

American public administration scholarship and the non-Western world:

Examining the past and organizing the future of Third World administrative studies

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Abstract

This article provides a synthesis of research on Third World administrative systems by reviewing both its status within public administration as well as by undertaking a literature review of articles published in leading social science journals. This meta-review identifies predicaments facing non-Western public administration research. It provides a platform from which to identify the challenges of Third World administrative studies and, in doing so, articulates and advances a future vision for public administration as a global social science.

Introduction

In 2008, the President of the American Society of Public Administration hinted in an article in *PA Times* that the future of public administration was bound to be a global one (White, 2008). Commonplace distinctions between foreign and domestic public administration were said to be collapsing in the face of tremendous global challenges, technological advances in communication and greater cross-national interdependency and inter-linkage. In his first address to a Joint Session of Congress on February 24, 2009, US President Barack Obama identified a similar convergence between American and international interests because “we know that America cannot meet the threats of this century alone, [and] the world cannot meet them without America.” But to what extent are these claims of integration and interdependency breaking down barriers between American public administration scholarship and the study of public administration in and of the global South?

This article provides a synthesis of research on Third World administrative systems by reviewing both its status within public administration as well as by undertaking a literature review of articles published in leading social science journals. The terms global South, non-Western world, developing countries and Third World are used interchangeably to refer to countries that are not located in North America and Western Europe.¹ By administrative systems, we refer to all the relevant aspects of public sector decision-making that include bureaucracies, legislatures, political parties, public corporations and courts (Riggs, 1970: 21). This review identifies predicaments

¹ We do not use the label “Third World” or “developing” in any pejorative sense. We include both developing and post-Communist transition countries in this designation.

facing non-Western public administration research. It provides a platform from which to identify the challenges of Third World administrative studies and in doing so, better articulate and advance a future vision for public administration as a global social science.

The first section provides a historical overview of the study of Third World administration within comparative public administration and problematizes its use as a virtual synonym with development administration, and indeed with all “foreign” or non-American administration (Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007: 609; Jreisat, 2006; Riggs, 1991). We give three reasons why the study of Third World public administration has extended beyond the boundaries of traditional comparative public administration: the status of American comparative public administration within the parent discipline of public administration; the re-emergence of development administration within (largely European) development studies programmes and public policy schools; and the evolving distinctions between public administration and public management. It is for these reasons that the numerous assessments of the state of comparative public administration within public administration can only ever partially present the state of Third World administrative research (Farazmand, 1991; Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007; Jreisat, 2005; Sigelman, 1976 (2006); Van Wart & Cayer, 1990; Waldo, 1976). Any endeavor to understand the state of play in Third World administrative studies must by definition look beyond the sub-field of comparative public administration itself.

The second section includes a content analysis of articles on Third World administration published in leading journals of public administration, development administration and public management from the late 1990s to present day. We ask which countries have been studied and topics examined? What theories and methods have been

used? What units of analysis are examined? Are the authors themselves affiliated with institutions in developing countries? By directly examining published research on administrative systems in the global South within and beyond comparative public administration, there is an attempt to understand what has constituted cutting edge research of non-Western administrations in the social sciences. Our empirical analysis suggests that a small minority of research published in these journals falls within the category of Third World administration. Administrative studies of the global South have fractured into a small-scale, disparate, non-cumulative, descriptive and non-comparative field dominated by researchers with Western affiliations.

The third section speculates on the reasons why Third World administration is in this current state, which ultimately hampers theoretical and methodological development of both Third World *and* American administrative science. First, the politics of knowledge within public administration has translated into a lower status for comparative public administration and, to an even greater extent, development administration, as an “applied” science. There is a presumed assumption that the problems of the world are either equivalent to those in America or reflective of the American experience, without treating this as a question requiring further investigation. As a result, there are startlingly few published outputs of Third World administration within journals associated with comparative public administration, and those that are published are largely focused on application rather than comparative science. Secondly, the professional identity of Third World administrative studies has been co-opted by the inter-disciplinary social sciences, including but not limited to development studies and public management. We suggest this may have fracture cumulative knowledge advancement, methodological rigour and

theory development within Third World administrative studies, leaving it as a descriptive, applied and non-comparative exercise. Lastly, we explain the weaknesses of Third World administrative knowledge by understanding the ways public administration knowledge is produced in and of the Third World. At one level, researchers in the developing world struggle against financial and resource constraints, a training curriculum that either by design or by circumstance does not reference American public administration literatures and debates, and where parochial interests can dominate as much as anywhere else. At another level, thought-provoking research on Third World administration exists but struggles to find its voice and space within mainstream Western academic discourses.

The article concludes with some guidance on how a globalized public administration in 2020 could incorporate Third World administrative scholarship. More collaboration and integration across different research traditions, disciplines and geographic locations are first steps for de-provincializing American public administration (Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007; Jreisat, 2005). This global interest must extend beyond the domain of the comparative public administration that has too often been exclusively associated as the only sub-field with “foreign” interests, thereby making all public administration comparative in some sense (Guess & Gabriellyan, 2007; Jreisat, 2006; Otenyo & Lind, 2006b; Riggs, 1991). A global public administration is one that permits us to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of all administrative contexts, imagine a wider range of administrative possibilities and can identify areas and methods of improvement as it builds knowledge cumulatively via collaborative arrangements that collapse geographic, methodological and disciplinary boundaries. Global public

administration flourishes to the mutual benefit of both American public administration and Third World administrative studies.

The scholarship of Third World administration

Early days: comparative public administration

The intellectual history of Third World public administration crosses both epochs and disciplines. Its history begins in the early days of the post-independence era, when fledgling governments in Asia and Africa were building public administrations to sustain their new rights to sovereignty. Against this backdrop, comparative public administration established itself as a sizable, identifiable and complex contemporary movement, a branch of public administration founded on comparative analysis of administrative processes and institutions (Guess & Gabriellyan, 2007; Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007: 606; Otenyo & Lind, 2006b: xxi; Raphaeli, 1967). The institutionalization of the Comparative Administration Group (CAG) within the American Society for Public Administration in 1960 nevertheless had as its “overriding interest” the administrative problems of developing countries (Riggs, 1970). This resulted in an association between the sub-discipline of comparative administration and “foreign” non-Western administrative concerns (Jreisat, 2005; Otenyo & Lind, 2006b; Van Wart & Cayer, 1990). The reason for the association derived from the sub-field’s early reliance on grants from large American donors like the Ford Foundation that sought greater understanding of the relationship between administrative reform and development, largely defined in economic terms (Riggs, 1970). The articulation of a foreign assistance programme in Point IV of President Harry Truman’s inaugural speech in 1949 had cemented the United

States as a nation ready and willing to give advance on all questions of Third World modernization, including administrative modernization (Truman, 1949). Meanwhile, as comparative public administration became equated to non-Western administrative science, the remainder of public administration scholarship, which at this time was largely an American-based discipline with links to political science, oriented itself towards American problems and American solutions (Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007: 607; Otenyo & Lind, 2006a: 2).

Under the stewardship of Fred Riggs, CAG's interest in "development" may have muddied up comparative public administration as the field acquired an association to the applied policy science of assisting newly independent nations (Tummala, 2008). Despite this tension, the 1960s and early 1970s marked the pinnacle for comparative public administration where the field grew in numbers, funding and academic prestige (Van Wart & Cayer, 1990: 239). The sub-field's contributions included: the construction of typologies of administrative systems that remains a guide for framing research, gathering and analyzing data; the establishment of patterns of administrative functions like those of the civil service and processes like public budgeting; and the articulation and advancement of development administration, defined as knowledge of the administrative problems of developing countries (Jreisat, 2005: 233). The irony is that the rise of development administration seems to have coincided with a deterioration in comparative's status as a sub-discipline of public administration.

The middle years: development administration

The history of development administration is partially the history of comparative public administration and partly the story of a “subject matter in search of a discipline” (Turner, 1997). As already mentioned, development administration is closely linked to the early history of comparative studies, particularly Truman’s Point IV program. Many scholars still assumed that comparative public administration equated to development administration, albeit the latter designation implying more applied performance-related concerns. While this synonymous use may have been more tenable in the early years of comparative administration, it is less so in the current epoch where development administration, and its cousin development management, exist as sub-disciplines within fields as diverse as political science, sociology, public management and economics

From an early date, development administration was seen as the study of the state, and largely an applied offshoot of comparative public administration (Brinkerhoff, 2008). Riggs offered two early meanings for development administration: (1) the administration *of* development programmes and methods to implement policies and plans to meet development objectives and (2) the development *of* administration as strengthening administrative capabilities (Riggs, 1970). In both cases, development administration connoted implementation research and training at the applied fringes of formal comparative scholarship focused on developing countries. In Britain, initial suspicions of development administration as a veiled attack on the colonial record gradually gave way to support for an applied vision of training overseas administrators through pragmatic, experience-based curricula (Clarke, 1999; Schaffer, 1969). Modeling Third World bureaucracies according to a “traditional, bureaucratic model of public administration”

came to be associated with the functional science of development administration (Hughes, 2003; Turner, 1997). Effort was expended on creating “visionary roadmaps (paradigms, models, middle-range theories, theses, and frameworks) to such destinations as revolution, modernization and development. Such maps could be followed only if resources were available and the elaborate conditions could be met” (Guess & Gabriellyan, 2007). It is at these applied margins perhaps that development administration gradually began to establish a separate identity from American comparative public administration, for example as a valued subject in British development programs and faculties even today.²

Meanwhile, confidence in comparative public administration that had staked its claim on development administration’s success also waned. This was due to the mediocre performance of developing states, the failures to analytically predict the outcomes of administrative reforms and the rise of authoritarian regimes in many parts of Africa and Latin America post-independence (Hirschmann, 1981; Schaffer, 1969; Van Wart & Cayer, 1990). The discipline of comparative public administration shared in the general disillusionment with development administration and suffered the consequences for latter’s underperformance. As a result, comparative public administration’s viability as a sub-field within public administration became increasingly uncertain from about the mid 1970 (Otenyo & Lind, 2006a; Peters, 1994; Sigelman, 1976 (2006)). The comparative public administration “bubble burst as rapidly as it had formed.” (Van Wart & Cayer, 1990: 239).

² For example, Birmingham University’s Development Administration Group was formed in 1968, while Manchester’s Institute for Development Policy and Management was set up in 1958.

The recent years: public management and development

Comparative administration's status as sub-discipline of public administration has remained an issue of perennial contestation and commentary. The criticisms leveled against it include an ambiguous identity as both an applied and academic science (Jreisat, 2005; Otenyo & Lind, 2006a); a predilection for grand abstract theories influenced by structural-functionalist thought that have little bearing on or relevance in reality (Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007); and conceptual fragmentation and dispersion relating to levels, units of analysis and dependent variables (Jreisat, 1991, 2005; Peters, 1994). This dissatisfaction has arguably prompted the autonomous and separate evolution of comparative public administration from its parent discipline of public administration (Jreisat, 2005: 234). It is logical to suggest that this divergence has had deleterious consequences for the status of scholarship on non-Western administrations within mainstream American public administration.

Two empirical studies of comparative public administration research by Sigelman (1976) and Van Wart and Cayer (1990) illuminate the sub-discipline's problems. In 1976, Sigelman undertook a content-analysis of full-length articles appearing in the discontinued *Journal of Comparative Administration* (JCA) between 1969 and 1974 and concluded that the field had not benefited from the interaction of theory and data, opting instead for grand abstract deductive theorizing that resulted in a vicious cycle of academic under-development (Sigelman, 1976 (2006)). In the Van Wart and Cayer (1990) study, a content analysis of 20 journals surveyed the state of comparative public administration articles, where comparative research was defined as articles that referred to the administration of a country other than the country of the publication or if the

administrations of two or more countries were compared. Nine subjects were identified within comparative public administration, one of which was “development administration” which constituted 14% of all coded articles.³ Their results suggested that while comparative administration research may not yet be completely defunct, it lacked a clearly defined identity or purpose.

More recently, there has been some reason for optimism about the state of comparative public administration. The appearance of articles with titles like “Comparative public administration is back in, prudently” (Jreisat, 2005) suggest that at least anecdotally the sub-field may be on the road to recovery. This re-emergence is almost certainly tied to the influence of “new” public management (NPM) agenda within public administration (Hood, 1991; Kaboulian, 1998; Kettle, 1997). This is because NPM has thrown up analytical and inter-disciplinary issues relating to “foreign” administration by fostering interest in new subjects like governance, decentralization, outsourcing, contracting, results-based accountability and performance improvement (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Brinkerhoff & Coston, 1999; Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007). The influence of NPM can also be felt by a changing vocabulary. The term development administration with its associations to the Third World state has been replaced with the label ‘development management’ that looks at the state in the context of its network of relationships to non-state actors, including the private sector and non-governmental organizations (Brinkerhoff, 2008; Guess & Gabriellyan, 2007: 571; Hughes, 2003). Nevertheless, for many European scholars the difference in terminology simply indicates

³ The others included: “concepts and paradigm, administrative history, bureaucracy and politics, personnel administration, organization theory and behaviour, public budgeting, local and field administration and citizens and administration.” These categories are borrowed from Huddleston (1984)

the rise of neo-liberal logics in Third World administration (Cooke, 2004; Cooke & Dar, 2008; Hughes, 2003).

The development management revolution stands somewhat separately from the discipline of comparative public administration for the most part, perhaps because it has also found new territories of inquiry, including the study of international aid actors and instruments. Development management is perhaps becoming more of a feature of interdisciplinary curricula in schools of public policy, development and management focused on improving administrative efficiency and effectiveness than Waldonian traditions of public administration (Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007: 614). The implications of this migration for the study of Third World administration in particular remain uninvestigated, although some suggest that comparative public administration has benefitted as it becomes an eclectic mix of disciplines no longer tied to its parent discipline of public administration. The fact that comparative studies is being fed from many sources is said to a source of its current resurgence and strength (Guess & Gabriellyan, 2007: 572)

Content analysis

In order to investigate the contemporary state of Third World administration studies, a content analysis was conducted using journal sources over the 1998-2008 period. Each journal represents a key publication from each of the three social science sub-disciplines that, as the previous section demonstrated, can claim a demonstrable connection to and outlet for non-Western administrative scholarship. Four journals,

ranked in Van Wart and Cayer (1990) as having published the highest frequency of comparative public administration research between 1982 and 1986, are examined. Two development studies journals that were not included in Van Wart and Cayer's content analysis (*Public Administration and Development* and *World Development*) are also examined, along with two other development journals that had not been originally listed. Finally, we examined only two relatively recent journals in public management to obtain some limited comparative perspective. Overall, 10 journals were examined (Table 1). We examined every third volume starting beginning with 2008 although some volumes had to be omitted due to lack of access.⁴ In each journal, we inspected all the full-length research articles⁵ and selected those that referred to the administrative systems⁶ of a developing country or set of countries, where this category is defined in terms of whether they were situated as potential loan recipients for either concessional or non-concessional development financing from the World Bank (Table 2). Articles that focused on regions with significant numbers of developing countries were also included in the sample, although these were categorized as "regional" studies of Third World administration. Using these criteria, we obtained a sample of 259 articles out of a possible 1698.

⁴ For example, for the *Journal of Developing Areas* that was originally included in the Van Wart and Cayer (1990) study, our libraries did not have access prior to 2003. Similarly, access to *Development and Change* prior to 1997 was unavailable. *International Review of Administrative Sciences* was inaccessible prior to 1997, while the *International Journal of Public Administration* was inaccessible prior to 2000 and we were also unable to download 2008 31(12). We were also only able to examine *World Development* until the year 1999. A future draft of this paper will attempt to access these volumes to complete the sample. It should also be noted that *International Public Management Journal* could only be accessed from 2005, Volume 8, Issue 3, although we keep it in the sample as its stature is growing within public management.

⁵ Book reviews, editorial introductions and in memoriam pieces were disregarded.

⁶ Recall by administrative systems, we refer to all the relevant aspects of public sector decision-making that include bureaucracies, legislatures, political parties, public corporations and courts (Riggs, 1970: 21).

Table 1. Third World administration articles in journals by frequency and rank, 1998-2008

Discipline	Journal	% of articles on Third World administration published over the period examined
Public administration		
	<i>International Review of Administrative Sciences</i>	28%
	<i>Public Administration</i>	0.5 %
	<i>International Journal of Public Administration</i>	25%
	<i>Public Administration Review</i>	3%
Development		
	<i>Public Administration and Development</i>	58%
	<i>Development and Change</i>	18%
	<i>Journal of Developing Areas</i>	8%
	<i>World Development</i>	12%
Public management		
	<i>Governance</i>	4%
	<i>International Public Management Journal</i>	3%

Table 2. Developing countries, World Bank (2009)

(a) Countries receiving concessional finance (IDA lending) (64 countries)

Afghanistan	Guyana	Nigeria
Angola	Haiti	Rwanda
Bangladesh	Honduras	Samoa
Benin	Kenya	São Tomé and Principe
Bhutan	Kiribati	Senegal
Burkina Faso	Kosovo	Sierra Leone
Burundi	Kyrgyz Republic	Solomon Islands
Cambodia	Lao PDR	Somalia
Cameroon	Lesotho	Sri Lanka
Central African Republic	Liberia	Sudan
Chad	Madagascar	Tajikistan
Comoros	Malawi	Tanzania
Congo, Dem. Rep.	Maldives	Timor-Leste
Congo, Rep.	Mali	Togo
Côte d'Ivoire	Mauritania	Tonga
Djibouti	Moldova	Uganda
Eritrea	Mongolia	Vanuatu
Ethiopia	Mozambique	Vietnam
Gambia, The	Myanmar	Yemen, Rep.
Ghana	Nepal	Zambia
Guinea	Nicaragua	
Guinea-Bissau	Niger	

(b) Countries receiving non-concessional financing (IBRD lending) (63 countries)

Albania	Guatemala	Paraguay
Algeria	Indonesia	Peru
Antigua and Barbuda	Iran, Islamic Rep.	Philippines
Argentina	Iraq	Poland
Belarus	Jamaica	Romania
Belize	Jordan	Russian Federation
Botswana	Kazakhstan	Serbia
Brazil	Korea, Rep.	Seychelles
Bulgaria	Lebanon	South Africa
Chile	Libya	St. Kitts and Nevis
China	Macedonia, FYR	Suriname
Colombia	Malaysia	Swaziland
Costa Rica	Marshall Islands	Syrian Arab Republic
Croatia	Mauritius	Thailand
Dominican Republic	Mexico	Trinidad and Tobago
Ecuador	Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	Tunisia
Egypt, Arab Rep.	Montenegro	Turkey
El Salvador	Morocco	Turkmenistan
Equatorial Guinea	Namibia	Ukraine
Fiji	Palau	Uruguay
Gabon	Panama	Venezuela

(c) Blend (access to both IDA and IBRD financing) (15 countries)

Armenia	Dominica	Papua New Guinea
Azerbaijan	Georgia	St. Lucia
Bolivia	Grenada	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Bosnia and Herzegovina	India	Uzbekistan
Cape Verde	Pakistan	Zimbabwe

In all these journals, the study of Third World administration remains a relatively small-scale endeavor (Table 1). Only in *Public Administration and Development* did Third World administration constitute a majority of published articles in the time period examined. Six key questions guided our analysis of the state of empirical research on topics relating to Third World administration. These are each set out below with the findings from our empirical study presented under each heading.

(1) Is research focused on a small set of geographic locations and topics?

Sigelman (1976) argued that any established field of study ought to be focused on a small set of common issues. This logic is applicable to geographic and research foci in developing country administrative studies. To assess geographic focus, we coded all articles according to the developing country being examined as per Table 2. Out of a possible 142 developing countries, our sample of 259 articles dealt with 82 developing countries. 47 papers were oriented towards regional groups that included a developing country region (eg. non-DAC countries, Africa, colonial countries, failed state, Eastern Europe, post-tsunami countries, etc.) This suggests a tremendous variety of countries that are being studied. Beyond the top 10 countries that provide a focus for research (Table 3), there appears to be little concentration or cumulative knowledge generation on specific countries.

Table 3. Top ten developing countries examined in the sample

Country	Number of articles
China	24
South Africa	16
India	15
Brazil	10
Tanzania	10
Ghana	8
Mexico	8
Malaysia	7
Russia	7
Uganda	7

To assess topical research focus, we adopted the section categories as per the American Society of Public Administration to proxy for the major research areas within public administration.⁷ Table 4 lists the research/thematic areas against which each article was coded. If it seemed there could be more than one research area covered by any article, we chose to code only the dominant theme. Our results indicate there is not really one prioritized “sector” in Third World administration but a number of them. For example, in *World Development* and *Journal of Developing Areas*, the state is most often discussed in the context of its public budgeting and financial management functions, natural given these journals orient themselves to economic topics like public expenditure management, liberalization, industrial policy and growth. We also find that environmental and resource management (for example in the area of water resources and forest management), and public law and administration (in the context of corruption and post-conflict reconstruction) remain recurrent themes in development journals. The wide variety of topics that are explored suggest there is perhaps less accumulation of thematic knowledge within the study of Third World administration. There were also a number of topics that did not fall neatly with the ASPA’s thematic areas, for example articles on food policy and its impact on the state, post-conflict themes, the study of authoritarian transitions, etc. In a sense, Third World administration almost needs its own sector classification because those used by American public administration seem insufficient to capture the diversity of topics it examines.

⁷ We exclude the Section of International and Comparative Administration (SICA) as we are exploring administrative study of developing countries that have largely dominated SICA’s research agenda. We also exclude the Section on Chinese Administration given it is a geographically circumscribed group; the Conference on Minority Administration given this does not have section-status; and the Section on Historical, Artistic and Reflective Expression given it represents a method of studying administration rather than a topic.

Table 4. Research areas of public administration

Health and human services administration	Ethics
Science and technology in government	Women in public administration
Professional and organizational development	Emergency and Crisis Management
Environmental and National Resource Administration	Public administration research*
Criminal Justice Administration	Public law and administration
Inter-governmental administration and management	Transportation policy and administration
Public budgeting and financial management	Complexity and Network Studies
Public administration education	Certified public management**
Public performance management	Democracy and social justice
Personnel administration and labour relations	

* This section's website defines its research focus as "research on city, county, special district, state and national public administration as well as research on public-private partnerships and third party government."

**This section's website defines its research in "the concept of certified management."

(2) What kinds of theories are used?

We seek to assess the level of theoretical-conceptual standard achieved by the study of Third World administration, in the same way that Van Wart and Cayer (1990) sought to assess the extent to which there was a degree of scientific purpose to the field of comparative public administration.⁸ In order to assess the extent to which a rigorous theory-testing mode was used, each article was coded as having one of three “styles” as per Van Wart and Cayer (1990). A descriptive style of a particular empirical reality was one category, a “thesis assertion” that offers a well-articulated statement or proposition around which data and arguments are structured and a “hypothesis or model testing” that requires hypotheses or relationships to be identified prior to data gathering to test theoretical assertions rigorously.

Our results indicate that most of our sample falls within the “descriptive” category, with the second most popular category being “thesis assertion.” At some level, this suggests that Third world administrative research is not building on Kuhnian scientific principles and protocols, although this is not to say that it has failed to make substantial progress or advance applied empirical research (Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007). Nevertheless, this is some indication that the desire for Third World administrative studies to seek explanatory (nomothetic) theories that can account for changing properties and problems is far from being achieved (Riggs, 1991: 473). The approach to theory seems to be in the “application and translation of existing theories into

⁸ Many reviews of comparative public administration have pointed out that a shift to ideographic (distinct cases) to nomothetic approaches (studies that seek explicitly to formulate and test propositions) is one vehicle for improving the state of comparativist scholarship (Jreisat, 2005: 237).

practice” (Guess & Gabriellyan, 2007) rather than “qualifying as the product of science” (Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007).

(3) What methods are used?

As both Sigelman (1976) and Van Wart and Cayer (1990) asked in relation to comparative public administration, we also ask whether substantial percentages of administrative studies of developing countries rely on systematic modes of analysis? Is the mode of analysis essay-based, including broad theoretical and conceptual pieces or summary-pieces? Is it empirical non-quantitative, including narrow empirical studies (mainly case studies) that do not employ quantitative techniques. Or is it empirical quantitative including (1) studies that employ only simple counting or percentizing techniques which Sigelman (1976) identifies as “low level” or (b) studies that employ techniques that assume more than nominal measurement and that use tests of significance (designated “more powerful”). By classifying studies according to their qualitative or quantitative dimensions, this is not to say that one is superior to the others. As Peters 1994 states, the debate between qualitative and quantitative studies may be misplaced as the important feature is that whatever the method, there is an ability to test arguments systematically using comparative data (Peters, 1994: 85).⁹

Our results suggest that is a small minority (7%) of articles adopt powerful high-level quantitative methods.¹⁰ The vast majority of articles fall within the category of non-

⁹ Both Peters (1994) and Jrseit (2005) argue that a science of comparative public administration must begin with descriptive generalization of fact in order to become science. Examining the “concreteness and distinctiveness” of cases being studies cannot be dismissed. Nevertheless, there are also cautionary words for those who would engage in “barefoot empiricism” (Peters, 1994: 85-86)

¹⁰ This is despite the fact that all the articles in the *Journal of Developing Areas* use exclusively strong quantitative methods that include formal modeling and econometric analysis. Nevertheless, this journal if

quantitative empirical studies. The imbalance between the prevalence of quantitative and qualitative methods is striking, although it is entirely in keeping with earlier surveys of comparative public administration articles conducted by Van Wart and Cayer (1990) and Sigelman (1976). The real question is whether theory and empirical methods begin to connect more closely in order to advance empirical research and cumulative knowledge of Third World administration. In this regard, some suggest anecdotally that there is some progress being made (Guess & Gabriellyan, 2007: 572; Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007: 613).

(4) Is an explicitly comparative lens adopted?

Peters (1994) believes “dangers” lurk with a single case study. Studying one country implicitly assumes it is “either so particular that no others need be compared, or is so general that all others are like it. American researchers for example, tend to do the former for other countries and the latter for the United States.” (Peters, 1994: 83).

Comparative analysis is said to produce better dependable results, better evaluation of hypotheses and better verification of conclusions (Jreisat, 2005: 239). Nevertheless, Van Wart and Cayer (1990) suggest we must take care in deciding what constitute comparative research. Thus, we adopt three categories: (1) Non-empirical conceptual pieces categorized as “essays”; (2a) single case studies-no comparison or (2b) single case study-comparison, for example if there was a sub-national comparisons, theoretical

chosen because it was included in the original Van Wart and Cayer (1990) content analysis of comparative public administration.

comparability attempted or hypothesis testing; (3) multiple country studies that by definition are comparative.

Somewhat “dangerously,” we find that 56% of our articles are single case studies with no comparisons attempted, multiple country case studies constitute approximately 24% of all articles and single case studies with some comparative element comprise 16% of our sample. Clearly, studies of Third World administration are not engaging in comparative analysis. As long as public administration is not comparative, the claim that there exists a science of public administration will always ring empty as the possibility for generalization is limited (Riggs, 1991: 474).

(5) What units of analysis are used?

We identify two salient levels of analysis: the horizontal and the vertical. Vertical levels of analysis can be distinguished between national level units, including bureaucracy or administrative systems denoting agencies, organizations, departments, bureaus of a country’s public sector. The national administrative system is a dominant and universal structure for performing essential functions of society (Jreisat, 2005: 238). This more macro-level of analysis directs attention to the connectedness of administrative institutions to social and political institutions, so for example focusing on the national level allows us to stay concerned with issues like accountability and the governance of administrative organizations in society (Peters, 1994: 73-4). On the other hand, some suggest that micro-level studies that access perceptions, attitudes and motivations as they function within government are invaluable for connecting levels of analysis (Peters, 1994: 73; Sigelman, 1976 (2006): 14). As Peters writes (1994: 73), there is “no right or

wrong” level of analysis at which to work, though the selection does seem to say something about the types of findings the research can produce.

On the horizontal dimension we look at three key areas: (1) Government: (2) Ministry/Agency (3) Program/Project//Policy. Government refers to a country’s entire public sector as a singular unit. Within government, ministries or agencies are the dominant organizational feature and within ministries and agencies, civil servants are frequently engaged with specific programs/projects or policies. The analytical level of scholarly analysis may vary from understanding “government” in general, to ministry-specific studies, to the study of policy and program administration and implementation.

We find that the vast majority of our articles fall within the category of macro-level studies, with very few articles focused at the micro-level of individual perceptions, attitudes, etc. On the horizontal dimension, most articles focus on government as a singular entity, with program/policy focus being the second dominant horizontal unit of analysis. In the case of development journals in particular, the category of ministry/agency remains a weak one. This seems to be because a lot of what constitutes Third World administration is often an examination of how extra-administrative dynamics (eg resistance groups, post-conflict challenges, NGOs) affect relations with the state as a unit. In development journals, the relationship between specific programs and policies on informal local dynamics (communities that could include village groupings, religious groups, NGOS and local government) is also an important trend.

(6) Where are authors located?

Our content analysis also explores the extent to which authors are affiliated with universities and institutions in the global South. We do this to understand whether published Third World administrative studies are undertaken by researchers with institutional affiliations in the developing world, or whether this field still remains the domain of those trained and financed in the West. This is important as we consider whether cutting edge research on Third World administration is a truly global endeavor that has potential positive externalities and contributions for educational establishments in the global South, or whether the field is still defined and constituted by those trained, situated and employed in the West.¹¹

To examine author affiliation systematically, we developed a coding system in which articles where all authors were affiliated with non-Western institutions received 3 points. Where half or the majority of authors are affiliated with Third World institutions, we allocated 2 points, while if a minority of authors can claim this kind of affiliation, 1 point was awarded. If no author cites institutional affiliations located in the Third world, we allocated no points. For this analysis, we disregard the cases where institutional affiliations were impossible to discern due to journal formatting (approximately 15 of our 259 articles). We discover that 65% of our articles do not have a single author affiliated with a developing country institute, while in 21% of our articles all of the authors are affiliated with organizations located in the Third World. 4% of all the articles have a minority of developing country authors, with 6% having half or a majority of developing

¹¹ We choose to use author institutional affiliation rather than an author's national identity because it is arguable that authors who are citizens of developing countries but employed in the West are most likely also to have trained in the West and are thus more with Western academic canons and practices.

world. Our results suggest that authors located in the North monopolize the pages of leading academic journals in the field of Third World administration studies.

Overall, our results indicate that Third World administration is a small-scale, disparate, descriptive, qualitative/empirical, non-comparative and Western activity that does not serve the cause of building a cumulative and universal science. The study of Third World administration remains a minority of published articles within leading public administration journals, development journals and public management journals. We also see that most published research across the three fields have fallen within the descriptive category, with those having a well-articulated statements and propositions around which data, arguments and evidence are a distinct minority of studies. The methods used to examine Third World administration are largely qualitative, with quantitative studies of both the low and high strength variety being few and far between. Research was infrequently comparative, with most research designs adopting the single case study. In terms of vertical units of analysis, most research was oriented to macro-level of analysis with micro-level studies of perceptions, attitudes and motivation hardly present. Third World administration research also seems to prefer examining government as a singular horizontal unit or else specific programs/policies, whereas the concept of ministry/agency seems less important. Finally, there are very few articles where authors have institutional affiliations in the global South, suggesting that Third world administrative studies remains a largely Western affair.

Why is Third World research in this state?

Why has Third World administration in the contemporary period become a small-scale, descriptive, qualitative/empirical and non-comparative field dominated by researchers with Western affiliations? We speculate on three reasons that Third World administration remains such an enterprise across the field of comparative public administration, development administration and public management. First, the perennial insecurity of comparative research within the parent discipline of public administration keeps Third World administrative studies as a minor sub-interest within American public administration. This is partly a consequence of the politics of knowledge within American graduate schools of public administration and affairs. Comparative and development administration courses remain electives on most US graduate programs, while core courses concentrate on American subjects with little examination of international phenomenon (Heady, 2001:393). While the host nation of any education program should rightly be the country of focus for training, American students risk being under-exposed to international phenomenon when compared to their counterparts located elsewhere in the world (Heady, 2001:393). This inadvertently creates a presumed assumption among future scholars of public administration that the problems of the world are unimportant, are equivalent to those in America, and/or at least reflective of the American experience, without treating this as a matter for further investigation. The study of foreign administration thus remains a luxury rather than necessity, an intellectual indulgence or altruistic act (when directed towards the Third World, for example) rather than an intrinsic part of building better understanding of American public administration. Perhaps even more worryingly, American public administration becomes increasingly

ethnocentric as it assumes the problems in other countries are both subordinate to and the mirror image of its own. Until comparative public administration is able to inform mainstream American public administration, there is a sense in which Third World administration will never gain the acceptance that it seeks (Riggs, 1991: 475).

Secondly, with comparative public administration relegated to a secondary status within public administration, research of “foreign” administrations have naturally kept separate and distant from mainstream public administration or else migrated to fields more welcoming towards their interests (Jreisat, 2005: 234). The result is a multi-disciplinary interest in Third World administration that has fragmented itself geographically, conceptually and methodologically, turning itself into a minor applied empirical sub-specialization. If anything does unite Third World administrative studies, it has been the ability to capture the “local realities” of administration in its full contextual specificity. With methods of comparison generally absent and little attempt to build coherent and cumulative literatures across topics or geographies, the ability to either generalize from this local context to other locations and conditions, whether in the developed or developing world, remains unviable.

Lastly, in order to make sense of the limited presence of Third World administrative content in leading publication outlets, as well as the lack of authors with affiliations to institutions located in developing countries, one also needs to consider the institutional obstacles that each confronts. Third World administrative research must be accommodated by journals published in the Western world and constituted by editorial boards made up of scholars trained in Western academic canons and traditions.

Researchers affiliated with institutes in the developing world are less likely to have been

educated abroad, and will therefore be less aware of Northern academic protocols, less familiar with Western theories and empirical traditions and less frequently immersed in key networks of association and influence. All of these are important part of socializing scholars of administration, putting them on a path to publication in highly rated international publications, most of which are situated with Anglo-American academic traditions. In some part, the challenge for Third World scholars is resource-based. Ensuring that scholars emerging from them can compete with graduates from anywhere else in the world requires additional financing that can enhance capacity in higher educational establishments and research centers in the Third World. In other ways, the challenge lies in parochial interests that keep the study of administration strictly within domestic boundaries, national languages and local journals. More concerning is that the possibility of publication in leading international journals is precluded because of the challenging and unconventional nature of the research itself, thereby betraying authors' unfamiliarity with Western academic conventions and discourses that bias against their publication.

Conclusion: a global public administration

In the face of the challenges and trends outlined in this article, the search for a robust science of contemporary Third World administration continues. As we consider the future of public administration, we guard against what Ferrel Heady described as both the hubris of making “ringing pronouncements about a new paradigm for the field of public administration” and the pessimism of “conclu[ding] that we have reached a state of decline or decadence requiring revolutionary efforts to rescue us from irrelevance” (Heady, 2001: 392).

Like many before us, we call for an end to the false dichotomies that separates Third World administrative scholarship, housed in the sub-discipline of comparative public administration, and American public administration (Farazmand, 1996, 1999; Heady, 2001; Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007; Riggs, 1991). The term “global public administration” captures this need to collapse the distinctions that separate comparative public administration from public administration, as well as those that segment development administration, development management and international public management. It would also be an inclusive enterprise, incorporating researchers and practitioners from both the global North and South. The “global” label also highlights that globalization is driving the changing character of the modern state in such a way that requires inter-disciplinary convergence and collaboration when examining any administration, Third World or otherwise (Farazmand, 1996, 1999). While Fred Riggs originally captures this sentiment by suggesting all public administration needed to become “comparative” in order to become a true science (Riggs, 1991), a “global” designation seems more relevant given both the times and the trends.

But what would a global public administration in 2020 look like? Its foremost aim would be to foster collaborative research organized around geographies, units of analysis, instruments, methodologies or substantial issues can transcend vested disciplinary and national interests in order to build a field of administrative sciences that has the potential for generalizing without losing hold of its empirical foundations (Jreisat, 2005: 238; Peters, 1994: 87). As in the case of law where case specifics are interpreted through larger principles and frameworks, so too can the administrative sciences only become a universal science by “going global.” It would be a cumulative enterprise that

links theory and data in defensible ways and avoids the “barefoot empiricism” that characterizes current research.

The vital purpose of global public administration would be to de-provincialize all administrative scholarship by giving all parties clearer understandings of the strengths and weaknesses of their systems, processes and instruments, thereby encouraging a wider array of solutions and alternatives (Heady, Perlman & Rivera, 2007; Jreisat, 2005). A global public administration is an enterprise that both American public administration *and* Third World administrative studies ultimately stand to benefit from.

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