejectionist perspectives. It views globalisation as an inevitable historical advancement of capitalism with new stages within the advent and realities of advanced technologies, the benefits of which cannot be denied serving all people (like cell phones or internet communication), and that the phenomenon must be considered with more open-minded lenses, rejecting what is bad and harmful to people and nation states, and accepting what is good and helpful to societies and economies. This author falls in this category of scholars with various different viewpoints, and argues that reforms, capacity building, and policy adjustments are needed to address this global phenomenon with many dimensional consequences (Farazmand, 1999, 2009, 2017, forthcoming).

Farazmand treats “the concepts of globalism [an ideology] and globalisation as phenomena produced by historical changes within the broader framework of continuity” (Farazmand, 1999: 510). Capitalism has advanced exponentially by the forces of super modern technology making it possible to make multi-billion dollar business and trade decisions by striking computer keys instantly almost anywhere in the world; a task that would have taken months to accomplish a decade earlier. Obviously, there are gainers and losers in the process, but the impacts are enormous, politically as well as economically and socially. Corporate capitalism has the power, influence, and ability to exert pressures with the arms of the “globalising power structures of the state military at its disposal” to modify governments’ policies, modify and force reforms, and even change unfriendly governments and their officials through military coups.” Such a global corporate power structure is viewed as a serious threat to national sovereignty, democracy, and freedom everywhere, and in fact to the world order, peace, and stability (Korten, 1995; Farazmand, 1999, 2002, 2009, forthcoming).

The impact and consequences for public administration has been and will continue to be serious and profound transformation. As noted earlier, through sweeping privatisations and outsourcing schemes, public sector assets (economically, financially, and institutionally) have been transferred to private corporate business sectors, massively downgrading the public sector capacities institutionally and culturally by aggressively pursuing NPM-driven ideologies of anti-public service and promoting market capitalism values. These developments have caused deprivation and decline of public services to vulnerable populations often in need of public services provided by public administration, have caused a serious crisis in the

administrative state – that has historically helped provided public services for all citizens and strengthened government public infrastructures - helped restore market capitalism vitality out of crises and potential collapse; as the New Deal and government interventions did during the 1930s in the economy of the United States and elsewhere around the world, and downgraded public values in favour of private business values, among others (Farazmand, 2012). They have also increased corruption and lack of accountability in both business and government organisations as the latter have often fallen victims to the pressures, of the powerful corporate oligarchs, and disempowered with corruption and inability to perform their tasks due to understaffing and incapacities.

Robust and dynamic governance and administrative reforms are needed as part of capacity building for the age of rapid globalisation with increasing unpredictability and uncertainty, as well as strong disciplines of professionalism, accountability, ethics, and anti-corruption measures (Farazmand, 2009, 2012, 2017, forthcoming). Such policies are badly needed to restore the administrative state and public administration institutions to regain public confidence in government institutions and restore the proper role of an accountable and responsive government.

Recent Trends in Public Administration Reforms

Public administration reforms are too many to discuss in a short essay like this. Instead, major recent reforms of the last three-four decades are covered briefly to assess their rationales, purposes, and intended or unintended results and consequences. Of these, the US Civil Service Reform of 1978, the sweeping privatisation and outsourcing reforms of the 1980s, the surge of globalisation development that followed in the 1990s, and by the two powerful ensuing reforms – privatisation and outsourcing, and the new public management (NPM) – as well as the post-NPM and the new calls for restoring new public service in various forms such as public values, new public service, public interests, and public motivation.

The U.S. Civil Service Reform of 1978

The 1978 *civil service reform* was in both spirit and letter a landmark legislative act under a Democratic president, Jimmie Carter, who sought to reform the system with private business management orientation and flexibility in the federal management system – *it actually reversed the purpose and spirit of the almost a century earlier Civil Service Reform Act of 1883*. Also called the Pendleton Act, the 1883 civil service legislation was a historic landmark administrative reform following the Civil War and multi-directional calls, mostly from below, and pressures to reform the federal government and its bureaucracy in the United States. It sought to abolish notorious spoils system and the corrupt practice of selling office for private gains, curb patronage and abuse of power, and to create a new civil service system based on Merit and competitive entrance examination with the establishment of a bipartisan civil service Commission to enforce the law, and to promote government by good and efficiency (see Farazmand, 2007; Van Riper, 2007 for more details and different perspectives).

The legislation also provided civil servants with a degree of independence from the changing partisan political bosses and potential partisan abuses to do their work based on Merit and to serve as “Guardians” in public service and administration (Thayer, 1997: 95-124). The intent and spirit were good and noble, the rationales clear and sound, and the impact fairly sound and progressive. Subsequent successive reforms of the federal administration system capitalised on this landmark legislation and helped professionalise public administration and its bureaucracy, with admirable achievements and results during the Great Depression of the

1930s and 1940s, gaining itself the image of a successful professionalised “administrative state” (Waldo, 1948; Thayer, 1997).

Following World-War Two, the success of the administrative state continued for the next two three decades, but starting in the 1960s, criticism on the bureaucracy and the administrative state were on the rise from different directions and for various purposes, who considered that the bureaucracy and administrative state had grown too big, exercised too much power, and their expertise power was undermining democracy and affecting the ability of the Federal Congress to perform its job. The solutions the critics offered were sweeping privatisation, more legislative oversight, and basically dismantling the administrative state and its professionalism.

The front runner of this national anti-bureaucracy crusade was the neo-classical and conservative economic theory of “public choice”. It argued for “small is beautiful” and political representation by elected officials that would enable citizens to exercise “choices” in the marketplace they supposedly make decisions with adequate and accurate information at hand and without coercion or monopoly of the power by any powerful interest groups. This was the ideal prescription the public choice economists and politicians offered and pushed for throughout the 1960 and 1970s.

Critics of this neo-conservative economic theory based their arguments against the self-interested individual preferences, also labeled as “methodological individualism” in the marketplace. They have all the time questioned the assumptions of the theory and argued against its heavy bias toward the rich and super rich people, and by that implication, in favour of the private business corporations, and against public service and public interest premises. To the critics, public choice theory is misleading as it does not offer the “public” purported choices as individual decisions are often made without adequate information in business and public realms, big business and powerful lobby organisations have better access to information centres through access to power elites, coercion is present in the market and public sectors, and other such flows as the powerless poor, the blind, and the sick being left with no choices in both business and public sectors and must accept whatever is out and dictated for them. To the critics, the conservative public choice theory promotes self-interest individualism versus public values and public interests, and the private business sector through more privatisation against the public sector (see Farazmand, 2002; chapter 2 for more details on this).

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 took a reversal tone and direction against the relative autonomy of the professional civils servants subjecting them to removal and loss of independence, prompting scholars like Frederick Thayer who called the Act as the cause of “death of the US Federal Civil Service —1883-1993 (R.I.P.) — as a result of the “political lynching of the U.S. civil service, which, for practical purposes, has now died because its members can no longer be expected to perform the tasks originally assigned to them” (Thayer, 1997: 95). To Thayer, the 1883 Civil Service Reform Act, “actually was the full equivalent of a constitutional amendment, even though there was no way to describe it as such” (pp. 95-96). “The original mission of the civil service” created by the Pendleton Act, “was to be the ethical watchdog, the moral guardian of government decision making” (p. 95), and “now that job security is largely stripped away, the guardians are powerless” (p. 96). Referring to the 1978 civil service reform and consequential impacts on the US civil service and professional public administration, he comments, “a civil service that cannot ask questions is politically dead” (p. 122).

The above statements and assessments are shared by most scholars of American public administration and civil service systems. So, what was it that caused the death of the

“guardians” of the American public service institutions and civil service system? What was it that was lynched politically in 1978? Answering these questions require a book length presentation. However, suffice it to say that the 1978 civil service reform act was promulgated by a number of factors: including among many, the habitual anti-bureaucracy rhetoric as a slogan every president has raised before election, the anti-bureaucracy and anti-public administrators’ criticism many public choice scholars repeatedly raised in the 1960-70s, and the general public perception against public administrators as non-elected officials who serve for a lifetime till they retire and are not answerable to elected politicians. Answering the second question, it was the very success of the bureaucracy and administrative state itself by accomplishing many national projects that, among other factors, caused its own lynching by the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act.

Having studied as a nuclear physicist and also engaged as a peanut grower businessman, the former Georgia Governor now the President of the United States, loved business practices and wanted to apply them in public service and administration. His reform proposal to Congress was unanimously approved and declared a great achievement. However, the professional administrators impartial in their execution of the Constitution and serving the broad-based public interests began to experience a new era of political partisan manipulation and abuse against the professional administrative state through partisan politicians — they began to pay a heavy price. In essence, the Reform of 1978 abolished the bi-partisan civil service commission and replaced it with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), an agency headed by a single director. An angel would give heaven, but the devil sends unwanted civil servants to hell, everyone not following the dictates without questions. It weakened the civil service protection measures by creating a merit system protection board, but also created a special counsel to hear and adjudicate on charges of irregularities and misconducts. Civil servants, especially the senior executive servants (GS 16, 17, 18), as well as the rank and file employees of agencies were vulnerable to political partisan manipulations, firing, and potential abuse for political party purposes.

Two more provisions made the professional administrators vulnerable and subjected to political and partisan abuse without protection: one was the rotation of senior servants, making it possible for transferring them to other agencies, similar to the private sector, hence making them vulnerable to partisan abuse and firing. The second was the creation of the Office of the Legal Counsel to serve as a judicial body with administrative judges to handle complaints or issues of conflicts in administrative agencies. Civil servants became the fish-in-the-tank, no longer able to question legislation or orders constitutionally objectionable. As Thayer noted, “a civil service that cannot question is essentially dead” (1997: 122). The public administration system became another private business-like operation enterprise, with its members subject to the bosses’ personal whims. Thus, “for practical purposes, the ‘administrative state’ is now the pre-1883 model risen from its grave” (Thayer, 1997: 122).

The Horror Era under the Ronald Reagan Administration

With the election of Ronald Reagan as president - who by the way had also promised to shrink the federal bureaucracy but by the end of his terms made the bureaucracy grow much larger - the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 became a Carter Gift to Reagan, whose anti public administration and public service views were well known. His OPM Director Donald Devine immediately started the notorious Great Purge of the Democrats and Democratic party leaning bureaucrats labeled as “they the enemies,” and indoctrinated a large number of ultra-conservative Republicans for political positions in control of the bureaucracy and began firing a massive number of Democrat leaning civil servants deemed undesirable or unsuitable under

the presidential authority of “reduction-in-Force,” “downsizing, rightsizing, outsourcing, and privatisation” (Farazmand, 2007). These were the proper words describing the Horror Era of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s regarding the faith of federal civil service.

Thus, arrived the new era of public administration by the “Spoils” as the Reagan administration brought in numerous conservative republicans to occupy the federal administrative agencies, they knew nothing about and had virtually no expertise to work with. Corruption and abuse of partisan power reached high levels of alarm, prompting Congress to launch investigations into allegations of partisan abuse of civil servants and rampant practices of spoils and patronage systems in the federal agencies.

The result was what many scholars from left to right called it a “crisis in the US Civil Service system and public administration institutions of the Federal Government” (see for details, Farazmand, 1989-b; Rourke, 1992; Rosen, 1986; Thayer, 1997). The legacies of the 1978 civil service reform were numerous, and left millions of public servants and vulnerable citizens harmed financially, occupationally, spiritually, and institutionally (Farazmand 1989-b; 2007).

Clinton-Gore Reforms, New Public Management, and Strategic Corporate Globalization of the World

With the election of Bill Clinton to presidency, the federal civil service system began to experience a reprieve, a period of breathing ground with hopeful promises and changes, though temporary and short-lived. With the Al Gore Reinventing Government reform measures, public administration began to experience some public value appreciation, but the “re-inventing government reform” as well as the “national productivity” reforms continued basically the private-sector practices or models of workforce management, with incentives, motivation, and rewards based on “performance” and productivity measurements (Moe, 1994). Three other important developments are in need of attention from the 1990s on:

The first is the relentless continuity in pursuit of privatisation, outsourcing, partnership building, and more in line with transferring public assets to private corporate sector, a process that continued in the decades after 2000. Bill Clinton was a big globaliser himself, speaking and sending special officials to countries like Mexico to negotiate against the Mexican government declaration of foreign debt payment default by offering them more North American Bank loans to keep paying the interest to help corporate American capitalism.

Second, using pretexts to break up the Yugoslav’s federation system of government still under a socialist system, Clinton sought and used pretexts of inter-ethnic conflicts on the grounds to launch massive bombardment of the country and created a chaos where the various republics living in relative harmony since the end of World War II, and broke out small states under different nationality names like Kosovo, Serbia, etc. The human casualties of the US and NATO bombings of Yugoslavia were beyond measures as destruction continued relentlessly, and socialism was abolished, and corporate capitalism was imposed on the respective nation states that were created and remained on the map.

The third thing that started and continued during the 2000s, was the concept of the so called New Public Management (NPM). Its premises were based on private sector business management principles and practices, which hit the grounds and continued to grow well into the 2000s and beyond. Major global corporations like IBM relentlessly promoted this business model of management worldwide. NPM-based Reforms were promoted along with the newcomer ideas of Public-Private Partnership Building (PPPB), New Governance (NG) with various forms and names, New Public Service (NPS), and a host of other ideas and concepts. They include the more recent Collaborative Governance and Administration, Public Values,

and a call to return back to the traditional Weberian bureaucratic administration in Europe and around the world. While valuable ideas, these concepts have been tried out in the public administration intellectual development, and records of research and publications document the growing size of such literature. And some like NPM were abandoned by many governments like Switzerland's local governments on the accountability issue, and even New Zealand where it was practiced much earlier.

As noted earlier, both the sweeping privatisation and outsourcing worldwide helped achieve the first strategic goal of corporate globalisation of the world by dismantling the administrative state and transferring a huge amount of public assets to the private corporate sector for private profits and interests. While the first strategic goal of corporate globalisation was achieved through "structural" reforms and changes, there remained a more profound cultural change in the public sector cognitive system — that is the imperative to change/alter the public opinion and public service mindsets of millions of civil servants/public administrators worldwide that "public service and administration is bad and bad again," and that private business/market-based administration was superior and better; hence a mind-altering crusade against public administration and public service.

This second strategic goal was achieved by the highly ideologically loaded NPM reforms. It profoundly changed the culture of public values and administration and "morphed" public service servants and administrators into "business like administrators", valuable only by market indicators, and disposable by market-based measures of success or failure, and with no respect for human dignity or vulnerable citizens who see government as the ultimate accountable and saviour of the weak, the poor, the blind, the sick, children, and the elderly. The results: money, market rules, and people that have been turned into fish in a pond controllable by a water valve.

An important development following the Clinton's 1990s era of Reinventing Government reform measures with promises and perils (Moe, 1994), the Bush the Senior presidency offered some appreciation for the public service and professional administrators. Yet, this was also short lived as George W. Bush the son came to power and turned the tables upside down with reforms that abolished agencies and consolidated about 15 of them into the Department of Homeland Security stripping civil service protection for all employees working in those agencies. His administration basically restricted such protections for most civil servants in federal agencies, especially the many agencies that were consolidated into the Homeland Security Administration, and further downsizing, privatising, outsourcing, and exercising arbitrary treatments of federal public servants across the country continued. Hence the Second Great Terror and Purge was experienced by the federal agencies, this time under national security reasons. Another corporate globalisation of the world was advanced by G.W. Bush through violence in the Persian Gulf War against Iraq under Saddam Hossein— under a false claim and based on lies — and another by invading Afghanistan under the pretext of fighting the Taliban and Al Qaida. Yet Al Qaida was active and even supported financially and intellectually by the extremist Islamic ideology of the official Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and other places. The Saudi Government has remained a friendly despotic dictatorship because it served and serves the economic interests of the United States and of the UK through its supply of oil and petrodollars.

Obama Administration Reforms

Federal public administration and civils service system under the eight-year Obama administration took a break by breathing better, some recovered from the terrors of the Bush and Bush era, as many could not survive the horror experiences of displacement, patronage,

arbitrary treatment, as well as outsourcing and downsizing. Aside from the Affordable Health Care legislation, the Obama Administration took a much more appreciative approach to reforming and improving the civil service system and its members' morale. Yet, performance remained the key issue in rewarding, recruiting, and development of public service, however restoring the public values of public administration to some extent.

Extensive discussion is needed to treat the reform and change measures in the U.S. federal, and by implication in state and local, government agencies under the Obama Administration; but this task is beyond the space limitation of this paper. Some of the key dimensions of those changes included: substantial increase in diversity within the workforce, especially with minorities, appreciation of differences in composition of the civil service system, restoration of the rule of law and merit along with preferential hiring based on minority considerations to restore fairness and balances out of the perceived inequality or discrimination practices of the past, and relative restoration and promotion of public sector institutionalisation of professionalism.

Trumpian Era of Civil Service

Little can be said about the federal civil service under Donald Trump, an American business oligarch, whose pride has been to play oligarchy, patronage, spoils system, and with little value for public servants working on a merit basis. Historians might compare him with plutocratic, oligarchic, personalistic, and media attention loving head of a state which represents twenty-first century nationalistic populism with no passion for vulnerable people, including children, especially from Asian, African, and Latin American races, as well as for those who do not appear similar or close to the white race Americans. This is sadly so, even though the latter themselves were immigrants from Europe and who exterminated the native Americans upon arrival on this continental land.

Some have considered him the Hitler of the twenty-first century, with strong desires for fascism and racial and ethnic cleansing against Muslims, but favourable desires for right-wing extremist Christians and Jews and extremist Israelis against Palestinians. His insatiable appetite for power and wealth has put him in line with his ancient Roman counterpart general Marcus Licinius Crassus, "the richest man in Rome" who had endless greedy desire for "gold" and properties he grabbed by force (Farazmand, forthcoming; Fry, 1975). As one of the first three Triumvirate along with Pompey and Caesar, Crassus brutally and proudly suppressed the defensive slave revolution, led by Spartacus, who was killed by him with contempt and hatred in 71 BC. Crassus eventually lost his own life along with most of his one hundred thousand Roman soldiers in a defeated attempt to conquer the powerful Persian Parthian Empire in 53 BCE (see Cook, 1985; Farazmand 1998, 2001, 2009, forthcoming; Fry, 1975).

The administration of Donald Trump will also be remembered, similar to Ronald Reagan and George W Bush, but only perhaps hundred times worse and harsher, as an era of absolute chaos in public service and administration, no respect for the rule of law or institutions, no appreciation for professional administrators and public values, and always ready for arbitrary practices against virtually anyone disagreeing with the bosses. Corruption at the top, as well as throughout the system appears to be a normal practice with virtually no accountability. Survival is a matter of life and death experience for millions of civil servants and many political appointees. It is no surprise that many scholars in the American public administration community are calling for efforts to "restore the administrative state," and this author is one of them. Yet, there is still a long way to go to restore the once admirable administrative state with cardinal public values; one must wait for a new renaissance of such restoration in the current and future era.

Conclusion

So, what has happened through the past administrative reforms, and what will the future hold for public administration reforms worldwide? Mentioned here briefly are some of the concluding points to take home with:

1. The traditional reforms of public administration were aimed and intended to improve the system and professionalise the administrative state with higher skills and expertise, to promote sound governance and public administration;
2. The later reforms of nationalisation, land and other reforms of the post-world war II era, along with 'institution building' or bureaucratisation and modernisation reforms of the 1960s along with a host of other organisational and administrative reforms like Planning, Programming, and Budgeting Systems (PPBS) or Zero-Based Budgeting were all aimed to improve the existing administrative systems, to promote American style corporate capitalism, and to extend central government bureaucratic control over rural areas in developing and underdeveloped nations, guided by remote control from Washington DC, London, or Paris;
3. The later reform measures of public administration and government systems changed, since the 1970s, toward more private sector business models, market reforms, and to help achieve the two strategic goals of corporate globalisation — transferring public assets to private corporate sector, and changing the culture of public service values to private business market values — public administration is bad and inefficient, and private business management is more efficient and better. These two strategic goals have profoundly changed the worlds of public and business administration (public administration, by shrinking its size, scope of activities, and changing its public service value culture; private business administration, by expanding its scope and activities and authority exponentially), and altered the minds of millions if not billions of people worldwide.
4. The role of the states, especially the globaliser states, as well as the vulnerable states under their former's satellite power structures, has been significant in achieving the strategic goals of market reforms unleashed on societies and governments around the world. So has the role of the United Nations, the supra governmental organisations like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Foreign aid agencies as well as non-governmental organisations that have served to enforce the "conditionality of the foreign aid to poor and developing nations," forcing them to implement top-down market reforms designed and required by the globalising corporatist states. Some of the states or governments resisting such reforms from the top and refusing such conditionalities have faced formidable challenges and crises of all forms, including violence and invasions (Hoffman, 2006). To Hoffman, globalisation is mainly an American project, and is often achieved by acts of wars and invasions, if resisted by peaceful means (Ibid). Examples include Yugoslavia, Iraq, Nicaragua, Iran, Russia, Chile, Indonesia, and others. Of these nations, the Revolutionary Iran, Russia, Cuba, and Venezuela have so far withstood the mounting economic, political, cultural pressures, and even threats of military intervention and forces of corporate globalisation. Others are still paying the price of wars of invasion, such as Yemen, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, where millions of people have died and been injured, more millions displaced, and even more experiencing crises of migration to other nations in the world;

5. Markets are essential to economic functioning of societies and they have a special place in human communities. Capitalism is also a valuable institution in the market operation, but Predatory capitalism, and predatory globalisation are dangerous to all human beings' lives and the environment, because they have a tendency to destroy the earth, the land, the water, and human labour for profit and expansionist control of more markets (Falk, 1997; Farazmand 2009). Greedy and monopolistic, or oligopolistic market systems are dangerous to everyone except the greedy corporations and profiteers;
6. Can we go home? Many reforms have been tried out since the 1980s, others are being packaged and old wines have been bottled in new bottles. Millions have suffered as the results of bad or failed reforms while others have benefitted, and still hope is never lost in the human mind to pursue a better future for their children. Many are proposing a return to the old traditional models of public administration and civil service systems, by making a call for "restoring the administrative state." Can we go home now? But, is home still there, or is it changed and disappeared? Where can we go then? This is the question for millions around the world.

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