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The Role of Comparative Public Administration in National Development

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Abstract

Comparative public administration refers to the study and analysis of the practices, structures, and functioning of public administration systems in different countries **or** regions. It involves examining the similarities and differences in the way various countries or regions manage their public affairs, make policy decisions, implement programs, and deliver public services.This study is therefore carried out to investigate the role of comparative public administration in national development. The paper is a desk study and so it relies on secondary source of data only, one major conclusion is that the comparism between the various organs of government, enable the different regions to copy from each other and also one major recommendation is that governments should embrace the principles of comparative public administration in order to tap from those countries that achieved development through public administration.

Keywords: Comparative, Public, Administration, National Development.

Introduction

Comparative public administration is a subfield of public administration which provide insights and comparative perspectives that can help improve governance and administration practices. **Eneanya, A.N. (2010).** It allows for an examination of different approaches, strategies, and models employed in different contexts, highlighting both successful and unsuccessful experiences. By studying the similarities and differences between public administration systems, policymakers, scholars, and practitioners can learn from each other and adapt successful strategies to their own contexts.

Some key areas that comparative public administration focuses on, according to Marume, S. B. M. ,Jubenkanda, R. R. and

Namusi, C. W. (2016).include, administrative structures and organizations, administrative reforms, public policy-making processes, bureaucratic culture, decision-making processes, service delivery mechanisms, and the role of public administration in development and governance. The study of comparative public administration can provide valuable insights into how different factors such as political systems, historical contexts, cultural norms, and economic conditions shape administrative practices and functioning.

The evolution of comparative public administration Heady, F. (2001)

i. **Early Comparative Studies:** The evolution of comparative public administration can be traced back to the early 20th century when scholars began comparing administrative practices across different countries. The initial focus was on understanding differences in administrative systems and structures, with a primary emphasis on politics, law, and organizational theories.

ii. **Functional Approach:** In the 1950s-1960s, comparative public administration shifted towards a more functional approach. Scholars started analyzing functions performed by administrative systems in different countries and examined how these functions contributed to societal goals. This approach emphasized the role of bureaucracy, public policies, and public management practices in achieving effective governance.

iii. **Structural-Functionalism:** During the 1960s-1970s, the structural-functionalism approach gained popularity. Scholars focused on the analysis of formal organizational structures, decision-making processes, and administrative reforms. The aim was to identify the best practices that could be adopted by countries to enhance administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

iv. **New Public Management:** In the 1980s-1990s, the rise of the New Public Management (NPM) movement brought a significant shift in comparative public administration. NPM emphasized market-oriented reforms, privatization, performance-based management, and result-oriented approaches. Comparative public administration began to examine the impact of these reforms on administrative systems, highlighting variations in implementation and outcomes.

v. **Governance Approach:** In recent years, comparative public administration has evolved to incorporate a broader governance perspective. Scholars have shifted their focus from the study of formal administrative structures to understanding the interplay of various actors and institutions involved in decision-making, policy formulation, and service delivery. This approach considers not only the government but also non-governmental organizations, civil society, and public-private partnerships in the analysis.

vi. **Comparative Regimes:** Another recent development in comparative public administration is the study of different administrative systems and regimes. Scholars have explored variations in governance models and administrative traditions across countries. This approach examines how different cultural, social, and political contexts influence administrative practices and policy outcomes.

Overall, the evolution of comparative public administration has moved from analyzing structures and functions to a broader perspective that includes governance, regimes, and contextual factors. The field continues to evolve as scholars explore new approaches, adapt to emerging challenges, and incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives in their research. It is therefore against this background that this paper aims at examining the role comparative public administration plays in National development.

CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATION

Some of the concepts involved in comparative public administration according to Marume, S. B. M. ,Jubenkanda, R. R. and Namusi, C. W. (2016).which are the key areas of comparism as well, include the followings ;-

a) **ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION:** This refers to the systematic arrangement and coordination of various elements that effectively carry out administrative tasks and functions as well as the overall framework of systems and processes that govern the day-to-day operations of an institution which together contribute to the efficient and effective functioning of the institution.

b) **ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM:** Administrative reform refers to the process of making changes and improvements in the administrative functions and structures of a government, organization, or institution. It focuses on enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency of administrative systems and practices.

c) **THE BUREAUCRATIC CULTURE:** This refers to the set of attitudes, behaviors, and practices that tend to be associated with large organizations and bureaucratic systems. It is a way of operating that emphasizes following rules and procedures, maintaining hierarchy and formal structures, and placing importance on paperwork and documentation.

d) **THE PUBLIC POLICY MAKING PROCESS:** The public policy making process refers to the series of steps that policymakers take to identify, develop, implement, and evaluate policies to address societal issues.

e) **THE SERVICE DELIVERY MECHANISMS**: Service delivery mechanism refers to the process or method through which services are provided or delivered to customers or clients. It involves the entire chain of activities, from the initial request or order to the final delivery and completion of the service. The service delivery mechanism encompasses various elements such as the infrastructure, technology, resources, and workflows necessary to provide the intended service. It is designed in a way that ensures efficiency, effectiveness, and customer satisfaction.

f) **REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT:** Representative government refers to a political system in which citizens elect individuals to represent their interests and make decisions on their behalf. In this system, elected representatives are responsible for making laws, policies, and governing the country or region.

Representative governments can take different forms, including democratic republics and constitutional monarchies. The specific structure and functions of these governments vary

across countries, but they typically involve regular elections, separation of powers, and checks and balances to ensure accountability and protect citizens' rights.

THE MODELS IN COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

There are many models used by different scholars to explain the meaning of comparative public administration, but in this context, we shall consider the few followings:

I. **The prismatic model,** also known as the prismatic society model, was developed by Australian sociologist and political scientist Professor Fred Riggs in the 1960s. It is a framework that offers an alternative view of societal development and compares different levels of government in a society.

According to Riggs, the prismatic model considers the interaction between different sectors of society and government institutions at various levels. It suggests that no single government or institution can adequately address the needs and complexities of modern society. Instead, it argues for a more nuanced approach that recognizes the diversity and interdependence of societal actors.

The prismatic model suggests that societies are composed of multiple sectors, each with its own distinct functions and interests. These sectors could include political, economic, social, and cultural organizations. Riggs argued that each sector has a different set of values, goals, and resources, and therefore, they cannot be treated as a unified entity.

Furthermore, Riggs emphasized the sociopolitical environment in which these sectors operate. He discussed how the power dynamics, formal and informal rules, and cultural values shape the relationships between sectors and influence public policy decisions. Riggs also pointed out that the sectors constantly interact and influence each other, either positively or negatively.

In terms of governance, the prismatic model acknowledges the existence of multiple levels of government. According to Riggs, these levels include local, regional, national, and international institutions. Each of these levels may have its own set of responsibilities, authority, and decision-making capacity.

Overall, the prismatic model emphasizes the importance of recognizing the complexity and interplay of multiple sectors and levels of government in a society. It suggests that effective governance requires a comprehensive understanding of these interactions and a flexible approach to problem-solving.

Critics of the prismatic model argue that it oversimplifies the relationships between sectors and levels of government. They argue that it fails to sufficiently address power dynamics and the role of elites in shaping societal development. Additionally, some argue that the prismatic model lacks practical guidance to inform policy-making and implementation efforts.

In conclusion, the prismatic model developed by Professor Fred Riggs offers an alternative perspective on societal development and governance. It highlights the diverse and interdependent nature of sectors and levels of government, suggesting that effective governance requires an understanding of these complex relationships. While the model has its critics, it continues to offer valuable insights into the study of public administration and poli**tical scienc**

II. **The modernization model ;-** (Non-governmental actors,) also known as non-state actors or civil society organizations, play a significant role in the administration of various sectors and issues. These actors are independent from government control and operate in a diverse range of areas, including development, human rights, environment, and public health. Some examples of non-governmental actors in administration include:

a. **Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations** (NGOs): These organizations are established to address specific social and developmental issues. They can work locally, nationally, or internationally and are often involved in service delivery, awareness campaigns, advocacy, and policy analysis. Examples include Amnesty International, Greenpeace, and World Wildlife Fund.

b. **Community-Based Organizations (CBOs):** These organizations primarily focus on representing and serving the interests of a specific community or locality. They can undertake community development initiatives, provide social services, and mobilize community participation. CBOs often work in sectors such as education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation.

c. **Trade Unions:** These organizations represent the collective interests of workers within specific industries or sectors. They negotiate labor rights, wages, and working conditions with employers and advocate for the rights and welfare of workers. Trade unions often engage in collective bargaining, strikes, and lobbying efforts.

d. **Professional Associations:** These associations represent professionals working in specific fields such as medicine, law, engineering, or journalism. They develop professional standards, provide training and education to their members, and advocate for the interests of the profession as a whole. Professional associations often work with governments to develop policies and regulations related to their respective sectors.

e. **Advocacy Groups and Think Tanks:** These organizations focus on research, analysis, and policy recommendations related to specific social, environmental, or political issues. They raise public awareness, conduct research, and engage in advocacy efforts to influence public policy. Examples include the Human Rights Watch and the Brookings Institution.

f. **Foundations and Philanthropic Organizations:** These entities provide funding, technical assistance, and other resources to support social and developmental initiatives. They often work in partnership with NGOs and community organizations to address various social challenges, including poverty, education, and healthcare.

Non-governmental actors in administration often complement the work of governmental agencies by bringing expertise, innovation, and community participation to policy formulation, service delivery, and monitoring. They play a crucial role in promoting accountability, transparency, and inclusive governance.

III. **The socialist model**

The socialist model, also known as the command economy or centrally planned economy, is a system in which the government owns and controls the means of production and distribution of goods and services as advocated by Karl Max as in

Heady, F. (2001). In comparative public administration, the socialist model is often studied and analyzed in comparison to other economic systems, such as capitalism.

One of the main characteristics of the socialist model is the centralization of economic planning and decision-making. The government, typically through a central planning agency, determines what goods and services are produced, how they are produced, and how they are distributed. This is in contrast to a market economy, where these decisions are driven by the forces of supply and demand.

In terms of public administration, the socialist model often requires a large bureaucracy to manage and implement the central plans. The bureaucracy is responsible for the allocation of resources, setting production targets, and ensuring that the plans are carried out. This can lead to a complex administrative apparatus, with multiple layers of decision-making and regulation.

Another characteristic of the socialist model is the emphasis on equitable distribution of resources and income. In theory, socialist economies aim to reduce income inequality by redistributing wealth and providing basic necessities to all citizens. This often involves social welfare programs, such as free healthcare, education, and housing, which are funded through the state.

However, the socialist model has faced criticism and challenges in practice. The centralization of decision-making can lead to inefficiencies, as information about consumer preferences and market trends may not be accurately reflected in the plans. Additionally, the lack of competition and profit incentives can hinder innovation and productivity.

Comparative public administration studies often examine the strengths and weaknesses of the socialist model in relation to other economic systems, such as capitalism. It also compares the outcomes of different socialist systems in different countries, as the implementation and outcomes of socialism can vary greatly.

IV. The endogenous model

The endogenous model in comparative public administration refers to a theoretical framework that focuses on internal factors within a country or organization to explain variations in administrative practices and outcomes.

According to this model, the characteristics and dynamics of a country or organization shape its administrative systems and practices. These internal factors could include historical, cultural, political, economic, bureaucratic, or legal factors. The endogenous model emphasizes that these factors interact and influence each other to produce unique administrative systems and outcomes in different contexts.

In the context of comparative public administration, the endogenous model suggests that the administrative systems of different countries cannot be fully explained by looking at external factors alone, such as political systems, economic development, or legal traditions. Instead, understanding the internal dynamics of a country, including its historical evolution, cultural values, and bureaucratic structures, is essential to comprehending its administrative practices.

The endogenous model highlights the importance of context-specific factors and rejects the idea of universal best practices in public administration. It recognizes that what works in one country, may not work in another due to the unique internal factors at play. Consequently, it encourages scholars and practitioners to study and analyze administrative systems in their specific contexts rather than imposing external models or standards.

In conclusion, the endogenous model in comparative public administration emphasizes the significance of internal factors in explaining variations in administrative practices and outcomes. It recognizes that administrative systems are shaped by a complex interplay of historical, cultural, political, economic, bureaucratic, and legal factors. By understanding these internal dynamics, it becomes possible to comprehend and analyze administrative systems in their specific contexts.

COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

National development is a multi dimentional process which is not unconnected with public administration since government is the principal actor. Therefore comparative public administration plays a vital role in national development. It involves studying and analyzing the administrative systems and practices of different countries and using that knowledge to improve the functioning of one's own country. Here are some ways in which comparative public administration contributes to national development according to Milner, E., and P. Joyce (2005).

1. Learning from best practices: Comparative studies enable countries to identify and adopt best practices from other nations. By critically examining the administrative systems of successful countries, policymakers can learn from their experiences and implement policies and practices that have proven to be effective in achieving development goals. This helps in avoiding reinventing the wheel and saves valuable time and resources.
2. Policy formulation and implementation: Comparative public administration helps in policy formulation and implementation by providing insights into the success or failure of various policies in different countries. It helps in understanding the factors that contribute to effective policy implementation, such as organizational structures, decision-making processes, and leadership styles. By adopting successful policies from other countries and avoiding the mistakes made by others, a nation can accelerate its development process.
3. Administrative reforms: Comparative studies help in identifying administrative weaknesses and inefficiencies, and provide ideas for administrative reforms. By examining how other countries have successfully reformed their administrative systems, nations can implement similar reforms and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their own public administration. This can lead to enhanced service delivery, reduced corruption, and better utilization of resources, all of which contribute to national development.
4. Capacity building: Comparative public administration supports capacity building by providing knowledge and expertise for developing administrative capabilities in different areas. By studying the administrative practices of more developed countries, nations can train their administrative staff to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge required for

effective governance. This can lead to an overall improvement in the quality of public administration, enabling better management of resources and promoting national development.

5. Fostering international cooperation: Comparative public administration facilitates international cooperation and collaboration by promoting the exchange of ideas, experiences, and best practices among nations. By studying the administrative systems of different countries, policymakers can develop networks and partnerships with foreign counterparts, which can lead to joint efforts in addressing common challenges and sharing resources for development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, comparative public administration plays a crucial role in national development by providing valuable insights, best practices, and lessons learned from other countries. It helps nations in formulating and implementing effective policies, undertaking administrative reforms, building capacity, and fostering international cooperation. Through these contributions, comparative public administration contributes to improving governance and accelerating the development process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the forgone conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

i. Governments should embrace the principles of comparative public administration in order for different countries of the world to emulate the best side of administration from one another.
ii. Comparative public administration should be included in schools curriculum.
iii. For national development as a comprehensive process to be sustainable, it must take into consideration the comparative public administration.
iv. Since no one model that fits all economies, due to differences in ideological background countries should the best model for their kind of economy.

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