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PREVIEW

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**The development of public administration as a field of study in
the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Al-Huwaity, Swailem Audah S., Ph.D.

University of North Texas, 1989

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PREVIEW

Al-Huwaity, Swailem Audah S. The Development of Public Administration as a Field of Study in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Doctor of Philosophy (College Teaching/Public Administration), December, 1989, 335 pp., 52 tables, bibliography, 212 titles.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the evolution and development of the field of public administration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Factors which brought about programs of public administration and which have been influential in the development of these programs were analyzed.

Although the historical roots of Saudi public administration are traced to the recapture of Riyadh by the late King Abdulaziz Al-Saud in 1902, modern public administration in the Kingdom actually began in 1953 with a royal decree which established the Council of Ministers. Factors that led to the establishment of the Institute of Public Administration and the birth of public administration programs at major Saudi universities include the country's rapid socioeconomic growth, rapid administrative expansion, and policies of administrative reform, higher education development, and the ambitious Five-Year Plans.

Despite the fact that attention to the field of public administration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia dates back to

the establishment of the College of Commerce at King Saud University in 1959, the real start of teaching public administration in Saudi universities is considered recent. The field of public administration is paralleled with the establishment of the Departments of Public Administration in King Abdulaziz University in 1971, followed by similar steps at King Saud University in 1978.

This study revealed that the Saudi Institute of Public Administration and institutions of higher education offering programs of public administration have played a highly influential role in the development of public administration in the Kingdom. However, current research in the field and practice of public administration at the university level is narrowly focused on faculty promotion. The research conducted for this study did not clarify the degree to which efforts are being made to bring theory closer to actual practice. However, a greater need for coordination between university-based public administration programs and governmental agencies seems strongly indicated.

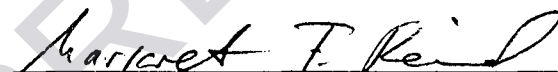
THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS A
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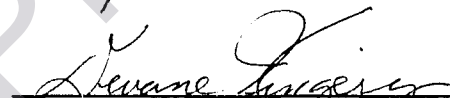
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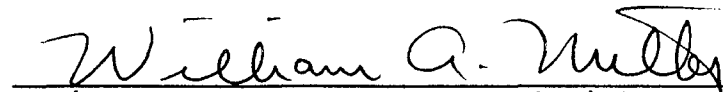
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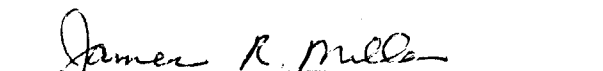

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PREVIEW

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS A
FIELD OF STUDY IN THE KINGDOM
OF SAUDI ARABIA

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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Denton, Texas

December, 1989

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	v
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction	
Context of the Problem	
Statement of the Problem	
Purposes of the Study	
Research Questions	
Significance of the Study	
2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	11
The Meaning and Significance of Public Administration	
Developing Countries' Need for Public Administration	
Education and the Study of Public Administration in Developing Countries	
The Islamic Public Administration Model	
Summary of Chapter Two	
3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	42
Historical Research	
Descriptive Methodology	
Analytical Methodology for Research Questions	
Data Collection	
Organization of the Study	
4. FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN SAUDI ARABIA: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	53
Introduction	
Stages of Growth in Public Administration	

Chapter		Page
	The Development of Public Administration, Phase 1	
	The Development of Public Administration, Phase 2	
	The Development of Public Administration, Phase 3	
	Summary of Chapter Four	
5.	DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS A FIELD OF STUDY	130
	The Development of Higher Education and the Educational System in Saudi Arabia: Historical Background	
	Government Policy for Higher Education and Teaching Public Administration	
	The Emergence of Public Administration as an Academic Major at Saudi Universities	
	The Role of Institutions of Public Administration in the Development of Public Administration	
	The Adaptation of Western Administration to the Local Administrative Environment	
	Effectiveness of Programs of Public Administration at Saudi Universities in Preparing and Providing Future Bureaucrats	
	Summary of Chapter Five	
6.	THE PROGRAMS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AT SAUDI UNIVERSITIES: SURVEY RESULTS	213
	Introduction	
	Development of Public Administration in Saudi Arabia	
	Summary of Chapter Six	
7.	SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	260
	Summary	
	Discussion	
	Observations	
	Recommendations	

	Page
APPENDIX	287
REFERENCE LIST	315

PREVIEW

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Saudi Arabian Oil Revenue: 1938-1980	57
2. Total Saudi Government Revenue in 5-Year Intervals: 1932-1967	66
3. Saudi Arabian Gross Domestic Product, 1962-1973 (Millions of Saudi Riyals)	77
4. Growth in Total Saudi Government Budget Appropriations: 1959-1974	78
5. Total Saudi Government Employees 1945-1985	79
6. Growth in Total Saudi Government Revenues and Expenditures: 1970-1979	86
7. Increase in Saudi Oil Price, Production, and Revenues (Arabia Light Crude/ US Dollars/ 1950-1975	87
8. Saudi Gross National Product 1969-1980	87
9. The Growing Number of Government Employees from 1976-77 to 1985-86	118
10. Growth in Saudi Budget for General and Higher Education	143
11. Growth in Total Education Facilities in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s	144
12. Growth in Total Education in Saudi Arabia	145
13. Growth in Higher Education in Saudi Arabia (Total Students and Teaching Staff)	148

Table	Page
14. Saudi Students Studying Abroad	150
15. Types of Degrees Awarded to Saudi Students Abroad: 1970-1980	151
16. Growth in Saudi Higher Education Enrollment and Teaching Staff	154
17. Major Saudi Universities	165
18. Factors Contributing to Development of the Field of Public Administration	215
19. Role of Saudi Government Policy on Teaching Public Administration in Institutions of Higher Education	216
20. Role of Various Entities in Establishing Saudi University Programs in Public Administration	217
21. Role of University Officials in Establishing Saudi University Programs in Public Administration	218
22. Role of Civil Service Bureau in Establishing Saudi University Programs in Public Administrations	219
23. Role of Ministry of Planning in Establishing Saudi University Programs in Public Administration	219
24. Role of Ministry of Higher Education in Establishing Saudi University Programs in Public Administration	220
25. Role of Other Government Agencies in Establishing Saudi University Programs in Public Administration	220
26. Role of Other Entities in Establishing Programs in Public Administration	221
27. Most Important Contributions of Institutes, Colleges, & Universities in Developing Field of Public Administration	222

Table		Page
28.	Reasons for Civil Service Bureau's Recent Job Classification System	223
29.	Impact of Public Administration Taught in Universities o Productivity of Public Bureaucracy	224
30.	Role of Universities and IPA in Developing Public Administration & Improving Public Service	225
31.	Extent of Improvement in Civil Service Due to Study of Public Administration and Training by IPA	226
32.	Impact of Public Administration Programs on Development of Public Bureaucracy	227
33.	Impact of Public Administration Programs on Development of Civil Service Systems	228
34.	Influence of Foreign Administrative Systems on Saudi Public Administration	230
35.	Foreign Administrative Systems Influencing Saudi Public Administration	231
36.	Adaptation of Discipline of Public Administration by Saudi Institutions of Higher Education & Training	232
37.	Extent of Influence of Western Ideas on Teaching of Public Administration	234
38.	Evaluation of the Quality of the Field of Public Administration with Respondent's Department	235
39.	Meeting of Government Needs for Staff in Public Administration by Saudi Universities	236
40.	Extent that Institutions of Public Administration Provide PUblic Sector with Personnel Needs	237

Table		Page
41.	Improvement of Public Service Through Specialization/Training in Public Administration	238
42.	Areas of Improvement in Civil Service Resulting from Entry of Public Administration Graduates & Ipa Training	240
43.	Preparation of Public Administration Graduates to Carry Out Public Administration	241
44.	Performance & Productivity of Administrative Personnel According to Educational Background	243
45.	Adequacy of Public Administration Graduates' Knowledge for Assuming Administrative Positions	244
46.	Suitability of Public Administration Graduates' Information/Experience for Local Work Environment	246
47.	Cooperation and Coordination Between Saudi Universities & Public Agencies	249
48.	Extent of Respondent's Connection/ Contact with Bureaucrats in Government Agencies	249
49.	Most Preferable Academic Majors for Administrative Positions	250
50.	Affect of Public Needs on Academic Curriculum of Public Administration	251
51.	Application of Research in Respondent's Department to Improvement of Field & Practice of Public Administration	252
52.	Efforts to Bring Theory Closer to Actual Practice	253

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

"Administration," Dwight Waldo (1955) observes, "has been studied since the dawn of history, but seldom with much self-consciousness, and never before with the scope and intensity of today" (p. 15). Indeed, as a field of study in the modern sense, public administration is relatively new. Waldo corroborates this, observing that "the rise of public administration as a self-conscious study" was a response to government expansion and

an attempt to make government work under the new and more demanding conditions, by increasing the amount of systematic study of the problems of government and the competence and training of those entering government service. (p. 19)

Waldo also maintains that public administration "as a literature and a body of concepts also came to contain a new theory or philosophy of government" (p. 19). This new governmental philosophy was aimed at making government stronger, more efficient, more responsible, and more responsive to the people governed; thus, the movement focused both on political and administrative reforms. The development of the study of public administration was

stimulated both by the growth of the study of political science and by the growth of higher education (pp. 19-20).

Concurring with this overall assessment, B. B. Schaffer (1969) dates the beginning of the study of public administration to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Particular stimulus was provided by "Woodrow Wilson's definition of public administration as a practical science," from his "particular agenda for research and teaching," and from his "recommendations that one should go on from reform to reorganization" (p. 180). J. C. Buechner (1968) points out that as "one of the foremost pioneers in public administration," Woodrow Wilson endeavored to show similarities between public administration and private business management (p. 6).

Many feel that Woodrow Wilson paved the way for public administration as an area of specialization. It was during this early period, according to N. L. Henry (1986), that "public administration received its first serious attention from scholars," mainly as a result of "the public-service movement that was taking place in American universities in the early part of this century" (p. 21). Ira Sharkansky (1982) has observed that

for academic specialists in political science and public administration, the study of public administration provides an opportunity to integrate their interests in government and politics with the study of how public policy is formulated and public services delivered. As social scientists interested in the specific realm

of public administration, we must take into account not only administrative departments, but also the most salient influences on them. (p. 11)

In a newly created society such as Saudi Arabia, the study of public administration is especially critical. As Henry S. Kariel (1969) observes,

If we desire societies to be well administered; if, furthermore, we realize it is merely question-begging to urge greater administrative efficiency; and if, finally, we know we cannot reasonably speak of administrative reforms without defining the goals we wish to realize, we cannot evade the attempt to define the ideals to be sustained by the machinery of the state. (p. 150)

The development of public administration as a field of study in Saudi Arabia has unveiled a number of unique situations and challenges. The need for effective research and education in public administration has emerged as an essential means for producing qualified bureaucrats who can carry out Saudi Arabian governmental responsibilities with competence and reliability.

The present study was undertaken with the expectation that the experiences of Saudi decision makers, administrators, and educators might benefit others under similar circumstances. It was also anticipated that an analysis of the process by which the study of public administration has evolved in Saudi Arabia may be of value to others facing similar problems.

Context of the Problem

As the International Group for Studies in National Planning (1966) points out, the responsibilities of guiding national development in virtually all modern countries have produced

an unprecedented challenge to the capacities of key personnel involved in planning, activating and evaluating programs of national economic change. This challenge has created a need everywhere for the development of greater capacities on the part of both present personnel and the younger people who will replace them. (p. 135)

W. Jimenez-Castro (1966) similarly asserts that "to achieve the aims of development planning, qualified human resources--which, in the emerging countries, are just as scarce as material resources--have to be utilized in the most suitable and rational manner" (p. 43). Jimenez-Castro concludes that:

Thus, greater benefit must be derived from the skills, knowledge, and experience of the public service personnel of the less developed countries and, through an efficient vocational and in-service training programme, the public service should have professional and technical personnel qualified in public administration. (p. 43)

Like most developing countries, Saudi Arabia has faced significant challenges. G. F. Gant (1966) observes that countries seeking social and economic development are often "frustrated by a lag between plan and accomplishment" (p. 53), of which a prominent cause is the inadequacy of public administration. In the case of Saudi Arabia, the processes of development have been complicated by rapid growth, the

availability of capital, and the lack of a pre-existing, inherited colonial administrative structure.

As Richard Chapman (1974) points out, approximately 15 years ago Saudi Arabia's administrative machinery was relatively new, having been created from scratch within the past two decades (p. 345). Unlike many other developing countries, Saudi Arabia was never colonized; thus, there was no legacy of administrative structure to inherit, reform, and customize.

Despite such limitations in human resources, however, the Saudi bureaucracy is "charged with enormous responsibilities" (Othman, 1979, p. 234). Moreover, according to A. N. Abussuud (1979),

the Saudi administration has grown not only in size but its parts have assumed different definite structures and functions. Historically speaking, the Saudi administrative machinery has grown from a simple structure represented by a small number of government agencies that deal with many functions at a time to a more complex structure with specific functions In fact, the number of ministries and other government agencies has increased astronomically. (p. 2)

Abussuud points out that this substantial growth in Saudi bureaucracy is a response to internal factors such as population growth, rising expectations, and efforts toward industrialization, as well as external factors such as the world petroleum and energy situation. This growth has especially impacted the kingdom's administrative apparatus, as reflected in an increase in the standard skills of public

employees and greater interest in the training and education of good administrators (pp. 2-4).

Observing that in all modern countries national governments have assumed "an important degree of responsibility for the guidance of significant economic change," G. Nannetti (1966) emphasizes that national development requires "a solid educational substructure." National development responsibilities necessitate "the formation of highly capable administrative cadres who must have, in addition to specialized technical university education, the ability to plan, program, execute, and evaluate the administrative action" (p. 129).

The challenges of Saudi Arabia's self-reliance and national development resulted in an early interest by Saudi authorities in developing an educational commitment to the field of public administration. This commitment began in the late 1950s with the establishment of public administration programs at the higher education level and with other events, such as the formation of the Saudi Institute of Public Administration.

This study presents an analysis of factors which led to the creation of programs for the study of public administration in Saudi Arabia and factors which have influenced the development of these programs. The study also highlights efforts by Saudi universities to adapt the program of public administration to the Saudi environment in

order to prepare qualified administrators who are capable of managing and operating government services. The government's policy and support for establishing essential programs to accelerate the progress of development is also discussed.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study is the development of public administration as a field of study in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Purposes of the Study

This research investigates the evolution and development of the discipline of public administration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is intended to provide government with qualified bureaucrats who are able to help the country achieve progress and development--socially, economically, and, most importantly, administratively.

The aims of this study are (a) to discover and analyze the factors which brought about the creation of programs for the study of public administration in Saudi Arabia and factors which have been influential in the development of these programs, (b) to determine how the field of public administration is studied, researched, and taught in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, (c) to examine how Saudi universities adapted Western concepts and ideas to fit the Saudi environment, (d) to investigate and describe the role

of government policies toward teaching public administration, (e) to determine, describe, and analyze the contact and coordination between institutions of public administration, the civil service bureau, and other government agencies, and (f) to report and analyze the perceptions of the practitioners and faculty about the adequacy of public administration programs.

Research Questions

Based on the purposes of the study, the following specific questions were investigated:

1. What factors have led to the establishment of the Institute of Public Administration and the birth of public administration programs at major Saudi universities?
2. How have Saudi Arabian institutions of higher education and training in public administration adapted the discipline of public administration?
3. What has been the role of Saudi government policy with respect to the teaching of public administration in Saudi institutions of higher education?
4. What has been the role of public administration programs in various institutes, colleges, and universities in developing the area of public administration?
5. How do Saudi institutions for study and training in public administration provide the Saudi government with needed civil servants and administrators?