

Subject: Public Administration
Course: Public Administration: An Introduction
Title of the Module: New Public Administration (NPA)

Introduction

The module presents an account of discussions, deliberations, characteristics, conclusions and impact of three Minnowbrook conferences held in 1968, 1988 and 2008 at Syracuse University. The New public Administration which begins with the Minnowbrook I in 1968 and subsequent conferences contributed the advancement in the discipline of Public administration. There is detailed discussion on all of the stated issues in this module.

Key Words:

Change, Ethics, Equity, Social Equity, Minnowbrook, New Public Administration, New Public Management, Public Administration, Relevance, Values

Beginning:

The New Public Administration (NPA) is a concept evolved to denote the academic advancement took place in the discipline of Public administration as a result of deliberations in first Minnowbrook conferences held in 1968. Rosemary O' Leary states "Minnowbrook stands for the spirit of critical inquiry and an honest examination of the field". The Minnowbrook spirit is still alive and the subsequent conferences held in the year 1988 and recently in 2008 have been enriching the New Public Administration and so the discipline.

The concept of New Public Administration was born because of 'grave happenings and urgent problems' in America during the decade of 1960's. There was 'social upheaval' as lesser privileged (Black Americans) were not been able to avail benefits of the prosperity generated during the 1950's and early 1960's. This social upheaval was coupled with political violence, conflict of US force in South East Asia and declines in the commitment of Americans to their institutions: the family, the church, the media, the profession, the government etc.

Dwight Waldo in his article 'Public Administration in a time of Turbulence' observed that " 1960's was turbulent period besieged by numerous society problems, but public

administration showed no sign of being aware of them, much less being serious to solve them”. While narrating the prevailing state of affairs he stated that “neither the study nor the practice of public administration ... responding in an appropriate measure to mounting turbulence and critical problems of the day”. Robert T Golembiewski also stated that “Public administration was shaken and affected by the turbulent or revolutionary 1960’s. For Public administration, the 1960’s were like war”. It was indeed a ‘turbulent period’ for Public Administration in America.

Further, there was also a deep sense of dissatisfaction among practitioners regarding the existing state of discipline and especially its obsession with efficiency and economy, the salient characteristics of traditional Public administration. The mainstream public administration was preoccupied with management ideas, issues and principles. The objective was to maximize economy and efficiency. The course content and practice of public administration found irrelevant and unuseful to the vital problems of society. Besides, the Public administration in 1960’s in United States come under the influence of younger generations which was dissatisfied with the contemporary status of public administration. The Honey Report and Philadelphia conference highlighted the prevailing restlessness among these young scholars.

It was in this setting, in 1967, Dwight Waldo, the Albert Schweitzer Professor of Humanities of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University with his junior colleagues (H. George Frederickson, Henry Lambright and Frank Marini) organized (first) Minnowbrook Conference at Syracuse University located in Adirondacks on September 3 through, 7, 1968.

Landmarks responsible for the emergence of New Public Administration:

The following landmarks are attributed for the emergence and growth of New Public Administration:

- I. The Honey Report on Higher Education for Public Service, 1967 (USA);
- II. The Philadelphia Conference on the Theory and Practice of Public Administration, 1967(US, Chairman James C. Charlesworth);
- III. Publication of Public Administration in a time of Revolution, 1968 – an article by Dwight Waldo; and

- IV. The Minnowbrook Conference, 1968;
- V. Toward A New Public Administration : The Minnowbrook Perspective, 1971(edited by the Frank Marini);
- VI. Public Administration in a Time of Turbulence, 1971(by Dwight Waldo); and
- VII. New Public Administration, 1980(by George Frederickson).

First Minnowbrook Conference

Minnowbrook is a Maxwell school tradition conceived and initiated by Dwight Waldo. He brought together scholars under the age of 35 to critique the field and to develop ideas for the future of discipline. As already stated the conference was held at Minnow brook, a very small conference centre owned by Syracuse University in the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York. There, actually, is a brook called “Minnow Brook” that runs through the property. The conference centre has a capacity to house 58 people in 28 rooms. It is lonely retreat centre in one of the most beautiful parts of the United States.

Minnowbrook is a tradition of critical self-evaluation that may very well be unique to the field of public administration. It is a spirit of “questioning authority” – asking why our field does what it does – why we study the question we study. The participants (of Minnow) found the field (of public administration) inadequate in its “set of concepts and ideas to explain the modern world of administration” and formulated the ideas of “New Public Administration”, an action oriented perspective that embraced normative inquiry, and advocated for social equity and citizen participation among other issues. (Marini, 1971, Waldo 1980;130). Fifty young scholars had assembled in 1968 under the leadership of D. Waldo to redefine the focus of public administration theory. The objective was to discuss how “public service can better respond to the turbulence and critical problems” at that time.

Most of the participants were young and educated in Political Science. The mood, tone and feeling were contentious, confrontational and revolutionary but theoretical. Rosemary O’Leary is of the opinion that: “**The key word at this conference was ‘relevance’**. Scholars asked if what we were doing and teaching in Public Administration had any relevance to life outside ivory tower”.

Frank Marini and Frederickson summarized the theme of the conference as relevance, anti-positivism, dissatisfaction with the state of discipline, personnel morality and ethics, innovation, improved human relations, reconciling public administration and democracy, client centered responsiveness and social equity. Some of the themes identified in this conference were so relevant that they have become important aspects of the present day public administration. These are:

1. Relevance: The NPA has rejected the traditional concept of efficiency and economy in administration. It stresses that the discipline had little to say about contemporary problems and issues and therefore becoming irrelevant. It was realized that the theme of relevance is more a reinterpretation than an original quest. How? First, the traditional Public Administration is concerned with efficiency and economy and the Public Administration had discovered that it paid lesser attention to the contemporary problems and issues which it ought to be. Second the contemporary scholars considered that management oriented Public Administration curriculum is irrelevant and the need to deal things explicitly with the political and administrative action was felt. Third, the character of the knowledge is also related to the relevance issue. The question that asked was: Public Administration knowledge for what? Is the purpose of Public Administration to facilitate use of administrative knowledge of perpetuation of political power? Obviously question challenged the relevance and therefore new movement (NPA) demanded radical curriculum change to facilitate meaningful studies oriented to the realities of public life to make the discipline and profession relevant one.

Mohit Bhattacharya also opined that “Management oriented public administration curriculum was found irrelevant and the demand was to deal with the political and administrative implications of administrative action”. Hence there was an urgent need to make the discipline socially relevant. In other words, there was a need for meaningful studies focusing on ‘policy issues’ instead of ‘management of agencies’.

The need of relevance identified and understood in the conference changed the public administrative system. While narrating the influence of NPA on public administration Frederickson in 1989 observed that “The field had shifted focus in significant measure from management of agencies to policy issues. The quality of schooling, the effects of law

enforcement.....have become “units of analysis” or “policy issue” at least as important as managerial practices in schools and in the police..... ..departments”. He further stated that “The public policy approach to public administration has flourished and it has had a significant effect on the quality of government”.

2. Value: New Public Administration believes in normative concerns in administrative analysis. It rejected the value neutrality like in behavioural political science and management oriented (efficiency and economy) public administration. The career service bureaucrats are no longer considered to be merely implementer of fixed decisions as they were in the dominant theory of the late 1950's and 1960's; they are now understood to hold a public trust to provide the best possible public service with the cost and benefits being fairly distributed among the people.(Rohr). The NPA movement advocates the openness of the values being served through administrative action. Frederickson observed that “ The New Public Administration is less ‘generic’ and more ‘public’ than his forbear, less ‘descriptive’ more ‘prescriptive’, less ‘institution oriented’ and more ‘client impact oriented’ , less ‘neutral’ more ‘normative’, and it is hoped no less scientific”. Later on he also stated that “Ethics, Honesty, and Responsibility in government have returned again to the lexicon of public administration” thus again emphasized the normative concerns advocated by New Public Administration.

3. Social Equity: It means that public administration should become champion of the under privileged sections of the society and positive discrimination kind of approach/strategy may be utilized to protect and promote the interests of such sections of population in order to ensure social equity in the society. The NPA advocates that the public administration must work for the realization of social equity. Frederickson was of the opinion that “a public administration which fails to work for changes which try to redress the deprivation of minorities will likely to eventually used to repress those minorities”. Therefore, New Public Administration calls the ‘bureaucrats to become an instrument for achieving social equity’.

Consequently “Social equity has been added to efficiency and economy as the rationale or justification of policy positions. Equal protection of the law has come to be considered as important to those charged with carrying out the law (public administrators) as it is to those elected to make the law”. Thus the concern for social equity has become an objective of public

administration under NPA and the responsibility to ensure it has not been left to the public administration alone rather entrusted to the State as a whole.

4. Change: It is considered that the government agencies have often outlived their purpose and public expect a change. Increments of growth and decrements of decline have come to have more equal weight in the lexicon of the public administrator. Therefore, the government must take appropriate measure to get rid of those programmes which are undesirable and initiate the required one as a principle/norm.

Frederickson observed that “Change, not growth, has come to be understood as the more critical theoretical issue”. A responsive government ‘grows’ when need emerges and ‘declines’ when a service of an agency not critically required. Frederickson observed that “Managing change, not just growth, is the standard for (measuring) effectiveness”. He, further, observed that “Effective public administration has come to be defined in the context of an active and participative citizenry”. Besides this, it has been realized that “The implementation has acquired a centre stage in an administrative process of an organisation. It has replaced the decision making considered to be highly significant during 1950’s and 1960’s. The implementation has become important due to the fact that it is a difficult challenge to carryout decisions.

The scholars also challenged the correctness of the rational model of organization and the usefulness of the strict concept of hierarchy professed in public administration. Thus, NPA emphasizes the public administration to be free from enslavement of the redundant and outworn administrative institutions. At the same time, it suggests appropriate innovations to be effective for the fulfillment of contemporary societal needs.

The ideas and contents of Minnowbrook conference received wider recognition and three works: *Toward a New Public Administration: The Minnowbrook Perspective* (1971) edited by Frank Marini and *Public Administration in a time of Turbulence* (1971) edited by Dwight Waldo and *New Public Administration* by George Frederickson(1980) were produced based on what had been discussed in the conference.

The Minnowbrook conference I is credited to bring a new era in public administration characterized with relevance, values, social equity and change. Besides this the issues like public interest and relating administration with ‘political’ had acquired prominence in the discipline. Narrating the positive effects of NPA, Mohit Bhattacharya states that “Its positive value lies in

bringing public administration closer to political science. In fact, the movement has been successful in integrating public administration with the basic concerns of political theory". He further states that " The client oriented, normative and socially conscious public administration, as advocated by new movement, is of direct relevance for the third world countries as well, where public administration is dire need of de-bureaucratization and basic qualitative transformation". **However, the New Public Administration was criticized as anti theoretic, anti positivist and anti management.**

The Minnowbrook Conference –II (1988)

There had been significant changes in 20 plus years since Minnowbrook-I in the settings of the American public administration. Frederickson observed that "Since the public was unable to be effective at changing government, some simply concluded that it is better to have less of it". The era of positive government – "which stimulated rapid sub urbanization, the stringing together of American cities with a national network of freeways, and the growth of schools and hospitals for the baby boom" of late 1960's and 1970's has given way to the regulatory state. The United States has witnessed more governance in place of directly performing government, more privatization and contracting out, more volunteerism, and more third - party government. The values of public purpose had receded to pave way to the value of private interest (Frederickson 1989). The period has also witnessed the prevalence of the homelessness and poverty and those have become serious problems for the U.S. once again. Further, the discipline of public administration has become much larger, interdisciplinary, analytically and theoretically sophisticated.

The second conference includes many individuals who have been trained in policy analysis and policy studies, economics, planning, urban studies, and law. The conference was practical in comparison to the previous conference, which was radical and confrontational one. The themes like *ethics, social equity, human relations, reconciling public administration and democracy and general concern for the academic field* were retained and deliberated and that has provided continuity in intellectual interest. The themes such as *leadership, constitutional and legal perspective, technology policy and economic perspectives* come up for the first time (or not so significant in first conference) and made the conference unique in its own.

The Minnowbrook II which was held in September, 1988 was attended by sixty scholars and practitioners, all belonging to policy sciences as much as history, economics, sociology, political sciences and public administration. The scholars who attended the 1988 conference came from a background and context far different from those of their other colleagues. The themes developed at 1988 largely focus on the current and future vision in the field of public administration.

The purpose of Minnowbrook II was not only to facilitate a general examination of the future of Public Administration but also to determine whether important differences exist between people who entered public administration in the 1960's and those who entered in 1980's. Frederickson has made a comparison of the two conferences on certain counts and summarized form of that is presented here.

1. The number of female participants were 14 in II where as it was only one in I.
2. Minorities were less attracted to public administration in 1988 than they were in 1968.
3. Almost the 1960's entire group were in their 30's at the time of Minnowbrook I but many of them were in their 40's or early 50's having entered in public administration after working in other occupations in Minnow-II.
4. At Minnowbrook I almost all the participants were educated in political science but on the other hand at Minnowbrook II individuals trained in policy analysis and policy studies, economics, planning, urban studies and law.
5. The mood, tone, and feeling of two conferences were different. It was **contentious, confrontational and revolutionary** in 1968 whereas it was **more civil and more practical** in 1988. It was anti behavioural in dialogue in 1968 but 1988 it was more receptive to the contributions of behavioural science to public administration. However, both conferences were theoretical.
6. The 1968 themes were summarized by Frank Marini and Frederickson as relevance, anti positivism, dissatisfaction with the state of discipline, personal morality and ethics, innovation, improved human relations, reconciling public administration and democracy, client centered responsiveness and social equity. The 1988 also included many of the

same themes, most particularly **ethics, social equity, human relations, reconciling public administration and democracy and concern for the state** of the field. However, several 1988 themes were not as prominent as they were in 1968, notably **leadership, constitutional and legal perspectives, technology, policy and economic perspectives**. Unlike the first conference, Minnow II made a conscious effort to conclude, to summarize, to integrate and to compare.

Guy summarized the deliberations of the conference under eleven themes, five of which were the legacy of Minnowbrook I and other six focused on the current and future visions of the field. These are:

1. The concerns for social equity that predominated at Minnowbrook-I are largely at peace now.
2. The papers and deliberations advocated a strong consensus about democratic values, like ethics, accountability and leadership, in public administration and the centrality of public administration to promote those values.
3. The debate between the normative and the behaviourist perspective has not diminished. The discussion on paradigmatic issues in field emphasized how to get the anticipated objectives in public administration. But, Guy states that “As a field, public administration is still in disagreement about how to get there”. She believes that “people are able to attend to issues longer and think harder about them when information is presented in the context of emotion, because it serves as a hot dressing emphasizing the issues in question”.
4. Diversity in society and in the work force was accepted as a basic value among participants at Minnowbrook II. The diversity was identified in three main contexts, viz.: the issue of **Generalists vs Specialists; Social, Ethnic, and Sexual** diversity; and **Gender** diversity. Guy observed that, “The gender diversity issue was one that was clearly a 1980’s interpretation”. In other words, the feminist theory has started to influence the literature of bureaucracy and managerial decision making during the decade and therefore it has also affected the discussions there in the conference. The Minnow Brook II has in real sense reflected “the beginning traces of a more heterogeneous work force, at least from the gender dimension”.

5. The tone of Minnow Brook II was one of constrained hopefulness. Mary Ellen Guy states: “Government is no longer seen as the train on which people want to ride”. The public servants were considered “more as conservators than as change agents” and “privatization was accepted in many of those fields, erstwhile considered to be in the domain of the government or public administration only.

Holzer states : “Society increasingly looks to the private and not for profit sectors to help to solve collective problems. Public Administration must exercise leadership in restoring the centrality of government in collective problem solving as a means of preserving constitutional values, as a way of countering values, as a way of countering parochialisms, and as an avenue for gaining the confidence of sometimes condescending corporate and political critics”. Thus the role of private sector in societal life was accepted the centrality under the leadership of government but with normative concerns.

6. One of the discussion groups brought the idea that “Rules of the road” must be followed in public administration. It means that the ‘visions’ in public administration needs to be of “near future” instead of “meaningful long term” one. The group advocated it on two grounds: First such vision are constrained and judged as more realistic and second it is immensely lesser problematic as the public administration performs in complex environment and it “is neither reasonable nor perhaps even possible” to work with long term vision.

7. The participants were reluctant to accept that focus on certain issues is in far greater details in other disciplines (like Human development, social psychology, economics, engineering and perhaps even management) than in public administration. Thus, a professional “ethnocentricity” or parochialism prevailed, indicating that public administration as a field is having a hard time dealing with its interdisciplinary roots.

8. There was strong adverse attitude towards business in the conference. Papers and discussion exhibited a disdainful acceptance of capitalism and business. How best the “business” and “public sectors” can serve the mankind was accepted as the challenge of public administration.

9. The Minnow Brook II also exhibited the concern for more innovative and productive personnel system.

10. There was unwillingness to address technological issues.
11. The politics/administration debate was alive and participants were unwilling to be specific on what the government should do or what it should not do.

In spite of all, the conference could offer little attention to the realities of public administration. It failed to visualize the vision how public service can function at its best with in what promises to be a future declining market share, as the United States faces the reality of a global economy and a changing industrial base”. However, Holzer states : “Given the pragmatism evident as Minnow Brook II, one might also conclude (however reluctantly) that a new realism might more effectively serve the public and public sector for the next two decades”.

Mary Timmey Bailey observed that “In contrast to Minnow brook I, which challenged Public Administration to become proactive with regard to social issue, “Minnow II retreated from an action perspective to cerebral examination of democracy, ethics, responsibility, philosophy and even economics. Finally, Mary Ellen Guy states that “the discipline of Public Administration is on a stable footing”. The discipline “seems to be at peace with its core values and its sense of relevance and purpose”. It has also accepted democratic values and has accorded pre-eminent attention to the issue of social equity.

Minnowbrook III

The public administration and governance has witnessed many challenges and changes after Minnowbrook II. The notable among those are:

1. The New Public Management (NPM) approach to governance, a normative conceptualization of public administration has emerged.
2. The publication of Reinventing Government by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) – redefined the functions of the Government and favoured an “Entrepreneurial Government” for bringing radical changes with the focus on de-bureaucratization, democratization, and decentralization of the administrative processes in the interest of the citizens.
3. The process of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalized has made the Public Administration as ‘Enabler’ or ‘Facilitator’.

Thus, there were extraordinary changes in the world in the last 20 years or so and it is argued that public administration is reasserting its role and leading the way in addressing cotemporary problems. Therefore the mission of Minnowbrook III was to “critique the current state of public administration public management and public service today and examine the future of the field”. The conference was held on 3-7 September 2008 and coordinated by Rosemary O’Leary a distinguished Professor at Syracuse University and on the theme of ‘**The Future of Public Administration, Public Management and Public Service around the World**’. It was held in two phases and at the same venue, i.e., the Department of Public Administration, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

The first phase, a ‘**pre conference workshop**’ was attended by 56 new scholars at the original Minnow Brook conference site at Blue Mountain Lake, New York. The second phase was a larger and more traditional conference at Lake Placid, New York and attended by 220 participants from 13 countries. The papers/ articles of both phases are published in a book titled: “**The Future of Public Administration Around the World: The Minnowbrook Perspective**” edited by Rosemary O’Leary, David Van Slyke and Kim in 2010.

The important themes deliberated at the conference were:

1. The changes taken place in the field of Public Administration since 1968.
2. Optimism to draw theoretical and empirical paradigms based on the experiences of working with market oriented New Public Management practices since last thirty years and especially in the present collapsed market context.
3. Assessing influence on the development of a core theoretical base of public administration as a result of inter disciplinary interactions initiated since Minnowbrook I.
4. Examining the impact of network governance and collaborative public management on the public administration, public management and public service.
5. Understanding the role of globalization in the study and practice of public administration, public management and public service.

The Minnowbrook, accepted as the spirit of critical inquiry which is related to the question “what is the importance and relevance of what we do”?, a “key theme that came up over and over again at Minnow brook III”. There was a desire for the field of public administration “to make a positive difference in the world in a very concrete way” states Rosemary O’Leary. Beth Gazley and David Van Slyke state that “Every participant viewed the Minnow brook III experience as an opportunity to raise questions about the relevance of the field or recommending a better integration of public administration research with social sciences, management, law and other disciplines”

The focal areas of the conference were:

1. Academic –practitioner relations;
2. Democratic performance management;
3. Financial management;
4. Globalization/comparative perspectives;
5. Information technology & management;
6. Law, politics and public administration management;
7. Leadership;
8. Methods/interdisciplinary; networks; performance measurements;
9. Public administration values and theory;
10. Social equity & justice; and
11. Transparency and accountability

1. Academic –practitioner relations:

How the academic field of public administration is connected with the world of public administration practice. The issue was taken up at the Minnowbrook I, revisited in II and one of the dominant theme of Minnowbrook III. It will also persist further, opined Bushouse et. al. They consider that “there will always be two Pas”, however, “the divide between them might narrow over time”. This divide can be bridged by various means (like connecting research to practice etc.) and it can be best measured in terms of the impact of scholastic knowledge of the discipline on the practitioner and the practice of Public Administration. The scholars suggested that

publishing summaries of research, creating open access online journals, establishing learning communities etc will help in connecting research and practice in the field.

It has also been suggested by Bushouse and others the future research in the field should more closely examine the extent to which the research actually impacts practice and how the research can be made more useful for practitioner. Therefore, there is need to create appropriate links to connect academics (theory) and practitioners (practice) in order to ensure the relevance and legitimacy of public administration with in academic and the larger world.

2. Democratic performance management:

The participants of Minnowbrook III “agree on the merit of an approach to public accountability that includes market based efficiency, programme performance, and law based democratic values such as equity and transparency”. Finally, an approach which is directed to achieve efficiency, effective and defensible public service delivery and that is also within the framework of constitutional democracy is required.

3. Financial Management:

The financial resources are life blood of public organizations. The financial resources determine the effectiveness of public service delivery networks, performance, entrepreneurial activities and to undertake reforms. Besides, “the Governments around the world are taking on unprecedented levels of debt, ownership of previously private industry (not so now in India) and other financial risks and responsibilities”. Thus, there is centrality of financial resources in the Government’s functioning. But, the financial resources not managed in a way. These should be managed and therefore resulting in financial resources, the scholars at the conference deliberated that public financial management (PFM) receives little attention outside the PFM subfield Kioko et. al. found that except some note worthy exceptions , “research on PFM’s traditional concerns – government accounting and auditing , debt policy and management, revenue forecasting ,tax administration, public procurement, and others- rarely appears in the mainstream PAM outlets. To a large degree, the opposite is also true. Many PFM specialists relegate the political, organizational and institutional context of their own work to the periphery.” It has created a disconnect between public Administration and Management and the management of public financial resources in public administration management has remained underappreciated or

unrecognized. Therefore, “ the key concerns accounting and financial reporting, auditing, fiscal policy making , cost analysis, cash management and others can inform some of PAM’s classic and contemporary questions”.

4. Globalization/comparative perspectives:

Globalization has its impact both on the theory and practice of public administration. It is well accepted now that every policy issue, domestic, national and international, cannot be confined to the national boundaries. Therefore, the issue was examined as Public Administration with a Global Perspective (PAGP). The PAGP is oriented “to advance knowledge building, address practical issues, improve public administration education, and ultimately, increase the relevancy of the field.” It also emphasizes “theory building that bridges “particularism” and “universalism” attending to observation in specific ethnic, cultural, and political contexts, while at the same time looking for greater explanatory power, wider practical implications, informed policy learning and transfer”. The aim is to serve global community, achieving higher theoretical acceptability and better satisfy practical demands in diverse and specific contexts. It is believed that “adopting a global perspective will make the field of public administration more relevant and vibrant in the quickly globalizing world”.

The PAGP “addresses the transnational connectedness, interdependence, and complexity of the field.” It is viewed as an approach and not desiquated to offer “a comprehensive theory” to “unity the study” or “a central democratizing concept”. It aims to redefine the scope of Public Administration to be globally relevant in our activities of teaching, research and services. The PAGP will be useful in developing practical and acceptable global public politicize and encourage the innovation and diversity of Public Administration practices.

Therefore, Minnowbrook III advocates to move field toward Public Administration with a Global Perspective (PAGP) in order to ensure discipline’s teaching, research and engagement more relevant to the changing reality of globalization. This kind of need is attributed to the fact that major policy issues cross national boundaries and can be better understood addressed with a global perspective.

First, we readily recognize that public administration both as an academic discipline and as a field of professional practice, has made tremendous strides in the last several decades and

we have aggregate hope for the future of the field. Earlier conferences kept them confined to the knowledge and experience focused on United States which has not been fair for the process of building theories based on global experiences and different cross cultural settings definitely offer great explanatory power, have higher acceptability, and are more responsive to the demands in diverse and specific contexts”.

The conference also encouraged a renaissance of comparative studies as the world has become increasingly interdependent. The essence of comparative approach is context sensitivity, that is, awareness that institutional and cultural context matters and should be incorporated in research. Contributions of this approach are practical for meeting curriculum needs, and theoretical in making research more rigorous, revealing underlying, often US oriented assumptions and exploring alternative contexts.

6. Law, politics and public administration management:

The Public Administration and its relationship with management and Law have been debated in all the three Minnowbrook conferences. In other words, the conflicts values of efficiency and performance viz.-a-viz. legal and democratic values such as accountability equality and transparency were debated by the scholars in prevailing context. The Minnowbrook III which has taken place in the environment of Market based reforms of New Public Management, emphasized the value of efficiency and performance in Public Administration. The values like legal and democratic mores such as accountability, equality, transparency, representativeness and values plurality receive relatively lesser emphasis. Many scholars found evidence that market based reforms continue to highlight the enduring relevance of the law/management tension in public administration research and practice. This state of affairs is “leading to crises of accountability, legitimacy and even harm to those most vulnerable in society” and “threatens to erode much to the democratic constitutional foundation upon which government rests”. Minnowbrook III like earlier Minnowbrooks did little to resolve it and it cannot be resolved “until scholars and practitioners pursue a more integrated approach”.

7. Leadership:

Getha-Taylor et.al. opine: “A central theme across all three Minnow brook gatherings has been the development of public administrators who truly makes a difference ,

who act as “agents of change” to transform public problems into solutions that reflects a commitment to public values”. In other words, there is a need to develop public leadership which is distinct from leadership and which strives for common good, for the purpose of certain public value. The participants in Minnow brook III argued “ for a heightened commitment to the study of public leadership, discuss conceptual challenges and offer propositions to direct future research”. They also emphasized “the development of public leadership capacity among current and future practitioners who answer the call of public service”. Hope that “ PA will take the charge to become the leading voice in public leadership research and practical development.

Getha Taylor et. al. states, “Although the Minnowbrook tradition has called for public administration to embrace their role in producing public value, we believe that public administration has fallen short in its focus on a key area of scholarship integral to accomplishing this goal : the study of public leadership”. Therefore, “The time has come to invigorate the study of public leadership”. The public leadership is distinct from general leadership and meant for the common good and inculcating public value. Therefore, the participants in the Minnowbrook conference advocated the study of public leadership, discuss the conceptual challenges and offer propositions to direct future research on this theme. The conference provided certain propositions relating to the public leadership around the character, the function and the jurisdiction of public leadership.

8. Methods/interdisciplinary; networks; performance measurements:

Nesbit et.al. are of the opinion that the intellectual diversity of Public Administration, both in terms of method and theory, and the public relevance of Public Administration, offer both benefits and costs. Further, the institutional barriers also play an important role in shaping the public administration. But it is the commitment level of the individuals in the field has taken precedence over other factors and therefore the conference (Minnowbrook III) calls for the commitment on the part of scholars in the discipline to become change agents to shape the future intellectual diversity of the field. The scholars are appealed to “just get along” and make much stronger efforts to thoroughly integrate multiple theoretical paradigms across the discipline, the continue to improve the rigor of our work lest we become a discipline with breadth but no depth,

and to embrace the public focus of our research as a way of binding different theoretical approaches and overpowering disciplinary fragmentation.

The diversity in public administration calls for supporting the application of diverse and rigorous methodological approaches, to continue with the theoretical diversity and theoretical depth and promoting relevance (Nesbit et.al. 2011).

Issett and others stated the focus on networks in public administration has grown rapidly in the past decade or so. Further, there have been policy networks (a set of public agencies, legislative officers, and private sector organizations including interest groups , corporations , non profit etc.) collaborative networks (collection of government agencies, non profits and for profits that work together to provide a public good, service or value when a single public agency is unable to provide a public services in the desired qualities), and governance networks (entities that fuse collaborative public goods and service provision with collective policy making) with which public administration has been able to deliver good to its citizens , after adopting the MPM or MPM like practices in governance.

Earlier, Moore (1995) pointed out that government no longer directly creates public “value” rather resorted to “third party governance” in response to the new public management , demand for more governance but less government in addition to many other contemporary factors. But, NPM could not address the problems which do not respect political, disciplinary and industrial boundaries and have become very common in the society. Networks attempt to fill up the insufficiencies of NPM by providing flexible structures, that are inclusive information rich and outside the scope of direct bureaucracy control.

The conference on the future of networks in public administration identified four areas of concern viz.

- i. Other disciplines are farther along in the study of networks than public administration;
- ii. Public administration scholars need to faster close ties with technical disciplines for understanding technical aspects used in method and measures of governance; public administration requires complete meta studies of networks cases; and
- iii. PA scholars need to become more engaged with practitioners.

The performance is an important tool for enforcing accountability in public administration and post 1988 period has witnessed a widespread diffusion of such tools in it. Moynihan et. Al. has observed “that the increasing complexity of governance ----- fundamentally affect both performance regime and governance”. They also found that the difficulties encountered by performance regimes tend to increase as we move away from traditional bureaucracies, towards networks and global governance. Further, the performance regimes have normative concerns. It appears that the traditional public administration is antagonistic toward effort to improve performance. But, it may not be true as 2008. Conference took a different perspective and concludes that performance regime offer in improving governance.

Nevertheless, I (Zhao) disagree with the NPA perspective that public administration should be a proactive advocate for the “ powerless minorities”. In today’s diverse world, we should realize that equity itself is value laden and cultural bounded, and even the definition of minorities is subjective. It is a key political question regarding whose interest to be promoted and to what level, which should be left for collective decision in a democratic society. Public administration should not be the judge of equity. Instead, it should act to reduce the information cost for the choice and access of public services, as a disseminator of practical knowledge, an interpreter of public issue, a clarifier of public preferences, and a facilitator of public interests.

9. Public administration values and theory; social equity & justice:

The advocacy for post positive approach emphasized the need to abandon value free and value neutral research and instead to cultivate an approach emphasizing social equity. Social equity means that Public Administration should become champion of underprivileged sections of the society. .

Social equity’s place within the academic field of public administration is rooted in the first Minnowbrook conference. Since then, “the concern for social equity has grown to the point where it now occupies a firm place within the academics, as well as the world of practice.” However, despite all gross social inequalities prevail all around us.

National Academy of Public Administration (2000, 11) standing Panel on Social Equity in Governance has defined social equity as “the fair, just and equitable management of all

institutions serving the public directly or by contract, and the fair and equitable distribution of public service, and implementation of public policy and the commitment to promote fairness, justice and equity in the formation of public policy.”

Gooden and Portillo state that “the role of social equity in the proceedings of the Minnowbrook III conference was more aligned with its role during the second conference in 1988. Although social equity was self identified as discussion topic by participants at the start of conference proceedings, only out of total 56 attendees actively participated in group discussions on social equity”. This modest level of interest can be optimistically viewed as evidence of great advances that have been made in instilling the concern for social equity as an accepted core value and concern within the field, but as those who participated in the working group on social equity pointed out during the conference, the field should not be so quick to assume that the advances that have been made are sufficient enough for the field to rest on its laurels.”

They were true in the sense as the research in public administration and policy revealed “substantial ethnic and gender based disparities in areas such as housing health care, employment, criminal justice and education.” Therefore, “time for renewed focus on social equity in both the practice and study of public administration” has been felt by Gooden and Portillo.

It is believed that three factors, namely: the need for conceptual clarity of the term social equity; the need for increased attention to social equity in the public administration curriculum; and the need for increased further methodological development in social equity research is essential required for instilling. It is argued by David W. Pitts that “improving social equity will require us to ask difficult empirical questions” as “some programs and policies simply preserve the status quo, whereas others will make social equities even work”. Hence “Policy makers cannot begin to repair these unsuccessful programmes unless we invest in the empirical research that is required to understand what work.” Therefore, “more informed suggestions” in order to accomplish social equity is emphasized.

Lastly, the scholars come out with a definition of public administration and defined it as “a socially embedded process of collection relationships, dialogue and action that promotes human flourishing for all”. But, the definition could not attend the issues like bureaucratic and

democratic ethos, public interest and public value theory, public conflicts, capacity of electoral institutions. In other words, the definition is unable to connect citizens and government.

The Minnowbrook deliberations were summarized by Mathew Crenson in the following words: “Well it might be useful to try to sum up this under two general headings: First, are there any common themes under all this smoke of discussion reported to us; and second are they new?” First, I think there are common themes: Almost every group arrived at the conclusion that there ought to be greater emphasis upon normative concerns in Public administration, whether it should be value neutral or somewhat committed to policies or the value neutrality. That leads to the next question: what sorts of organizations must there be in order for change to be facilitated? Which leads to: what things should organizations respond to in changing, namely, the environment? Others seem to put greater emphasis upon environmental factors, consequences for the environment of things in the organization of administration. The question is, of course, whether there is agreement on all these things, and if there is, whether that is new.

