Public Administration in Governmental Sector, a Case Study of Dubai

Dr. Raed Atef
Independent researcher in governance and management
United Arab Emirates

Abstract

Dubai has monarchy government sector differ from the World public sector as the second operates in equity when providing services for its residents regardless of their sex, nationality, and race. Dubai Government sector is operating on the principles of private companies aiming for generating revenue to cover the expense of its departments and citizens. To maximize revenue, discriminate in wages- services- and prices among residents in away led the government sector losing one of its significant as a public sector.

Investigation on Dubai government sector is not an easy job due to lack of information realized from officials. This has required adopting analytical approach, analyzing available secondary data, and supported by primary qualitative data. Analyzing current situation; using examples - short case studies and experts' comments through interviews and the researcher notes. Findings concludes that Dubai has differ government sector when comparing it to public sector principles and implications; it operates like private companies when dealing with residents, aiming to increase government revenues to spend it on Dubai infrastructures and nationals. The research proves the assumption that Dubai Government sector does not follow the public sector orientation and practices. Also, it shows that the government sector is accountable only for UAE citizens excluding residents. The research calls for reviewing Dubai government sector theory and implementation in a way to meet public sector standards and fit with leadership announced vision to make Dubai and UAE one of the best living place in the World.

Key words: Government Sector, Dubai, Human Resources, Services, and Scientific Research

Introduction

Arab countries are facing several economical- political – social challenges; on the top of these problems are: poverty, absence of housing, unemployment, corruption, low political involvement and participation (United Nations, 2014). Challenges have been increased after political storms – clashes that occurred in the region; these clashes brought further continuous obstacles that affect the public sector in various areas. Continuous further challenges includes: representation of the population, providing services, dealing with residents and their ethnicities – background, responsibility of public sector within wars and clashes, responsibility of protecting individual and collective rights, and human rights. The challenges of public sector in the region are tights to political- security stability and appears in two sets: countries that face military conflicts therefore complex challenges compare with countries has suffered from demonstration and nonviolent conflicts. In general, public sector challenges or problems look alike in away or another with differentiation among political systems – republic, monarchy, royal... etc. differences are on the distribution and deepness of public sector problems. However, this generalization of faced challenges exclude few Arab gulf countries that have little citizens compare with residents population- example Qatar and UAE.

Public sector is owned by the public, managed by the government and provided services to people. Using the concept of public sector associated with public fund- public budget, although some countries like to use government sector instead.

Using public or government sector[1] are both still associated with public fund (Business dictionary, 2016). In UAE including Dubai, the used concept is a government sector- local and federal government, institutions instead of public sector. Government sector is responsible of managing the emirates; affairs; this sector provides core and free services mainly to UAE citizens and paid services to residents. Government sector in UAE differs from public sector in the World; government sectors in the world deal with residents equally except in elections-political election participations – voting and nomination[2] (Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org). Dubai is a leading emirate among UAE' seven emirates in issuing- charging fees on all activities and subsectors; about 80% of Dubai government budget comes from collecting fees while oil revenue contributes with about 1%. Dubai ambitious plans and financial crises in 2007 led to create various types of fees and increase fees amount (Albayan Newspaper, 11 November 2016). Dubai government sector practices exceed the idea of charge cost of some services to generate profit from providing services. New public administration theory which formulated in UK and then enlarged in the USA has built on slogan that private sector is more active and efficient than public sector as the private sector whom motivate economic development (Gruening, 2001). However, it does not exaggerate and reach the level of current practice of Dubai (Kapucu, 2006).   Dubai exaggerating has exceeded and changed government organizations for the machine to generate money from noncitizen residents. Government sector has stopped offering free services (social- health- education- women, - youth, children …etc) to residents, only limited to UAE citizens whom equal to 10% of UAE populations. Government sector becomes fully private sector in practice (Public Sector Definition, https://na.theii.org). Residents in Dubai and UAE do not enjoy equal rights and obligations as in most of the world.

To understand the public sector in Dubai and UAE, this paper asks two questions: what are the government sector practices in relations to public sector concepts, and what is the status of scientific research and how can enhance public administration practices among government sector?

Answering these questions lead to adopt analytical approach after describing the sector, supported by, qualitative approach of primary and secondary data. Participants in this study are selected based on their possibility to cooperate and their deep knowledge on the public administration issues. Participants' names have kept confidential due to their interests.

Background: Dubai and Government Sectors

Dubai has an area of 4,114 square kilometers about 5% of UAE total space (Information on Dubai, http://ar.wikipedia.org). Where about 2.3 million people live at night, and about 3.4 million in the daytime period (Dubai Statistical Center, https://www.dsc.gov.ae) , about 10% are citizens and 90% are residents. Dubai achieved a high growth rate about 6% by the end of 2014 (Dubai Economic Growth, www.zawaya.com). There are more than 46 government institutions in Dubai, some of which are referred to as Department, Authority and Centers (Dubai Government Organizations. http://www.dubai.ae). The Ruler of Dubai has absolute power, combine and control the three powers: the legislative, executive and judicial. He is the legislator for issuing laws and approving decisions of the Executive Council. The Ruler is the body that sets up government institutions and appoints its boards of directors and members (Dubai Executive Council. http://www.tec.gov.ae/tec). The Ruler appoints the first rank in the government sector, and the body that appoints the entire judicial staff, which can intervene in the promotion of staff and the resolution of disputes and disputes

(Dubai Government, www.Legal.dubai.gov.ae). The Executive Council can issue various legislatives: decrees, orders, with the support of Ruler. The Emirate' affairs including governmental institutions and their inhabitants, are conducted. The government departments have the power to establish regulations and given further policies and specifications to government departments ... and are applied to the population and the establishment (Dubai Government, www.Legal.dubai.gov.ae).

In the context of the Emirate of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the Rule of Dubai. He has two deputies, namely his brother Hamdan bin Rashid Maktoum and his son Maktoum.

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[1] Public sector is defined as part of the economy that provide services to people in which private sector cannot provide or people cannot have it for several cases including cannot pay for it.
[2] Please note that some countries have granted partially/ fully voting rights to their non-citizen residents, example election in local government. Source, Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_of_foreigners_to_vote

His son, Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid is heading of the Executive Council and also he is the Crown Prince of Emirate of Dubai after his father. [13] Hamdan – the Head of Dubai Executive Council has two deputies, his brother Maktoum and his cousin Saeed.   The Head of the Executive Council has the authority to issue some legislations; orders, decisions, regulations, policies, and circulars over the institutions of the government sector and appointing of executive directors – second ranks official in government departments (Dubai Executive Council, http://www.tec.gov.ae/tec).   The Government of Dubai has two kinds or groups of institutions; the first one which plays central role in the government is attached to the Ruler Court, managed by a general manager appointed by the Ruler (Dubai Government, www.Legal.dubai.gov.ae. The second group of institutions is under the umbrella of Executive Council. Members of Executive Council are appointed from the Ruler with direct recommendation from the Executive Council Head (Dubai Executive Council. http://www.tec.gov.ae/tec).   In order to consolidate the efforts of the governmental institutions, the director general of Ruler Court has appointed as a member of the Executive Council.

For the purpose of managing government's human resources in the Emirate of Dubai, a specialized department has established in 2009 known Dubai Government Human Resources Department of (DGHR) after several years working as small unit within the Ruler Court. DGHR work scope is on: proposed and amendments of legislations to high level, proposed systems and policies, develop of strategies and plans related to management and development plans, develop government leaderships for different levels, managing scholarships for post-secondary levels, communication with relevant international specialists and institutions for the purpose of exchanging experiences. In the responsibilities includes, monitoring the implementation of HR plans across government departments in the Emirate of Dubai and approving new modified department's structures (Law of Establishment HR Department, 2009; HR Law no. (27), 2006).

Adopting Private Sector Practice

The UAE and Dubai have set their sights on the government sector, where public services are limited to some 10% of the population i.e. citizens while residents are left to the private sector. The government sector deals with residents like private companies. This is not a metaphor but exact situation; an approach has developed by UAE leaders and their vision (Mohammad Bin Rashid article, www.albayan.ae). The living in UAE including Dubai requires the need to pay money in exchange; this means that governments exceed covering cost of services but also generating profits. Residents whom cannot cover the cost of living, they have to find new countries to stay and leave UAE. The results of a polling indicates that half of the respondents who are residents and employees in Dubai do not want to live there. This is because of high cost of living, and lower savings feasibility after long years of working. This is exactly follow the adaptation of private companies pattern towards population. It seems that the picture will be the following: If individual cannot generate much money to cover expenses, s/he does not belong to Dubai, and better for the individual to search for place elsewhere. When people lose their work and source of income, and when they cannot be able to pay government fees to stay in the country, they have to leave (Residents in Dubai, http://www.arabianbusiness.com). Some examples illustrate this picture; tenants are not protect by laws, and subject to the evacuation of housing when losing job or disagreed on high increment in rent. Also, the inability to pay educational fees for children, the same thing applies on education, health and social services. It might be exceptions of a few very distinct cases in the academic collection of enrolled in public schools, and health services such as preventive vaccination for polio. Otherwise, its not government sector problems (UAE laws, http://www.dubai.ae).

Experts agree that Dubai is looking for economic activists who can push the stature of the city forward. They say, "a smart city needs smart people"; people who can think and save money, know how to work on maximizing their income (Interview with HR Consultant, 5 March 2016). That is why Dubai does not want its permanent residents to be unskilled workers, such as construction workers and cleaners, while it can be argued that the emirate will not completely dispense with this segment as it providing Dubai financial returns. An economic report released by the Department of Economic Development (DED) stated that Dubai's growth is partly due to its unskilled labor returns (Dubai Economic Department report, Dubai government). This is no different from the fact that the Ruler of Dubai explains the reason for UAE success which is following the corporate business model. Of course, following of good governance principles were not meant the separation of powers in government authority branches, but rather from a profit-based approach, a profit-orientation. The invitation of the Ruler of Dubai to scientific research is gaining the approval and consensus of local and global as a result of the role of scientific research positively on all aspects of life and business institutions.

In large corporations and for good governance purpose, there is a separation between owners and managers. The General Assembly consists of the owners, which is the largest and the highest legislative authority, followed by the Board of Directors, which is composed of shareholders and shares according to wealth, and on the basis of those who have more wealth controls the Board of Directors, which is responsible for the leadership of the company and has the powers to appoint the executive management - general director or chief executive officer. In UAE, all powers and authorities are concentrated in one hand, thus losing the quality of corporate governance. One major common practice between Dubai government and big companies which both are looking for profits, maximize and access to revenues for the purpose of disbursement to UAE nationals.

In UAE context, a replacement for vocabulary has occurred instead of citizens / residents to costumers / user. First set of concepts refers to the public sector while the second refers to private sector. The aim of this shift is to focus on a small part of the population, namely citizens and avoid providing health, education, and social services of the entire population. In addition, several institutions and private companies have been established to provide services to residents to benefit citizens, government and individuals in different ways. Here lies a question: Is it reasonable that the government sector be responsible to and held accountable by 10% of population? Of course not, governments are responsible for their populations and accountable to them and should focus on groups that face difficulties in life and marginalized groups.

Two sets of Gov. Organizations

Dubai government organizations consist of two types: the first sells services to the population and the second provides services exclusively to UAE citizens only. Here are some of the applications of these institutions.

Roads and Transport Authority (RTA), responsible of roads, traffic and licensing of vehicles and public transport services, sells services to people. According to UAE culture, public transportation used by residents and its rare to find citizens uses it. Several roads in Dubai have gates and vehicles needs to pay money to pass the road; a prepaid electronic card for deducting the fee known as (Salik). RTA has a number of agencies operating under its umbrella; private companies, an example, Dubai Taxi that provides private mobility services to the population. Tax regulations guarantee financial returns that cover costs and generate significant profits. RTA experience fits perfectly with the mentality of companies; any project or launched initiatives are taken from the angle of benefits Dubai's economy and generate financial revenue. Through this view, Dubai residents benefit from public transport but first it should gain revenue to government and citizens. So the engine is not providing solutions to the population on the ground but its to seize the opportunity to profit, provide revenue to the government and benefit from the revenues to spend on the government and the citizens of Dubai. To maximize profit, the government is controlling public transportation; a monopoly over metros, trains buses, taxis… etc (RTA website. from www.rta.ae).

RTA budget for the year 2014 shows 7 billion & 36 million AED as expenses, while the expected revenue for the same year about five billion dirhams. The difference here between revenue and expenditure does not mean it's a deficit to support public services – kind of subsidy to poor and marginalized groups, however, its for launching and counting multi-projects to support local economy and various business sectors. Proejcts that expected to generate 800% return on investment, with each AED subsequently producing AED 8. It appears here that the measurement of projects depends on the return on investment not the segment or the beneficiary of population in general (RTA website. from www.rta.ae) .

RTA also relies on the traffic gate revenues "Salk" which is supposed to the streets to be quick, this gate refers to another classification of population based on the price, who pays can pass the road otherwise should find far way to travel on. Salik provides millions of dirhams annually to the government. In the same context, violations of **Dubai Police** rules (Radar and cameras) cost amount that requires payments otherwise cannot leave the country, renew licenses, and do official business without paying fines. Some experts believe that police have a key role in increasing the emirate's revenues through the irregularities and fees imposed on the population (Interview with Public Admin Consultant, 2 March 2016). The **Municipality of Dubai** is on the same track [Interview with public administration consultant, 2 March 2016.]. Municipality revenue in 2010 is about AED 9 billion and 258 million, with a surplus of total AED 472 million (Al-khaleej Newspaper, http://www.alkhaleej.ae)   . Revenue has generated from mandatory fee on municipal transactions for individuals and businesses, and fines collected from residents (Interview with Public Admin Consultant, 2 March 2016). The municipality was able to achieve more than 2.1 billion dirhams in 2011 budget, any surplus supposed to return services to the population of the city (Dubai Municipality, www.dm.gov.ae).

In other hand, **Community Development Authority (CDA)** deals with the needs of Dubai's citizens not residents by providing them with social services. CDA offer free services to UAE citizens; people with disabilities, the elderly, families, children and youth, and prisoners. CDA manages social responsibility file with the private sector aiming to generate revenue from companies to support the implementation of services. Also, CDA manages further community issues including voluntarism - licensing clubs - and social professions. For example, CDA provides some common services on *Sanad* Card, which includes two social benefits such as housing, treatment and others. Cardholders are citizens, and some fee discounts from entry to some places like clubs for the entire population. *Sanad* Card beneficiaries needs to fulfill certain requirements, one is living in Dubai. Only some residents, elders and disable people are offered very limited free and discount services; car parks, some government services that with very small fee, and discount in using clubs facility (CDA, www.cda.gov.ar).

UAE likes other Gulf Corporation Countries (GCC) has relied on the rental economy, providing additional income to their citizens, and ensuring full coverage of their expenses. Dubai is the first emirate to provide additional resources to the government and citizens generating by various types of fees. Every year there is increasing on types of fees and amount (Dubai Government legislations, www.legal.dubai.gov.ae). After financial crisis, which was strongly overshadowed in 2007- 2008, UAE has increased the role of government sector in collecting additional amount to support government budget and benefit citizens. This tool follows the rental economy model practice, which deepens with the economic mobility and increasing of GCC population.

Dubai today is required to find a solution commensurate with its call to the world for occupying advanced ranks compared to major world' cities. Invitations such as preserving national identity, citizenship and non-assimilation with expatriate populations, maintaining ruling the country and fears to govern by Indians (Top Gov. Dubai Official, www.traidnt.net). These concerns do not justify government practice as private companies, and its ambivalence in dealing with population under the global call. The public sector needs to be responsible for the entire population.

Primary challenges for the government sector

Although government departments deal with residents like private companies, there are three challenges facing the government sector in Dubai: participation in policy-making, scientific research, and weak cooperation between government departments, which are supposed to play an integral role. Participation of stakeholders or beneficiaries is a requirement in policy-making, planning and decision-making, and a requirement in scientific research as well, whereas in practice, participation is limited (Interview with HR Consultant, 5 March 2016). Policies and decisions need scientific studies; therefore, no involvement of stakeholders in researches, especially primarily beneficiaries of the population and government employees means inaccurate results. Participation deepens the objectivity of decisions and research work and helps strengthen the reality of governance.

Experts in development work see standard comparisons helps identify the institution's capabilities and position among other organizations operating in the same field, and identify both used methods and areas of improvement. There is a need for studies on public administration, human resources, human capital, economic and human development, studies on government departments, productivity and human resources. In addition, a need to adopt comprehensive complementary studies or kinds of inclusiveness that is related to description, explanation, understanding the causes that will have a great impact on human resources and residents of Dubai. One example in Dubai, where a segment of educated women prefer not to join the labor market after college graduation; knowing the characteristics of this group is not enough to encourage them to work, but rather to know why they are not involved in the market. In the same way, it is necessary to study how to achieve the goals; economic growth, although important, does not demonstrate the application of best practices in government institutions. In work, fundamental criteria's are driven from good governance (Coulom, 2013).

Government Sector & Overcharges

Government's practices in dealing with non-citizens are fully commercialized. They aim to achieve revenues that have been legislated in accordance with legislation issued by the Ruler of Dubai, the Head of the Executive Council and government departments that have the ability to issue rules. The pattern of companies is also illustrated by a rating system based on number of stars inspired by the classification system Hotels - the private sector. Number of stars here depends on the speed of collection of fees that called services, which is in fact imperative mandatory measures.

In other words, what is rumored about facilitating the provision of services is the acceleration of the collection of fee revenues, with discrimination in dealing with individuals and institutions on the price. Government departments such as Residence & Foreigners Affairs, Municipality, RTA, and Dubai Police transactions are good examples.

Government sector business practices outweigh the practices of the private sector; fees to be collected for transactions have additional collection fees. Paying a fee to the Residence and Foreigners Department requires the individual to pay an additional fee. There is a state of conviction that value of paid fees is overcharged and does not match the paperwork required of individuals and institutions. Also, if some transactions contain service, the fees are so exaggerated that they exceed the same service and the reason for overstating transactions. It is inevitable and only government organizations can carry these monopoly transactions (Interview with HR Consultant, 1 march 2016).

HR in Dubai Government Sector

HR practices in Dubai government sector are similar to the world in terms of bureaucracy; slow decision-making, less productivity compared with private companies. However, there are different points that attract attention:-

- As Dubai government relies on fees to earn revenues, and these fees are mandatory for individuals and institutions inevitable to pay, the changes that have occurred recently is speed of collection fees from employees.
- Dependency on jobs and tasks that require reflection, solutions and hard work tends to favor for noncitizen staff, while the easy jobs tends to attract nationals human resources.
- Duplication of HR in handling application, despite the existence of a unified human resources law in Government of Dubai, practice on the ground refers to two basic types, one for UAE nationals and other for noncitizen HR. By virtue of law, the citizen is protected; his/her work cannot be terminated as the right to work is not only constitutional but it is absolutely guaranteed to the extent that those who are convicted on various charges can work after releasing them. It is hard to fire citizen employees, whether their productivity is weak or unproductive, as long as they fulfill minimum requirement which is attendance (although attendance is not always must in certain services jobs) (Interview with Human Development Expert, 20 February 2016).

The division of labor in government sector is same as the country' population; employees' concern are divided upon their citizenship. Also, further division among employees occurred among the two types over: salary, rights, working conditions, duties and tasks, applying the provisions of the law, working pressure, severity and discipline ... etc. DGHR has made efforts for developing the national workers, including: resettlement, training and preparation for leadership roles, develop systems and policies, and others. There is still a need to link current HR, manpower and human capital planning to the Emirate of Dubai, as well as to launch a relationship with human and economic development. Planning of workforce at the level of government sector requires adapting with the strategic plans, [36] and directions of the government towards employment and citizens. Also, Focuses on knowledge of government needs for the next five years of the workforce, especially for fulfilling scarcity jobs with understanding for the government vision in localization and the implementation of succession plans.

Scientific Research & HR

Current research situation on government sector in relation to HR indicates that studies are limited to quantitative data without attempting to link society problems reflected by social studies to organization challenges i.e. government institutions. Most undertaken studies emphasis are on normative comparisons internationally and reduction of understanding of the local context. This approach causes weakness and lack of understanding of the reality of human capital and its mobility in social and economic conditions (Yes Youth, http://yels.ae/ar). For example, increasing the participation of women in labor market needs social based study linked to business sectors and institutions. Standard comparisons index among countries cannot be used alone to solve local problems. Singapore's reality is different from Dubai and Sydney in Australia and elsewhere.

The call for building administrative research linked to politics and public administration in field is an important call; public sector needs to study the field, might based on grounded theory, and mix of methodologies and methods of data collection such as: observations, interviews, focus groups, survey, to deal with complex situation (Grounded Theory, http://www.qualres.org). Researches here seems to be objective because of the absence of any preconceived theory.

In addition, it has been noticed absence of long-term studies, follow-up studies from government departments related to HR For example, one private consulting firm has conducted an HR follow-up to figures out what kind of work does graduate students occupying, and what kind of skills they have obtained to know their professional benfits from current jobs (Interview with HR Consultant, 1 march 2016).

Divorced With Public Sector Practices

UAE continues to deal with government sector as private companies when dealing in particular with the majority of the non-national population. This approach is profitable and beneficial in terms of sustainable revenue, and allocating fund to serve 10% of population. The government sector has made it clear that will not be accountable or responsible for Dubai's residents' services. This is a divorce and separation between government sector in Dubai & UAE with the characteristics and approach of the public sector in favor of continuity for companies and businesses practice. It seems that whenever government budget needs more revenue, the solution is increasing fees coming from noncitizen population (Interview with human development expert, 20 February 2016). Therefore, the continuation closure situation of a segment of population, and division of society is the interest of those who governs and manages state affairs in terms of ability to meet the economic, social and educational requirements of citizens. The embodiment of state closure arises under claims of reservation of national identity, which it takes several forms: living at specific geographical - residential sites, absence of social interaction in many aspects, and encourage marriage in the circle of citizens.

Conclusion

The research concludes that Dubai government sector has adopted fully practices of private sector and orientation when dealing with residents non UAE citizens on generating as much as revenue from them on forms of fees. Such huge fees aims to pay social bells and benefit both the government and UAE citizens, revenue from residents 90% of population to benfits citizens10% of population. Revenue are generating from residents on forms of fees does not goes back to whom they paid it on form of services; it called fees not taxes to escape from providing services to residents in retune of their payments. This discrimination among residents followed by discrimination on HR policies and applications; government agencies deal with non-citizens from business orientation too while they pampering citizens.

Its important to enlarge the umbrella of government sector responsibility and accountability by taking into consideration residents' needs and opinions. Government sector should stop dealing with residents from generating revenue point of view and take the responsibility of providing services to all populations. Residents' share revenue in the government budget so they need to receive part on forms of services, expenditure in the budget. With disagreement among development and public experts; national experts seems to be traditional and offering little of facilities to residents while international experts tend to expand government services offered to residents. This needs to allow true – scientific free researches by allowing access to data and facilitating researches on cooperating with researchers to benfits of community, all populations not limited to 10 % citizens.

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