

REVIEW OF THE BOOK: MARÍA DEL CARMEN PARDO (2014). AN OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN MEXICO. MÉXICO: EL COLEGIO DE MÉXICO (THE COLLEGE OF MEXICO)

Alberto Arellano Ríos*

Maria del Carmen Pardo is a role model researcher in the study and comprehension of problems Mexican public administration faces. With a very simple, clear style and taking our context into consideration, distinctive signature that has as academy The College of Mexico, a collection of works compiled by five texts of her own authorship written between 2010 and 2013 it is offered to us. The chapters included in this work of literature seek to offer an overview of the problems faced by the Mexican public administration and public function.

The texts analyze and describe the public administration profile in accordance with its capacity to design values to a society related to the political Mexican system. This is perhaps the nodal axis that will make the work a referent and mandatory consultation to the extent of separation between politics and administration not situated as an analytical division but a close and constant relationship.

This book is extremely important to the extent that realizes the transformation of the administrative Mexican system in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The public administration profile is analyzed in the first chapter. A socio-historical journey of the administrative structure of the state of Mexico is tried to be given. In this section Maria del Carmen Pardo analyzes the structural features of the Mexican government and its administration.

Del Carmen Pardo pauses to value the civil service and review the bonds of the bureaucracy with the political parties and the civil society. To this effect the political transition to an authoritarian regime towards democracy is taken into consideration. The section itself questions

* Research Professor at El Colegio de Jalisco. Member of the National System of Researchers (SIN) level 1. Doctor in Social Sciences by CIESAS. It works on issues of political change, public policies and local governments.

and points out that the administrative and management reforms implemented by the Mexican governments were short since they were classified into adjustment policies based on economic crisis.

In the next chapter the Mexican public administrations evolution during the XX Century is traced. This section is the most extensive of the five texts compiled integrated in this work of literature; and in this chapter The College of Mexico researcher interweaves the storyline that the Mexican public has become. Maria del Carmen Pardo mentions how important and fundamental the public administration in the development of our country is.

The public role is seen as cause and part of modernization in the Mexican society and its political system. At the same time accounts for the dynamism of the Mexican bureaucracy which develops itself between autonomy and subordination; the local-regional transformations and the central government; the economic dynamics and social changes and in the public areas.

The common thread of exposure of this evolution explanation starts with the ideological display of public administration to later go to the periods of 1940-1960, 1960-1980, 1980-1990, and 1990-2000 and finishes in the decade that goes into this century. The thesis and conclusion reached by Maria del Carmen Pardo in this section is that public administration can be a factor for development as long is seen as part of society, capable of modernizing it, create new practices, new interests and new resistances.

In the third chapter the expert of The College of Mexico endorses a problem rarely considered by governmental studies and represents more interest than other disciplines in Mexico such as anthropology; the autochthonous issue. Under the title of representative bureaucracy, the section seeks to answer the unsolved mystery of why Mexico, a contraire other countries with ethnic diversity, there has not existed a clear effort to consolidate a representative bureaucracy for the indigenous minorities of the country.

The answer to this concern, she discovers the dominant inequality in Mexico. Then plans are made towards bureaucracy models, citizen conditions, and the political representation in Mexico, as well as the nooks and crannies in which mixed race populations have been immersed. The main problem, according to Maria del Carmen, and illustrator of the situation, is also a wakeup call for those who study such discipline, administrative reforms, stimulated and motivated by the New Public Management, had the problem of nurturing a citizen conception that trivializes different citizen segments and it does not allow to consider or value the complexity and diversity in the Mexican culture. In that sense, the central argument of the chapter is critical and reflexive and encourages having a greater theoretical imagination.

Chapter four is entitled more like a question: changes or paralysis in the Mexican public administration? Analyzes the efforts in the administrative reform carried out by the federal governments of Vicente Fox and Felipe Calderon (2000-2010), both were of the PAN (Action National Party). The administrative changes made are valued in the light of the transformations of the government itself. They are seen as background thesis like transactions that try to redistribute power resources. They contrast themselves in their discursive part and their real effects and reaches.

If in Vicente Fox's government there were ambitious proposals presented in terms of a managerial and transcendental reform, Felipe Calderon's was more modest. But the reforms were limited and framed in a managerial aspect because they sought to embed mechanisms and practices of the private initiative in the public administration. Although important, their core limitation was not to think that the administrative reforms must be situated on an agenda of wider and greater magnitude transformation for both political and economical aspects.

Finally, the self-called chapter "The Mexican State: From the intervention to the regulation?" Analyzes the agencies and commissions established by the State for this purpose, its functions, legal regimen, functional composition and when possible, to evaluate its performance. In order to achieve this goal Maria del Carmen Pardo traces the regulatory role of the Mexican State in the market and society. She realizes an historical outline to delve in how the change in the roles of the state took place.

The text stops to delineate the neoliberal model and how the Mexican State is redefined as well as the spheres that still regulates: the naturally competitive markets, healthy areas, security, environment, consumer protection, markets related with both face-to-face and online networks, applicable to financial markets; and institutional areas such as copyright, compliance, dispute resolution, laws in the administrative, civil and legal action area.

The agencies and commissions analyzed are lead to claim that most of them are classified in the figure of decentralized government bodies; their organizational management roles are collegiate; and it is subject to the professional civil service. However, from a structural vision the regulatory role of the Mexican State is still weak. Hence the existence and urgent regulatory need of a State that proves is strong is a longing one still.