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## **Policy making reform: Command and control within Jordanian governmental institutions**

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### **Abstract**

The intent of this research is to undertake a systematic methodical study of Jordanian governmental administrative improvement and investigate the experiences and characteristics of such a reform. The study revealed that the degree of legitimacy ascribed to both the state and its administrative apparatus is clearly the major factor that can either impede or promote effective levels of accountability and responsiveness. In conclusion, underperformance management, input-oriented budgets are turned into performance budgets, cash-based accounting systems are changed into accrual-based cost accounting systems or performance reporting systems.

**Keywords:** Business administration, Jordanian government, Policy.

**Reforma de la formulación de políticas: comando y control dentro de las instituciones gubernamentales jordanas**

### **Resumen**

La intención de esta investigación es emprender un estudio sistemático metódico de la mejora administrativa gubernamental jordana e investigar las experiencias y características de dicha reforma.

El estudio reveló que el grado de legitimidad atribuido tanto al estado como a su aparato administrativo es claramente el factor principal que puede impedir o promover niveles efectivos de responsabilidad y capacidad de respuesta. En conclusión, la gestión de bajo rendimiento, los presupuestos orientados a los insumos se convierten en presupuestos de rendimiento, los sistemas de contabilidad basados en efectivo se convierten en sistemas de contabilidad de costos basados en el devengo o en sistemas de informes de rendimiento.

**Palabras clave:** administración de empresas, Gobierno jordano, Política.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Public administration in Jordan faces immense challenges. These include the need to maintain peace and harmony, to alleviate deep poverty, to sustain a healthy and inclusive economic growth, and to ensure social justice to achieve ethical, efficient, transparent and participative governance (STOLK & WERGRICH, 2008). The sort of public administration needed to escalate the growth rate may not necessarily be the one that tackles poverty problems seeks to remove inequality and tackles corruption to ensure speedy justice.

In articulating the dichotomy between politics and administration, Woodrow Wilson sought to answer these questions. Politics has to do with policies or expressions of the state will, and administration has to do with the execution of these policies (PEARCE, 2011). Political leaders make political decisions about public policy, and then the career officials determine the most efficient way to implement these policies. Unhappily, this simple division of

labor is much harder to implement than to assert. The legislatures (or executive's) policy statements are rarely so explicit as to leave only the technical details of implementation to be worked out by the administering agency.

No matter how the governmental structure may appear it is explicit that the overwhelming power of the executive branch overweighs that of the judicial and legislative. The intense hierarchal and bureaucratic structure within the executive branch defies and limits the opportunity for formulating or implementing change, thus creating obstacles and barriers for innovative and creative problem solutions such as effectiveness and efficiency in achieving governmental strategic objectives and most notably reducing the level of corruption.

The governmental chain of command within the institutional structure is so rigid that top leadership is disinclined to share or empower their constituents. Much of the supervisory authority is granted preferably to individuals based on personal relationships and not on quality or worth. NOVECK (2009) noted that this discretionary power has derailed and contributed to the lack of skills needed to confront the duties aligned with decentralization.

The patterns of governing structure are changing in ways that have been captured as the shift from government to governance (ANGRANOFF & YILDIS, 2006). This shift involves the focus of administrative practice moving outside the walls of government, away

from the bureaucratic state and direct government provision of services and toward what has been called third-party government (JACOBSEN, 2006).

In other words, the ways in which we govern are moving beyond governmental boundaries; that is, the traditional mechanisms and institutions of government are becoming less involved with, and less central to, the ways that we govern ourselves (FAHED, 2016).

The overwhelming challenge of these changing times, however, has recently initiated some soul-searching among scholars and practitioners in this field. This reengineering contemplates the following: Is the traditional bureaucracy adequate to cope with social, economic, and political changes? Is it geared to national development, which is the expressed goal of practically all governments? Should not the focus be turned from mere system maintenance to active pursuit of development? Should not more attention be paid to the innovative aspects of government administration?

Scholars in public administration, political science, economics, and other related disciplines are not lacking in ideas for bridging transitional stages from a state of scarcity to one of abundance. The obvious question, that arises, however, is in what way would one type of administrative reform directly result in national development? Had there been satisfactory analysis of this question, there would have been no problems in achieving the required growth that was expected in the last decade.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The study focused on providing a diagnostic-analytic study of reforming command and control in the Jordanian policy-making process to identify the pitfalls and shortcomings that accompanied it. In this analytical process, the study examined and presented the important characteristics of rival explanations in policy-making reform. Pattern-matching is a well-known mechanism in this kind of study, where several cases may be known to have a certain type of outcome, and the investigation focused on how and why this outcome occurred in each case. A common policy problem is to understand the conditions under which research and development can be made useful to society.

Therefore, this model is useful in explaining and understanding the approaches and motives of reforms and reorganizations undertaken by modern governments. Additionally, this model provides conceptual frameworks for analysis of organization and reorganization of modern governance and public administration.

In doing so, the analysis and explanation focused on the conditions under which the governing structure works effectively, and how Jordan can orient its human and material resources toward the achievement of efficiency in public service. Therefore, this study was undertaken to verify some aspects of the means-ends relationships by focusing on policy roles, command and control, and economy and their impact on the public interest.

This study seeks to investigate the authoritative power within the governmental institutional structure and how the constituents within it can assist in establishing more efficient and effective decisional strategies in guideline and policy formulation. CHENG (2005) states that the major issues involved in such activity are in identifying the proper procedures and including the appropriate content of such a decision. Frequently these issues are combined and integrated with the presumption that certain individuals are responsible for certain procedural implementations (civil servants) while certain characters are responsible for certain procedural development (interventionist). Preferably, certain measures, for example, market-based vouchers, should be devised to reduce the level of bureaucracy.

How to govern is the question. What are the managerial functions of the government? How would the labor be divided? Who decides what to decide? Who sets the job descriptions and job specifications? What will the organizational chart look like? What level of authority and transparency is set for each branch of government? What level of checks and balances is needed?

Due to some recent economic and financial difficulties, Jordan has initiated a reform process. Globalization and the financial crisis in 2008 have made this reform even more urgent. However, studies that are directed at analyzing and evaluating this reform program are very scarce. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to scientifically analyze the policymaking process in order to identify its pitfalls and effectiveness. The study also expected to provide the policy and



decision-makers with the opportunity to pinpoint any deviation in order to be able to correct it in a timely manner.

This study is important theoretically and practically. From a theoretical perspective to the best of the author's knowledge, this is the first study that investigates the reform of the policymaking process in Jordan and identifies its results and downturns. Thus, the study is expected to enrich the literature in the field of public administration, particularly concentrating on policymaking.

From a practical perspective, the results of this study will serve to assist policy and decision-makers to recognize some of the results of the administrative reform in Jordan and be aware of some of the pitfalls of the reform process. Furthermore, this kind of study is very important to achieve the intended goals of the reform program.

Comprehension of the Jordanian governmental policy formulation requires the comprehension of the roles and relationships of governmental agencies. This study will serve as an analytical analysis with a focus on the reduction of bureaucracy within the governmental agencies and hopefully define a trigger event that will enhance decision-making by different participants and establish command and control mechanisms within such agencies.

The dramatic political and socioeconomic changes that have taken place in authoritarian regimes in the last ten years have called into question the usefulness and validity of many conventionally held

views regarding the role and functions of both the state and the major actors in policy-making processes (KETTLE & DALIDO, 1996: KANG'ETHE & MAFA, 2015).

Examining the government transition efforts toward democracy, one can observe that these efforts have focused on either broad questions of constitutional reform at the systemic level or the role played by, or assigned to, traditional institutions and actors such as the executives, legislators, political parties, or international factors. Little if any attention is given, to the public bureaucracy and its potential for effectively influencing the content and direction of processes of change and innovation in the policy-making process. Good Governance needs to rest in the system's ability to manage the conflicting goals of economic efficiency and rationality with the policy-making of legitimacy based on broad participation in public policy-making processes and equity in the distribution of and access to public services (KERNAGHAN, 2010).

The challenge is how to reach a balance between the demands for improving the operations of a free market in the neoliberal tradition of capitalism and the need to reinstate and improve some of the traditional institutions and processes associated with the workings of a democratic welfare state (DUFLO, 2012).

In its attempts to respond to urbanization issues through national economic policies, the state became the instrument for achieving a wide variety of new conflicting goals ranging from

regulating and promoting economic and social activities to ensuring social integration and equality.

The state is characterized by institutional development with long-lasting consequences for public administration. First, organizationally, the state expands the scope of its functions to include industrial, commercial, economic, financial, public health, social security, education, and welfare activities.

The pattern of growth in the public sector is one of incremental aggregation. No integrated master plan existed before the launching of ambitious developmental policies and programs. Nor was there growth in the scope of the state functions, size, cost, or relative power and influences based on rationality. Second, the fragmented evolution of the public sector became an obstacle to attempts at tackling questions of development from a technical perspective. Leading to an uneasy coexistence of public policies and institutions established to respond to conflicting goals, uncertain legitimacy, and considerable variations in resource availability. The potential for exercising some degree of effective planning, control, and coordination by policy-makers in general and through public participation in particular, became minimal.

The adoption of modern rational approaches to decision-making processes was to reinforce conceptions about the instrumental nature of both the organization and the management of the state. A

technocratic ethos was set in place with the legitimization of the bureaucratic arena as the proper place for settling conflicts of interest.

To answer these questions, the analysis focused on how the reform model can clarify how legislators, political executives, and career civil servants should share responsibility for policy-making and implementation.

### **3. FINDINGS**

The executive branch is vested with an impressive array of formal powers that places the Prime Minister at the center of the political arena. He is called upon to carry out a number of roles that give him the opportunity to expand his ability to persuade and influence other significant actors in the political process (the Constitution, article 14). Article 14 of the Constitution states that- the Council of Ministers, upon the approval of the king, can pass bylaws that provide control of the allocation and spending of public funds, and the organization of the government's warehouses. In addition to that, to respond to increasing levels of demands on his office and be able to cope with complexities of contemporary problems, the government of Jordan has established independent agencies for controlling and auditing government activities (e.g. Budget Department, Audit Bureau, and the Internal Control function entrusted to the Ministry of Finance).

The study found that the following institutions are directly involved in controlling the bureaucracy and auditing governmental activities.

The internal control function is entrusted to the Ministry of Finance and the Minister of Finance is responsible for control of the accounts of other ministries and public agencies and making sure that each of them complies with the terms of the financial bylaw No. (3) of 1994 concerning its accounting and financial transactions (KUGLER & KUGLER, 2009). Each concerned Minister is also responsible for the implementation of the bylaw.

To perform its role, the Ministry of Finance checks spending to ensure compliance with applicable legislation. It also checks the collection of revenues to ensure that the right amounts have been collected at the right time as determined by applicable legislation and that the collected funds have been deposited in the public treasury. The Ministry of Finance notifies other ministries and agencies about any deficiencies or excesses and demands the correction of any violations of appropriate legislation (KPUNDEH, 2000).

The Ministry of Finance can also conduct surprise checks on inventories of cash flow and other financial transactions. To activate the role of internal control in governmental units, the government has issued circular No. (31) of 1992.

According to the circular, the internal control units have to assist top management in the governmental units in controlling public funds, including upgrading performance levels to planned aspirations in order to accomplish the objectives stated in the circular.

A general framework for the activities of the internal control units in the various ministries and public agencies was established and the necessary measures were taken to implement the internal unit function (LEFTWICH, 1994). The required instructions were issued to ensure the accomplishment of designed internal control objectives, including increasing the level of performance, tightening control of public funds and energizing the systems of internal audit.

The increasing activities of government and the expansion of its role, including its adoption of economic and social development planning with its various programs and projects, have greatly increased the burdens of the external control institutions. The situation requires a serious review of the role of current external controls and the adoption of new control devices that are more capable of verifying the efficiency and performance levels of the executive machinery and revealing the degree of success in accomplishing the objectives of social programs and projects (JREISAT, 2017). The concept of external control has expanded to include subjects such as the methods of resource utilization and the corresponding consequences, in addition to its classical function of financial and legal audits. It presently covers financial, legal, and efficiency audits.

The Bureau of Audit, as an arm of Parliament, is entrusted with the functions of conducting external control on the activities of Ministries, public agencies and public enterprises, and the municipal and rural councils.

The Bureau of Audit Law No. (28) of 1952 is based on an article (119) of the Constitution of Jordan, which called for the formation of the Bureau of Audit to monitor the state's revenues, expenditures and ways of spending. Based on the Law and its amendments, the Bureau carries out the following functions: (a) monitor the country's revenues and expenditures, and audit the accounts of trusts, advance payments, loans and warehouses, and (b) advise public agencies that fall within its audit concerning accounting matters. To accomplish its control objectives, the Bureau of Audit has the following authorities:

1. To carry out a surprise audit of accounts at any time of any public agency.
2. To investigate the soundness of any document or record until it is fully convinced of its legality.
3. To make sure that accounts have been kept according to correct rulings and that the precautionary measures against delinquency, perjury and falsification are sufficient and effective. The Bureau has the right to draw the attention of concerned officials to any deficiencies or shortcomings in the

financial and administrative legislation, or any mistakes committed. It can also express its views concerning all regulations and instructions given to enhance the accomplishment of the objectives of laws and bylaws.

4. To examine inspector's reports, financial and administrative, and delinquencies investigation reports that have financial ramifications, and to request information and demand response to its inquiries concerning any matter related to its work.

5. All parties that fall under the scrutiny of the Bureau of Audit have to reply to any inquiry addressed to them within a period of no more than 30 days of the date of arrival of an inquiry if they are located inside Jordan and within a period of no more than 60 days if they are located outside Jordan.

The government of Jordan requested from the UNDP office in Jordan to determine the causes and extent of inefficiency and corruption in Jordan. It focused on weaknesses in the government's legal framework, regulations, institutions, management systems, policies and procedures that facilitate corrupt practices and ineffectiveness.

UNDP found that numerous sources acknowledged the existence of corruption in Jordan, particularly at higher levels, and they identified the causes as institutional weaknesses, nepotism, inadequate salaries, a weak budgetary and financial control system,



weak enforcement, duplication of roles, an over-regulated bureaucracy, and widespread discretion on the part of top management levels (JREISAT, 2017).

Nepotism (in Arabic *wasta*) as the principal cause of corruption. They contend it permeates the entire system and affects the quality of institutions. They also found that most people in top government positions, including members of Parliament, use *wasta* to get their relatives, constituency members, tribal colleagues, and friends, jobs for which few are qualified. Consequently, staff morale is low, especially in departments where they believe many high-level supervisors were employed because of *wasta*.

Additionally, government ministers and top appointees have too much discretionary power (NICHOLAS, 2006). Excessive discretionary power without any checks and balances is a precursor to bribery and nepotism. Although corruption is not a way of life in Jordan presently, if such matters are not addressed, it soon will be. The lack of accountability is facilitated by the domination of the executive branch over other branches of government. Candidates for ministerial and high-level positions are not subject to any screening processes. They come and go as the government changes. The King appoints the Prime Minister and his government implements the King's agenda. Consequently, the party system is weak and there is no organized opposition in Parliament. The programs of the government, which are synonymous with those of the king, are subject to virtually no opposition and more importantly, very little legitimate debate. UNDP

found that Parliament focuses mainly on amending legislation initiated by the Prime Minister.

However, there are indications that there is, and has been, the political will to address corruption in the Kingdom. His Majesty King Abdullah, in a recent letter of designation to the new Prime Minister, insisted that his government should wage war against nepotism, corruption, negligence, and incompetence in the public sector by modernizing and trimming the Kingdom's bloated bureaucracy.

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