

Development Administration: Origin, Concept, and Diffusion*

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It is now twelve years since the term development administration first came into international use. It was in 1956 that George Gant, Ford Foundation representative in Pakistan, began suggesting the usefulness of the concept. His method was Socratic; he stimulated residents and visiting consultants with his searching questions.

Origin and Concept

Yet it was than a decade earlier that the idea behind the concept was born of a special situation in the United States. The Tennessee Valley Authority was specifically charged with the broad development of a large region within the United States. In order effectively to carry out the program, the personnel office of TVA was anxious to recruit development minded administrators. Such innovators as Floyd Reeves and George Gant directed the unusual TVA personnel office, and in the latter forties, Gant became general manager of TVA.

For TVA the statement of the problem was a simple one: How to maximize the social, economic, technological, and even political development of the Tennessee Valley. Years later in Pakistan, George Gant was faced with a similar problem on an even vaster scale: How to maximize the development of Pakistan, a populous, physically divided country which was undergoing a major political crisis.

The writer's own contact with the term development administration stems from a period of

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consultancy in Pakistan during the summer of 1956. Gant was provocative and persuasive. The term seemed to be applicable to much of what was confronting Asia, and indeed to what was beginning to be discussed in Latin America and Africa. More intriguing, it was a term that usefully described a need in the United States and other Western countries as well.

On his return to the United States, the writer began to speak and write about the new concept of development administration. Others did likewise. In the United States the principal centers interested in development administration, naturally enough, initially were those institutions heavily involved in Pakistan: Michigan State, Southern California, and Syracuse. Still, very little had been written on the subject by 1960, and proposed programs in development administration, as at Michigan State, were slow to be formulated and launched. Around 1960 bibliographies on comparative and development administration showed much writing on the periphery of the subject, and very little on its central aspects.

Development administration was a concept that could not be readily accepted. It ran counter to established ways of organizing knowledge and administering universities. For some, it became a fashionable substitute for "public administration." Development administration was in danger of being public administration on the export market. For others, especially those concerned with research, development administration became synonymous with comparative administration.

Questions arose. Did development administration mean the development of administration or the administration of development? What was administration? Was it confined to the public sector? What was development? Was it synonymous with any human endeavor?

While polite debate and even skepticism reigned, the problems of mankind continued to assert themselves unabated. The misery, need, and expectations of men everywhere called out for attention. Gradually, the manipulative character of public administration (and business administration, for that matter) became evident. The difference between development administration and the more traditional aspects of administration was one of purpose, of goals. Administration had been neutral as to purposes. Development administration invited scholars and practitioners alike to think of relating means to a particular and fundamental goal—the political, social, economic, and technological development of the world—development as rapidly as possible and on a continuing basis.

A developmental focus required a broad interdisciplinary approach which few universities were prepared to embrace. Development administration spanned many aspects of administration, and it also encompassed much of the behavioral sciences and the applied professional areas as

well education, the health sciences, agriculture, and engineering, to name a few. It called for technical specialists and administrative generalists to get together. This was, and remains, of achievement.

With the onset of the 1960's a great deal of writing began to focus on development administration. Much of it centered on the grand debate over what constituted development administration. Not until some years later was much concern evidenced for the practical implications of development administration for programs in particular countries.

What is development administrations? Formulations vary. The intricacies of the arguments need not concern us here. Put most simply and understandably, development administration is those actions leading to the maximum attainment of development goals. Development is progressive modernizing, the continuous attainment of goals of nation-building and socio-economic progress. It may include system change. In the long run it must include growth. Behind it lies the assumption that man, at least in part, is the master of his own destiny. Planning and purposeful action can change man's environment.

While development administration was being brought more clearly into focus, three organizations were responsible for involving scholars and practitioners more deeply in it. The Ford Foundation placed its prestige and resources behind the concept and action flowing from it. George Gant, returned from Pakistan, gave leadership to the New York office's concern with development administration. Both in its technical assistance grant so verse as and in its domestic university grants, the Ford Foundation stimulated training, research, and action in development administration. It was especially active in Asia; Gant directed the Foundation's Asian development program.

Meanwhile, a new organization was established at the University of Hawaii. Financed mainly by a contract with the United States government, the East West Center began to focus on development administration in 1962. Each year groups of Asian and American scholars and practitioners were brought to the Center for periods of residence up to a year. Not only were knowledge advanced and experiences exchanged, but also intimate professional relations evolved. In addition, through its international development fellowships, the Center assisted a number of younger Asian scholars toward the doctorate at various American universities.

A third organization, the Comparative Administration Group of the American Society for Public Administration, was organized in the late fifties. However, its interest in development administration stems largely from the early 1960's. Through seminars and a most ambitious

program of occasional papers and other publications, it reinforced and stimulated interest in development. In doing so, it was assisted by a Ford Foundation grant.

All three organizations combined their efforts in an unusual seminar held at the East West Center in the summer of 1966. Equal numbers of Asian and American scholars devoted themselves intensively to development administration in Asia. Some thirteen papers were directly issued from the seminar.

The most significant aspect of the 1966 Honolulu seminar was not the papers, however. Instead, it gave a group of Asian scholars from widely different locations—Korea, Hong Kong, The Philippines, Vietnam, India and Pakistan—an opportunity to get to know each other more intimately. Together with the collegueship developed on other occasions, the seminar provided a stimulus for a discussion of a new Asian organization. Formally launched the following year, the Development Administration Group (Asia) has an initial membership of some twenty to thirty Asian scholars devoted to development administration. It is unique. There is no similar regional organization in any other part of the world.

At the moment, then, Asia and the United States have jointly taken leadership in development administration. The many universities and the vast resources of the United States, together with its pragmatic posture, help explain the interest in development administration in America. What explains the Asian leadership? In part it is the diversity of Asia. Asia is many countries of quite different backgrounds sharing a chain of interconnected boundaries. In part the explanation lies in the stimulus of recent nationhood. Most countries of Asia threw off colonial yokes in the forties or fifties. However, Asia has been a special development case at least as far back as 1940. Its leaders called for development earlier and more insistently than those of Africa or Latin America. Its educational program has steadily matured. Clusters of outstanding research scholars are to be found in most Asian countries. Their development orientation is marked.

In fact, it now appears that Asia has an opportunity to innovate in regard to development administration in a manner as yet unparalleled. It is therefore to a consideration of diffusion of development administration in Asia that we now turn.

Diffusion

Diffusion of development administration can come from several sources. Viewed grossly, it can come from within a country through government or universities or from outside a country

through technical assistance agencies. The technical assistance agencies played an important role in the last twenty years, but their function has now dramatically changed. In most Asian countries, they are performing a role of merely supporting development administration goals and attitudes already firmly fixed. The days of heavy foreign stimulation of development have ended.

It is this fact that presents academic groups such as DAG with a unique opportunity. It is to DAG and similar organizations that Asian countries must now turn for a major source of development ideas and development stimulus. Universities are more than guardians of culture and custodians of knowledge. They are a nation's generators. They are enclaves for innovative thinking. They are sources of inspiration for national development. In this perspective, then, let us examine the opportunities and responsibilities of the members of DAG as seen by an outside observer—opportunities and responsibilities individually and collectively, domestically and internationally.

First, DAG must look inward. If a group is to serve as a source of diffusion in development administration, it must be cohesive and high-spirited. It must have a sense of mission. It must be aware of its objectives and be determined to contribute to their realization.

The Development Administration Group is well on its way toward meeting these conditions. The small core group that held a seminar in Bangkok in March 1968 was unified both in its approach and its dedication to development administration. Without exception each participant had prepared a thoughtful paper in advance on some aspect of development administration in his own country. Each seminarian was prepared to extend and revise his remarks in accordance with the insights provided by his colleagues. It is seldom that a regional group exhibits such sharp intellectual exchange in such a relaxed and friendly manner as was true in Bangkok.

Still, the Bangkok seminar was a small, select group. Only one or two persons from each of seven countries were present. Before a "take-off" point can be reached, the dozen or so persons at Bangkok must be multiplied until there are ten or twenty persons in each Asian country equally committed and productive. Such an expansion must be carried out cautiously and with no more than deliberate speed. To sacrifice cohesiveness and élan to numbers would undermine the very potential of DAG.

Yet is it merely an expansion of numbers that is called for? All the seminarians were from a single academic background, namely, public administration. The papers presented made it clear that those from several other disciplines have much to contribute. Anthropologists, sociologists, and economists, particularly, are crucial to an enlightened development adminis-

tration. In addition, the private sector was repeatedly mentioned in the Bangkok papers as having a major impact on development in Asia. Business administration has an important contribution to make development administration. So has education.

During the next two or three years, DAG could thus expand to more than a hundred members in ten or more Asian countries, each country's membership consisting of persons from several disciplines. A next step might be the emergence of identifiable country groups, each with its own active program of research, publication, conferences, and seminars. If such a program materializes, it would be important in the first year or two to concentrate on a small number of scholars in each country so as to provide an opportunity for the flowering of the same cohesion and high spirit that was exhibited internationally at Bangkok.

However, if scholars merely talk with scholars, the potential of diffusion of development administration will be severely limited. DAG internationally is a part of EROPA, and as such it is integrally related to the civil servants who constitute the great proportion of EROPA's membership. At the level of each country, a similar dialogue should be joined between academic DAG members and development-minded administrators. There are many ways in which this can be done, and it would undoubtedly be appropriate to do it in different ways in different countries. The essential thing is that a useful arrangement be worked out to keep academic and administrator together, mutually stimulating and reinforcing each other. This is of fundamental importance for the role of intellectuals as agents of diffusion.

Asia might wish to take the lead in nurturing a new kind of large membership organization based on a common interest in development administration. Traditional associations for public administration and/or business administration may not be appropriate for some countries. With the new interest in goal-oriented administration, it is appropriate that associations for development administration be tried, in some cases as a supplement to, in other cases as a substitute for, public or business administration societies. They would include administrators i.e., entrepreneurs from both the private and the public sectors, plus a wide group of academics.

Intellectuals must not merely point the finger at governments, requesting that they innovate so as to facilitate change. Through their own schools, institutes, and universities, they must themselves be innovative. If development administration is something more than a play upon words if it is something other than a fashionable way of saying public administration then it follows that there should be specific reflection of it in the curricula of institutions of higher education.

It seems doubtful that development administration is just a course or even a single curriculum

in academic terms. It is an ecological or environmental approach to knowledge and learning. It is a concern with contemporary problems. It is pragmatic and experimental. Institutions of higher education are among the most conservative parts of society. They are extremely resistant to change. Nonetheless, development administration-oriented academics must have the courage of their own convictions if they are to influence others. They must begin by innovating in their own institutes and schools, eventually influencing the approach of entire colleges and universities. In turn, universities can serve as enclaves of ideas, enclaves of consultants, trainers, for society as a whole.

The content of specific innovations in curricula cannot be generally prescribed across national boundaries. Nor can other methods of diffusion such as books or journals, in English as well as in other national languages, conferences, seminars, meetings, associations, consulting arrangements, etc. Innovations must be adapted to local circumstances.

Yet the fundamental character of DAG's opportunity for diffusion of development administration is clear. It is of two parts. First, it involves a belief, a conviction, a dedication in development as a practical, operating objective as well as a long-range goal. Second, it requires continuous enlargement of participation until literally all the people are participants and beneficiaries as well.

The remarks on diffusion are made by a foreign intruder into the Asian scene. Like all exogenous forces, they need to be approached critically. The views of outside observers are frequently interesting, but they may not be valid. It would have been ungracious of me to turn down the invitation of Dean Hahn-- Been Lee to address you on this occasion. But it is important not to be easily captivated by words from a foreign soil.

My humble salute to you, your innovating Graduate School of Public Administration, and your rapidly changing and progressive country.