

# **MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION IN ISLAM**

**Dr. Muhammad A. Al-Buraey**



To: Y. A. B. Dato' Sri Mohd  
Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak  
Deputy Prime Minister of  
Malaysia — to commemorate  
our first meeting @ IKIM on  
1st July 2004.

With best wishes of the  
author:



13/05/1425  
01/07/2004

Kuala Lumpur



# **MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION IN ISLAM**

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# P R O L O G U E

For me reading this book was a backtrack to a golden era of some three to four decades ago, which I fully lived. This was a time of great intellectual confidence, optimism and good will. The United Nations had the audacity to proclaim the 1960s and 1970s as the decades of development. The tenor of the times was very much American: man can take destiny in hand, hold and mold it. There was no reason for any society to suffer pain of social injustice, oppressive privilege, and hopeless poverty. Man was endowed with boundless creativity. Government could do "good" things in fostering a Great Society. The keystone science for its maintenance and progress was Taylorism, application of scientific management.

Almost unconsciously the notion of the social gospel as articulated by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Protestant churches became official policy. One could win Christ's favor only by doing good, which is also very Islamic in deed and action. The ultimate articulation of this policy took place in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the United Nations espoused a redistribution of wealth and providing aid to the "poorest of the poor."

Throughout this period of high idealism, public administration, later called development administration, was given extraordinary importance. Its effective application was essential to social progress. Hence public administration experts, most of them American – but joined by a goodly number of English, French, Dutch and other Europeans – were scattered all over the developing world and into some areas not so

(1)

developing. (See Garth N. Jones, Book Review Essay "Frontiersmen in Search for the 'Lost Horizon': The State of Development Administration in the 1960s," *Public Administration Review* (January/February 1976, pp. 99-119).

A large number of bright intellectuals from developing areas were brought to the United States' universities for advanced education in development administration and allied subjects, especially economics. It was a time of intense cultural exchange. The world of scholarship profoundly changed, along with socio-relationships. My writing a foreword to Dr. Muhammad Al-Buraey's book is a good example. I grew up in the 1930s when the United States' foreign policy was strongly isolationist. Americans were inner-oriented people absorbed with their own peculiar problems of nation building. World War II dramatically changed this world-view, with a lot of innocents such as myself suddenly placed into distant lands. (See Garth N. Jones, "In Search of History: Great Expectations of Development Administration: A Personal Memoir with Apologies to Theodore H. White and Charles Dickens," *Pakistan Administration: A Journal of the Administrative Staff College* 17, no. 1, [January-June 1990], pp. 5-31.)

We were forced to become instantaneous experts in strange cultures. Out of pure innocence, we made mistakes and misjudgments. Our intent was always for the good.

If that time was difficult for me, I often wondered how difficult it must have been for my national counterparts. Development administration was then a quintessentially American concept and endeavor. Americans display a unique competency to create and destroy, almost at will, formal-type organizations. Only highly differentiated societies can produce sufficient goods, services and psychic satisfaction for the good life. From whence does that uniqueness come? Can it be transferred and fostered?

## *Prologue*

I have no adequate answer to these crucial questions. However, this much I am quite certain: Administration as a discipline is "site-specific." Only in gross terms is it possible to treat it in a universal context. From harsh experience I have learned the subject matter is similar to that of agronomy. Although everything may appear to be ecologically comparable, corn grows differently in the corn-belt of the United States than in the agricultural regions of Nigeria. For some reason the roots of corn in the U.S. corn-belt penetrate six or eight feet into the deep alluvial soil tapping reservoirs of water. In Nigeria the roots only penetrate a foot and a half. The water reservoir is very shallow. If irrigated every day, beautiful corn can be grown in Nigeria, but only with a lot of hard work in irrigating nearly every day.

To deal with this plant phenomenon, U.S. agricultural technicians called for plot studies, which was the methodical application of empiricism. I was never able to convince the technical assistance agencies in which I worked to undertake comparable studies in management. Expediency was the rule of the day. There was no need to do any socio-mapping; but then in many host countries it must be acknowledged that this was considered to be a dangerous activity. Social science was a suspect subject, especially if foreign scholars were involved.

What I am trying to say is that development administration is the sensitive operationalization of social science. Although fraught with methodological problems, anthropologists have more to say than any other sort of social scientist on systematic intervention into human affairs. As to my corn example, I once met an Indian Punjabi irrigation engineer who was advising the Nigerian government on the design of an irrigation system. His tool of reference was the Punjab canal manual published in 1890. He was oblivious to the unique African ecology. Obviously his

technical advice had little worth. He was a prisoner of his own time and experience.

I saw the same kind of mistake with my fellow public administration technicians, who with no reservations, whatsoever attempted to install their own manuals on personnel administration, budgetary practice, and organizational design. Public administration principles were treated in universal and mundane terms.

In the early 1970s I underwent a major intellectual crisis. I gained an intense fear of organization, especially that of government. There was good reason. Wherever I traveled, government was failing. My POSDCORB infusions were instrumental in strengthening the power positions of corrupt individuals and groups. I swore to myself that I would never again become involved in technical assistance abroad, unless it could be treated in holistic terms.

Every administration must ask two questions: 1) am I doing the right thing? And 2) am I doing things right? The first question is more important than the second. It has significant policy considerations.

In the year 1980 I was employed under a World Bank contract to prepare the organizational design to relocate two and a half million landless and near-landless people from the densely populated islands of Java, Madura and Bali to 250 transmigration sites located across the Indonesia Archipelago. This was a tremendous humanitarian operation with an over two billion U.S. dollar investment. I asked myself the question: Was this right? My answer was "No." Indonesia with foreign assistance was sowing the seeds for ethnic disaster. Fifteen years later my fear was realized. There are now nearly 800,000 displaced people. My design in organization and management worked very well-too well in fact. The result was terrible "blowback".

This experience reaffirmed to me that religious culture is the most vital aspect to be studied in the discipline of development. For this reason I value highly Al-Buraey's book. As an insider, he examines the peculiarities of organization and management in Islamic culture. It is, indeed, a solid study, drawing upon comparative approaches. As a primer I accept his macro-context and analyses. He makes a strong case against unequivocal application of Western models and thought concerning administrative development. Uniqueness and strengths in an Islamic perspective are thoughtfully and carefully explained. However, it must be recognized that Islam is not a monolithic culture or religion, just as is the case with all the other great faiths. During my professional career abroad, I spent considerable time in Indonesia and Pakistan, the two largest Islamic nations in the world.

Islam as practiced in Indonesia is substantially different from that in Pakistan. I have had little experience in the Middle East, but I have learned of the variety in sects. In Indonesia, for example, there is little controversy between Shiites and Sunnis. There has been evidenced great religious tolerance. All the great religious traditions have converged on the island of Java with remarkable harmony. Java has a surfeit of socio-religious culture.

In my recent studies of Islam, I have discovered gross intellectual inadequacies. The Middle East is over-studied. Southeast Asia is under-studied. Islam in the United States and Europe is scarcely studied, which applies to other regions with sizeable Islamic populations.

Dr. Muhammad Al-Buraey's book essentially falls within Islam's Middle East tradition, and he examines that tradition very well. It would be interesting to see his models applied in other Islamic regions. Then there is also the situation where Muslims constitute sizeable minorities. How do Islamists

accommodate their basic tradition in such a complex socio-religious circumstances? Islam is a missionary religion which is spreading throughout the world. Islamic leaders will make their presence known and felt.

Globalization is the most powerful influence in today's life and social affairs. With it comes drastic social change and transformation in the form of induced formal-type organization, a kind that welds together science and technology into the very social-psychological structure and being. Such transformation is a religious matter, since the soul of society is being impacted. Modern organization as it now stands is essentially an American-Northern European cultural product which reaches to fullest development in the fiction of a corporation located in a pluralistic society. For most of the world's populations, corporations are feared. Yet, ironically, they are the principal way for a high standard of living and a good life.

Twenty years ago I set out to determine why this fear and reluctance to accept this most important social innovation of the last four hundred years. In surveying the impressive skyline of Seoul, South Korea, I categorized the world into six broad socio-religious cultures: Christian, Islam, Hindu-Buddhist, Confucian, Javanese-Malayan, and folk (such as found in the Pacific Basin and black Africa.)

Only in the Confucian culture did I find a strong acceptance of the modern corporation – Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. Catholic countries, especially those in South America, have strongly resisted corporate organizations. There I found the same religious-intellectual concerns as expressed in Dr. Al-Buraey's book, especially as pertains to interest and usury and social justice. All of these societies wanted greater equality and voice in matters that affect their well being. For many individuals living in these societies, Islam proclaims a message of hope for a better life.

## *Prologue*

Development has proved to be a painful process, making the twentieth century one of the most violent in the last one thousand years of recorded time. There must be found an easier way by which to improve the lot of masses of people living under poverty. On this score Dr. Al-Buraey's book is extremely important. It addresses the knotty problem of how to create and manage viable organization in an Islamic setting with the purpose of achieving a full measure of social justice. As the late French philosopher Andres Malraux in his declining years commented: "The twenty-first century will be a religious century or it will be nothing at all." (Indebted to Peter J. Riggs, "Letter to Editor," *First Things: A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life*, no. 87 [November 1998] p. 2).

This is how I read Dr. Al-Buraey's book. Therein is found a meaningful Islamic perspective to the management of organization for the general good.

Garth N. Jones  
Professor Emeritus  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
USA  
November 29, 2001



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# Foreword

The main purpose of this work is to present a developmental perspective different from the prevailing Western one. The author hopes that this point of view will contribute towards the goal of developing a general theory of world development of human societies that presently does not exist. Though the focus of this study is on Islamic views of administrative development, other aspects of development – such as the political and socio-economic – are also discussed.

It is felt by the author and many other scholars of development that the role of Islam in development is consistently pushed aside as irrelevant or, at best, ignored as being inadequate in the existing literature on development. This omission is not only a general characteristic of the academic circles of higher educational institutions, but also of their most learned journals and professional publications. This unfortunate trend is also true of textbooks, reports, and other scholarly literature on development and related fields.

In an effort to bridge this serious gap, the present work tries to show that Islam – as a system and a way of life – is not only compatible with development but also a moving force in its process and realization. Most of the recent turmoil in the Muslim World points in a direction on which many intellectuals agree: a return to the basic

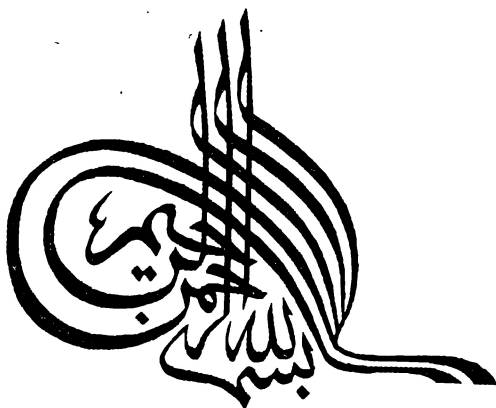
## *Administrative Development*

and pure spirit of Islam as a viable alternative to the failure of both Western and Eastern models of development. The major theme then is that indigenous, Islamic models of administration can achieve developmental goals far better than both 'Western' and 'Eastern' models of development.

While attempting a fresh Islamic outlook on administrative development, this study does not seek to provide the theory or the model of Islam. Rather, it is an Islamic perspective on development with special emphasis on administrative development.

Using the systems concept, the study combines a well-known Western methodology (and technique) with Islamic substance, values, and ethics. The systems model is the most appropriate since it offers a dynamic interaction with the environment. It allows the researcher to view an Islamic administrative model as an integral part of its broader political and socio-economic environments with distinctive conditions, stresses, threats, forces, and influences. These factors tend to define its boundaries and give the ranges of such interaction within which a more plausible explanation of its functioning is attainable.

The study is divided into three major parts. In Part I, 'The Ideology for Development', Chapter 1 gives a comprehensive background and analysis of Islam, as a guiding ideology for development. Chapter 2 discusses man and development and portrays an Islamic view of human nature. In Part II, 'The Environment of Development', Chapter 3 discusses political development, and Chapter 4, socio-economic development. Part III, 'Administrative Development', is the core of the study and contains three chapters. Chapter 5 details the administrative sources in Islam and researches Islamic roots of administration. Chapter 6 analyses the elements and dynamics of an Islamic model of administration with emphasis on its Six P's Version (see pp. 311-313). Finally, Chapter 7 outlines the strategy, implementation, and implications of this model, emphasizing the Islamists' role in the process. Brief concluding remarks, presenting a summary and the direction of future research, complete the study.



*IN THE NAME OF ALLAH,  
THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL .*

Dedicated to my mother and to the memory and soul of my  
father. Also to my uncle Said M. Bana'imah who  
assumed the role of a father after my father's death.

Also dedicated to my Home Country,

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

which sponsored my education from elementary  
stage to the Ph. D.

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*M. A. B.*  
*(Abu Abdullah)*  
*6 Rajab 1410*  
*1 February 1990*



## Introduction

# Islam and Development

Although development has different meanings for different people, one meaning seems generally accepted: development means change. In the Islamic perspective, however, change is not taken for granted – at least not in all spheres of development such as the cosmic universe and the physical and moral laws which do not change over the years. Muslims believe that there is something in the total system of life that does not change and is not subject to modernization. Other things, of course, are expected to change and their development and modernization are encouraged. Thus, it is very important at the outset to thoroughly understand what is subject to change and what is not, from the Islamic point of view. This distinction is the crucial difference between the Islamic and the non-Islamic models and ideals of development.

The discussion below is based on a survey and analysis of most of the Islamic literature<sup>1</sup> on the subject of change.

### **Non-changeable Elements**

First, the elements that constitute the Islamic doctrines, principles, tenets, and articles of faith as well as the ideology that shapes the

'... An outstanding ... study in Islamic administration ... the book should be required reading for anyone interested in Islamic economics.' - *Middle East Studies Association*

'... Fascinating and authoritative book ... will be welcomed by all students of public administration and development ...'  
- *Public Administration and Development*

'From the early documents of the religious leaders, numerous rules for public administrative behaviour and procedure may be extracted, and these are supplemented by the wisdom of Islamic administration. They are brought together, using system approach, to form 'an ideal Islamic administrative model.' The result is the emphasis on the dignity of the individual, social equity and personal growth....'  
- *Richard Chapman, University of Durham*

A professor of management at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, al-Buraey presents an Islamic perspective on management... Many aspects of Islam are examined here, and shown to be not only compatible with development, but also a moving force in its realisation. - *Anthony Hyman, Middle East International.*



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