

Review of: "Revitalizing Public Administration: Transformative Solutions for Addressing Mankind's Governance Challenges"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The paper's theme is very timely and deals with the ever-evolving challenges of public administration as it increasingly faces a crossroad, thereby requiring feasible forms of tackling the relative quagmires and assuming the rightful pathway to cumulative social progress. However, my consideration is that it requires revision that enables the higher attainment of its objectives.

- This reviewer, amid the additional comments and suggestions below, considers tenable the relevant critiques made by other reviewers, especially about methodological and theoretical issues viewed as deficient or inadequately harnessed.
- The authors need to think about rearranging the paper's structure by making it more systematically fluid and intelligible. As it stands now, it looks amorphous, lacking clear and adequate designation in sub-topics for illuminating readership and promoting the understanding of the key theoretical and analytical elements exploited by the authors with their linkages and implications.
- Ample emphasis appears heaped on the role of the Defence Ministry in what looks like role quintessence, that is, as a unique transformative agency for turning the tide against the prevalent atrophies of public administration. This does not imply cutting back its importance in the change process, but that the central role of transforming public administration through good governance more adequately falls under the citadel of state structure and its objective administration by the government, especially the bureaucracy and technocracy operating in conjunction with the political elite and public spirited societal actors. Usually, the State consists of multifaceted and multifunctional institutions that primarily structure the behaviour or activities of government agents in the initiation and implementation of public sector changes aimed at improving social standards. In this sense, many institutions and government agencies engage themselves at the intra- and inter-levels of relationships, which may (or not) typify networking, for generating a pro-development synergy.
- The discussion and showcasing of the troubles being encountered by present-day public administration, along with

their possible solutions for a better world, can be greatly enhanced, that is, in theoretical, analytical, and empirical terms, by highlighting those salient aspects hinging on state capacity and state autonomy. The respective strength and amplitude of the latter two under liberal propositions are needed to curtail state capture and predation that usually occur at the nodal points between powerful (particularistic) social and political elites. If, where, and when these notable social forces collude, the effectiveness of public administration can derail. Hence, the instrumentality of properly designed and strong, albeit dynamic, state institutions (founded on the synergic and impelling democratic governance mechanisms of horizontal and vertical accountability, transparency, and quality inclusions) cannot be discarded, mainly for securing and galvanizing the public administrators' functional autonomy. Once free from undue meddling in state functions, the officialdom can operate more efficiently by leveraging public resources, that is, for exceedingly realizing the definable public interests. Some research, recommendations, and experiences, *inter alia*, based on the World Bank papers and annual reports since the 1980s, can be consulted regarding the State, state capacity, and state autonomy.

In all, the paper requires a clear-cut and coherent body of theory and literature for enhancing a critical and well-informed diagnosis of the challenges and expected changes in the public administration sector. The New Public Administration (NPA) principles, one of the most recent and sturdy contributions to the field, apparently missing in the paper, can be introduced for instructing and enriching the paper's analysis. Through triangulation that involves the blending of data and methods aimed at a more vigorous research outcome, both the NPA and the neo-institutionalism approach emphasize good governance precepts that can be drawn upon (as an auxiliary framework) for discussing and linking the various elements in the paper. Triangulation can also cast a novel and deeper light on the stewardship changes expected of the techno-bureaucratic and political elite vis-à-vis their interactions with the larger society for producing effective public policies.