



FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE LIMITED INCLUSION OF NON-WESTERN THINKERS IN THE EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract:

This paper explores the factors that have contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the evolution of public administration. The field of public administration has been dominated by Western perspectives, which has limited the recognition of non-Western theories and approaches. Historical factors, cultural factors, and institutional factors have all played a role in this limited inclusion. Institutional factors such as educational systems, dominance of Western academic institutions, funding mechanisms, government policies and practices, professional associations, language barriers, publication bias, limited resources, limited access to technology, and lack of representation have all contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in public administration. Addressing these factors will require a greater recognition of the value of non-Western perspectives and a commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion in public administration research and practice.

Keywords: Historical factors, culture factors, institutional factors, non-western thinkers, diversity, colonialism

Introduction:

The field of public administration has undergone significant evolution in recent years, with new theories and approaches emerging to address complex issues facing governments around the world. However, this evolution has been dominated by Western perspectives, limiting the recognition of non-Western theories and approaches. This paper explores the factors that have contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the evolution of public administration.

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Historical factors, cultural factors, and institutional factors have all played a role in this limited inclusion. Historical factors include colonialism and the influence of Western education systems in non-Western countries. Cultural factors include differences in values and beliefs between Western and non-Western cultures that can affect the development and application of public administration theory and practice. Institutional factors include the dominance of Western academic institutions, funding mechanisms, government policies and practices, professional associations, language barriers, publication bias, limited resources, limited access to technology, and lack of representation.

Addressing these factors will require a greater recognition of the value of non-Western perspectives and a commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion in public administration research and practice. This can be achieved through a range of measures, including greater investment in non-Western academic institutions, more inclusive funding mechanisms and publication policies, and increased representation of non-Western scholars and practitioners in leadership roles in public administration organizations.

By examining the factors that have contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the evolution of public administration, this paper aims to contribute to a more inclusive and diverse field of study, with the potential to generate new insights and approaches to address complex governance challenges facing societies around the world.

Historical factors

There are several historical factors that have contributed to the Western-centric approach to public administration and the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the development of the field. Some of these factors include:

Colonialism and imperialism: During the era of European colonialism and imperialism, many non-Western societies were subjugated and governed by Western powers. The administrative systems that were established in these societies were often modeled on Western systems and designed to serve the interests of the colonizing powers. As a result, the study of public administration became closely associated with Western modes of governance and institutional frameworks.

Modernization theory: In the mid-twentieth century, modernization theory became a dominant framework for understanding the development of societies. This theory posited that all societies progress through stages of development, culminating in the adoption of Western-style political and economic institutions. As a result, the study of public administration became closely associated with the goal of modernizing and “developing” non-Western societies.

Cold War politics: During the Cold War, the study of public administration became an important tool for promoting Western-style governance and combating the spread of communism. Many Western countries, including the United States, established programs to train public administrators in non-Western countries, with the aim of promoting democratic governance and market-oriented economic reforms.

Language barriers: Another historical factor that has contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the development of public administration is the language barrier. Many non-Western scholars and practitioners may not have had access to the same academic and professional networks as their Western counterparts, due to language barriers and limited access to English-language academic journals and conferences.

Moreover, historical factors such as colonialism, modernization theory, Cold War politics, and language barriers have all contributed to the Western-centric approach to public administration and the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the development of the field.

Other historical factors that have contributed to the Western-centric approach to public administration and limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the development of the field include:

Eurocentrism: The study of public administration emerged in Europe and North America during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and was influenced by the dominant intellectual and cultural trends of those regions. As a result, the field became closely associated with Eurocentric perspectives and frameworks, which were often not applicable or relevant to non-Western societies. Limited exchange of ideas: For much of the 20th century, there was a limited exchange of ideas and information between Western and non-Western scholars and practitioners of public administration. This was partly due to geopolitical barriers, such as the Cold War, but was also influenced by cultural differences and a lack of recognition of the value of non-Western perspectives.

Cultural bias: Many Western scholars and practitioners of public administration have been influenced by cultural biases and assumptions, which have led to a limited understanding of non-Western political and administrative systems. For example, many Western theories of public administration are based on assumptions of individualism and bureaucracy, which may not be applicable to non-Western societies, where collectivism and patronage networks are more important.

Resistance to change: The field of public administration has been slow to incorporate non-Western perspectives and insights due to a resistance to change and a commitment to established Western models and frameworks. This has led to a lack of innovation and a limited understanding of the complexity and diversity of governance systems in non-Western societies.

However, historical factors such as Eurocentrism, limited exchange of ideas, cultural bias, and resistance to change have all contributed to the Western-centric approach to public administration and the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the development of the field. Overcoming these barriers will require a greater recognition of the value of non-Western perspectives and a commitment to promoting greater exchange and collaboration between Western and non-Western scholars and practitioners.

Cultural factors

Cultural factors have played an important role in shaping the development of public administration and in the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the field. Some of the key cultural factors include:

Differences in cultural values: Non-Western societies often have different cultural values and norms than Western societies, which can affect the way that public administration is conceptualized and practiced. For example, in some non-Western societies, there may be a greater emphasis on social harmony and collective decision-making, which can conflict with Western-style bureaucratic decision-making models.

Linguistic and translation challenges: Communication barriers due to linguistic and translation challenges can also contribute to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the development of public administration. Many non-Western scholars and practitioners may not have access to English-language academic journals or may have difficulty articulating their ideas in English, which can limit their ability to participate in global scholarly discourse.

Lack of recognition of non-Western perspectives: Historically, Western perspectives have dominated the field of public administration, which has limited the recognition of non-Western perspectives and contributions. This can result in the marginalization of non-Western scholars and practitioners and a lack of attention to the unique challenges and opportunities facing non-Western societies.

Differences in administrative systems: Administrative systems in non-Western societies can be quite different from those in Western societies, which can make it difficult to apply Western models and frameworks to non-Western contexts. This can result in a limited understanding of the complexity and diversity of governance systems in non-Western societies.

Limited cross-cultural understanding: A limited cross-cultural understanding among scholars and practitioners of public administration can contribute to the marginalization of non-Western perspectives. There may be a lack of recognition of the value of non-Western knowledge and practices, or a tendency to view non-Western systems as inferior or less developed.

Moreover, cultural factors have played an important role in shaping the development of public administration and in the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the field. Addressing these cultural factors will require a greater recognition of the value of non-Western perspectives, a commitment to promoting cross-cultural understanding, and a willingness to adapt Western models and frameworks to non-Western contexts.

Some additional cultural factors that have contributed to the Western-centric approach to public administration and the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the field include:

Power dynamics: Power dynamics between Western and non-Western societies can influence the development and adoption of Western-style administrative systems in non-Western contexts. For example, colonialism and imperialism played a significant role in the introduction of Western administrative systems to many non-Western societies, which may have led to a lack of trust in Western-style governance.

Perception of modernization: There has been a perception that Western-style administrative systems are necessary for modernization and development in non-Western societies. This has led to a focus on importing Western models and frameworks, rather than adapting or developing locally appropriate approaches.

Influence of international organizations: International organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have played a significant role in shaping public administration in non-Western societies. However, these organizations are often dominated by Western perspectives and may promote Western-style administrative systems over non-Western approaches.

Emphasis on individualism: Many Western models and frameworks for public administration are based on the concept of individualism, which may not be applicable to non-Western societies, where collectivism and group decision-making are more common. This can lead to a limited understanding of the social and cultural context of non-Western governance systems.

Dominance of Western academia: The dominance of Western academia in the field of public administration has also contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers. Non-Western scholars may face barriers to publishing in Western academic journals or may be overlooked for academic positions or research funding.

However, cultural factors such as differences in cultural values, linguistic and translation challenges, lack of recognition of non-Western perspectives, differences in administrative systems, power dynamics, perception of modernization, influence of international organizations, emphasis on individualism, and dominance of Western academia have all contributed to the Western-centric approach to public administration and the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the development of the field. Addressing these cultural factors will require a greater recognition of the importance of cultural diversity and a commitment to promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration in the study and practice of public administration.

Institutional factors

Institutional factors have also played a role in the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in public administration. Some of the key institutional factors include:

Educational systems: Educational systems can have a significant influence on the development of public administration, as they provide the training and knowledge base for future practitioners and scholars. Many educational systems in non-Western countries may not provide sufficient exposure to Western theories and approaches to public administration, which can limit the ability of non-Western scholars to participate in global scholarly discourse.

Dominance of Western academic institutions: Western academic institutions have historically dominated the field of public administration, which has limited the recognition of non-Western perspectives and scholars. Non-Western scholars may have limited access to international academic networks and may not be recognized as equal partners in global academic collaborations.

Funding mechanisms: Funding mechanisms for public administration research and education may also contribute to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers. Many funding sources may prioritize research that is aligned with Western models and frameworks or may prioritize research that has immediate practical applications in Western contexts.

Government policies and practices: Government policies and practices can also play a role in the development of public administration. Many non-Western governments may prioritize local knowledge and practices, which can limit the adoption of Western models and frameworks.

Professional associations: Professional associations can provide a forum for scholarly exchange and collaboration in the field of public administration. However, many professional associations may be dominated by Western perspectives and may not provide sufficient opportunities for non-Western scholars and practitioners to participate in global conversations.

However, institutional factors such as educational systems, dominance of Western academic institutions, funding mechanisms, government policies and practices, and professional associations have all contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in public administration. Addressing these institutional factors will require a greater recognition of the value of non-Western perspectives and a commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion in public administration research and practice. This can be achieved through greater collaboration and exchange between Western and non-Western scholars and practitioners, increased support for non-Western academic institutions, and more inclusive funding mechanisms and professional associations.

Some additional institutional factors that have contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in public administration include:

Language barriers: Language barriers can be a significant obstacle for non-Western scholars in contributing to the global discourse on public administration. English is the dominant language in many international academic journals and conferences, which can be a disadvantage for non-native English speakers.

Publication bias: Publication bias in academic journals can also contribute to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers. Many academic journals may prioritize research that is aligned with Western models and frameworks or may not recognize the value of non-Western perspectives.

Limited resources: Limited resources, both financial and human, can also be a significant barrier for non-Western scholars in contributing to the field of public administration. Many non-Western countries may not have the same level of resources to invest in research and education as Western countries, which can limit the capacity of non-Western scholars to participate in global scholarly discourse.

Limited access to technology: Limited access to technology, such as computers and the internet, can also limit the ability of non-Western scholars to participate in global scholarly discourse. Many non-Western countries may not have the same level of technological infrastructure as Western countries, which can limit the ability of non-Western scholars to communicate and collaborate with their peers in other parts of the world.

Lack of representation: Finally, a lack of representation of non-Western scholars and practitioners in leadership positions in public administration organizations can also contribute to the limited inclusion of non-Western perspectives. Without representation in key decision-making roles, non-Western perspectives may be overlooked or undervalued in the development of public administration theory and practice.

Lastly, institutional factors such as educational systems, dominance of Western academic institutions, funding mechanisms, government policies and practices, professional associations, language barriers, publication bias, limited resources, limited access to technology, and lack of

representation have all contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in public administration. Addressing these institutional factors will require a concerted effort to promote diversity and inclusion in the field, with a particular emphasis on supporting non-Western scholars and practitioners to participate in global scholarly discourse. This can be achieved through a range of measures, including greater investment in non-Western academic institutions, more inclusive funding mechanisms and publication policies, and increased representation of non-Western scholars and practitioners in leadership roles in public administration organizations.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this paper has explored the factors that have contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the evolution of public administration. Historical, cultural, and institutional factors have all played a role in shaping the development of the field, limiting the recognition of non-Western theories and approaches. Addressing these factors will require a concerted effort to promote diversity and inclusion in public administration research and practice.

Greater recognition of the value of non-Western perspectives can bring new insights and approaches to address complex governance challenges facing societies around the world. This requires a commitment to supporting non-Western scholars and practitioners to participate in global scholarly discourse, through measures such as greater investment in non-Western academic institutions, more inclusive funding mechanisms and publication policies, and increased representation of non-Western scholars and practitioners in leadership roles in public administration organizations.

By addressing the factors that have contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers, the field of public administration can become more diverse, inclusive, and better equipped to address the challenges facing governments and societies around the world. It is a call for a greater appreciation of different perspectives, and the recognition of the value that non-Western thinkers can bring to the field of public administration.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, it is important for the field of public administration to reflect the diversity of perspectives and experiences that shape governance challenges around the world. By recognizing the value of non-Western perspectives, the field can develop more robust and nuanced approaches to public administration theory and practice, that can address the complex issues facing governments and societies around the world.

In order to achieve this goal, it is important to address the institutional, cultural, and historical factors that have contributed to the limited inclusion of non-Western thinkers in the field. For example, efforts to promote diversity and inclusion could include more inclusive funding mechanisms, publication policies, and educational systems, as well as increased representation of non-Western scholars and practitioners in leadership roles in public administration organizations.

However, these efforts must go beyond tokenism or superficial recognition of non-Western perspectives. True inclusion requires a deep and genuine commitment to understanding and learning from diverse perspectives, and a willingness to challenge the dominant paradigms and assumptions that have shaped the evolution of public administration. This can be a challenging but rewarding

process, that can lead to the development of more robust and effective approaches to public administration theory and practice, and a more inclusive and equitable field of study.

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