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The System of Government and Administration in Sweden and United Arab Emirate: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The need to make study of public administration scientific, motivated scholars to embark on a meticulous cross-national and cross-cultural study of different systems of administration across the world with the aim of exploring the best practices and developing a universal theory of public administration. In line with the above, this study sought to compare systems of government and administration in Sweden and UAE that are both constitutional monarchies. The study used structural functional theory that examines the structure and functions of administrative systems of the two countries. The study explored their similarities and differences using secondary sources of data. Comparative analysis was used in the data analysis. It was found that both countries have dual executive i.e. president and prime minister, even though they operate different systems of government. While Sweden operates parliamentary system, UAE has presidential system of government. Both countries have unicameral legislature. While in Sweden the power to make laws is vested in the parliament, in UAE the legislative body has no constitutional power to make laws. It was also discovered that in Sweden, there is adherence to principle of separation of power while in UAE there is fusion of power regardless of the fact that Sweden and UAE have parliamentary system of government and presidential system of government respectively. The paper concluded that despite of the fact that both countries have dual executive and unicameral legislature, there are so many differences in the ways and manner their institutions operate.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, Constitution, Executive, Judiciary, Legislature, Monarchy,

1.0 Introduction

The need to make study of public administration scientific, motivated scholars to embark on a meticulous cross-national and cross-cultural study of different systems of administration across the world with the aim of exploring the best practices and developing a universal theory of public administration that could be applicable in different administrative systems across the globe. According to Comparative Administration Group (CAG) a discipline can be regarded as scientific on the basis of comparative approach that concerns with the study of different systems of government and administration in order to look at the similarities and differences between and among them, and then observe and test how applicable and workable the theories of public administration are in different countries and cultural settings. In the light of the above assertion, Riggs (1962) views comparative public administration as the theory of public administration applied to different culture and national settings, and the body of functional data by which it can be examined and tested.

Dahl (1947) states that “the comparative aspect of public administration has been ignored and as long as the study of public administration is not comparative, claim for a ‘science of administration’ sounds hollow”. Based on the above academic submissions, this paper intended to conduct a comparative study of the systems of government and administration in Sweden and United Arab Emirate (UAE) by tracing their similarities and differences in respect of structure of government, type of executive, type of legislature, judicial system, and pattern of bureaucracies.

The main objective of this study is to explore these two countries thoroughly to determine the degree of their similarities and differences. Therefore, the study looks at the structure of government and functions of some institutions i.e. executive, legislature, judiciary and civil service of the two countries for comparison.

2.0 Structure of Sweden Government

Sweden is a country in Northern Europe with a total population of about 10.54 million (World Fact book, 2023). The Swedish latest constitution was adopted on 1st January, 1975. Sweden is a Nordic country on the Scandinavian Peninsula and member of the European Union since January 1, 1995. Sweden gained her independence on 6th June 1523, following the election of Gustav Vasa as the king of Sweden which marked the abolishment of the Kalmar Union between Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Sweden is divided in to twenty one counties, and each county is administered by a county Administrative Board appointed by the government. Each county is divided in to municipalities that have municipal government and municipal legislative assembly elected after every four years. Sweden is a representative democracy which means that any political party that receives more than 4% of the votes cast in general election is allocated seats in the parliament. The Sweden capital city is Stockholm (UN, 2006).

The Sweden systems of government, levels of government, arms of government, type of executive, type of legislature, and number of counties are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1

Summary of Swedish Government Structure

Item	Description
System of government	Parliamentary constitutional monarchy
Levels of government	3 levels of government i.e. national, regional and local
Arms of government	3 arms of government i.e. executive, legislature and judiciary
Type of executive	Dual executive i.e. Prime Minister and President
Type of legislature	Unicameral
Number of Counties	21 Counties
Separation of power	There is adherence to the principle of separation of power

Source: Researcher, 2023

2.1 The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is the head of government and exercises executive power. The Prime Minister is appointed by the parliament based on the proposal from the speaker. The Prime Minister then appoints the ministers who are to make up the Government. If an elected member of parliament is appointed as minister, he is substituted for parliamentary duty. Most ministers are members of Riksdag, but politicians without a seat in Riksdag and independent experts with no direct political affiliation may also be appointed to serve in government. The Cabinet members, including the Prime Minister, resign their seats in Parliament while holding Cabinet office. Ministers do not have to be elected to Parliament to serve in the Cabinet.

2.2 The President

The monarch, who occupies hereditary position, is the President and chief of state. He has no political power but represents the country and performs ceremonial duties. The president is not elected through democratic process. He has no executive power.

2.3 The Parliament

The parliament (Riksdag) is the legislative body in Sweden. It consists of 349 members who are directly elected by popular vote on a proportional representation basis to serve four-year terms. The Riksdag's tasks include enacting laws and determining taxes and the central government budget. It is also responsible for examining the Government and the public agencies in Sweden. Legislative proposals can also come in the form of a private member's motion from one or several members of the Riksdag. The Speaker presides over the work in the Riksdag. The Riksdag appoints the Prime Minister on the basis of a proposal from the Speaker.. The Riksdag is responsible for determining central government expenditure and revenue. It does this after the Government has submitted proposals in the Budget Bill as to how the money at the disposal of the central government sector should be used. Once the Riksdag has taken a decision on the central government budget, the Government is responsible for the budget and for implementing the Riksdag's decision (Swedish Government, nd).

2.4 The Judiciary

The Swedish judicial system comprises three types of Courts i.e. General courts, General Administrative Courts and Special Courts. The Courts have independent status constitutionally. The system is based on common laws. The judges of Supreme Court (Hogsta Dom stolen) which is under general courts, are nominated by Board of Judges and appointed by the Prime Minister . The special courts determine disputes within special areas, for example, the Labour Court and the Market Court (UN, 2006).

2.5 Civil Service in Sweden

Sweden has employment civil service system. The employment system regards post in the same way as in the private sector. It has the same employment rules in public sector as obtainable in private sector. There are performance bonuses and supplementary hour's gratifications but. The civil service is structured in accordance with the hierarchical conception in to corps, grades and posts. In this system, the civil servants are specialists rather than generalists. They are recruited based on specific skills and they have no guarantee or security of employment (UN, 2006). The civil service is structured according to a hierarchical conception into corps, grades and posts. This kind of system has the following features;

- i. Recruitment on other positions during the career
- ii. Specific requirements for specific posts
- iii. No age limits on recruitment
- iv. Recognition of previous professional experience
- v. Individual payment
- vi. No automatic salaries progress
- vii. Non-statutory promotion system
- viii. Non-statutory pension system
- ix. Different legislation structure

3.0 Structure of United Arab Emirate Government

United Arab Emirate (Dawlat al-Imarat al-Arabiyya al-Muttahidah) is a country in Western Asia at the Southeast end of the Arabian Peninsula on the Persian Gulf, with a population of about 9.89 million (Worldometers, 2023). The federation got its independence on 2nd December, 1971 from United Kingdom. The UAE federal structure involves a Federal Supreme Council (FSC) made up of seven rulers of the respective emirates, a Council of Ministers and Federal National Council (FNC). The federation is governed by Federal Supreme Council (FSC) of. The seven emirates are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm Al-Quwain, AI Fujairah, Ajman and Ras Al Khaima and have full authority over their territories, i.e., maintaining law and order, provision of public services, development of social and economic standards within the emirate, enforcement of local ordinances, etc. Each emirate is governed by its own ruler, and has its own local governments, courts and police forces (UAE, 2004).

The UAE system of government, levels of government, arms of government, type of executive, type of legislature, and number of emirates are presented in table 2 below;

Table 2

Summary of UAE Government Structure

Item	Description
System of government	Presidential constitutional monarchy
Levels of government	3 levels of government i.e. national, regional and local
Arms of government	3 arms of government i.e. executive, legislature and judiciary
Type of executive	Dual executive i.e. Prime Minister and President
Type of legislature	Unicameral
Number of emirates	7 emirates
Separation of power	No clear separation of power

Source: Researcher, 2023

3.1 The Federal Supreme Council (FSC)

The Federal Supreme Council (FSC) is the highest constitutional authority in the UAE. It is also the highest legislative and executive body. The FSC is composed of their Highnesses the rulers of the seven emirates. Each of the emirs is a hereditary position. The Council is responsible for the formulation of the public policy of the Federation, the ratification of federal laws and decrees, international agreements and

tackling higher control affairs, etc. The rulers of Abu Dhabi and Dubai have veto power in elections for the role of President. The FSC meets four times per year.

3.2 The President

The ruler of Abu Dhabi is the President of the UAE and the head of state. In UAE, the President and Vice President are elected by the Federal Supreme Council (a group of seven electors) for five-year terms. The FSC meets at five-year intervals to reaffirm the existing President or elect a new one (there is no limit on terms). The president appoints a prime minister, a deputy prime minister, and a council of ministers (Majlis Al-Wizara'i) to serve as a cabinet body. The council of ministers consists of 22 members and is also headed by a Prime Minister and it is the executive authority for the federation. Under the supreme control of the President and Supreme Council, it manages all the internal and foreign affairs of the federation.

3.3 The Prime Minister

The ruler of Dubai who is also the Vice President is the prime minister of UAE. The prime minister is the head of government and is elected by the Parliament. The Prime Minister constitutes the cabinet. The Prime Minister appoints the ministers who are to be included in the Government and also determines which of the ministers are to be Heads of Ministries. Together, the Prime Minister and Ministers formed the Government of Sweden and are responsible to the President and the Federal Supreme Council.

3.4 The Federal National Council

The Federal National Council (FNC) is the legislative body (Al-Majlis Al-Watani Al-Ittiahadi) of the federation. It consists of 40 members of which 20 members are appointed by the rulers of their respective emirates and hold all of the council's political power. The other 20 members, who have only advisory tasks and serve 4-year term of office, are indirectly elected by a 6,689-member electoral college whose members are appointed by the emirates. The selection process of the FNC members is left by the constitution to the emirates' discretion. Members are drawn from each emirate based on population and the Council is presided over by a speaker who is elected from among the council's members. The FNC reviews legislation and proposes amendments to it, but it does not have the power to veto laws or to initiate new laws. As such, the legislature is largely a consultative body. The Council, however, does not have the power to examine a proposed legislation and the power to summon and question any federal minister as well as its own members. One of the main duties of the FNC is to discuss the annual budget. The beginning and termination of legislative sessions are determined by presidential decree (UN, 2004).

3.5 The Judiciary

The legal system of the UAE is based on a dual system of Shari 'ah and civil courts. It is a combination of Islamic and common laws. The Federal Judiciary is a constitutionally independent body which includes the Federal Supreme Court which consists of five judges appointed by the president. The Constitution, first written in 1971 and reaffirmed several times since then, declares Shari 'a to be a principle source for law in the United Arab Emirates. Additional influences on the UAE legal system are

the Common Law and Egyptian legal traditions. Custom and tradition are also considered in judicial decision-making. The official language of the courts is Arabic. Civil matters are dealt with by the federal judiciary structure of UAE, although two emirates, Dubai and Ras Al Khaimah, remain outside this structure. The lowest courts in the system are the Courts of First Instance, located in each of the emirates. There is a two-tiered appellate system beyond the Courts of First Instance: the Federal Appeal Court, located in each of the emirates, and the highest court in the structure, the Court of Cassation. This Court, located in Abu Dhabi, serves as the final court of appeal for all cases heard in the lower courts and is also empowered to adjudicate any dispute between courts in the individual emirates. The Court of Cassation has jurisdiction to investigate misconduct by high government officials and to try offenses against the Federation. The Federal Supreme Court judges decide on the constitutionality of federal laws and arbitrate on intra-emirate disputes and disputes between the federal government and the emirates. There are separate criminal and Shari'a courts. While the criminal courts have a separate appeal system, cases heard in the Shari'a Courts of First Instance may be appealed to the Civil Courts of Appeal and the Court of Cassation in Abu Dhabi. The legal profession is governed by Federal Law No. 23 of 1991, which states that only nationals of the United Arab Emirates with appropriate legal qualifications are entitled to appear before the courts as lawyers (UN, 2004).

3.6 Civil Service in United Arab Emirate

The Civil Service Council (CSC) is the technical arm of the Cabinet that caters for the development of the civil service, productivity within governmental organizations and follow-up the executive units in carrying out their stipulated duties. Also the CSC ensures that the *Civil Service Law* is adhered to by the different governmental units.

The Civil Service Law No. 8 of 1973 regulates the different aspects of employees' service. The civil service posts are classified into four groups: the top management (grade 1-2), high posts (grade 1-4), middle post (grade 1-4) and workers and labourers (grade 1-4). And each scale is divided into grades, the total of which is fourteen.

The Civil Service Law is applied for the federal government civil servants. The armed forces

(Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior) as well as those who work under special laws are excluded from the Civil Service Law. Moreover, temporary employees (i.e., expatriates) are employed on a contract basis.

- i. Recruitment and selection of civil servants is based on merit via competitive exams. According to the Civil Service Law, employees in groups II and III are promoted by seniority. However, 25% of them could be promoted by efficiency criteria.
- ii. Retirement age is 60 years, but extendable for five more years with the approval of the Cabinet.
- iii. The employees are covered with a pension scheme, except the expatriates, who are entitled to a gratuity commensurate to their period of service.
- iv. Recognition of previous professional experience.

4.0 Methodology

The study is exploratory in nature. Therefore, it relied on secondary data generated specifically from websites of Sweden and United Arab Emirates governments and United Nations Organisation. The structural-functional approach guided the study in which some governmental institutions i.e. executive, legislature, judiciary and civil service were examined. Comparative analysis was used in the data analysis.

5.0 Comparative Analysis

Having discussed the political history, structures and functions of executive, legislative and judicial arms as well as bureaucracies of both Sweden and UAE, it is very important at this point, to compare and contrast between the two countries under study.

5.1 Similarities in System of Government and Administration in Sweden and UAE

Both countries operate constitutional monarchy with democratic principles. The Prime Ministers and members of legislative bodies are elected on a tenure basis i.e. to serve for a certain number of years. Both countries have employment system that operates based on merit. The staffs are recruited based on merit. Both countries have principles that guide the operation of the civil service. Moreover, in Sweden and UAE, there is a dual executive i.e. prime minister and president. The prime minister is the head of government that exercises the executive power and together with his cabinet members formed the government. While the President is the head of state and performs ceremonial duties. Both countries have unicameral legislature that is made up of one chamber. In terms of judicial system, both countries have judicial systems that have independent status constitutionally.

5.2 Differences in System of Government and Administration in Sweden and UAE

In terms of system of government, Sweden operates parliamentary constitutional monarchy. But in Sweden there is clear separation of power among the three arms of government i.e. executive, legislature and judiciary. A parliamentary member cannot hold ministerial position at the same time. If a member in the parliament is appointed as a minister, he should be substitute for parliamentary job. Similarly, the executive powers vest on the Prime Minister who is elected by the parliament and ceremonial powers rest on the King who is the President and Head of State. On the other hand, UAE operates presidential system of government but with fusion of power. In other words, there is no clear separation of power in UAE despite that the federation operates presidential system of government. Therefore, the Federal Supreme Council is the highest legislative and executive body in UAE. Likewise, the executive power is vested on the Vice President and Prime Minister (ruler of Dubai) but under the control of the President and the Federal Supreme Council. The President appoints the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (Majlis Al-Wizara'i).

In terms of legal power, in Sweden the legal power is vested on parliament. The Swedish parliament known as Riksdag consists of 349 members. The parliament makes laws that are implemented by the executive. Unlike in UAE, whereby the legislative body only performs advisory or consultative duties. It

has no legal power to make laws. The laws are made and implemented by the Federal Supreme Council. The name of legislative arm of government in UAE is Federal National Council (Al-Majlis Al-Watani Al-Ittihadi) comprises 40 members.

In terms of the election of legislators, in Sweden the members are directly elected by popular vote in a general election conducted after every four years. But in UAE, out of 40 members of the legislative body, 20 are indirectly elected by the members of the Electoral College after every four years. The remaining 20 members are appointed by the respective rulers of their emirates.

The Swedish government consists three national, regional and local governments. The regional government is divided in to 21 counties, and the local government comprises 290 municipalities. The President is the monarch who occupies hereditary position and performs ceremonial functions. On the other hand, UAE consists of seven emirates that made the Federal Supreme Council which is the highest authority. The President is elected by the Federal Supreme Council. According to the convention, the position of president is exclusively reserved for the ruler of Abu Dhabi while that of vice president and the prime minister is reserved for the emir of Dubai.

In Sweden the legal system is based on common laws comprising three types of Court; General Courts, General Administrative Courts and Special Courts. While the UAE legal system is a combination of Islamic and common laws. The federal judiciary oversees the judicial system with individual emirates appointing their own ministers of justice in UAE. The system consists of federal supreme courts which deal with the federal or inter-emirate disputes and crimes against the state, court of first instance that deal with administrative, civil and commercial disputes, and also court of cassation that serves as the final court of appeal for all cases heard in the lower courts and deal with disputes between courts in the individual emirates.

6.0 Major Findings

The study found similarities and differences between the two countries that are constitutional monarchies. Both countries have dual executive i.e. president and prime minister, despite that they operate different system of government which is direct opposite to each other. The Swedish system of government is parliamentary while the system of government for UAE is presidential. The president is the chief of state while the prime minister is the head of government. Both countries have unicameral legislature. However, in Sweden the legal power to make laws is vested on the parliament, unlike UAE whereby the legislative body has no constitutional power to make laws. It only plays advisory role. Also found was the principle of separation of power. In Sweden, there is separation of power among the three arms of government even though it operates parliamentary system of government that is associated with fusion of power. But in UAE where presidential system is being operated, the principle of separation of power is not observed.

Moreover, the study discovered that the two countries have employment systems that operate based on merit. But the Swedish employment system applies the same employment rules to public sector

employees as applied to private sector employees. In Sweden, civil servants are recruited based on specific skills. They have no job security and guarantee of promotion. Both countries have independent judiciary. The Swedish legal system is based on common laws comprising three types of Court; General Courts, General Administrative Courts and Special Courts. While the UAE legal system is a combination of Islamic and common laws.

7.0 Conclusion

I have decided to study these two countries that are both constitutional monarchies but with different systems of government so as to make a comparative analysis. The findings revealed that both Sweden and UAE have dual executives, unicameral legislatures and independent judiciaries regardless of the fact that the two countries operate different system of government. However, Sweden is more democratic than UAE, because in Sweden legislative members are directly elected by popular vote on a proportional representation basis to serve for four-year terms, while in UAE legislative members are indirectly elected by Federal Supreme Council which consists of 7 rulers of the seven emirates. The paper concluded that despite of the fact that both countries have dual executive and unicameral legislature, there are so many differences in the ways and manner their institutions operate. Therefore, comparative study of Sweden and UAE is more feasible, since both countries have constitutional monarchies.

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