

## Professional Bodies and Public Administration as an Academic Discipline: The Nexus and Contributions

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### Abstract

*Public administration as an academic discipline comes forth in the United State of America. After the seminal essay entitled 'The Study of Administration' published in the 'Political Science Quarterly' in 1887, written by Woodrow Wilson, which is considered to be its symbolic beginning as a field of inquiry. However, before this development, public administration has no unique identity; rather fused with political science; has no advocacy for its scientific study; talk less, comparative approaches. But as a result of this essay, scholars in the United State of America in specific and across the globe general, such as Frank Goodnow, Eldy Wight, Marx Weber, host of others continue to enrich it. Thusly, professional bodies also started emerging with the aim of making public administration look so special and professional, like International Institute of Administrative Science (IIAS), American Society of Public Administration (ASPA) among others. The main objective of this study is to examine the contributions of these professional bodies toward the development of public administration as an academic discipline. The study used qualitative method of research, using secondary research method of analysis. The study found that, professional bodies have contributed to the development of public administration as an academic discipline through providing a space for exchanges that promote knowledge and good practices of the field by means of organising and sponsoring conferences, seminars, consortia, and even establishing National academy of public administration. The study recommended that the professional bodies should device a means for increasing their proficiency by participating in the activities of government at all levels through their members working with various public organisations to observe, areas of strengths and weaknesses in the management of public affairs, enforcement of public laws and fulfilment of public policies with a view to propound possible solution in addressing the weaknesses and innovating ways to serve the public better.*

**Keywords:** Public Administration, Academic Discipline, Professional Bodies

### Introduction

Public administration as an academic discipline or a body of knowledge originated in the United State of America, after the seminal essay entitled 'The Study of Administration' published in the 'Political Science Quarterly' in 1887, written by Woodrow Wilson which is considered to be its symbolic beginning as a field of study. However, before this development; policy maker were also the policy implementer, meaning there were no intellectual or resource persons that will implement such policy; there was no strong chief executive having a highly integrated and centralised executive and administrative structure; administrative questions were considered as political questions, which is very wrong; political control was too strong in the

United State of America and often subverted with popular will to partisan interest and undermined efficient administration. In a nutshell before the Wilsons' essay, public administration has no unique identity; rather fused with political science; has no advocacy for its scientific study; talk less, comparative approaches. But as a result of this essay, scholars in the United State of America in specific and across the globe in general, such as Frank Goodnow, Eldy Wight, Marx Weber, Robert Vehe host of others began to enrich it even today. Thusly, professional bodies also started emerging with the aim of making public administration look special and professional, like International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS), American Society of Public Administration (ASPA), European Group for

Public Administration (EGPA), Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), Institute of Professional Managers and Administrators of Nigeria (IPMA) to mention but a few.

However, Public administration has to do with fusion of human and material resources in order to achieve the objectives of public policy. One cardinal issue here to which attention must be paid is the issue of policy implementation. This is a very focal point in the study of public administration as a field of inquiry (Nicholas, 1986). It is worthy of note that, professional of bodies of public administration are structured toward promoting efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of government or public policies. Indeed, public administration and professional bodies are connected or moving toward one goal, that is effective and efficient public service delivery.

### **Concept of Public Administration**

Denhardt (2009) sees public administration as the management of public programs. Donald and Fessler (2009) view public administration as the translation of politics into the reality that citizens see every day. Public administration is centrally concerned with the organization of government policies and programs as well as the behaviour of officials (usually non-elected) formally responsible for their conduct (UN, 2006). According to Nicholas (1986) Public administration is the fusion of human and material resources in order to achieve the objectives of public policy. One cardinal issue here to which attention must be paid is the issue of policy implementation. This is a very focal point in the study of public administration Madubum (2008) opines that Public Administration is the study of the development and Maintenance of policy by members of governments, public agencies and public sector employees and the practice of implementing the authoritative decisions they have made. Public Administration concerns itself more with how politicians in government and non-elected public sector employees devise policy, sustain the machinery of government and ensure policies are put into practice. Adebayo (2000) sees Public Administration as a governmental administration that operates in the particular sphere of government as its machinery for implementing governmental policies. He believes that its study must therefore lead to the

most efficient way of organizing the executive branch of the government, its functions and its procedures. From his assertion, we can deduce that Public Administration is basically concerned with the study of how a country's administration is organized as well as how it functions. McKinney and Howard (1998) see public administration as the study of government decision making, the analysis of the policies themselves, the various inputs that have produced them, and the inputs necessary to produce alternative policies. Public Administration can also be viewed as a body of knowledge which is directed towards the understanding of administration of the government business.

### **Objective of the study**

The objective of the study is to examine the contributions of professional bodies toward the development of public administration as an academic discipline.

### **Methodology**

The paper is qualitative in nature as the study relies on secondary data and information such as publications of the professional bodies, related books; articles and essay have been viewed.

### **International organizations on Public Administration**

There are a lot of international organisations or professional bodies on public administration among them include: The Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management (CAPAM), The International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS), the European Group for Public Administration (EGPA), Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), The Centre for Latin American Administration for Development (CLAD), Caribbean working in public administration and policy analysis. It has more than 49 members from top research schools in various countries throughout the hemisphere.

### **State Professional Bodies on Public Administration**

Many entities study public management in particular, in various countries, including:

- In the US, the American Society for Public Administration. Indiana University Bloomington
- In the UK, Newcastle Business School, Warwick Business School, the London School of Economics, University College London, the UK local democracy project and London Health Observatory.
- In Australia, the Institute of Public Administration Australia.
- In Belgium, the Public Governance Institute, KU Leuven.
- In Switzerland, the University of Geneva and the Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration (IDHEAP).
- In Cyprus, the Cyprus International Institute of Management or CIIM.
- In Ireland, the Institute of Public Administration, Dublin.
- In South Africa, Regenesys Business School through the Regenesys School of Public Management and MANCOSA.
- In Nigeria, institute of professional managers and administrator of Nigeria.

#### **A glance at some of these Professional Bodies**

All in essence is to trace the historical origin of these professional bodies, their missions and visions, objectives, activities and achievement in promoting the study and practice of public administration.

#### **American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)**

American Society for Public Administration was founded in 1939, following growing concerns about the management of federal government and the report of the Brownlow Committee. It was formally incorporated on September 13, 1945 (ASPA, 2016). American Society for Public Administration is a membership association of almost 10,000 professionals in the United States sponsoring conferences and providing professional services primarily to those who study the implementation of government policy, public administration, and, to a lesser degree, programs of civil society. Its annual conference is an important meeting for those interested in bureaucracy, civic engagement, program evaluation, public management and other public administration topics, such as budgeting and budget theory, government strategic planning, policy analysis, contract

administration, personnel management, and related topics.

American Society for Public Administration sponsors the journal *Public Administration Review*, Journal of Health and Human Services Administration, Public Budgeting and Finance, and other leading international journals related to its over 30 working membership sections (e.g., Section on Public Performance and Management, Section on Women in Public Administration, Section on the Environment and Natural Resources Administration, Section on Intergovernmental Management and Administration).

Significant events in American Society for Public Administration's history include:

- Sponsorship of Public Administration Review since 1939.
- After a developmental grant from the Ford Foundation in 1956, independence from PACH.
- A move of the headquarters to Washington, D.C., in 1964.
- Establishment of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) as part of ASPA in 1967, and formal separation of NAPA from ASPA in 1970.
- Reformulation of ASPA's Council on Graduate Education for Public Administration to the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) within ASPA in 1970, and formal separation of NASPAA from ASPA in 1975.
- In 1981, creation with NAPA of National Public Service Awards.
- A 50th Anniversary Conference in 1990.
- Approval of the American Society for Public Administration Code of Ethics in 1994 (Brownlow, 1958, Pugh, 1990, Plant, 2009, NASPAA, 2012, ASPA, 2012).

#### **Awards**

American Society for Public Administration sponsors over twenty awards for practitioners and scholars of public administration, of which the longest-running are the Dwight Waldo and Charles Levine awards (ASPA, 2012).

#### **International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS)**

The International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) was created in 1930, is an International Association with Scientific

Purpose whose seat is in Brussels. As a non-governmental international organisation its activities are centred on the study of public administration and it provides a forum in which comparative studies – including both practical experiences and theoretical analyses of experts in public administration worldwide and from all cultures – are presented and discussed. The Institute is interested in all questions related to contemporary public administration at the national and international level.

Each year IIAS holds three conferences in three countries around the world, is host for seven-hundred plus delegates, publishes approximately 10 books, publishes four issues of its prestigious *International Review of Administrative Sciences* (in three editions English, French and Mandarin Chinese), leads and coordinates activities among its ninety Member States and National Sections.

**Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA)** is a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit organization. It is an international association of public affairs schools (schools of public policy and administration) at universities in the United States and abroad. NASPAA is also the recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as the accreditor of master's degree programs in public policy (MPP), public affairs (MPAFF), and public administration (MPA) (CHAE, 2017). Its stated mission is to ensure excellence in education and training for public service and to promote the ideal of public service (NASPAA, 2013).

Founded in 1970, NASPAA serves as a national and international resource for the promotion of excellence in education for the public service. Its institutional membership includes more than 280 university programs in the United States in public administration, policy, and management. NASPAA is also the accreditor of its member schools, seeking to promote the quality of education. It accomplishes its purposes through direct services to its member institutions and by:

- Developing and administering appropriate standards for educational programs in public affairs through its Executive Council and its Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation;
- Representing to governments and other institutions the objectives and needs of

education for public affairs and administration;

- Encouraging curriculum development and innovation and providing a forum for publication and discussion of education scholarship, practices, and issues;
- Undertaking surveys that provide members and the public with information on key educational issues;
- Meeting with employers to promote internship and employment for students and graduates;
- Undertaking joint educational projects with practitioner professional organizations; and
- Collaborating with institutes and schools of public administration in other countries through conferences, consortia, and joint projects.

NASPAA provides opportunities for international engagement for NASPAA members, placing a global emphasis on educational quality and quality assurance.

In 2013, NASPAA changed its name from the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration to the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration to reflect its growing international membership and disciplinary breadth (NASPAA, 2013).

NASPAA has *Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE)* and is a quarterly, peer-reviewed, academic journal of public administration education that is published by Taylor & Francis on behalf of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (JPAE, 2018, Liou, 2001). The journal was established in 1995, and has been edited by Bruce D. McDonald, III (North Carolina State University) and William Hatcher (Augusta University) since 2017 (McDonald and Hatcher, 2018). However, the *Journal of Public Administration Education* was founded in 1995 by H. George Frederickson (Perry 2010).

#### **Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA)**

The Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration (EROPA) was formed "In order to advance the economic and social development of the Region through the promotion of the study, practice and status of

public administration and adoption of adequate administrative systems", by international treaty signed in Manila in the Philippines on 19 June 1958. EROPA was officially formed on 5 December 1960 (EROPA, 2017).

EROPA is a partner of the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) and also has special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The Philippines remains the centre for its activities, since having hosted the first *Regional Conference on Public Administration* 7 to 20 June 1958, with EROPA being based out of National College of Public Administration and Governance, University of the Philippines, Quezon City, Philippines.

In addition to the headquarters in the Philippines, it has four active centres:

- Development Management Centre (South Korea) in conjunction with the National Human Resources Development Institute in Gyeonggi Province.
- E-Government Research Centre (China) in conjunction with the Chinese Academy of Personnel Science in Beijing.
- Local Government Centre (Japan) in conjunction with the Local Autonomy College in Tokyo.
- Training Centre (India) in conjunction with the Indian Institute of Public Administration in New Delhi

EROPA organized different conferences across the globe since 1958 till date. Among the conferences organized by the EROPA included the following:

Topic	Place	Date
First Regional Conference on Public Administration (formed EROPA)	Manila, Philippines	June 7–20, 1958
The Role of Public Administration in National Development	Berlin, Germany and New Delhi, India	October to November 1966
Curriculum for Development Administration	Bangkok, Thailand	November 1971
Delivery of Public Services in National Development	Bangkok, Thailand	December 1985
Public Administration in a Changing National and International Environment	Manila, Philippines	November 1987
Accountability in the Public Service	Malaysia	October 1990
Administrative Reforms Towards Promoting Productivity in Bureaucratic Performance	Beijing, China	October 1991
Public Administration in Promoting Economic Development	Manila, Philippines	March 1996
Public Service Management: Achieving Quality Performance in the 21st Century	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	November 1997
Administration in Transition	Macau SAR, China	October 1998
From Government to Governance	Manila, Philippines	June 1999
Public Administration and Globalization: Challenges, Opportunities and Options	New Delhi, India	October 2003
Role of Public Administration and Governance Stakeholders in Attaining the Millennium Development Goals	Hanoi, Vietnam	October 2005
Modernizing the Civil Service in Alignment with National Development Goals	Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam	November 2006
Challenges, Opportunities and Innovations in Public Administration in the Next Decade	Bangkok, Thailand	February 19–23, 2012
Enhancing the Quality of Government: Government, Governability and Governance	Tokyo, Japan	October 15–19, 2013
Modernization of Governance: Reforms and Good Practices in Emerging Markets	Shanghai, China	October 17–21, 2015
Governance: Innovative. Inclusive. Integrity-based	Manila, Philippines	October 10–14, 2016

The Role of Public Governance in  
Achieving Sustainable Development  
Goals: Transforming, Empowering  
and Network-Building

Seoul, South Korea

September 11–15, 2017

Source: EROPA, 2018

### **Publications**

EROPA produces the biannual journal *Asian Review of Public Administration* (ARPA) since 1989. The organization also produces the quarterly newsletter *EROPA Bulletin* since 1976.

### **Institute of Professional Managers and Administrators of Nigeria (IPMA)**

The Institute of Professional Managers and Administrators of Nigeria (IPMA) is registered in line with the provisions of the Companies and Allied Matters Acts (CAMA) 1990, as a Limited by Guarantee Corporate body for the purpose of promoting Management/Administrative standards and values in Nigeria. The Institute is also approved by the Federal Ministry of Education and Federal Ministry of Justice.

Today, the Institute has so many members from all walks of life, and would appreciate and welcome everyone wishing to be registered or inducted as a professional Manager/Administrator for licensing by the Institute.

As a corporate body saddled with the responsibility of promoting Management/Administrative standards and values within Nigeria and the Institute thoroughly understands the hostile environment facing so many productivity through the provisions of management development solutions that would nevertheless, enhance growth and development.

This effort is climaxed with the authority of a corporate body as this, for effective signatory of professionalism and maintenance of excellent line in communication with subordinates and other stakeholders in distributive or general administrative channels, which products cannot be over-emphasized.

### **IPMA Programmes**

The Institute is running a pre-professional course leading to the award of a recognized Diploma, Higher Diploma and professional Post-Graduate Diploma in the field of management and administration.

However, the institute of professional managers and administrator of Nigeria is designed to achieve; continued professional training through meetings, seminars, conferences and courses at minimal contributions, within and outside Nigeria; and improvement and development of the science of management, commerce and industries, to foster and maintain investigations and researches into the application of such sciences.

### **Discussion/Result of Findings**

From the foregoing and evidence of the professional bodies' activities, they contributed a lot to the development of public administration as an academic discipline in terms of motivating the advancement of management and administration for generating strategies to impact the economy of Nations through conferences, seminar and workshops; the improvement and development of the science of management, commerce and industries, to foster and maintain investigations and researches into the application of such sciences; Encourage curriculum development and innovation and providing a forum for publication and discussion of education scholarship, practices, and issues; Promote Management/Administrative standards and values through consortia; Produces biannual journals of Public Administration and also produces the quarterly newsletter *Bulletin*; Present award for excellence to a public administration faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in three major areas of the field of teaching, research and service to the wider community and to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the professional literature of public administration over an extended career; Establishment of the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) as part of ASPA in 1967; frequent international and National conferences; Developing and administering appropriate standards for educational programs in public affairs on Peer Review and Accreditation.

### Conclusion/Recommendation

Public administration as an academic discipline originated/emerged in the United State of American and the US scholars continue to enrich it even today. It was the seminal essay entitled 'The Study of Public Administration' published in the 'Political Science Quarterly' in 1887, written by Woodrow Wilson that is considered to be its symbolic beginning as a field of study. Consequently, this play a significant role for the development and emergence of professional bodies on public administration with a view to promote management/administrative standards and values, ensure excellence in education and training for public service and the ideal of public service.

Apart from providing a space for exchanges that promote knowledge and good practices to improve the organization and operation of public administration and ensuring that public agencies are committed to respond better to the current and future expectations and needs of society through education and training of administrator and managers, the study recommended that the professional bodies should device a means for increasing their proficiency by participating in the activities of government at all levels through their members working with various public organisations to observe, areas of strengths and weaknesses in the management of public affairs, enforcement of public laws and fulfilment of public policies with a view to propound possible solution to the organisation responsible for.

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