

## PARADIGMS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: CONFIGURATIONS OF THE FIELD IN OUR TIME

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**Abstract:** Public Administration has evolved from a relatively narrow, state-centric administrative craft into a multi-paradigmatic field drawing on economics, sociology, psychology, and governance studies. Building on Nicholas Henry's classic notion of paradigms in public administration, this article reviews how contemporary public administration science is structured around several partially competing, partially complementary paradigms, including Traditional Public Administration, New Public Management, New Public Governance, the New Public Service, public value, and digital era-oriented approaches, and Behavioral Public Administration. Using a narrative literature review, it examines their core assumptions regarding the role of the state, the image of the citizen, dominant values, and preferred instruments. The discussion shows that, rather than a linear replacement of one paradigm by another, current public administration is characterized by hybridization and contextual variation across countries and levels of government. The conclusion makes the case that this multi-paradigmatic situation is likely to continue and that future studies should concentrate on how many paradigms are selectively merged in reality, particularly in non-Western contexts and in times of polycrisis and digital transition.

**Keywords:** *Paradigms of Public Administration, Concept of Paradigm, Paradigms and the Evolution of Public Administration, Contemporary Paradigms of Public Administration Science*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This research focused on the concept of paradigm in general and on the phases of development of the paradigms of public administration science to the present time. Chalmers defined a paradigm as "Made up of the general theoretical assumptions and laws, and techniques for their application that the members of a particular scientific community adopt" (Chalmers, 1982, p. 8). Public Administration is the discipline that studies how the public sector serves the public good through developing and implementing public policies and what is needed to conduct this business in an efficient, compelling, legitimate, and rational way to optimize serving the public good" (De Vries, 2016, p. 6). The science of public administration emerged significantly at the beginning of the twentieth century through many thinkers and researchers presenting research and studies that contributed substantially to the development of this science and the spread of its theories to be the basis on which students in universities, as well as leaders and officials in countries around the world, are taught. Some of the most prominent authors who wrote about the science of management were Frederick Taylor (The Principles of Scientific Management, 1911), Henry Fayol (Administration Industrielle et Générale, 1916), Gulick and Urwick, published their Papers on the Science of Administration, resulting in the still famous POSDCORB (planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, budgeting) acronym 1937; and Max Weber who wrote about bureaucracy (Bouckaert, 2022:1).

Public Administration has focused on how government might be set up and run to achieve public goals since the late nineteenth century. Early research by Weber (1978/1922), White (1926), and Goodnow (1900) centered the field on issues of hierarchy, legality, and efficiency. Over time, however, the field has experienced recurrent phases of self-reflection and redefinition (Goodnow, 1900).

Nicholas Henry's influential 1975 article "Paradigms of Public Administration" conceptualized the evolution of the American field as a succession of paradigms defined by changing "locus" (where public administration is located institutionally) and "focus" (what it primarily studies). His analysis suggested that the discipline periodically reorganizes itself around new combinations of organizational theory, management science, and conceptions of the public interest (Henry, 1975).

Henry's usage of the term "paradigm" was subtly influenced by the larger philosophy of science literature, particularly Thomas Kuhn's idea that, up until "paradigm shifts" take place, scientific societies function within common frameworks of issues, ideas, and procedures. Such paradigm shifts in public administration seldom adhere to Kuhn's rigid incommensurable model. Instead, older approaches tend to persist alongside newer ones, creating a layered and sometimes contradictory reality (Shapere, 1964).

The primary aim of this paper is to analyze the paradigms that structure public administration sciences in our time. It addresses three guiding questions:

- A. What are the main paradigms that currently shape public administration research and practice?**
- B. How do these paradigms differ in their views of the state, citizens, administrative values, and preferred instruments?**
- C. What are the implications of a multi-paradigmatic field for future research and practice?**
- D. How the Paradigms Shape Methods and Findings in Public Administration Research?**

The paper proceeds as follows to address these questions. The literature on paradigms in public administration is reviewed in the following section, with a focus on modern methods. The process, which is based on a narrative literature review, is described in Part 3. A comparative analysis of the identified paradigms is presented in Part 4. Implications and recommendations for additional research are included in Part 5's conclusion.

## **2. Literature Review**

The Phases Progress of Paradigms and the evolution of public administration in Public Administration Science:

### **2.1 Paradigms and the Evolution of Public Administration**

#### **A. The Policy/Administration Dualism(1900-1926)**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the question was whether public administration was part of political science or an independent field with its own theories and concepts. In the book "Politics and Administration," by the American writers Frank J. Goodnow and Leonard D. White, published in 1900, they specified that politics are expressions of the will of the state, while administration concerns the implementation of those policies. In addition, the authors explained that there is a separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches, with the judiciary assisting the legislature. According to Goodnow and his colleagues, public administration is situated within the bureaucracy, but in academia it is seen as a natural subfield of political science (Goodnow, 1900:10-11). At the same time, the administration implements policies in a neutral and non-political manner. The first paradigm of public administration focused on the place it should occupy within the government bureaucracy and at the center of government. Therefore, a problem, "The policy/administration Dualism," emerged among academics and practitioners in that period (Henry, 1975:378-386).

#### **B. The Principles of Public Administration(1927-1937)**

In the second paradigm, a new trend emerged: the scientific principles of public administration, with administrators as the experts in applying them. The American writer F.W. Willoughby explained this in his 1927 book "Principles of Public Administration". In the thirties and forties of the last century, management experts were in demand by industrial companies and the government for their administrative expertise. Public administrators were in great demand in both the public and private sectors. Therefore, the second paradigm of public administration focuses on scientific princi-

ples because their application concerns the organization of human work and can be studied as a state-of-the-art, free of political or constitutional issues. It appeared clearly in the writings of Luther H. Gulick and Lyndall Urwick's Papers in 1937 through an inductive study to determine its connection to the human element(Gulick & Urwick, 1937:49). In the period extending between the late thirties and the beginning of the fifties of the last century, many scholars specializing in administration wrote about the conceptual framework of the science of public administration to define its form. The major challenge was that politics could not be separated from administration and that the administration's principles needed to be more consistent and logical. However, the theory was criticized in the 1940s primarily for ignoring the environment in which public administration is practiced. According to Henry, two criticisms were made: first, that politics and administration could not be separated, and second, that the tenets of administration were illogical. Simon went on to demonstrate in 1947 that there was a counter-principle to every advanced principle, making the concept of principles debatable (Henry, 1975: 378-386).

### **C. Public Administration As Political Science(1950-1970)**

In the 1950s, scholars tended to reconceive Public Administration as a department affiliated with Political Science, focusing on government bureaucracy, personnel management, and budgets. Scholars have been returning to the birthplace of public administration in this period. Public administration was merely a field of study or possibly a synonym for political science; particularly in America, interest in public administration declined(Henry, 1975:378-386). This generation of academics questioned Wilson's theories on the separation of politics and public administration, relativizing the distinction between the two fields (Thornhill, 2006).

### **D. Public Administration As Administrative Science (1956-1970)**

In this paradigm, the idea was discussed that public administration is specific to organization theory and management science. That administration is administration in any institutional environment and provides the expertise and technical specialization required. Still, the problem in this paradigm is that public administration loses its identity and is reduced to a focus rather than a place. The problem with this idea is that the administrative sciences track, in that public administration shares a methodology with specific characteristics and patterns that make it difficult to choose it as a branch of political science or administrative sciences. Another area for improvement in this paradigm is the distinction between public administration and business administration. The conceptual dilemma increases the complexity of the empirical definition from an academic perspective, making it difficult to determine the nature of the institutional dimension. After all, public organizations are related to the political system. As for the normative dimension, it defines the highest value of public interest and is a fundamental pillar of the science of public administration. In contrast, the administrative sciences focus on matters other than public affairs and analyze them in this way. Therefore, this "Organization/Administration" theory received little support in political science because of the blurring of the line between private and public(Henry, 1975: 378-386).

## **2.2. Contemporary Paradigms: From Management to Governance and Behavior**

### **A. Public Administration As Public Administration(1970-1980)**

The distinct division between the public and private sectors was established in the 1970s. The academics identified a distinctive cognitive approach in public administration, grounded in organizational theory and management science, to create a stand-alone educational system. This development sets public administration apart from the political science and business administration departments. It is likely to foster the field's expansion, especially now that it is starting to garner significant recognition and attention, which is enough justification for its independence. Since the early seventies, universities have begun to study it as an independent specialty, free from the burden of political science and administrative science, based on a concept of methodologies that combines the terms public interest and bureaucracy to form separate academic units institutionally. This institutional trend

demonstrates that public administration has taken an educational path that distinguishes between what is "specialized" and what is "institutional," indicating the presence of intellectual maturity that confirms the identity of public administration and its independence as a science with clear foundations, principles, and methodologies. Henry called this phase in the progress of the public administration paradigm "Institutionalizing Paradigm: Toward Curricular Autonomy" (Henry, 1975: 378-386).

### **B. Paradigm of New Public Management (NPM) (1990-2000)**

The emergence of the term new public administration dates back to the late seventies and early eighties. The first application of this term in Britain was during the period of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. It applied in municipalities in the United States of America, in California and some other states, which suffered greatly from the economic recession and the harshness of taxes. It has also been applied in governments. New Zealand and Australia. This success led many countries to include the new public administration on their administrative reform agendas. The researchers then started by defining the traits. The term "New Public Management" was used to refer to public reform. This paradigm is not the same as traditional management, which is criticized for its bureaucratic difficulties, restricted ideology, inefficiency, and welfare state. The new public administration model is moving towards neoliberalism, which prioritizes the private sector and market competition in delivering services. New Public Management is a method that has previously been used successfully in the private sector and has proven its effectiveness, as it focuses on changing the organization's culture so that the customer is the core concern of the organization's management (Abullraheem, 2018:1).

NPM is known to employ a variety of tenets and tactics. The downsizing strategy is the first. This principle, which calls for a reduction in the volume of public administration, holds that a new management strategy should be developed by reducing public administration costs, increasing management's efficiency, and broadening management's responsibilities. Furthermore, NPM promotes the development of a new management culture that emphasizes adaptability, creativity, problem-solving, entrepreneurship, and productivity. This new approach also enables tailoring the business management ideology to the needs of public administration. It suggests introducing specific evaluation components, such as efficiency measurement and performance management, to incorporate private-sector production and service applications into public institutions. Another approach supports the following ideas and tactics: applying the logic of entrepreneurial management to public administration, localizing, decreasing bureaucracy, privatizing, transferring authority, becoming flexible, enhancing human resource management, using information technology, and formulating a competitive strategy (Weikart, 2001:380). The New Public Management paradigm emphasizes the need to move towards market mechanisms, which contributes. In the presence of competition, the efficiency and quality of government services to citizens must be improved. In his book "Reinventing Government", published in 1993, writer David Osborne emphasized that the role of government is determined by "Entrepreneurial governments are catalytic, competitive, mission-driven, results-oriented, customer-driven, and enterprising. The other four principles are equally commonsensical. Decentralization means empowering employees and pushing decisions down from one level of government to another. Community-owned government pushes control out of bureaucracy and into the community. Anticipatory government stresses prevention rather than cure. Finally, market-driven government explores the idea of changing markets rather than always using public programs to solve problems" (Osborne, 1993:356). Despite the advantages of the new public administration paradigm, many criticisms are directed at NPM. The NPM was first criticized on economic grounds. Terrorism and global warming are problems that neither private nor public entities can tackle on their own, notwithstanding the seeming economic efficiency of public administration. As a result, it attacks a broader social context and, consistent with the new paradigm of public administration, views citizens as more than just clients. Setting precise, stable, prioritized, limited, and clear targets for public service delivery is challenging.

Additionally, it is challenging to quantify public service performance and highlight public service profitability. It is acknowledged that the strategies the private sector uses to deliver public services are occasionally appropriated. But if these methods are applied without considering the public, they will fail and face harsh criticism. The use of organizational behavior and employees' sociopsychological status in private sector performance management techniques is another critique levelled at the new public management system. These criticisms, which can be categorized as New Taylorism, contend that Taylor still represents the NPM in his understanding of what he refers to as the optimal method for carrying out a task(Hughes, 1998).

The argument that private-sector management is inappropriate in public institutions is the second main critique of the NPM method. Another critique is that, as long as there is a chance of politicization in public administration and this persists, the NPM idea cannot be fully implemented. These criticisms have significantly influenced the reduction in the size of the public sector and the shift in management perspectives. Similarly, proponents of neoliberalism said that less government and a greater emphasis on the market would have the opposite effect, restricting the expansion and autonomy of the state. The most crucial criticism of the NPM is that it views public servants as impartial individuals who avoid the political aspirations that benefit politicians. The sphere of public administration is no longer under the control of politicians and senior public bureaucrats; it is believed that NPM is the cause of functional fragmentation and privatization in public services. Theoretically, NPM proponents cannot act in concert with practice. Consequently, several novel methodologies have been created to address the theoretical shortcomings of the NPM approach and its limited applicability in real-world scenarios or as a substitute for NPM (Islam, 2015:149).

NPM has the potential to erode moral principles, breed corruption, and promote managerial autonomy, thereby muddying accountability and raising the possibility that public managers may be corrupt. The most striking objection to date is that, while the NPM reform paradigm was developed in a few wealthy nations, its application in less developed nations may be limited by differences in political cultures, practices, and other environmental factors. Developing country governments may need the requisite experience or have faulty information systems. Hence, the NPM is not appropriate for them. Developing countries need the means or managerial expertise to implement complex NPM changes. The decentralization of the NPM concept has spread from wealthy to developing nations, while centralized decision-making is still frequently utilized by developing nation governments. Prominent public managers retain the power to decide everything within their companies (Polidano,1999:35). This concentrated decision-making process may pressure people to act arbitrarily or corruptly (World Bank, 1997).

### **C. Post-New Public Management Paradigm**

Since the 2000s, the New Public Administration paradigm has been subject to significant criticism. A complicated, diversified, contradictory, and hybrid situation is on the agenda of the public administration major rather than a best-method approach, because different reform approaches coincide in this subject. The New Public Management approach has faced harsh criticism. Some researchers considered (NPM) to be "dead" (De Vries, 2010, p. 1). The term "Post-New Public Management" (Post-NPM) is used to characterize this paradigm change in public administration. An umbrella term (Post-NPM) combines disparate, even incompatible principles, beliefs, norms, and reform ideas. The private sector's logic, the customer's point of view, ambiguous conditions, the understanding of the market and competition, and the social context are the primary criticisms levelled at the (NPM) method (Karataş, 2019).

Post-NPM has many tendencies that impact the public administration field, such as:

- The trend of the Post-NPM approach calls for the regular use of IT, communication, and e-government tools to promote public sector transparency and guarantee citizen access and participation (Dunleavy, et al. 2006:480).

- Post-NPM has a propensity to forge alliances and partnerships. Public institutions should cultivate diverse collaboration, cooperation, and stakeholder ties with the private and third sectors (NGOs) (Christensen & Lægreid, 2008, p. 25).
- The administrative inclination of Post-NPM is its support for creating, managing, and applying networks to generate and provide public services (Lodg & Gill, 2011, p. 160).
- The Post-NPM paradigm focuses on creating a more efficient accountability system, which citizens and the state can accomplish more skillfully using political and administrative controls. It promotes the idea that public administration should become more sensitive to and accountable to the public. Post-NPM trends include professionalizing and appreciating state employees, establishing a robust public bureaucracy, and creating a socially conscious, interdisciplinary bureaucracy. (Cavalcante, 2018).
- The Post-NPM trends in establishing public policy encourage community involvement in public administration as a source of legitimacy and value while also widening social participation channels (Pierre & Ingraham, 2010).
- Similar to the New Public Governance concept, citizens must be involved as stakeholders in creating and administering public services as well as in exercising public scrutiny via political channels. Consequently, it should be acknowledged that the citizen is more than just a client, given their democratic rights. In conclusion, a return to Weberian bureaucracy is not the primary objective of Post-NPM, despite some studies that emphasize a return to hierarchy. In actuality, this circumstance is merely comparable. Nevertheless, even though the Post-NPM approach is of academic interest, more research and development are still needed before it can be used as a general public administration theory, despite these assessments and examples from different nations (Reiter & Klenk, 2019).

#### **D. New Public Governance Paradigm**

Public administration is playing a new role in enhancing overall governance in response to challenges of survival, progress, change, and pressures across the local, national, regional, and international arenas. The primary obstacle facing governance in the coming years will be to develop a new social structure that goes beyond the current framework and moves towards a more natural and inclusive relationship among the functions of the state, the corporate sector, and civil society. A new public service model, "New Public Governance," or "NPG," was introduced in response to the changing environment. Its features include the centralization of power, the expansion of the number, function, and influence of partisan-political staff, the personalization of senior public service appointments, and the presumption that the public service is promiscuously partisan for the ruling party. NPM and governance approaches must address the intricate realities of 21st-century public service delivery, design, and management. Finally, an integrated body of knowledge about the NPG is needed to develop NPG as a conceptualization of public policy implementation and public service management. Understanding the execution of public policy and the provision of public services is complex. This method allows for a more thorough and integrated approach to the study and practice of public policy implementation and public service delivery, moving beyond the sterile dichotomy of "administration vs. management". According to some earlier authors, public administration should be an integrated science that draws on other fields while preserving those fields' unique identities (Osborne, 2010).

#### **E. Public Administration As E-governance**

The new direction for the public administration paradigm is represented by e-governance, especially given the significant development of the information and communications technology sector. E-governance is characterized by coordination among the government, citizens, stakeholders, and companies, as well as by planning, drafting, and implementing decisions and processes related to management challenges (Misuraca, 2007). E-governance has also become more established and cannot be dispensed with in government work. Despite the growing importance of the e-governance

model, a digital gap persists in the interaction between the government and citizens. Therefore, governments seek to enhance communication by using government websites and social media to reduce this gap and increase reliance on information technology in their interactions with citizens (Mukonza, 2014: 500).

#### **F. Behavioral Public Administration**

More recently, Behavioral Public Administration (BPA) has emerged as an explicitly micro-level paradigm that integrates public administration with psychology and behavioral economics. Grimmelikhuijsen defines BPA as the analysis of public administration from the perspective of individual behavior and attitudes, using experimental and quasi-experimental methods. BPA focuses on how cognitive biases, heuristics, and social norms influence public managers, street-level bureaucrats, and citizens. It has informed the design of "nudges," transparency initiatives, and behavioral interventions aimed at improving compliance, trust, and service uptake. At the same time, it raises normative questions about paternalism, consent, and the limits of technocratic expertise (Grimmelikhuijsen et al, 2017).

#### **G. Neo-Weberian State Paradigm**

(NWS) continued to be an essential ideal type, at least for Western European practice, as ingrained in Weberian public administration (PA). Whether NWS is resilient and sustainable in redefining and reevaluating "bureaucracy" in the twenty-first century is a theoretical and empirical question. This contribution argues that public sector reforms in the second half of the 20th century gave rise to the first empirical observation of neo-Weberian public administration, at least in continental Europe. It was then "upgraded" to an NWS ideal type model for theoretical reasons. Within the hierarchy-market-network space, NWS operates as a hierarchy-driven system. After that, this hierarchy-based NWS switched to a normative reform model. It is also claimed and assumed in this contribution that, in contrast to NPM (market-driven) and NPG (network-driven), NWS will make sure the three core functions of a whole-of-government strategy within an entire society context are inclusive and equitable service delivery, resilient crisis governance, and effective government and society innovation. The foundations of the modern ideal type are the uniqueness of public services and the requirement to fortify rather than weaken or dilute the state. The perfect type is in two Neo-Weberian States (NWS) variations. The first emphasizes the need for professional, performance-oriented management, on the assumption that public servants are often full of initiative and will improve their operations once freed from heavy bureaucratic regulation at higher levels of the traditional hierarchy (Bouckaert, 2022).

In contrast, the second emphasizes that involving citizens and service users in various participatory processes is the most effective way to modernize. It places greater trust in the influence of civil society from the "bottom up," while the first variant is more focused on reducing regulation from the "top down". In summary, Bouckaert found that the 'hierarchy' driving principle leads to a Weberian state at first and then to a neo-Weberian state (NWS). Second, New Public Management (NPM) is the outcome of the guiding concept of "market". Third, New Public Governance (NPG) is the outcome of the guiding concept of "networks". This working paper's central premise is that, compared to NPM and NPG, NWS is far better at guaranteeing and integrating equitable and inclusive performance with resilience and sustainability. The terms "crisis governance," "innovation," and "service delivery." Because of this, (NWS) as the "pure" or ideal type seems to materialize and evolve into a desirable model of reform and governance, which is necessary for the long run from the perspective of the entire society (Bouckaert, 2022).

### **3 . The Paradigms and How it Shape Methods and Findings in Public Administration Research:**

In public administration (PA), a research paradigm is a worldview that connects particular designs and analytical choices to ontological and epistemological assumptions. Choosing between positivism, constructivism, and pragmatism influences the questions you ask, the evidence you believe to be trustworthy, the rigor criteria you use, and ultimately the kinds of answers you can defend. Because these worldviews influence the choice of strategies (e.g., experiments, ethnographies, mixed methods) and particular methods (e.g., instruments, interviews, integration procedures), scholars are encouraged to make them explicit in commonly used design frameworks. Research paradigms are significant because they serve as the intellectual foundation for a research undertaking. Research paradigms shape how various academic disciplines, such as the sciences and the humanities, conduct their research. An acceptable approach can be selected after a research philosophy has been established. Knowing the philosophical underpinnings of your research can also help you do better in any analysis you may need to do, and your research will be of higher quality. Ontology, epistemology, and research methods make up a research paradigm (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research philosophy consists of ontological and epistemological considerations. A research paradigm results from combining research methodology and research philosophy. There are three examples of research paradigms:

### **3.1 Positivism**

It refers to the fact that there is just one reality that can be quantified and comprehended. It makes use of quantitative technique study. A theory established via positivism can be verified or disproven by statistical data analysis. Positivism frequently looks at whether a relationship exists between two variables rather than concentrating on the source of a correlation. Since reality exists but is poorly understood, post-positivism aligns positivist research with critical realism, which maintains that objectivity is a regulatory ideal realized through design elements such as controls and critical community examination. In terms of methodology, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, hypothesis testing, replication, and triangulation, also known as "Critical Multiplism," are highlighted (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Typical outcomes include generalizable estimates (e.g., program effects on service delivery or citizen outcomes) and theory testing of causal mechanisms in administrative contexts. (Cook et al., 2002).

### **3.2 Constructivists**

There are several realities rather than a single reality or truth. They commit themselves to deciphering and analyzing the significance of an action. Because of this, constructivists frequently employ qualitative research techniques that offer multiple viewpoints, such as case studies and interviews (Proofed 2022:1-5). Constructivism holds that social reality is multifaceted, context-dependent, and jointly created by researchers and actors; methods are dialogic and hermeneutical; and epistemology is transactional/subjectivist. Typical results highlight plausibility, coherence, and utility in similar contexts; contextually rich explanations of administrative practice, the logics of actors' views, and how policies gain meaning in situ(Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **3.3 Pragmatists**

The new and unpredictable circumstances constantly shape how reality is understood and re-negotiated. As a result, the research question itself determines the philosophy they use. In a single research project, pragmatics frequently integrates constructivist and positivist ideas, employing qualitative and quantitative methodologies to examine various aspects of a research problem (Proofed 2022:1-5). Typical outcomes combine stakeholder insights with effect estimates and provide managers and policymakers with helpful information (e.g., whether an invention "works," for whom, and under what circumstances). (Mele & Belardinelli, 2019).

## **4. Methodology**

#### **4.1. Research design**

This study adopts a qualitative, interpretive research design based on a narrative literature review. The objective is not to provide an exhaustive, systematic review of all publications in public administration, but to synthesize representative and influential works that define and elaborate on key paradigms.

Following guidelines for narrative reviews in social sciences, the approach privileges conceptual depth and historical contextualization over exhaustive coverage. The article therefore focuses on “classic” contributions (e.g., Henry, Hood, Moore, Denhardt & Denhardt) and widely cited recent works (e.g., Grimmelikhuijsen et al., Dunleavy et al.) that are recognized as shaping contemporary debates.

#### **4.2. Data Sources and Selection**

Sources were identified through a combination of:

- Keyword searches in academic databases and publishers’ platforms (e.g., “paradigms of public administration,” “New Public Management,” “New Public Governance,” “New Public Service,” “public value,” “digital-era governance,” “behavioral public administration”),
- Backward and forward citation tracking of seminal works, and consultation of reference textbooks and comparative reform studies.

The selection criteria emphasized:

- A .** Conceptual clarity in articulating a paradigm or framework.
- B .** Substantial influence, operationalized through citation counts and presence in subsequent debates.
- C .** Coverage of different regions and administrative traditions, where possible. The analysis is limited to published secondary literature and does not involve original empirical data collection.

#### **4.3. Analytical Framework**

To compare paradigms, an analytical framework was constructed around four dimensions, derived from Henry’s locus/focus distinction and contemporary governance scholarship:

- A . Role of the State and Locus of Administration** (hierarchy, market, network, digital platform).
- B . Image of the Citizen** (subject, client/customer, partner/co-producer, democratic citizen, behavioral decision-maker).
- C . Core Administrative Values** (legality, efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, equity, participation, public value).
- D . Dominant Instruments and Knowledge Base** (rules and procedures, performance management, contracting and competition, networks and partnerships, deliberative practices, data analytics, behavioral interventions) (Henry, 1975).

### **5. Discussion: Comparing Contemporary Paradigms**

#### **5.1. Role of the State and Governance Modes**

Traditional Public Administration conceives the state as a sovereign authority exercising hierarchical control through a professional bureaucracy. Weberian legality and formal rules ensure predictability and equal treatment (Weber, 1978).

New Public Management partially de-centers the state by introducing market-like mechanisms and quasi-autonomous agencies. The state becomes a purchaser and regulator rather than a direct provider, with competition and contracts as key mechanisms for coordination (Hood, 1991).

New Public Governance moves further toward a polycentric view of the state embedded in networks of public, private, and civil society actors. The state steers, negotiates, and facilitates rather than commands or buys services(Osborne, 2006).

The New Public Service and public value approaches re-emphasize the state as a guarantor of democratic processes and collective values, but do so within a context that acknowledges networks and partnerships (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Digital-era governance highlights how states increasingly act as platforms, providing digital infrastructures that enable other actors to transact and co-produce services (Dunleavy et al., 2006).

Behavioral Public Administration, while less explicit about macro-structures, generally takes existing institutional settings as given and concentrates on micro-level behavior within them. In practice, BPA tools (e.g., nudges) can be applied within hierarchical, market-based, or networked governance arrangements (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2017).

### **5.2. Image of the Citizen**

Each paradigm constructs a characteristic image of the citizen:

- **TPA:** Citizens are rights-bearing subjects and beneficiaries who are entitled to equal treatment under the law.
- **NPM:** Citizens are customers whose preferences should be satisfied through choice, competition, and service quality(Hood, 1991).
- **NPG:** Citizens are stakeholders and partners engaged in collaborative governance and co-production(Osborne, 2006).
- **NPS:** Citizens are democratic owners of the polity, whose voices should shape the definition of the public interest; the emphasis is on citizenship rather than consumption (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000).
- **Public Value/DEG:** Citizens are both co - producers and evaluators of public value, often interacting with government via digital channels and performance platforms (Moore, 1995).
- **BPA:** Citizens are boundedly rational decision-makers whose behavior is shaped by cognitive and contextual factors; policy design must account for these regularities (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2017).

These different images have implications for the design of participation mechanisms, accountability structures, and service delivery channels. For example, customer-oriented reforms may prioritize satisfaction surveys and service charters, whereas NPS-inspired reforms emphasize deliberative forums and co-governance arrangements.

### **5.3. Core Administrative Values**

The paradigms also differ in their dominant values:

- **TPA** prioritizes legality, neutrality, and procedural fairness.
- **NPM** elevates efficiency, performance, and fiscal discipline(Hood, 1991).
- **NPG** emphasizes collaboration, trust, and the capacity to manage interdependence(Osborne, 2006).
- **NPS** stresses democratic participation, social equity, and serving rather than steering (Denhardt, R., & Denhardt, J., 2000).
- **Public value/DEG** focuses on substantive outcomes and collectively valued results, often measured through performance indicators and citizen feedback (Moore, 1995).
- **BPA** values effectiveness and evidence-based design, assessed through rigorous empirical methods such as experiments (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2017).

In practice, public organizations must often balance several of these values simultaneously, for instance, ensuring due process (TPA) while meeting performance targets (NPM) and engaging stakeholders (NPG/NPS). Conflicts among values (e.g., efficiency vs. equity) are a central theme in contemporary research.

### **5.4. Instruments and Knowledge Bases**

Traditional public administration relies on instruments such as laws, regulations, standardized procedures, and hierarchical supervision, supported by legal and organizational theory (Weber, 1978).

NPM introduced performance measurement, management by objectives, contracting-out, and quasi-markets, drawing heavily on economics and management science(Hood, 1991).

NPG and NPS favor tools for network and partnership management, collaborative planning, and public deliberation, informed by governance theory, policy networks, and democratic theory(Osborne, 2006).

Public value and DEG stress strategic management, cross-boundary coordination, and digital tools such as integrated platforms, open data, and user-centered design (Moore, 1995). Behavioral Public Administration adds experimental methods, randomized controlled trials, and psychologically informed interventions to this toolbox (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2017).

### **5.5. Coexistence, Hybridization, and Context**

One of the key findings of comparative reform studies is that paradigms rarely succeed one another in a simple linear sequence; instead, they layer and hybridize. Pollitt and Bouckaert show that many OECD countries combine elements of TPA, NPM, and newer governance approaches, with patterns shaped by administrative traditions and political systems(Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

Dunleavy et al. similarly argue that although digital-era governance has supplanted some NPM practices, NPM doctrines continue to influence organizational structures and performance regimes (Dunleavy et al., 2006). In many jurisdictions, especially in the Global South, reforms are layered on top of existing bureaucratic structures, producing complex hybrids that mix patronage, Weberian bureaucracy, managerialism, and donor-driven governance models.

This multi-paradigmatic condition has at least three implications:

- A. Analytical Complexity:** Researchers must be cautious when labeling a country or sector as “NPM” or “governance-oriented,” as empirical realities often involve multiple, overlapping logics.
- B. Normative Ambiguity:** Competing paradigms offer different answers to questions about what public administration ought to do, e.g., maximize efficiency, deepen democracy, or create public value, leading to contested reform agendas.
- C. Contextual Dependence:** The viability and desirability of particular paradigmatic elements depend on legal traditions, state capacity, political culture, and socio-economic conditions. A reform that works in a high-capacity OECD country may fail or have unintended consequences in a fragile state.

Overall, contemporary public administration science is best seen as a pluralistic field in which paradigms serve as lenses rather than exclusive doctrines.

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper has examined how public administration sciences of our time are structured around a set of interrelated paradigms. Building on Henry's concept of paradigms and subsequent developments, it has identified Traditional Public Administration, New Public Management, New Public Governance, the New Public Service, public value, and digital-era governance as particularly salient. The analysis shows that these paradigms differ systematically in their conceptions of the state, the image of the citizen, core values, and preferred instruments. Traditional Public Administration emphasizes legality and hierarchy; NPM focuses on efficiency, competition, and performance; NPG highlights networks and collaboration; NPS foregrounds democracy and citizenship; public value and DEG stress outcomes and digital infrastructures; and BPA brings micro-level behavioral insights and experimental methods to the field. Rather than replacing one another in a clean sequence, these paradigms coexist and hybridize. Contemporary public administration is characterized by multi-layered governance arrangements in which different paradigmatic logics are activated in other sectors, levels of government, and policy problems. This multi-paradigmatic reality poses challenges for both theory and practice, but also offers opportunities for creative combinations of tools and values.

Future research could usefully focus on:

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- Mapping hybrid configurations of paradigms in specific countries and sectoral contexts;
- Examining how public officials navigate conflicting normative and instrumental demands arising from different paradigms;
- Exploring the implications of digital transformation and polycrisis (e.g., climate change, pandemics) for the balance between hierarchy, markets, networks, and behavioral tools;
- Expanding empirical work beyond OECD countries to understand better how paradigms travel, adapt, and are resisted across diverse administrative traditions.

For practitioners, awareness of these paradigms can foster reflexivity about the implicit assumptions that guide administrative reforms and everyday decision-making. Recognizing the plurality of paradigms encourages a pragmatic, context-sensitive approach that combines legal safeguards, managerial competence, collaborative governance, democratic engagement, and evidence-based behavioral insights in the pursuit of public value.

To sum up, our world is witnessing many developments. With these developments, the need to keep pace increases, especially in public administration, which implements the government's public policies through various agencies. Therefore, public administration paradigms are developed and practical subjects, not static, and thus, governments resort to applying a model that suits the nature of the phase. It is flexible and deals with problems and shocks better due to the many international challenges, whether political, economic, security, or environmental, and develops appropriate solutions. Contemporary public administration cannot survive in a political, financial, and social vacuum. This implies that the discipline will continue to change as societal circumstances evolve. Public administration in the contemporary world will face increasingly sophisticated problems and demands as a result of changing trends in liberalization, privatization, and globalization. Given the existing problems in public administration, general research in the field remains relatively underdeveloped. It is a practice area that remains extremely important, even today. The study of public administration is a real subject of life. It is gaining increasing importance globally and is slowly but surely occupying its rightful place, taking a logically central position in the family of social sciences. Nevertheless, we cannot fully understand today's public administration, or predict tomorrow's, without understanding yesterday's. (Dhameja, 2003:8).

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