

Politics-Administration Dichotomy: A Century Debate

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Abstract *The issue of politics-administration dichotomy as one of the five great issues in the field of public administration has had a strange history. For more than a century it has been one of the most disreputable notions in the field of public administration. At the heart of the public administration is the relationship between administrators, on one hand, and politicians and the public on the other hand. The nature of that relationship and the proper role of political leaders and administrators in the administrative and political process have been the subject of considerable debate. The purpose of this article is to review of relationship between politics and administration in different time periods.*

Keywords: *politics-administration, dichotomy, policy-administration dichotomy, complementarity model.*

JEL: *H11.*

Introduction

One of the most important theoretical constructs in public administration is the politics-administration dichotomy. For more than a century, the politics-administration dichotomy has been one of the most disreputable Issues in the field of public administration. The politics-administration dichotomy has had a strange history in public administration. It expands and contracts, rises and falls, but never to go away (Svara & Overeem, 2006: 121). At the heart of the public administration is relationship between administrators, on one hand, and politicians and the public on the other hand. The nature of that relationship and the proper role of political leaders and administrators in the administrative and political process have been the subject of considerable debate. In importance of the politics and administration, Waldo (1987) wrote:

Nothing is more central in thinking about public administration than the nature and interrelations of politics and administration. Nor are the nature and interrelations of politics and administration matters only for academic theorizing. What is more important in the day-to-day, year-to-year, decade-to-decade operation of government than the ways in which politics and administration are conceptualized, rationalized ,and related one to the other.

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In this article we review history of the politics-administration dichotomy in five sections. First, we examine classical conceptualizations of relationship between politics and administration in early author's notes such as Wilson, Goodnow and Weber. We then argue that how the dichotomy model rose after founders by the scientific management and the principles of administration Movements. Then, we describe relationship between politics and administration after scientific management that in this time the politics-administration dichotomy rejected and emphasized on administrators policymaking role, specially under the New public administration (NPA). In next section we contend that how in 80 and 90 decades insisted on separation of policy and administration by the New Public Management (NPM) and the Reinventing Government (RG) Movements. In final section, we review new trends and views on debate that introduce the complementarily model of politics and administration.

1. Early views about the politics and administration relationship: Wilson, Goodnow and Weber

Although the politics-administration dichotomy was not current as a theoretical construct until the late 1940s when it first became an important issue in the literature of public administration, most scholars now trace it to Woodrow Wilson. Wilson's essay (1887) with title of "The Study of Administration" was not cited for many years after publication, but it is an exemplar of a stream of reformist thinking about government in the late nineteenth century. Wilson intended to shield administration from political interference, He wrote:

The field of administration is a field of business. It is removed from the hurry and strife of politics.... Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the tasks for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices (Wilson, 1887: 18).

Wilson was concerned with both the corrupting and politicizing interference of party organizations in administrative affairs (Stillman, 1973). He was critical of the way Congress handled core legislative functions. He stated that Congress policy making was haphazard and its oversight was weak. When Wilson suggested the clearer differentiation of politics and administration, he was seeking to strengthen and redirect the former while protecting the latter (Svara, 1998: 52). In *The Study of Administration*, Wilson explained the division of functions of Government as follows:

Public administration is detailed and systematic execution of public law...but the general laws...are obviously outside of and above administration. The broad plans of governmental action are not administrative; the detailed execution of such plans is administrative (Wilson, 1966: 372).

However, Wilson originally considered politics and administration as independent, but later embraced version of the dichotomy, which assumed that politics and administration interact to improve the organic state (Martin, 1988). In this time Wilson asserted that administrators would directly interpret and respond to public opinion. Therefore, they should be involved in the policy process and elected officials should be involved in the administrative process (Wilson, 1966: 375).

Wilson's change of mind can be explained that On the one hand, He admired the administration of European countries and proposed learning from them, which would not have been possible unless administration was distinctly separate from politics. On the other hand, his ultimate concern was to promote democracy, for he believed that the function of administration was to rescue democracy from its own excesses (Yang & Holzer, 2005: 113-4). Miewald (1984: 25-6) contend that this view of administrators was even clearer in Wilson's later lectures that stated the real function of administration is not merely ministerial, but adaptive, guiding, discretionary. It must accommodate and realize the law in practice. In Miewald's view, such administrators also were politicians and they must have the freedom to make ethical decisions. Van Riper (1984: 209) asserted that Wilson can not be blame or give credit for originating the dichotomy. In his view, Wilson like some of his contemporaries, simply wanted to advance the partisan (not political) neutrality of the civil service. Svava (1998: 52) argue that Wilson's view of the administrative function was broad and not consistent with the dichotomy model as it came to be articulated later. He refer to this Wilson's note that large powers and unhampered discretion seem to me the indispensable conditions of responsibility for administrators.

The European version of the dichotomy was accepted by Frank Goodnow. In his book "Politics and Administration" (1900), Goodnow attacked to the executive, legislative, and judicial functions as three basic functions of government. Instead, he argued, there were two basic functions of government: the expression of the popular will and the execution of that will. The three traditional powers were derived from the two functions, and each of the three branches of government combined in different measure both the expression and the execution of the popular will. Goodnow argued that the function of politics was to express the state's will and the function of administration was to execute the state's will. He contented that it was analytically possible to separate administration from politics, but practically impossible to add the two functions to one branch of government (Goodnow, 1900: 9-13). Goodnow argued that certain aspects of administration were harmed by politics and should have been shielded from it. He argued:

“political control over administrative functions is liable...to produce inefficient administration in that it makes administrative officers feel that what is demanded of them is not so much work that will improve their own department, as compliance with the behests of the political party” (Goodnow, 1900: 83).

Svara (1998: 53) believed that in Goodnow's writing there is a continuity between the political and administrative spheres, not a separation of the two, except as it applies to insulating administrative staff from partisan political inference. Because of Goodnow and other scholars at this time were interested in strengthening the relationship between administrators and elected officials rather than separating them. In sum, It should be recognized that Wilson and Goodnow aimed to eliminate the spoils system by freeing administration from political intervention and establishing a merit system in its place. They particularly opposed political appointments and patronage (Caiden, 1984: 53-7; Fry, 1989: 1036; Rohr, 2003: xiii-xvii; Rosenbloom, 2008: 58). They were more concerned with the improvement of administrative practice than with establishing a theoretical Construct (Stillman, 1973: 586). In other word, the dichotomy was not merely an analytical device for them, but first of all a practical imperative. To Wilson and Goodnow politics bore too strong an influence on public administration. Their's aim was to take politics out of administration (Fry, 1989: 1036-7).

In early twentieth century, Weber also arrived to a dichotomy between politics and administration, but from the opposite direction of Wilson and Goodnow. Weber argued that politics are too weak to curb administrative power, and that is the danger of *Beamtenherrschaft* (government by functionaries) that treat government. Therefore, he insisted that it was essential that administration stay out of politics (Weber, 1919/1968: 28). In "Politikals Beruf" Weber draws a sharp line between administrators and politicians:

According to his proper vocation, the genuine civil servant...should not engage in politics, but administer, above all impartially.... Hence, he shall precisely not do what the politician, the leader as well as his following, must always and necessarily do, namely, fight. For partisanship, fight, passion are stadium are the politician's element. (Weber, 1919/1968: 27-8)

According to Weber, in the political controversies public administrators should operate above all impartially and remain politically neutral. In sum, It should be said that in founder's views it was partisan politics they wanted to keep apart from public administration rather than politics per se (Van Riper, 1984: 209; Ranney, 1949). Overeem (2005: 317) contended that in it's classical conceptualizations the dichotomy between politics and administration implied a deep concern about the political neutrality of administrators. Whether attempts were made to take politics out of administration, as in the case of Wilson and Goodnow, or the other way around, as in the case of Weber, the aim was always to render administration impartial, an outsider to political controversy.

2. Toward the dichotomy: raise of the politics-administration dichotomy concept after founders

Yang and Holzer (2005: 114) believed that in deciphering Wilson and Goodnow, practitioners and academicians incorporated their own beliefs and reconstructed (or distorted) the two authors' intentions. This misreading, they argued, is no surprise because in light of the Progressive context Openness to the separation of administration from politics was necessary if public administration was to emerge as an autonomous field, an urgent and legitimate attitude at a time when politics perversely intruded into administration, as exemplified by the spoils system.

There is agreement that the idea of separation between politics and administration (Dichotomy) diverged from the earlier approaches by Wilson and Goodnow. Van Riper (1984: 209) argue that Wilson and Goodnow's ideas do not correspond to a dichotomy. Waldo (1948: 108), Appleby (1949: 16), Golembiewski (1977: 9), and Caiden (1984: 60) also have same views. Rabin and Bowman (1984: 4) content that the distinction between politics and administration identified by Wilson and Goodnow had been converted by thirties authors into a dichotomy. Martin demonstrates the thinking of the thirties as follows:

In the atmosphere provided by scientific management, a mechanistic concept of public administration came to prevail widely and in important circles. Administration was separated severely from the legislative body.... Politics was anathema-not the politics practiced by administrators, but the politics of the politicians (1952: 667).

According to Caiden (1984: 60-1), in the thirties, there was a narrower conception of administration as being the management of organizations without regard to purpose, persons, or objectives, that is a generic science of management. Because of the purpose and methods of the two spheres were different, not only could administration be taken out of politics, but politics could be taken out of administration. Thus, the dichotomy model and the scientific practice of administration became the dominant modes of inquiry in this time. Demir and Nyhan (2008: 83) note that the politics-administration dichotomy sought to minimize politics in public administration by prescribing expertise, neutrality, and hierarchy. This values more than of all was insisted in the thirties.

Van Riper (1984: 209-10) also argued that between, 1910 and 1950, there did in the literature and practice of public administration a kind of distance between politics and administration. The need for a sharp division was justified to permit scientific methods to be established, and these methods both closed off administration to the untrained politician and at the same time made the administrator an expert who was above politics. In Gulick's view, the politics and administration were differentiated not in terms of principle, but in terms of specialization and the division of labor. He noted:

The reason for separating politics from administration is not that their combination is a violation of a principle of government. The

reason for insisting that the elected legislative and executive officials shall not interfere with the details of administration, and that the rank and file of the permanent administrators shall be permanent and skilled and shall not meddle with politics, is that this division of work makes use of specialization and appears to give better results than a system where such a differentiation does not exist. (cited by Waldo, 1948: 124)

Summarizing such views, It should be said that the dichotomy model was not a direct idea identified by founders of public administration but a transformation of those ideas to make them part of the mechanistic approach that dominated in the twenties and thirties. The idea of strict separation (dichotomy model) was part of scientific management and the principles of administration that abandoned starting 1940 and replaced by ideas that emphasized interaction between politics and administration.

3. Interaction between policy and administration

Although in the thirties some of authors such as Gaus, White, and Dimock had been arguing that administrators should have a role in policymaking, but During the 1940s the dichotomy dominated the field of public administration. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, The politics-administration Dichotomy was increasingly criticized, came under attack and was rejected by many authors. Waldo (1948: 128) reviewed the extensive literature of the issue and concluded that any simple division of government into politics and administration is inadequate. He noted:

As the 1930s advanced, doubt and dissent increased. In the 1940s refutation and repudiation came to the fore. By the 1950s it had become common to refer to the politics administration dichotomy as an outworn if not ludicrous creed (1987: 93).

We can see the most criticism in Appleby's work. In "Policy and Administration" (1949), Appleby identified politics as everything having to do with the government and everything the government does. Thus, he concluded, administration could indeed not be no part of it (1949: 3). In Appleby's view, it is impossible to draw a meaningful institutional distinction between politics or policy and administration. Any issue dealt with in the hierarchy of government is regarded as policy by those who operate below the level at which it is settled, and as administration by those operating above that level. If an issue becomes more controversial, it will rise in the hierarchy and, thus, will be seen as policy by a greater number of functionaries and as administration by a smaller number of functionaries. Appleby noted that in the perspective of an outside observer or the public administration theorist, policy and administration are treated together at every level (1949: 22). Thus, whether an issue is policy or administration becomes completely relative; policy and administration are only two sides of the same coin,

and there is no use in speaking about them as two distinct governmental functions. Appleby concluded that public administration is not autonomous, exclusive or isolated but is policy making nonetheless (1949: 170). He also did draw a horizontal line between partisan politics and other forms of politics:

Everything having to do with the government and everything the government does is political, for politics is the art and science of government. But in terms of mass, only a small part of politics is partisan (1949: 153).

In the 1960s the role of administrators in policy-making process emphasized because of governments was increasingly troubled by complex social, economic, and security problems such as civil rights and poverty. This tendency was strong then in the 1970s, when the Vietnam War, Watergate, and the energy crisis all had an impact on the balance between politics and administration. Because of the political nature of administration was highlighted, and the dichotomy denounced as false, many believed that administrators should actively apply their personal values and judgments to policy-making (Yang & Holzer, 2005: 116). One of reasons for rejecting separation of politics-administration was due ethical considerations that were evident in the New Public Administration (NPA). Frederickson (1976), with aware of the need of public organizations to administrative values such as efficiency and economy, emphasized that values such as equity, ethics, responsiveness, participation, and citizenship should be considered. He argued that this democratic values should be executed by administrators as responsible individuals. Administrators for the first time were asked to utilize their personal value judgments in public decision-making. Therefore, politics and administration could not to be separate of each other.

4. Return to the dichotomy: separation of policy and administration

Some of authors believe that in the 1980s observe a return to the dichotomy with emphasize on privatization, decentralization and productivity (Uveges & Keller, 1997). This return continued in the 1990s under the Reinventing Government and the New Public Management (NPM) Movements. The Reinventing Government by emphasize on need to change administrator's role from rowing to steering reincarnated the dichotomy in five ways: distinguishing between policy and management, extending it from the inner workings of government to the body politic, freeing administration from political controls in the form of red tape, redefining accountability, and specifying congressional action as politics and presidential action as management (Carroll, 1995). Separation policy-making of policy-implementation also supported by the New Public Management. Hughes, one of the NPM proponents, notes:

Public organizations do things; governments now want to know what they do; how well they do it; who is in charge and taking responsibility for results. The primary way of achieving this is to let the manager manage. Meaning that senior manager would themselves

be responsible for the achievement of results rather than being an administrator.... Disaggregate anion means splitting large department into different parts by setting up agencies to deliver services for a small policy department.... In some ways disaggregation could be seen as a reversion to the ideas of Woodrow Wilson with an organizational split between policy and administration in the division of policy departments and agencies (Hughes, 2003: 62-5).

According to Christensen and Laegreid (2001: 96-101) The economic way of thinking in NPM points to an almost generally accepted axiom that it is more efficient to separate political and administrative functions than them integrated, as traditionally has been the case in most countries.

The argument is that a division between these functions makes it clearer that they are different functions with different actors that is the politicians should set the goals and the civil servants implement the policies. They believed that One argument in favour of a sharper division between politics and administration is that an integrated solution makes politicians vulnerable to influence and pressure from civil servants, that civil servants threaten to invade the political sphere and that a stricter separation of functions makes it easier to control the civil service. The Slogan let the managers manage, meaning discretion for managers and boards and not too much daily interference from the political leaders. The implication of this slogan is that chief executives are better at managing and therefore should be given the discretion and opportunity to do so, thereby reducing the burden on the political leadership and, through a sharp division between politics and administration, increase political control. Christensen and Laegreid argued that through devolution and contracting, NPM has sought to separate policy-making more clearly from policy administration and implementation. Policy –makers make policy and then delegate its implementation to managers and hold them accountable by contract.

5. Reconceptualization of dichotomy: two dichotomies

In recent two decades, some of authors have critic to the classical conceptualization of the politics-administration dichotomy and attempt to reconceptualize it. Montjoy and Watson (1995: 232-3) Argue that some of Wilson's statements certainly do advocate a separation of politics and administration, but what would mean in practice depends upon the definitions of the key terms. They point out that Wilson actually dealt with two different types of politics, one focused on partisanship and patronage, the other on policy making. Wilson Clearly wished to separate patronage politics from administration and Whether he advocated a dichotomy of policy making and administration is another issue. Regardless of what he wrote in *The Study of Administration*, the implications of his later work are unavoidable: administrators were politicians; they must have the freedom to make ethical decisions.

Montjoy and Watson believe that much of the confusion about politics and administration comes from Goodnow. They ask that was Goodnow's dichotomy between politics and administration or between policy making and administration, or were politics and policy making interchangeable for him? They offer an interpretation of Goodnow's work based on the assumption of two dichotomies: a conceptual dichotomy between policy and administration and an institutional dichotomy between politics and administration. Montjoy and Watson assert that Goodnow used both "politics" and "policy" to refer to the expression of the popular will and "administration" to refer to the execution of that will. They ask Does politics mean patronage or does it mean policy making, or are the three concepts indistinguishable? They argue that the answer may lie in the definition of politics that Goodnow offers in the beginning of *Politics and Administration*:

The act or vocation of guiding or influencing the policy of a government through the organization of a party among its citizens--including, therefore, not only the ethics of government, but more especially, and often to the exclusion of ethical principles, the art of influencing public opinion, attracting and marshalling voters, and obtaining and distributing public patronage, so far as the possession of offices may depend upon the political opinions or political services of individuals (Goodnow, 1900: 19).

Montjoy and Watson content that this statement yields two important points. First, politics is definition ally limited to that part of the policy-making process, the act or vocation of guiding or influencing the policy of a government, which is accomplished through a particular method, the organization of a party among its citizens. Second, the application of that method explicitly includes patronage. They conceive of Goodnow's expression of the public will as the entire policy-making process, including elections. Politics is that part of the process related to political parties. Therefore, they state, we are left with two dichotomies. The first is conceptual, dividing the functions of government into the expression of a will and the execution of that will. The second is operational, the doctrine that the filling of administrative offices (those primarily concerned with execution of the will) should not be used by candidates to attract support in the contest for electoral offices.

Another argument about reconceptualization of the politics-administration dichotomy has been done by Overeem. Overeem (2005: 318-22) draw a distinction between two types of politics: "partisan politics" and "policy politics" and state that in these two different types of politics, the stakes are different. In "partisan politics" the stakes are the powers to make decisions (votes and offices), whereas in "policy politics" the stakes are the contents of those decisions. Public administrators can have an involvement in the latter, but not in the former. In brief, public administrators cannot (and should not) be excluded from the kind of politics that is inherent to policy-making, but they can (and should) be excluded from politics that has a more partisan character. Overeem explain that in its mid-twentieth century reconceptualization, the politics-administration dichotomy was not so much

thickened in its intensity as it was broadened in its scope. The Dichotomy's critics suggested that its intention had been to keep administration not merely out of (partisan) politics, but out of the making of policy as well. Often, the dichotomy's critics took what had been conceptualized as a contrast between politics and administration for the parallel, alternative, and occasionally synonymous dichotomy between policy and administration. Indeed, the two dichotomies were more and more taken as synonyms. Overeem conclude that public administration contrasts with two dichotomy: 1) politics-administration dichotomy and 2) policy-administration dichotomy. He assert that later should be rejected but former should be accepted.

6. New trends: complementarity of politics and administration

We will finish our argument with focus on a new model about politics and administration relationship that named the Complementarity Model. Svava (2001: 179-80) explain that the complementarity Model of politics and administration is based on the premise that elected officials and administrators join together in the common pursuit of sound governance. Complementarity entails separate parts, but parts that come together in a mutually supportive way. Complementarity stresses interdependence along with distinct roles; compliance along with independence; respect for political control along with a commitment to shape and implement policy in ways that promote the public interest; deference to elected incumbents along with adherence to the law and support for fair electoral competition; and appreciation of politics along with support for professional standards. Svava believe that Complementarity recognizes the interdependence and reciprocal influence between elected officials and administrators. Elected officials and administrators maintain distinct roles based on their unique perspectives and values and the differences in their formal positions, but the functions they perform necessarily overlap.

The figure of bellow show different parts of Complementarity Model. The first part is the political dominance that results from high political control and low administrative independence is the condition that has been attacked by reformers from the Progressive Era to the present because of their concern for loss of administrative competence and the potential for political corruption. The second part is Bureaucratic autonomy that is feared by critics of the administrative state, who argue that administrators are self-controlling and advance agency interests rather than the public interest. In both situations, Svava explain, either the level of control or independence is extreme, and the key reciprocating value is not present: Politicians do not respect administrators, or administrators are not committed to accountability. The third part is the combination of low control and low independence, producing a "live and let live" attitude among officials. Svava believe that the dichotomy model, which is based on totally separate spheres, would logically fit in this category.

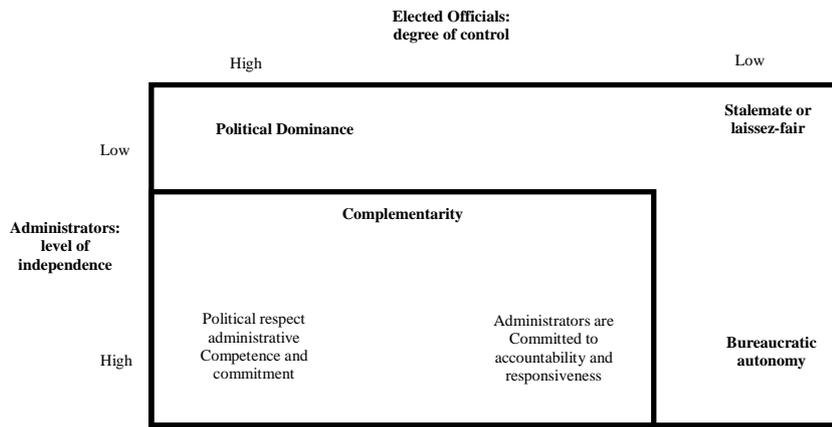


Figure1. Understanding the interaction between Politicians and Administrator (Svara, 2001, 180)

The final part that is the largest space in figure is the zone of complementarity. Svara argue that most interactions among officials reflect complementarity, and evidence from local governments in 14 countries supports this generalization. Although in earlier times there was greater emphasis on subordination of administrators linked to greater reliance on hierarchy as an organizational principle, interdependence and reciprocal influence are common and longstanding. A condition that presumably was common earlier in the century, high accountability and moderate independence, would fit in the upper-left corner of the complementarity quadrant, whereas recent experience with moderate control and extensive administrative initiative would be in the lower-right corner.

Svara assert that Complementarity Model entails ongoing interaction, reciprocal influence, and mutual deference between elected officials and administrators. Administrators help to shape policy, and they give it specific content and meaning in the process of implementation. Elected officials oversee implementation, probe specific complaints about poor performance, and attempt to correct problems with performance through fine-tuning.

Conclusions

The purpose of this article was to review literature of the politics-administration dichotomy. In order to, the author’s view about issue on different time periods was argued. The issue of politics and administration is one of the most important issues in public administration as Denhardt introduce dates one of the five main issues in public administration (Denhardt & Baker, 2007: 121).Therefore, that is not to be false if we say that the politics-administration dichotomy is the important part of the public administration identity. Thus, awareness of its history can be effective in properly understand the field of public administration and rightly recognition its problems.

There are a number of reasons why the dichotomy idea has persisted. It is convenient to explain the division of roles in terms of total separation because it is

easier to explain than a model based on sharing roles, particularly since the separation model does not limit the actual policy contributions of administrators in practice. At the same time, the dichotomy idea shields administrators from scrutiny and serves the interests of elected officials who can pass responsibility for unpopular decisions to administrators (Peters, 1995: 177-8). In founders view of public administration, politics and administration should be separated. But, it must be notice that their intention was to remove political interferes of public administration practices. It can be say that founders never clearly rejected the role of public administrators in policy making. They simultaneously emphasized on separation and insulation of administrators from political interference, on one hand, and interaction and incorporation of administrative contributions in the design and the implementation of public policy, on the other hand. Wilson and Goodnow as founding fathers of the field never advocated the dichotomy attributed to them (Golembiewski, 1977; Rabin and Bowman, 1984: 4; Rohr, 1986: 31; Van Riper, 1984: 209-10), It was after them and under the scientific management and the principles of administration movements that separation policy-making of policy-implementation favored and accepted. Under this movements the strict version of separation was formed.

After the classic public administration and under the new public administration approach and because of need to values such as equity, ethics, responsiveness, participation, and citizenship the role of administrators in policy-making was emphasized. In this time, Because of the political nature of administration was highlighted, and the dichotomy denounced as false, many believed that administrators should actively apply their personal values and judgments to policy-making.

In 80 and 90 decades under the Reinventing Government and the New Public Management Movements observe a return to the dichotomy. Reinventing Government by introduce rowing and steering metaphor emphasized on Separation of policy-making and policy-implementation by freeing administration from political controls and distinguishing between policy and management. NPM, also, through devolution and contracting has sought to separate policy-making more clearly from policy administration and implementation. Policy-makers make policy and then delegate its implementation to managers and hold them accountable by contract.

Nowadays, it is widely regarded both unfeasible and undesirable to keep politics and administration apart and their relationship is presently depicted as complementary rather than dichotomous (Frederickson & Smith, 2003: 15-40; Riggs, 1987; Svava, 1998, 1999, and 2001; Svava & Brunet, 2003). Svava present the idea of complementarity as a conceptual framework that includes differentiation along with interaction as an alternative to the dichotomy. The Complementarity model is based on conditions for maintaining the distinction between politics and administration, while at the same time describing how the two are intermixed and prescribing values for preserving this complex relationship.

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