

Administration for development: the idea and the renewal

Administração para o desenvolvimento: a ideia e a renovação

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Administration for development: the idea

The discussions on the theme which involves the relation between administration and development already date a few decades in Brazil. In 1972, on the publication of the article “Administration for development: The discipline in search of relevance”, the basic discussions of those who study public administration were directed towards the subject. The proposals of that time sought to promote development by means of large scale public works. The premise of expansion of the State and the public investment was borne as a form of achieving greater social and economic inclusion of the population with a better distribution of the national revenue. An important role of the public management would be to ensure the efficiency, effectiveness and equity in access to the services. There was, on the part of a few players, the awareness of a distancing existing between the preparation of economic development plans and the administrative capacity of the developing nations for implementing such plans.

At that moment, the great majority of the countries strived to promote progress by means of social-economic changes – then a focus of development -, the first boundary of the new discipline being the geographic area of the developing nations. Scope and substance were initially left diffuse and inaccurate, to be defined later from comparative researches in the new administrative ambiance of the developing bureaucracies.

The movement for defining this new discipline was intense within the public administration, taking the directions of effort for theoretical conception and the urgency of practical application. The result of these efforts, in spite of having produced a great number of studies, was considerably limited, empiric and prescriptive scope.

An insertion into the world market was imagined for the national companies still based on the exploitation of the proper natural resources, considering a greater added value and taking the low cost of workforce into account. The belief in extending the scope of corporate activity was low on account of technological

Text submitted on April 19th, 2013 and accepted for publication on June 19th, 2013.

This version corresponds to the translated text of the original paper in Portuguese.

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dominium and managerial competences. A traditional centralizer and paternalist State did not favor entrepreneurship and still left the companies highly dependent on appropriate incentives and fiscal facilities for their progress. On account of still carrying traditional characteristics, the public administration was seen as incapable of promoting development and more prone to preserving the traditional powers.

Thus, administration for development found a new geographic area for administrative studies. All the proposals at that time sought in part a significant change of the public management. There was a “globalness” of thought: all the public projects were presumed as a source of the development and the equity in the access to the income and to the goods and services. As an academic discipline, administration for development became a set of administrative diagnoses and prognoses, limited not only by the conceptual vision, but also by the administrative dimensions of the more developed nations: short on theory and culturally new had been developed. To this effect, the evolution of theory became a reflex of the evolution of the administrative and organizational theory in the more advanced countries (HEADY, 1959; 2001).

Empiric studies depict various new administrative aspects, but there was still considerable conflict between the descriptive studies and the prescriptive theoretical formulations. For instance, administrative reforms and international technical assistance were made, almost exclusively, according to administrative doctrines diffused in developed nations. The belief on these doctrines as the most efficient and effective ones prevailed, and, therefore, should be the basic reference for administration of development. Thus, the notion of administrative progress as sheltered in the transferability of the modern administrative rationality for obtaining immediate benefits was quite strong.

Concerns of that time with the Public Administration performance

The more advanced countries had already, since the XIX century, surpassed the administrative traditionalism and conquered greater professionalism and efficiency in public management. The current proposals for the developing countries were to follow the same steps that the pioneers and thus achieve similar results. This vision had already been tried out by the more developed countries in their different stages of progress. It was a matter of breaking with the typical practices of a traditional society and inserting new forms of acting according to standards of modernity, basically for two reasons:³ 1. to make jumping stages possible and not only slowly go through the same paths of the pioneers; 2. there was a political dimension, the majority of the developing countries faced serious problems in inserting democracy. The visions of professionalism and institutional strengthening, arduously inserted in the advanced countries, were given as primordial dimensions. For public administration, efficiency was viewed as a need and an engine for development. Various attempts of changes were suggested which were reflected in themes such as administrative reforms, institutional strengthening, professionalism and innovation in the work processes.

After the Second World War, there was a great change in the world with the rearrangement of power between the developed nations, in addition to creating new countries in Africa and Asia. Among the most developed ones, forms of collaboration were extended. In a recuperation process, the European continent received a strong American with the greater transatlantic exchange. Not only foreign trade, but the technological progress also served to transfer new abilities, competences and practices for the progress of the European countries. In the same manner, for instance, the new knowledge on health, as well as agricultural technologies. In this context, the new technologies and administrative practice are also included. In this period, mainly the 1950's and 1960's, the creation of management schools, curricular changes of North-American inspiration was verified.

³ It is important to highlight that in 1972 this practice was not denied directly, but advanced in different proposals to beyond what went on in the more advanced countries.

On searching for progress, the developing countries, chiefly, the new nations, voiced their concern in absorbing this new knowledge as a means of breaking with traditionalism and conquering modernity. Given the difficulties and greater poverty of these countries, the expectation and request for health included practically all the corporate fields and action in the public area. It was imagined at the time the immediate introduction of modern practices as a manner of jumping stages and speeding up the development. In a manner similar to the more developed countries, there were expectations of incorporating knowledge in the health and agricultural technologies areas. Differently from the more developed countries, it was necessary as a pre-condition a greater investment in education, also to make the introduction of new practices of production and service rendering viable.

The ideas on managerial competencies and abilities were also a part of the needs considered imperious to achieve progress. In fact, there were many beliefs in the management inabilities, chiefly in the public area manifestly linked the feudal traditionalisms. Public bureaucracies created explicitly to satisfy preferential groups which did not hold the capacity of acting with equity and efficiency in the formulation of politics and the rendering of services. The attempt to improve democracy and ensure the universality of the rights of citizenship required a reformulation of the public institutions.

It is important to highlight that the paths followed by the developed countries were no different from those followed by the developing countries. In the XIX century, the conquest of democracy was accompanied by administrative reforms for changing public administrations, created before to defend feudal interests. Mainly in the second half of the XX century, the developing countries followed the same trajectory, but at that moment, sought to enjoy the knowledge and experience of the most advanced ones. So, there always was a constant search for administrative newness. It would be innocent to think that the interest in modernity of the health services, the agricultural technologies and the industrial investments could be done dismissing the administrative modernity.

Therefore, the dissemination of knowledge in administration had as driving force ideas such as: the effectiveness of a new concept, the extension of the decision-making rationality, the commitment with the social objectives of progress as a value, the administrative participation, administrative flexibility. Such ideas were reflected as follows:

- **Effectiveness as a new concept** which was beyond the traditional goals and efficiency and effectiveness measures. In truth, it concerned an impact measure, still not practiced in the administrative reforms of that time. Efficiency seen as a process measure or a product raw material ratio, and effectiveness as a measure of results. Efficiency was calculated asking how it happened, and effectiveness asked what happened. The distinction would be, as an impact measure, effectiveness would answer to the question: what difference did it make in society or economy? While a concept, effectiveness sought to go beyond the perspective of organizational objectives and include broader objectives of equity and economic-social development. Thus, it should go beyond the construction of stronger and more stable institutions and capacitate them for producing effective changes linked to the development.
- **Extension of the organizational decision-making rationality perspective** began to be so emphasized at the time as a function of the first Nobel Prize given to a specialist in administration – Herbert Simon – exactly for their works on organizational decision and limits of rationality. The administrative rationality of the development then would depend on the relevance determined by a scale of values and the social and economic pressures and demands of the national context.
- **Commitment with the social objectives of progress as a central value** for administration of development. Since their beginnings, the theories of the modern public administration proclaim the neutrality of the administrator. Administration for development should insert the idea of non neutrality of the administrator, but of its commitment with the ideals of progress.
- **The administrative participation was** still inexistent in the developing countries – and incipient in the more advanced ones – and began to be disseminated in the attempt to compensate for the lack of

democracy in the political system. Differently from what the opposers argued in the developed countries, there was no risk of weakening the legislative powers, for these were fragile in the developing nations. On account of the risk being low, a democratic practice was proposed in the administrative bodies not only to compensate for the authoritarianism in force, but also to allow the citizens some citizenship right and the democratic practice as part of a learning path for democracy in the larger system.

- **Administrative flexibility** was proposed beyond what was practiced and recommended in the more advanced countries. The European bureaucracy strictness, the descriptions of the Weberian models served a justifiable cultural purpose in countries in which the institutional legal construction was based directly in the citizens' expectations. So, flexible structures, outside the Weberian ideals, would be more adaptable to the various circumstances, whether they are from the nature of work, clientele or the geographic area. Administration of development would follow a permanent transition ritual, fully contesting the bureaucratic proposals grounded in the Prussian practices.
- In this context, in the developing countries, the legal institutional framework did not reflect the expectations and cultural conditions of a people, but the idealizations of elites inspired in customs of the most the most advanced. The very constitutions and the institutional legal apparatus floated over society and normally did not determine practices and behaviors.
- All the proposals considered the public administration less a bureaucratic apparatus of the State – bureaucracy concept – and more an administrative system.⁴ The purpose is to always have the perspective of interdependency not only to understand, but, chiefly, to propose new basis for achieving progress. The central questions were: 1. define the real problem of the public administration in the development; 2. what to do to solve these problems and ensure the public administration as an engine for development. Several proposals were presented, among which stood out the belief in the creative capacity of bureaucracy, the premise on the proposed cultural contaminations of the administrative knowledge which is most normative such as the strategic intention of changing, the understanding of simplicity of models from the more advanced societies, the political and administrative capacity as preconditions to development, remarks to the emphasis of bureaucratic rational models. A brief description follows:
 - a) The belief in the creative capacity of bureaucracy, in spite of great obstacles in the development process (ESMAN, 1972) – the idea at the time was to disseminate professionalism in the public administration so as to promote specialization in the organization;
 - b) The premise on the proposed cultural contaminations of the administrative knowledge pointed out that North-American practices would be irrelevant in the context of development. Administrative development means a single stage in the progress and which could not be explained by the mere understanding of traditional and modern practices. The social and administrative transition means a unique stage (RIGGS, 1968; 1971). The replication of successful solutions, from other cultures, favors solutions out-of-context and, therefore, inadequate.
 - c) More normative proposals showed themselves to be the strategic intention of changing, by means of a conscious ideological choice, the primordial factor for development (KATZ, 1966, 1970). In this case, the developments' proposals dismissed the analysis of reality to favor idealization.

⁴ It is worthwhile to make a distinction between administrative system and bureaucracy as analytical categories not to confuse bureaucracy with administrative modernization. It is understood as bureaucracy herein as the structural component of all the governments – in the greater part, a government's work is done within the bureaucracy, not only on it. The administrative system includes all the relevant aspects of the governmental decision-making process which are developed and comprise the inter-relations with the legislative, the judiciary and entities external to the bureaucracy, such as state-owned companies and even NGO's.

- d) Models from more advanced societies were seen as naïve to understand sub development, and each country would be a unique case (LA PALOMBRA, 1963, 1971). On account of being environments with very distinct realities, the solutions applied and developed in developed countries would not answer the demands from the most needy countries and with problems of greater complexity.
- e) The political and administrative capacity would be preconditions for development, as long as there was balance in development between political and administrative objectives (ILCHMAN and BAGARVA, 1971; and ILCHMAN, 1971). This focus would center less in the structural components of the system and more in the inter-relations between these components.
- f) The more the bureaucratic rational models are emphasized, the less they would change into established social values and the more the administration would distance itself from the masses in traditional society (SJOLBERG, 1971). It was argued that gradualism or incrementalism, in opposition to more global and radical forms of change, helped to preserve the power of those who already were on the top of the administration.
- g) The diversity of the proposals, as well as followed reflections of trial and errors, has provided changes in management and in conducting the development projects. Among the advances, it is observed that public administration became modernized, improving its foundations in society, but still maintains vices from traditionalism to also server traditional preferential groups, mainly by means of political allotment of public positions.

Growth and extension of State activities did not serve directly and naturally to the development or generated a more equitable redistribution of the national revenue. The conquests have arrived in a clearer manner after the State acting as stimulator of growth and less as a performer of large scale projects. There was a significant transformation in the company, observing a technological advancement and the conquest of new managerial skills. The world perspective and competitiveness expanded to all the business modes and processes, revealing new modes of insertion in the globalized world.

As a result, it was observed that, even before the progresses in administrative modernization, the reports on the continuity of traditionalism make public administration still suffer a few of the difficulties from past decades. However, there are significant progresses and a new optimism. On one hand there are conquests of modernity, a product of the new relations of the State with society. The expansion of democratic practices, verified in many developing countries, chiefly in Latin America and Africa, reinforced the rights of citizenship and the capacity of popular influence on the fate of the nation. On the other hand, popular awareness of public administration has brought new and more effective pressures for reforms in the administrative practices (MOTTA, 2002).

In the last few years, an example of a more radical proposal came with the idea of making public administration similar to the private company. This idea advanced and spread out as new and promising mode for public management. The *New Public Management* (or managerialism) presented itself with the primordial objective of making public administration work as a private company and, thus, acquire greater effectiveness in the rendering of services. Inserting the benefits of competition and avoiding monopolies, greater flexibility would be achieved in management (OSBORNE and GAEBLER, 1995). More competition, decentralization and privatization were proposed with more power to the service managers. Traditional government practices would be restricted to exclusive functions and inappropriate to the market mechanisms (OSBORNE, 2010; DENHARDT, 2012; KETTL, 2005).

Renewal: reflections for the advance of administration directed towards development

The progress of the scientific and professional activity and in management led to a new social dynamics and to a new integration between managerial knowledge and practice. On account of being more globalist, complex and interdependent, the modern world makes new integrations easier. i.e., creative forms of inter-relating and creating values. Even before the difficulties, the collaboration with the more advanced countries achieved valuable results and conquests. Today, only a few developing countries, now named emerging, try not only a narrower collaboration between themselves, as well as a new protagonism in the world scenario. To do that, it is necessary that these nations position themselves as formers of opinion and developers of proper knowledge and technologies.

In spite of new and strong competitive factors, emerging countries imitate prior models, providing help to even poorer countries: they transfer a few technologies; replicate a few of the success histories; take new managerial practices increasing the presence of their professionals in other countries. Even if they are not, they act as large donators and create new meaning in the international policy. They create cooperation outside the traditional North-South perspective. They allow, thus, various interpretations about their presences and analogous to those carried out on the old help of the more developed nations.

This new perspective of transmissibility means one less managerial technical interference and more the discovery of new possibilities of creating value for the development. It does not mean a chance in the in the premises of intercultural transmissibility of the managerial know-how, but a new perspective on the possibility of creating almost a science of application. Neither the explicit values of the transmitter culture nor the ideals of the receiving culture are destroyed So, new standards of governance are admitted by the creative integration of two sets of knowledge. This is the new transmissibility.

The manner how individuals relate with one another and with their surroundings, define the potential of rational use of resources. The advance of the concept of development has its perspective extended on the discourse, raising the composition supported by the tripod of economic, social and environmental dimensions; however, in practice, the prevalence of the first dimension is observed and, as an offset, the strong media appeal of the environmental and social dimensions.⁵

To this effect, various networks are created to challenge the existing relations, chiefly those related to the matters of development. However, such initiatives, usually, are anchored in abundant situations of inequality of power, articulated by historical processes, with different views, political positions and interests (RIBEIRO, 2008). International cooperation networks directed towards development are impregnated with asymmetrical relations, which are measured by power⁶ and, predominantly, ruled by the economic-financial aspect – on taking into account the interference of the economic, social and environmental dimensions (SCHMITT, 2011). Considering that centrality precedes power (BURKHARDT and BRASS, 1993), it is up to the actors interested in the development and improvement of management practices to reflect on the role they wish to play.

Relations stem from the conjunction between substantive elements – such as te discursive construction – and instrumental elements – such as partners and networks. The central question lies on searching for a balance of interests from different perspectives and understandings of reality, which are often very divergent. For developing countries, the formation of partnerships is important, for they cease to be recipients to become partners; however, partnerships can produce new forms of agency and discipline, as rhetorical innovations, which are associated with contemporary politics and used for instrumental reasons (ABRAHAMSEN, 2004).

⁵ To preconize the extension of interest in social-environmental matters in a balanced manner it is relevant and legitimate, however, to believe that these environmental and social affairs still prevail can be considered utopic.

⁶ Networks are environments comprised by a set of relations which constitute in exchanges, in ongoing construction and change of the results, however, without necessarily meaning the absence of conflicts and disputes of power (Lopes and Baldi, 2009).

A naïve look in the formation of networks directed towards development can lead to a situation in which the public good ends up being considerably harmed, with the absence of political will and a more transparent and democratic public management. So, even before relevance, it is important to be attentive to the fact that the discourses and partnerships are used as instruments of power, also in the networks directed towards development.

The construction of knowledge, while a reflex of the collective construction, originates from an environment of association of individuals with common interests. Networks are associations which depend in the existence of common objectives, in which interests and these objectives are well-defined and lasting; otherwise, they tend to become institutions based in personal relationships and in bureaucratic rationality, with active (decision makers) and passive (affected parties) subjects (PINTO and JUNQUEIRA, 2009). Therefore, production of knowledge relevant for management and development in the national context depends on the existence of persons interested in advancing the theme, as well as discussing the relevant docket for comprehending the peculiarities of the environment being studied.

The construction of innovating knowledge, which reflects the maximization of potentialities and construction of new technologies, consists in conjugating the concern of understanding the relation between locus and focus – chiefly in the improvement of knowledge on focus. Thus, knowledge advances to a discussion of a critical nature, above merely academician and of a prescriptive character, so as to fill the existing gap between theory and practice in the management and development fields – or even management directed towards development.

The insertion of a diversity of actors in a participative mode is a necessity. There are limits for comparability between territories, for, on interpreting the space and its context, it is possible to ascertain the existence of differentiating aspects (PECQUER, 2006) – such as individuals and their cultures. The participation of distinct groups provides the expansion of rationality, also in the discussion of conflicting and punctual questions, since different spaces demand organizations which are coherent to their context.

In the organizational context, a starting point is in understanding that there is a latent need for fluid and flexible organizations, which adopt new practices, more adequate to the present context. Seeking to revert this situation, the sustainable development results from understanding the specificities of the living systems in the knowledge and action processes (OLLAGNON, 2000). The effort for development seeks to intermediate the relations between individuals and space, for use by organizations or technologies which allow interaction between means and resources for solving problems (SCHMITT and MORETTO, 2011).

The current development model contemplates the prevailing elements, ignoring the principles heterogeneity, so that the spaces are considered a similar whole (CAZELLA, 2006). To this effect, in the search for a standard, specific elements essential to development are ignored. This context, in a certain manner, limits the improvement of the associated quality of life, from the moment that it encourages maintaining repetitive behaviors and, in a certain manner, not very creative or innovating. The great challenge is to understand the complexity of the environment and the influence of such interactions.

Development is characterized by the multiculturalism and transversality due to the constancy of divergences of interests and by the conceptions of strategies of the actors implicated in the formal actions. On account of the actors having different view of the world and interests, the development begins to be resultant from the negotiation process, seeking to approach the different spheres (BIERSCHENK, 1988; VIEIRA, 2006; CAZELLA, 2006; SACHS, 2007). Different perspectives propitiate the solution of questions with greater potential of scope.

The challenge remains, therefore, of approaching management practices and knowledge to the study directed towards development - in a non-utopic manner -, given that the objective is improving the public good. Next, the need of expanding the relevance of aspects which are inherent to the development in the field of administration, as long as they are used for legitimate purposes.

The development presupposes innovative postures directed towards the effective transformation of realities, consequent from changing speeches into practice. Just as the management interferes in development, the reciprocity is also true, and can contribute greatly to the evolution of the fields of study of administration for development. For this reason, it is important to provide the advance of critical knowledge – above the prescriptive or indoctrinary – so as to contribute to improving the practice.

A starting point for renewal is in understanding administration as a means and development as an end; public administration as an instrument for consecution of the objective of improving the common good, by means of a holistic vision which contemplates the well-being of individuals and maintaining the natural environment. In this manner, innovation of knowledge contemplates in fact the social, economic and environmental questions – with disregarding the relevance of each one of them for maintaining the relations.

This new role reveals a new managerial capacity in developing nations: public administration conquers greater effectiveness and corporate administration shows greater ability on inserting themselves competitively in the international scenario. In practical terms, the reflex is reducing the influence of already developed countries in the export of “success models” – however, out of context –, for expanding the reflection and search for their own solutions and most adequate to the reality of the developing countries, so as to contemplate matters neglected up to then relative to the territorial peculiarities.

Final remarks

In most of the countries called in development, a sharper progress was observed in the last few decades. There was not only growth of the national revenue, but also a better distribution of riches. Data on the war on poverty and the better educational and health indexes reveal positive conquests. Moreover, these nations have adapted well to the new ideals of sustainability, i.e., they seek to satisfy the current demands and needs of their populations, with the awareness of not damaging the quality of life of future generations.

The administration in these countries has modernized itself: it has acquired conditions to break with a traditionalist past and introduce standards of modernity. Soit served, not only as an engine for development, but also as a receiver of the new conquests of progress. New perspectives and ideals reactivated optimism on the development of management.

With the edition of the Handbooks, EBAPE depicts the current conditions of the administration for development: their difficulties, possibilities and challenges. It contributes to the advancement of the debates on the theme of management and development and their interconnections. The texts offer valuable ideas on the knowledge construction process, the social technologies and on the reproduction and use of “good practices”, in addition to highlighting the role of the social and environmental dimensions, the partnerships and the international cooperation networks. They propose, therefore, reflections for filling in important gaps in the management and development fields.

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