



Comparative Management and Administration

— A BOOK OF READINGS —

Second Edition

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Chapter 5

Comparative Public Administration: A Theoretical Exposition

J. O. Fatile and K. D. Adejuwon

Introduction

PUBLIC administration has gained immense importance since the emergence of the administrative state. Its functions both in the capitalist and the socialist states have become manifold. It is an instrument not only for protecting and restraining but also fostering and promotion. Its nature, contents and scope – all go to make it the heart of the problem of modern government (Bhagwan and Bhushan, 2006:1). Public administration has become the machinery for formulating plans and programmes and carrying them out. This clearly reflects that public administration is imperative for all societies – developed or developing.

Just as the systematic study of public administration was pioneered by mainly scholars from the United States of America, so also did they blaze the trail in the comparative administration movement. Predictably, most of the deluge of literature that highlight the comparative approach to the study of public administration originated from the United States of America. This trend has posed one major problem to the study of comparative public administration in Nigeria. Comparative approach, therefore, is one of the oldest approaches to the study of public administration. This approach was stimulated as a result of an increased feeling of inadequacy of traditional approaches to the study of

politics and administration. The study of comparative government limited itself to Western European cultures and political institutions or to areas affected by Western influences. Also, the framework of studying comparative government was legalistic and formalistic. It was paying much attention to the examination of documents, governmental institutions and being descriptive rather than problem-solving, explanatory and analytical-oriented. Furthermore, there were no techniques or concepts for determining similarities and differences when countries were studied and compared.

It is important, even at the most introductory phase of any national survey, to adopt a comparative framework and not simply to study the social arrangements for a specific nation. We cannot be said to fully understand the administrative structures of any particular country unless we have a knowledge and understanding of other administrative systems. Thus, the comparative approach seeks to establish similarities and differences among administrative phenomena as a source of data for concept formation and classification (Fatile, 2007:83). It is pertinent to add that we may know the basic structure of the institution of a country and how the various elements of this structure interrelate to establish and implement public policy, but we cannot appreciate whether institutions are particularly efficient, democratic and ethically sound without comparison with other countries. Comparative public administration therefore applies to comparing public administration settings. Basically, it compares administrative structures of government between two settings (Eneanya, 2009:35). Comparative approach is a close substitute in public administration for experimentation in the physical and natural sciences.

The Meaning of Comparative Public Administration

Before we dwell on the meaning of comparative public administration, as a subfield of administration, it is important to first of all define what public administration is all about.

Public administration has been variously defined by numerous thinkers. The term "public administration" is concerned with the management of government activities. "Government" is best viewed as an organization that exists to achieve certain objectives. "Organization" in this context, refers to public affairs (Eneanya, 2009). To Tonwe (1998:39), public administration consists of getting the work of government done by co-ordinating the efforts of people so that they can work together to accomplish their set tasks. Dimock (1937), however, perceives it as:

The Fulfillment or enforcement of public policy as declared by the competent authorities. It deals with the problem and powers, the organization and techniques of management involved in carrying out the laws and policies formulated by the policy-making agencies of government. Public administration is law in action. It is the executive side of government.

However, Pfiffner (1960:3), views public administration as the organization and direction of human and material resources to achieve desired ends.

Bhagwan and Bhushan (2006:4), therefore observe that the definitions above point out that the term "public administration" has been used in two senses. In the wider sense, it includes all activities of the government, whether in the legislative, executive or judicial branch of government. The wider view has been taken by White (1926), Wilson (1987), Pfiffner (1960) and Dimock (1937). In the narrow sense, public administration is concerned with the activities of the executive branch only. This view has been taken by Gulick (1937), Simon (1947), Willoughby (1927), Fayol (1949) and Tead (1966).

Comparative public administration therefore means cross-cultural and cross-national public administration. The Comparative Administration Group described comparative public administration as "the theory of public administration applied to diverse cultures and national settings" and "the

body of factual data, by which it can be examined and tested. It stresses the comparative analysis of systems of public administration in the nation states around the world today. Thus, it has a commitment to comparison as a method of study to better describe and evaluate the different administrative systems of various nations with diverse ecological settings (Naidu, 2004:135).

To Chandler and Plano (1982:8), comparative public administration is a cross-cultural approach to the study of public administration that rejects theory rooted solely in the American experience and which assumes that cultural factors do not make any difference in administrative settings because "principles are principles."

In the view of Bhagwan and Bhushan (2006:57), comparative public administration emphasizes that:

- ◆ organization must be viewed as embedded in specific cultures and political settings;
- ◆ the "principles of public administration" are seriously inadequate;
- ◆ both the study and practice of administration are pervasively value-loaded; and
- ◆ any proper discipline must have complimentary pure and applied aspects.

Comparative public administration addresses five motivating concerns as an intellectual enterprise: the search for theory; the urge for practical application; the incidental contribution to the broader field of comparative politics; the interests of researchers trained in the tradition of administrative law; and the comparative analysis of ongoing problems of public administration (Nicholas, 2006:39). According to him, much of the work in comparative public administration revolves round the ideas of Riggs (1961), who "captured" the field's early interest in public administration in the developing natives, and who was simply a very prolific writer and substantial contributor to the theoretical development of the

subfield in its early stages. Riggs (1961) holds that the term "comparative" should be used only for empirical, monothetic studies. Charturvedi (2006:61) outlines three trends in the comparative study of public administration: (i) From normative towards more empirical approaches; (ii) Shifts from ideographic (individualistic) towards nomothetic (universal), and (iii) shifts from a predominantly non-ecological to an ecological basis for the study of public administration.

From the above analysis, comparative public administration can therefore be summarized thus:

- ◆ It studies different administrative systems in their ecological settings.
- ◆ It emphasizes empirical study based on rigorous methods such as field observation, field experiments and organization like groups.
- ◆ It has developed on the interdisciplinary orientation.
- ◆ It lays stress on the interaction between administration and socio-economic, cultural and political phenomena.
- ◆ It highlights the multi-organizational nature of public administration and the importance of interaction among organizations at different levels of government; (local, state and federal).
- ◆ It has widened the horizons of public administration by making it broader, deeper and more useful.

The aim of comparative analysis of public administration is the development of a more scientific public administration; that is, building and strengthening theory in public administration.

The Significance and Problems of Comparison in Public Administration

Governmental politics needs to be studied comparatively, in the first place, because studies undertaken on a single-country basis often do not provide enough cases for firm

conclusions to be drawn. This is not so true in other fields of learning, either because one can conduct experiments or because the same phenomena occur frequently. It is, in the main, by observing series of identical or at least similar phenomena that we learn about our environment (Blondel, 1995:4). As the American political scientist, Coleman (1948) used to tell his students, "You can't be scientific if you're not comparing" (Hague *et al*, 1992:23). Also, Tocqueville (1938) once noted that, without comparisons to make, the mind does not know how to proceed.

Tocqueville was telling us that comparison is fundamental to all human thought. It is the only way we can fully understand our own political system. Comparing the past and present of our nation and comparing our experience with that of other nations deepens our understanding of our own institutions (Almond *et al*, 2007:31). Examining public administration in other societies permits us to see a wider range of administrative alternatives and illuminates the virtues and shortcomings of our public administration. By taking us beyond our familiar arrangements and assumptions, comparative analysis helps expand our awareness of the possibilities of public administration.

It is possible to use the comparative methods to describe and explain the different combinations of political events and institutions found in different societies. Comparative analysis helps us develop explanations and test theories of the way in which political processes work and in which political change occurs. Also, it enhances our ability to describe and understand political processes and political change in any country by offering concepts and reference points from a broader perspective. The comparative approach also stimulates us to form general theories of political relationship. It encourages and enables us to test our political theories by confronting them with the experience of many institutions and settings (Almond *et al*, 2007:32).

In the physical sciences, these comparisons can be done in

the laboratory, under carefully controlled conditions. The difficulty with comparative politics is that such precise experiments are rarely feasible. One can certainly undertake comparisons by looking at events in one country over time, but the more obvious way to undertake comparisons is to compare governments across countries. Such an approach seems in general more advisable because it enables us to discover how governments behave at the same moment, without having to control for the possible effect that one event may have on a subsequent one (Blondel, 1995:4). The study of comparative politics serves in two important ways:

- ◆ It offers perspective on our own institutions. Examining politics in other societies permits us to see a wide range of political alternatives. Thus, it illuminates the virtues, the shortcomings, and the possibilities in our own political life.
- ◆ Comparative analysis helps to develop explanations and to test theories of the way in which political processes work. Here, the logic and intention of the comparative method used by political scientists are similar to those used in more exact sciences, such as astronomy and biology.

The comparative approach to the study of political phenomenon is very old. It is as old as the discipline of Political Science. Aristotle, 'the father of Political Science,' was the first to adopt the comparative approach in his monumental work entitled "Politics" (Tonwe, 1998:114). Aristotle contrasted the economies and social structures of many Greek city states in an effort to determine how the social and economic environment affected political institutions and policies. Also, modern political scientists like Dahl (1971), in his "Polyarchy", compares the economic characteristics, the cultures, and the historical experiences of more than one hundred contemporary nations in an effort to discover the combinations and/or conditions and characteristics that are associated with democracy (Dahl, 1971:56). The comparative approach has also been used in studying contemporary

systems of government and administration. Scholarly writings abound in this regard. Tonwe (1998:114) notes that Sisson's book entitled "The Spirit of British Administration and Some European Comparisons" was a brilliant attempt at a comparative study of contemporary administrative institutions in Europe. Also, the work of Siffin (1957) entitled, "Towards a Comparative Study of Public Administration," was a remarkable effort towards studying the administrative systems of a number of developing countries and these include Thailand, Egypt, Vietnam, etc. The application of the comparative approach to the study of public administration has witnessed shifts in its focus and orientation since its adoption. When we talk of the comparative method or approach in public administration, we are referring simultaneously to a method (the comparative method) and to an approach (comparative public administration), (Adamolekun, 1983:20).

From the foregoing, the purpose of the study of comparative public administration can be firmly located in the need to introduce comparative analysis of the systems of public administration across national boundaries. Although this is not entirely new, it should be emphasized that comparison has not been the main thrust in the systemic study of public administration prior to the end of World War II. Given that pioneers like Wilson (1987) drew upon European experience in their efforts to improve upon the American administration, majority of the subsequent writers localized their studies to a very large extent. The inherent limitations and hazard of such parochialism has stimulated the shift to the new era in administrative studies that stresses comparative analysis (Awosika, 2000:14).

Edigin (1994:2) summarized the significance of comparison thus:

Advocates of comparative study of administration believe that in attempting to construct a science of administration, it depends, among other things, on sense in establishing propositions about admini-

strative behaviour which transcends national boundaries. For example, formulating general principles concerning public administration in the United States, the United Kingdom and France may be difficult enough, but this would be quite inadequate in a world having the great number and diversity of national administrative systems that must now be included in our field of interest. Administration in newly independent nation-states scattered around the globe must also be taken into account.

Aside from the demands of scientific inquiry, there are other advantages to be gained from a better understanding of public administration of nations and regions of the world that makes comprehensive study of the conduct of administration much more important than in the past.

Various administrative devices developed abroad may prove worthy of consideration for adoption at home, e.g. the Scandinavian Office of Ombudsman designed for protection of public against administrative abuse.

The above statement shows that comparative studies of public administration across national boundaries has contributed to adoption and adaptation of various administrative devices beyond the shores where they originated. While the influence of Western patterns of administration on their former colonies is obvious (e.g. Britain and Nigeria), less obvious is the growing interest of the larger countries concerning the administrative machinery originated in smaller countries.

To Curtis (1985:1), the study of foreign political systems or comparative politics is useful for a number of reasons. First, we can better understand our own system if we can appreciate its similarities to, and differences from, other systems. Second, we can be more aware of the interrelationship

between considerations of domestic politics and attitudes to the rest of the world. The study of different systems allows us to compare the ways in which governments face similar problems and the manner in which they respond to the needs and demands of their citizens.

Comparative analysis, then, is a powerful and versatile tool. It enhances our ability to describe and understand the politics in any country – including our own – by offering concepts and reference points from a broader perspective. By taking us out of the network of assumptions and familiar arrangements within which we usually operate, it helps expand our awareness of the possibilities of politics.

The comparative approach also stimulates us to form general theories of political relationship. It encourages and enables us, moreover, to test our political theories by confronting them with the experience of many institutions and settings.

Several problems arise in putting the comparative approach to work. As noted by Heady (1979:14), any attempt to compare national administrative systems must acknowledge the fact that administration is only one aspect of the operation of the political system. This, according to Edigin (1994:2), means that comparative public administration is linked closely to the study of comparative politics and must start from the base provided by the current stage of development of comparative studies of whole political system.

The Evolution and Growth of Comparative Public Administration

Comparative public administration is today an important sub-field of public administration. Since the emergence of public administration as a systematic study, comparative study is perhaps the area of greatest scholarly activity. For instance, scholars interested in administrative science in the comparative context first formally exchanged ideas at the international congresses of the Administrative Sciences held in 1910, 1923 and 1927 (Offiong, 1994:21). According to

Heady (1979:8), a sustained effort to undertake comparative analysis in public administration was not begun until after the end of World War II, but the industry and enthusiasm of its devotees have resulted in frequent references to the comparative public administration “movement”, both by those who are impressed by what has been accomplished and those who are skeptical of what they consider pretentious claims.

In the 1950s, a sustained effort to undertake comparative analysis in public administration really began. During that decade, two factors contributed to its development. One was the growing realization by the political scientists that comparing national bureaucracies was as important as comparing legislatures or political attitudes. The second factor was the exposure of a large number of American scholars and practitioners of administration to the diverse administrative systems of the newly emergent, Third World countries as a result of the American foreign assistance programme to them.

These two developments in the 1950s created interest in those who wanted to study public administration on a comparative basis (Naidu, 2004:134). In the same vein, Awosika (2000:10) notes that the increased awareness towards comparative public administration resulted into many colleges and universities offering courses in comparative public administration with some specializing in it. However, the comparative administration movement got a major boost when it received the first professional recognition in 1953 through the appointment of an ad hoc committee on comparative administration by the American Political Science Association which led to the establishment of the Comparative Administration Group (CAG) in 1960 which was affiliated to the American Society for Public Administration.

However, the eminent scholars associated with the CAG, according to Laxmikanth (2005:5) were Fred Riggs, Alfred Diamant, Ferrel Heady, Dwight Waldo, Wallace Sayre,

Martin Landau, William Saffin, John Montgomery, Ralph Braibanti, Bertram Gross and others. It is important to note that Fred Riggs is the major exponent of the comparative approach to public administration. He is considered as the "father of Comparative Public Administration." He was the Chairman for one decade (1960-1970), and later succeeded by Richard Gable. By the mid-1960s, they came up with the idea that efficient and effective administration in developing countries required a specific set of principles and practices and they referred to this new orientation emphasis as "Development Administration" (Adamolekun, 1983:22). The study of development administration, according to Heady (1979:10), can help to identify the condition under which a maximum rate of development is sought and the conditions under which it has been obtained. As Swerdlow (1963) remarks:

... poor countries have special characteristics that tend to create a different role for government. These characteristics and this expanded or emphasized role of government, particularly as it affects economic growth, tend to make the operations of the public administrator significantly different. Where these differences exist, public administration can be usefully called development administration.

Comparative public administration moved into the third phase in the 1970s. This period witnessed disagreement among scholars over the fundamental issues of comparative public administration, and it can then be described as in a state of what Naidu (2004:135) called "confusing disorder." These developments laid the groundwork for comparative public administration to move ahead in the 1980s.

From the viewpoint of Laxmikanth (2005:16), the following factors contributed to the rise and growth of comparative public administration:

- ◆ The revisionist movement in comparative politics due to dissatisfaction with the traditional approaches;

- ◆ The dissatisfaction with traditional public administration which is culture-bound;
- ◆ Intellectually oriented catalysts, aimed at developing universally relevant theoretical models;
- ◆ Exposure of American scholars and administrators to the new features of the administrative systems of developing countries during the World War II period;
- ◆ The emergence of newly independent Third World countries which attempted to achieve rapid socio-economic development, creating opportunities for scientific investigation;
- ◆ Policy-oriented catalysts, aimed at developing the practical knowledge to make policy formulation and policy execution more effective;
- ◆ The scientific, technological and theoretical developments which have influenced the forms of administrative structure;
- ◆ The extension of American foreign aid programmes (both political and economic) to newly emerged developing countries; and
- ◆ The rise of the behavioural approach in public administration as a reaction to the classical structural approach.

Offiong (1994:22-23), however, pigeonholes the factors leading to the growth and development of comparative public administration into three compactments. These are:

- ◆ United States Post-War foreign aid programme;
- ◆ The 1952 Conference on Comparative Public Administration at Princeton University in the USA; and
- ◆ The emergence of Comparative Administration Group (CAG).

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that the study of comparative public administration is not merely an intellectual exercise of some young scholars. Its conclusions,

as noted by Bhagwan and Bhushan (2006:59), have an important bearing on the whole range of public administration. The major contribution is that it has helped eliminate the narrowness of "provincialism" and "regionalism." The principles of public administration are analysed in cross-cultural and cross-national contexts and, to be universal, they should be tested in cross-cultural settings.

Theoretical Models for Comparison in Public Administration

The practice of comparative public administration is informed by a number of theoretical models. These can then be used to guide specific studies. As noted by Offiong (1994:25), the most remarkable and persistent concern in comparative administration has been in the search for theories and models, for cross-cultural comparisons of administrative systems. He states further that the fundamental aim of the Comparative Administration Group (CAG) was to develop a science of comparative administration through an empirical set of generalizations about administration. Concepts were being sought and developed aimed at attempting to set Western and non-Western administrations into a common theoretical framework.

The following, according to Laxmikanth (2005:17), are the various models/approaches in the study of comparative public administration:

- ◆ The Bureaucratic system approach adopted by Alfred Diamant, Robert Presthus, Ferrel Heady, Michael Crozier, Morrow Berger, and so on;
- ◆ The General systems approach adopted by F.W. Riggs in his "fused-prismatic-diffracted typology" and John T. Dorsey in his "information energy model";
- ◆ The Development Administration approach adopted by Riggs, Wiedner, and others emphasizing directed socio-economic change;

- ◆ The Decision-making approach advocated by Martin Landau to increase the decision-making capacity of developing countries' administrative systems to avoid the "muddling through" technique;
- ◆ Anthony Downs's model, which differentiated five categories of bureaucrats, namely; climbers, conserves, zealots, advocates and statesmen;
- ◆ The Structural- Functional model advocated by Talcott Parsons, involving the concept of "social system" as a given system and the society in terms of its structures and functions; and
- ◆ Other models developed by Poul Meyer, F.M Marx, and Brian Chapman, emphasizing on the comparative study of administrative organization and civil society systems in the Western developed countries.

From the above-mentioned models in the study of comparative public administration, the bureaucratic model is found to be the most useful, the most provocative and the most influential model. No wonder, Waldo (1964) notes:

The model is set in a long framework that spans history and cultures and relates bureaucracy to important societal variables; yet it focuses attention upon the chief structural and functional characteristics of bureaucracy.

In light of the above, Heady (1979) raises an important question: In view of the preference of many leading students of comparative politics for a functional or nonstructural approach, why should the structure or the institution of bureaucracy be selected as the subject for comparative administrative analysis rather than a function such as Almond's rule application? The answer he gave is pertinent to the study, when he asserted:

The answer does not lie in a general judgement that a functional approach to comparative study of whole political systems is inferior to a structural approach;

rather, it is a decision that the bureaucracy as a specialized political structure offers a better basis for treatment than would a choice of one or more functional categories. Our objective is comparison of whole political systems. Such a narrowing of interest forces us to choose the most promising basis for comparison for the particular purpose (in this case public administration) – a basis that will simultaneously include enough, but not too much, and can promise data for comparison in the politics covered. For the student of public administration, the structure of bureaucracy has some advantages over the function of rule of application, or any functional alternative that has been suggested (Heady, 1966).

From the viewpoint of Edigin (1994:5), the more compelling reason for the adoption of bureaucracy as a focus of comparison in comparative public administration is that a sweeping comparison across national boundaries requires some organizing concept to avoid burial under an avalanche of data about a multitude of diverse administrative systems. Bureaucracy provides such organizing concept, one which certainly is at the core of modern administration, even though public administration and public bureaucracy are not synonymous, and which has, impinging upon it, all the other forces that have in the past interested students of public administration.

The major objections made by Almond (1980) and others to comparative studies that have a structural emphasis are that structures may vary substantially from system to system, and like structures, in different systems, may have significant functional differences that are overlooked. These cautions do not seem to vitiate the utility of a structural approach in the comparative study of public administration. Apparently, bureaucracy as a specialized structure is common to all modern nation states (Heady, 1979:15).

In the same vein, Edigin (1994:5) states that any partial comparative analysis of political system presents a dilemma whether the approach is functional or institutional. This may not be serious in Western countries when there is a high degree of correlation across systems, between structures and corresponding functions, but either approach runs into serious difficulties in developing countries.

It can also be argued from another perspective that comparison of bureaucratic structure and behaviour is deficient because it offers only partial coverage of topics traditionally dealt with in books on public administration in particular countries such as administrative organization and management, fiscal and personnel administration, relations between levels of administration and administrative law. One response is that a common framework for treatment is that variation in perspective is more acceptable.

Bureaucracy has been picked as a focus of comparison in comparative public administration because it is relatively manageable; because it can rely upon a fairly adequate accumulation of basic data; and because it offers the promise of leading to future comparative research that will be both more exact and more comprehensive.

As a theoretical framework, the bureaucratic model is ideal and important; it has made a great contribution to the study of public administration; it is far more superior to any other models in the study of comparative public administration. Bureaucratic model can therefore be considered as a "paradigm" of public administration.

Comparative Study of Administrative Systems

This section briefly gives a comparison of administrative systems in France, Germany, the United States and Britain. Studying the administrative systems is based on the theoretical framework of bureaucracy by Weber (1978). In doing so, we look at their approximation to Weber postulations.

France and Germany – The Classic Culture

The administrative system of France and Germany is referred to as “Classic Culture.” It is in the sense that the bureaucracies of France and Germany conform most closely to Weber’s description of bureaucracy; that is why they are called “classic” administrative systems. In contrast to discontinuity in politics, both France and Germany have had remarkable administrative and bureaucratic continuity. Both countries share the same antecedents which have influence on their bureaucracies. The first is the fact that both countries have been victims of continuous political instability, with successive regimes having drastically different orientations. Political change was abrupt, drastic and frequent, e.g. French revolution against institutionalized monarchy. Germany underwent even more extreme and disruptive changes which culminated into the division between the West and East Germany after World War II. The unification took place almost two decades ago. Also, in contrast to their political experience, both countries have bureaucratic and administrative continuity. The Prussian administration (which is reputed to have given rise to modern bureaucracy) was the core of the government in a unified Germany. Similarly, the administrative apparatus that was utilized before the revolution, has remained largely the same, servicing the modern France (Awosika, 2000:37).

The most notable characteristics of the bureaucracies is that public officials are considered members of a corps representing and closely identified within the state. The bureaucrat is considered a public official rather than a public servant. In both countries, the civil service is a career service. The bureaucracies of France and Germany have been actively involved in policy formulation and execution (Idahosa, 1994:58). They have a tradition of professional identity and of maintaining continuity in the management of government affairs.

Britain and the United States: The Civic Culture

Britain and the United States are among those countries that are generally classified as belonging to, or exhibiting civic culture. The civic culture is said to promote democracy and participation in public affairs and, by extension, ensuring access to the public service (Edosa, 1994:61). This civil culture or participatory culture, according to Almond and Verba (1963:300), rests upon a set of non-political attitudes and non-political affiliations. In contrast to Germany and France, the history of their political development is one of relative stability.

Britain achieved political integration by the early seventeenth century, and the political heritage of the United States is largely British. Both countries have been able to develop stable democratic political systems and to maintain them over considerable periods of time.

Compared to France and Germany, the civil service in Britain and the United States was remarkably slow in becoming professionalized and in acquiring other important characteristics of Weberian-style bureaucracy. In Britain, the civil service is an establishment of the crown, and its affairs are almost exclusively controlled by order-in-council or other executive action. In the United States, the executive and legislative branches share in regulating the bureaucracy, so that it has a partial statutory base, but there is no constitutional protection for the national civil service. The merit of bureaucracy depends more on a protective tradition than on elaborate legal provisions (Heady, 1979:47). In both countries, high-ranking bureaucrats play a substantial role in governmental decision-making, but the rules of the game differ decidedly.

Despite their similarities, it is important to note that the US civil service is more decentralized, while that of Britain is more unified or centralized. The US civil service is dominated by professionals or specialists, while that of Britain is

dominated by generalists. Entering into the US top civil service is by political patronage, while Britain's civil service could be said to be based largely on merit.

Comparative Analysis of Public Administration in Developed and Developing Countries

The Weberian ideal-type model of bureaucracy was most applicable to the developed Western European countries, which is also referred to as "Modernized Polity". However, it is generally agreed that the states of Western Europe, North America, Japan, Germany and Russia are developed. Development generally takes place, according to Joseph I. Spiegler, quoted by Edigin (1994:9), "when an index of that which is deemed desirable and relatively preferable increases in magnitude. This section scrutinizes those antecedents and attributes that are common to the developed or modernized polity which in turn have produced administrative systems with common features across national boundaries. The characteristics shared by the modernized polities of Western Europe and elsewhere have been described with substantial agreement by a number of students of comparative politics (Robert *et al.*, 1964:6).

Heady (1979) articulated some basic political characteristics shared by these Western European modernized countries to include the following:

- ◆ The system of government organization is highly differentiated and functionally specific with allocation of political role based on achievement rather than ascription, reflecting general characteristics of the system. Among other things, this means a bureaucracy with a high degree of internal specialization and with competence and merit as standards for bureaucratic recruitment.
- ◆ Procedures for making political decisions are largely rational and secular. The power position of the traditional elite has been largely eroded and the appeal of the

traditional value greatly weakened. A predominantly secular and impersonal system of law reflects this orientation.

- ◆ The volume and range of political administration is exclusive, permeating all major spheres of life in the society, and the tendency is towards further expansion.
- ◆ There is high correlation between political power and legitimacy, resting upon a sense of popular identification with the nation state which is widespread and effective.
- ◆ Popular interest and involvement in the political system is widespread, but this does not necessarily mean active participation by the citizenry in general in political decision-making.
- ◆ The public service of a developed political system will be a large-scale complex and instrumental, in the sense that its mission is understood to be that of carrying out the policies of the political decision-makers. These are the Weberian attributes of an ideal bureaucracy.
- ◆ The bureaucracy will be highly specialized and will require in its ranks most of the occupational and professional categories represented in the society.
- ◆ The bureaucracy will exhibit, to a marked degree, a sense of professionalization, both in the sense of identification with the public service as a profession and in the sense of belonging to a narrow field of professional or technical specialization within the service, such as law, engineering or social work.
- ◆ Because the political system as a whole is relatively stable and mature, and the bureaucracy is more fully developed, the role of the bureaucracy in the political process is fairly clear, and the line of demarcation between the bureaucracy and other political institutions is generally defined and accepted.

- ◆ The bureaucracy in a developed polity will be subject to effective policy control by other functionally specific political institutions (Awosika, 2000: 35-36; Edigin, 1994: 11-12).

Administration in the Developing Societies

It is certainly the case that developing countries followed the traditional model of public administration both during and immediately following independence (Hughes, 1998:206). Bureaucracy in developing nations was patterned alongside their colonial masters. The basic pattern of public administration is imitative rather than indigenous. Bureaucracy found in developing countries like Nigeria however paint an entirely different picture from features of the ideal model. Expectedly, there is some resemblance in the structural arrangement with the Liberian model to justify its being called a bureaucracy, but the behavioural traits prevalent in the Nigerian bureaucracy virtually contravenes all the enumerated characteristics (Basu, 2000:33).

The bureaucracy in the developing world is apt to have a generous measure of operational autonomy which can be accounted for by the convergence of several forces usually at work in recently independent developing nations. Groups capable of competing for political influence or imposing close control over the bureaucracy are few and far between, such that, more often than not, the bureaucracy is able to move into a partial power vacuum (Edigin, 1994:13). They are independent because no group is competing with them, or interferes with whatever they do. This has resulted in unequal distribution of services; inefficiency on rule application; institutionalized corruption; nepotism in recruitment, motives of self-expectation, etc. In addition, much of the bureaucratic activity in developing nations is channelled towards the realization of goals other than the achievement of programme objectives. That is to say, they are not productive.

The widespread discrepancy between form and reality is another distinguishing characteristic. Riggs (1961) has labelled this phenomenon "formalism." In the post-independence period, government was the prime agent of economic development, providing infrastructure, and producing goods and services, often provided through the mechanism of the public enterprise. Developing countries used public enterprises to a greater extent than in most Western countries, Russia, for example, holds the record of having the largest number of government ministries in the West, reminiscent of what obtains in Third World countries whose governments are equally engaged in various industrialization programmes. This is a complete departure from the smaller number of ministries found in the bureaucracies of the core Western countries like Britain or the USA. As compared to the developed polities, the typical situation in developing countries is one of political uncertainty, discontinuity, and extralegal change.

Public and Private Administration: A Comparative Analysis

Regarding the relationship between public and private administration, a difference of opinions exists. There are some scholars who feel that there is no difference between the two and that the administrative activities and techniques are similar in all organizations, whether they be private or public (Ekhatior, 2003:15). They argue that the difference between the two is negligible, and that the application is similar in some situations, especially in respect of process administration, where administration means the same to a manager (Eneanya, 2009:22). This school contends that administration is one with the same fundamental characteristics, and as such the question of separating public from non-public or private administration for the purposes of study should not arise at all. The protagonists of this school of thought include Henri Fayol, Follet and L. Urwick (Tonwe, 1998:65).

The second school of thought were of the opinion that there is a world of difference between public and private administration and as such, it is desirable to separate both for the purposes of study. The supporters of this school of thought include Appleby (1947) and Simon (1947). To drive home this point, Simon emphatically stated that popular imagination makes a rather sharp distinction between public and private administration. Tonwe (1998) therefore notes that the distinction relates principally to three aspects, viz:

- ◆ That public administration is bureaucratic, while private administration is business-like;
- ◆ That public administration is political, whereas private administration is non-political; and
- ◆ That public administration is characterized by red tape, whereas private administration is free.

Generally, the following are some points of difference between public and private administration.

Political Direction: The primary distinction between public and private administration is anchored on political direction. Private administration is not subjected to political direction except in terms of the gravest emergency. The ends it pursues are of its own device. Its objectives generally do not depend upon political decision. A public administrator, however, has no option but to carry out orders or programmes as dictated by the political executive.

Test of Efficiency: The fundamental objective of the science of administration is least expenditure of manpower and materials. Efficiency is thus axiom number one in the value scale of administration. In public administration, the core yardsticks for interpreting efficiency are not always available nor are they always appropriate; whereas in private administration, profit-making is sometimes used as a measure of efficiency. In fact, private administration is seen by some to be synonymous with efficiency. The level of

efficiency in private administration is superior to that of public administration.

Financial Control: Public administration is subject to the principle of external financial control. In all democratic countries, it is not the executive that controls finance; it is the legislature which approves the budget submitted to it by the executive and also ensures the budget is implemented as approved. Finance and administration are not completely separated in the case of private administration (Tonwe, 1998:70).

Public Responsibility: Public administration has responsibility to the public. The public administrators are expected to act in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the people expressed through their representatives who constitute the legislature. The legally sanctioned policies are implemented by the executive branch of government. It is only the principle of public responsibility that requires public administrator to keep accurate and elaborate records and accounts of their activities. On the other hand, private administration does not have as much great responsibility towards the public. Private administration is only responsible to the people indirectly and that too generally to secure its own ends and not necessarily for the welfare of the people.

Nature of the Organization: Public administration is more complex than private administration. Private administration has a narrow focus, in the fact that it concentrates attention and resources on one line of activity. This is usually economic in nature and concerns one specified or specific aspect of economic life. Adebayo (2001:7) observes that public administration departments are bureaucratic in organizational form, hierarchical and staffed largely by permanent and career officials. The officials are employed until retirement, are promoted largely by seniority and remunerated at standard rates within fixed pay and promotion grades. On the other hand, in the private sector an official may be sacked anytime his performance is considered

inadequate. Also, compulsory retirements of personnel whose ages are far below the mandatory retirement age are commonplace in the private sector. However, in the public sector, compulsory retirement is rarely done except as a punishment for some obvious wrongdoings.

Based on the above discussion, we can conclude that both public and private administrations are placed in different surroundings. But this difference, in the view of Ekhtor (2003:21), is more imaginary than real. In fact, public and private administrations are two species of the same genus. But they have special values and techniques of their own which give each other its distinctive character.

Similarities

In spite of the differences between public and private administration, both of them have certain features in common. These, according to Eneanya (2009:25), are:

- ◆ They mobilize resources – human, money and material – to achieve specific goals.
- ◆ Both of them review their goals in the context of existing resources.
- ◆ They motivate their employees for higher performance.
- ◆ Both pay attention to social responsibility in the community where they operate.
- ◆ Both public and private administrations are involved in bureaucracy, especially as some private organizations have become large in size, which has made administration complex.

Conclusion

The study of comparative public administration is not merely an intellectual exercise by some young scholars. Its conclusions have an important bearing on the whole sphere of public administration. The major contribution is that it has helped eliminate narrowness of “provincialism” and

“regionalism.” The principles of public administration are analyzed in cross-cultural and cross-national contexts and, to be universal they should be tested in cross-cultural settings (Bhagwan and Bhushan, 2006:59). A comparative study of the diverse administrative systems in the world enables us to consider to what extent public administration around the world seems to possess common versus contrasting themes or features. Comparative approach helps us explain the differences in the behaviour of bureaucracies in different countries and cultures and thus to formulate general principles about administrative behaviour transcending national boundaries.

In conclusion, Verman and Sharma (1994) once remarked: “The crisis suffered by comparative public administration both in terms of methodology and applicability is not severe enough to make it disappear altogether. It might have lost its impetus in recent years, but it still has potentiality to remain alive because of its identity, though faint, in the conceptual range of modern social sciences.”

Comparative public administration provides a picture of the life of governments and serves as a guide on how the institutions of government are being studied.

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