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ENGLISH SECTION

COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

by Keith M. Henderson

The unenlightened graduate student in Political Science or Public Administration when he hears the words "comparative government" or "comparative administration" probably thinks of a series of somewhat underexposed photographic images of various national governments, usually those of the Western countries and typically the United States, Great Britain and France. More frequently, these days, he also thinks of the developing countries.

The student may be excused if he sometimes forgets that reality cannot be captured in the way a photographer catches his subject. In the older literature, there is little conscious awareness of methodological problems or mental "sets" which the various authors use in approaching their subjects. The absence of consciously recognized theoretical approaches on the part of writers surveying various governmental systems leads us to conclude sometimes that the scholar has in fact recorded an imperfect but accurate representation of reality and conveyed it to the reader. If the representations of various governments focus on political parties, election machinery, pressure groups, constitutions, or institutions in their formal aspects, the course is characteristically called "Comparative Government". If the representations are of the central administrative machinery, decentralization patterns, civil services, public finances, controls over the executive, or roles of the administrative officer, the course is characteristically called "Comparative Administration" or "Comparative Public Administration". Emphasis in both is upon the Western model of industrialized countries and those government institutions and practices important in the West.

This is not a bad starting point and is well adapted for teaching purposes. It provides the framework for a vast array of useful data. However, considerable dissatisfaction has been expressed with these approaches and some alternatives have been presented by Social Scientists which may eventually supersede contemporary teaching.

Aside from the fact that the existing arrangement of Comparative Administration and Comparative Government perpetuates a distinction between the political and administrative realms that many would call "passé," it may be said that the various country "images" don't help us much in understanding how the administration or administrator actually operates from country to country, or area to area, or level to level, or institution to institution.

Why don't we call this older material "government of foreign areas," asks Fred W. Riggs, instead of "comparative"? It is not truly comparative.¹

Background

The comparative study of public administration, in the sense of something more than accumulated country by country descriptions or prescriptions of formal systems, is of relatively recent origin.

In the United States the post-war reaction of Political Scientists to their administrative forebearers emphasized the involvement of administration in the political environment but there was no stampede towards theory and relatively little academic interest in the international scene.

Although there was little shifting of the academic focus beyond the confines of the U.S. there was a recognition of the limited applicability of traditional generalizations.² There was also a ferment of activity in the exporting of administrative services and considerable related documenting and reporting.

With the close of the Second World War, the United States found itself committed on an international scale to post-war occupations and economic recovery of the war-damaged nations. More recently, under the auspices of the U.S. Government, private universities and foundations, and the United Nations, hundreds of programs have been

¹ Fred W. Riggs, "Trends in the Comparative Study of Public Administration," *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 28 (1962), p. 13.

² See, for example, Robert A. Dahl, "The Science of Public Administration: Three Problems" *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 7 (1947), pp. 1-11.

initiated to improve the administrative apparatus of the "under-developed" countries. Although Development Administration, as the effort to solve immediate problems and improve government administration, is a somewhat different subject, the applied technical assistance work has certainly helped stimulate an international interest among American scholars. The numerous studies undertaken by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Agency for International Development and its predecessors, individual technical assistance experts or scholars, and, not least, scholars of the developing countries, have given us a wealth of material which suggests many interesting hypotheses. It is the insights contributed by Sociologists and Anthropologists, as well as Political Scientists and practitioners, which has caused us to further question some of our fundamental assumptions about the universal applicability of American practices of Public Administration and confirmed the judgement of critics such as Dahl. The unsuccessful efforts at introducing technical change have suggested that perhaps some of our fundamental assumptions were wrong; that not only do we need a fuller understanding of the cultural context of Public Administration, but that we need some new ideas about Public Administration itself.

Although the subject is not construed consistently, there is ample evidence of the current interest in Comparative Public Administration in the form of bibliographies, conferences, new courses, and a wide range of scholarly articles and books. Even the *American Political Science Review*, which in the past has been slow to respond to new thinking in Public Administration, recognized this new movement by inaugurating, as of March, 1963, a bibliographical section entitled Comparative Public Administration.

One of the major programs in this field is being undertaken by the Comparative Administration Group (Fred W. Riggs, Chairman) of the American Society for Public Administration which has received a substantial three-year Ford Foundation grant. In a very real sense we may say that Comparative Public Administration is no longer a sub-area within the broader field of Public Administration, but is becoming a parallel focus distinct from the current "U.S. Culture" focus upon Organizations and the Politics of Administration.

Towards the Truly Comparative

Riggs inform us³ that there are three trends in the Comparative Study of Public Administration during the last fifty years, one of which is fairly distinct and the other two of which are still on the horizon. The first is a movement from the normative to empirical approach. This reflects the deemphasis of "how to" writings recommending changes in administrative structure and functioning, and an emphasis on descriptions and analyses of actual administrative situations. The empirical writings are not yet truly comparative—they share no common orienting schemes—but they have shifted away from ideal prescriptions of what government and administration *should* be towards what it *is*.

The empirical writings express both "idiographic" and "nomothetic" approaches and it is the movement from the first to the second of these which constitutes another, less distinct trend seen by Riggs. The shift is from individual country or case studies, such as those concerned with British Administration, or French Administration, or Swiss Administration (the idiographic approach) towards the more theoretical, general concern with similarities and uniformities common to many governmental systems (the nomothetic approach). The nomothetic approach is generic and law-seeking although it is not necessarily concerned with any inviolable patterns.

The third trend, also less distinct than the first, is from the non-ecological to ecological approaches. The non-ecological approach describes administrative institutions as separate entities existing apart from their cultural settings, whereas the ecological approach is concerned with the full patterning of relationships and interrelationships in the total social system. According to Riggs, the non-administrative factors need to be related to the administrative, and in his view the only studies which are truly comparative are those which are empirical, nomothetic, and ecological.⁴

Elsewhere, Riggs notes that industrial societies reveal a high degree of differentiation of institutions and this makes feasible an academic description of discrete structures which is not legitimate for undifferentiated societies.

³ Fred W. Riggs, *op. cit.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Hence, there may be said to be polar types (the "refracted" and the "fused" in Riggs more recent scholarship) which correspond to mass-consumption industrial society on the one hand and pre-industrial society on the other. In the refracted model of advanced Western societies, the various structures (political, administrative, economic, educational, religious, etc) perform distinct functions whereas in the fused type there is lack of differentiation—the tribal chief, for example, may occupy a political-administrative-educational-religious role.

Of even greater interest than the polar extremes are the "in-between" types which may be characterized—in Riggs' light-refraction scheme—as prismatic. A two-tiered model (formal and effective levels) has been applied by Riggs to developing societies and politics.

Comparative Public Administration Scholarship as of 1963

Fred W. Riggs Stands at the forefront of the Comparative Public Administration movement and his voluminous writing forms a distinct approach in itself.

A new vocabulary accompanies Riggs work making it necessary for students and scholars to be familiar with terms such as: agraria, transitia, industria, fused, prismatic, refracted, exoprismatic, endoprismatic, sala, and clect, as well as empirical, nomothetic, and ecological.

The latter is perhaps the best single concept to characterize Riggs own works and the "ecologically-oriented" label is the one which Ferrel Heady affixes to Riggs' theory building.⁵

The ecology of Public Administration is the relationship with the environment or, in structural-functional terms, the larger societal systems. It is often thought of as the sum of external conditioners of Public Administration, including political, economic, social, and religious factors.

⁵ Ferrel Heady, "Comparative Public Administration: Concerns and Priorities," *Papers in Comparative Public Administration*, ed. Ferrel Heady and Sybil L. Stokes (Ann Arbor: Institute of Public Administration, University of Michigan, 1962), p.4. Heady identifies four tendencies in theory building: modified traditional, equilibrium or input-output, bureaucratic orientation, and ecologically oriented.

The need for ecological models, as Riggs sees it, stems from the inadequacy of models derived from the study of the U.S., Great Britain, and other Western Countries.⁶ The scope is broad for one following Riggs analysis and requires astute sociological understanding grounded in a structural-functional Weltanschauung.

In a given country, the observer who would understand public administration must understand its social context.

The structural-functional or bureaucratic emphasis, borrowed from the discipline of Sociology which itself has had little direct interest in the administration of public affairs, finds many adherents other than Riggs and can hence be regarded as the foremost of several key models.

Departing somewhat from Ferrel Heady's four-fold classification, let us arbitrarily define three approaches⁷: (1) The bureaucratic system, (2) The input-output system, (3) The component approach. The major distinction is between integrated, holistic "system" approaches and "partial" approaches.

The Bureaucratic System

In addition to Riggs, Morroe Berger and Robert V. Presthus might be included under this label. That both have moved on to other interests than Comparative Public Administration in no way detracts from their earlier works. Berger's significant contribution is *Bureaucracy and Society in Modern Egypt*, published in 1957, one of the few examples of genuine comparative empirical research. In this survey of the Egyptian higher civil service, questionnaire responses from 249 officials in several Ministries are analyzed for

⁶ See, for example, Fred W. Riggs, "An Ecological Approach: The Sala Model," ed. Heady and Stokes, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁷ Perhaps it should be mentioned that Heady had earlier classified the important theoretical work on a three-fold basis, including Riggs under the "Bureaucratic Orientation," in Ferrel Heady, "Recent Literature on Comparative Public Administration," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 5 (1960), pp. 134-154.

evidence of bureaucratic and professional orientations. Berger seeks the extent to which the Weberian ideal-type model of bureaucracy is applicable in a non-Western situation and concludes that such a model, in pristine form, has considerable limitations. In another 1957 publication,⁸ Berger further explores the structural-functional theory of bureaucracy as applied to developing countries.

In much the same vein, Robert V. Presthus has explored the conflict between social values of western and traditional society and their implication for bureaucratic behavior.⁹ Presthus, harkening the advice of Robert K. Merton, calls for researchable "middle-range" theory, which explains a manageable set of relationships, rather than the broad-gauge social theories, at one extreme, and non-comparable individual cases at the other.¹⁰ Relationships between the public administration system and other economic, political, or kinship systems is of interest to Presthus and falls within the desired middle-range.

A recent effort to explore, for its value in research, the theory of Max Weber is Alfred Diamant's, "The Bureaucratic Model: Max Weber Rejected, Rediscovered, Reformed,"¹¹ Diamant's analysis has received favorable comment from many notable scholars, including Dwight Waldo. Two interesting proposals for the comparative analysis of bureaucracies are given by Diamant at the end of his selection :

1. The construction of types of administrative staffs must be preceded by the development of a typology of political authority. One should not assume that the generalized authority in society is of the legal-rational kind even though the bureaucracy to be investigated resembles the legal-rational bureaucracy of Weber's typology."

⁸ Morroe Berger, "Bureaucracy East and West," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 1 (1957), pp. 518-529.

⁹ Robert V. Presthus, "The Social Bases of Bureaucratic Organization," *Social Forces*, Vol. 38 (1959), pp. 103-109; "Behavior and Bureaucracy in Many Cultures," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19 (1959), pp. 25-35; "Weberian v. Welfare Bureaucracy in Traditional Society," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 6 (1961), pp. 1-24.

¹⁰ Robert V. Presthus "Behavior & Bureaucracy in Many Cultures," and "Comparative Administration" in Pfiffner and Presthus, *Public Administration*, (New York : Renold Press, 1960), particularly pp. 78-82 in the latter.

¹¹ Heady and Stokes., *op. cit.*, pp. 59-96,

2. The construction of types of administrative staffs must be closely correlated with the types of authority already developed ¹²

In an earlier article,¹³ Diamant had indicated that comparative models are of fundamentally two kinds - General System and Political Culture. The former involves no preliminary classification of the subject into categories whereas the latter, as in the proposals above, involves an initial breakdown, before analysis, into geographic political system, political authority, or other categories.

The bureaucratic orientation, rooted in the Sociology of Max Weber, was introduced into Public Administration after the Second World War via scholars such as Philip Selznick and Reinhard Bendix, and has gradually grown in favor until it now occupies a prominent place not only in comparative Public Administration but also, through the contemporary organizational theory of Talcott Parsons himself, Amatai Etzioni and others in "U.S." Public Administration.

However, from the Public Administration perspective, bureaucracy may prove of most value as an orienting concept on the international scene. The "fused" or "prismatic" society's relatively undeveloped Public Administration is perhaps understood only as part of a social fabric, but the West offers the researcher a relatively more differentiated set of institutions and practices, of greater complexity, which are best studied as small chunks rather than as social gestalten.

Recent efforts have been made to relate the bureaucratic orientation to processes of political development. The title of a significant effort edited by Joseph La Palombara and containing selections by a cross-section of the administrative structural-functionalist as well as others indicates these efforts. The tenor of *Bureaucracy and Political Development* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1963) is that the polity must be upgraded first and foremost whereas improvement of the Public Administration as such carries danger of aggrandising bureaucratic power.

¹² *Ibid*, pp.86-87.

¹³ Diamant, "The Relevance of Comparative Politics to the Study of Comparative Administration," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol.5 (1960), pp. 87-112.

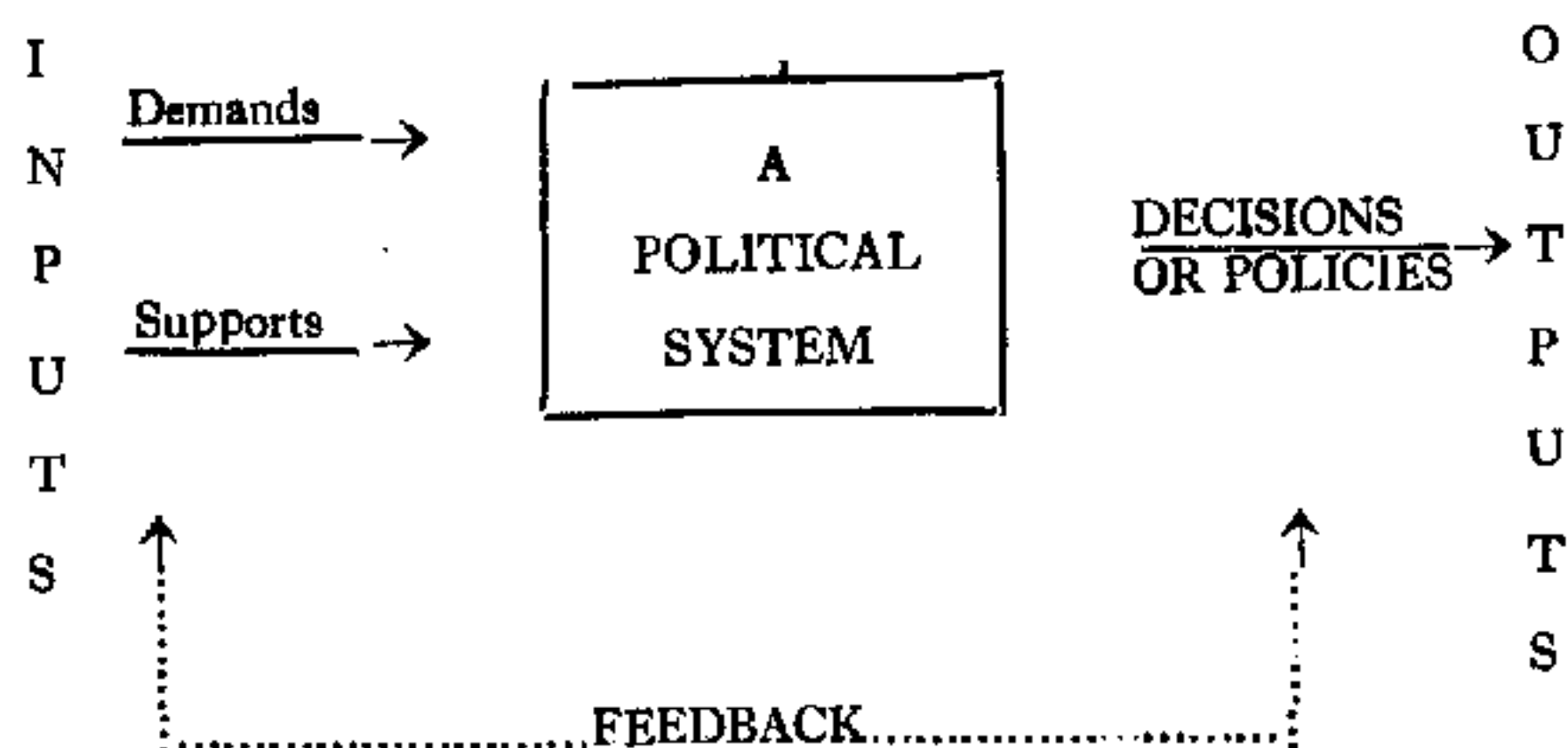
The Input - Output System

This is properly labeled the input-conversion-output system approach and it tends to be somewhat less "organic" than the typical structural-functional bureaucratic model, that is the component parts are not as inter-related functionally although they are elements of a self-contained whole. In addition, there is greater emphasis in the input-output equation upon boundary exchanges between system and environment.

The lines of demarcation between the two systems approaches are, of necessity, ill-defined as is the relationship of the "Public administration (or bureaucratic) system" with other systems. Some models might better be labeled "input-conversion-output, bureaucratic" or "bureaucratic with inputs from and outputs to other systems." For example, Riggs' *Agraria and Industria*¹⁴ postulates an input-conversion-output scheme though it is not of crucial significance for his polar types.¹⁴

The question is often one of emphasis and to be classified under the input-output rubric a scholar must take some variation of the basic Easton model as his starting point. Few have done so in Comparative Public Administration as of 1964, although the model is well known to students of Comparative Politics.

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¹⁴Fred W. Riggs, "Agraria and Industria—Toward a Typology of Comparative Administration," *Toward the Comparative Study of Public Administration*, ed. William J. Siffin, (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1957), pp. 95-96.

Historically, David Easton's new classic, *The Political System*, (1953) helped usher in the "behavioralist" era in Political Science through its pointed critique of existing study in that field and an attendant call for the development of theory. Several years later, the same author presented his basic political system model (see diagram) for the analysis of political life.¹⁵ Inputs in the form of demands and supports are converted by the system into outputs which have consequences both for the larger environment and for the political system itself.

The place of administration in this scheme is, at best, uncertain but some scholars would show it as an output function.

Almond's functional approach to Comparative Politics in *Politics of the Developing Areas* (1960) differs somewhat from Easton's by indicating four input functions (interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, and political socialization and recruitment, and three output functions (rule-making, application, and rule-adjudication). Each of the output functions, of course, corresponds to a branch of government—rule-making to the legislative, rule-application to the executive, and rule-adjudication to the judiciary.

Of more direct relevance to Comparative Public Administration, since it concentrates on the administrative dimension not as an incidental output function but as a system itself, is the work of John T. Dorsey.

Working separately from Social Science scholars at the Rand and System Development Corporations,¹⁶ who are also seeking systems models of organisms and organizations, Dorsey, at Vanderbilt University, has delved into an "information-energy" unified theory of human

¹⁵ David Easton "An Approach to Analysis of Political Systems," *World Politics*, Vol. 9 (1956-57), p.p. 383-400.

¹⁶ Behavioral Social Scientists not directly concerned with organizations might also be mentioned. An interesting early volume is Roy R. Grinker, *Toward a Unified Theory of Human Behavior* (New York: Basic Books, 1956). Dorsey's admitted lack of familiarity with the relevant literature detracts somewhat from his efforts. Also, his "Operationalization" of the input-output model in Vietnam seems "forced" or artificial. See "Stresses and Strains in a Developing Administrative System," *Problems of Freedom, South Vietnam since Independence*, ed. Wesley Fishel, (New York: Free press, 1961), pp. 139-152; "The Bureaucracy and Political Development in Vietnam," ed. Joseph La Palombara, *op.cit.*, pp. 318-359.

behavior.¹⁷ Persons, groups, organizations and societies become complex information-energy converters. Information inputs such as demands and intelligence are converted by the system (through, for example, various screening, selecting, and channeling processes) into outputs which, in the case of an administrative organization, might be regulations or services and goods for other systems in the larger environment.

The research focus in Comparative Public Administration, according to Dorsey, may be upon either the inputs, conversion processes, or outputs, or upon tangential factors such as stresses and strains affecting the conversion processes. Dorsey believes research is needed on all relevant dimensions of the scheme. He makes no pretense of having final answers.

It should be apparent that the input-conversion-output model, except as handled in Almond and Coleman's *Politics of the Developing Areas*, is intended to be applied universally without initial classification into categories. It is, in Diamant's terms, a General System Model and not a Political Culture model. On this basis, Dorsey's efforts are distinguishable from those of structural-functionalists who begins with classification of categories of systems and limit generalizations to those categories.

The Component Approach

The third approach becomes a "catch-all" for historical and other materials not classifiable as bureaucratic system or input-output system. Although a conscious bias towards the system. Approaches is reflected in the holistic-partial typology, this need not be taken as a value comment. Much of the more "traditional" work on parts or aspects of the total complex is considerably more meaningful and useful at this stage of study than heroic, grandiose schemes.

An example of perhaps the best sort of component work is James Fesler's investigation into comparative Field Administration. The politics of Administration, which may be lost from sight in the systems models, come across clearly in Fesler's work.¹⁸ The

¹⁷ "An Information - Energy Model," ed. Heady and Stokes, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-57.

¹⁸ See for example, "The Political Role of Field Administration," ed. Heady and Stokes, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-143.

emphasis on power and on communication linkages between center and field suggests some interesting possibilities of integration into a model such as Dorey's or Almond's but, for the present, it remain Field Administration.

In another vein, Fritz Morstein Marx has undertaken a comparative analysis of the "Eternal verities" control and responsibility.¹⁹

The current work which reflects an awareness of the theoretical developments in Comparative Public Administration is vastly overshadowed by a plethora of idiographic case studies which are essentially reportorial. Emphasis is often upon formal institutions and their functioning as discrete structures. In addition to the formal, legal and historical details-of varying quality—concerning Ministries, Boards, Administrative tribunals, the Civil Service apparatus, the budget mechanism, etc., description and or analysis is frequently offered of behavioral and environment factors. Thus, the informal unofficial behavior of administrators, agency clients, and peripheral figures such as politicians, is examined, either alone or in conjunction with a clarification of environmental differences.

The component approach clearly remains dominant in terms of the number of comparative studies currently being undertaken. It is of considerable significance both in itself and as a source for new and improved hypotheses and generalizations.

Conclusion

Public Administration scholarship, it may be argued, is recognizing that an ethnocentric approach to non-western study may be misleading; that unique historical-formal-institutional descriptions are inadequate for comparison; and that there is no choice between theory and absence of theory.

Comparative Public Administration may now be thought of as one of three foci of contemporary American Public Administration—the other two being "U.S. Culture, Administration and Development Administration." It has only recently emerged from its status as a sub-area within the field of Public Administration to the point where it warrants this parallel place beside the culture-bound or possibly culture-bound U.S. Culture study.

¹⁹ "Control and Responsibility in Administration: Comparative Aspects," ed. Heady and Stokes. *op. cit.*, pp. 145-171.

As such, there are yet few lines of agreement although, academically, the Indiana-Michigan group, with a heavy sociological orientation, is clearly dominant.

It is not yet sure just what we are comparing in Comparative Public Administration — specific structures; functions; patterns of behavior; national administrative systems; politics; societies; cultures? —or how we are to go about our task. In an effort to escape recognized difficulties of the usual schemes, Comparative Public Administration scholarship in its first burst of enthusiasm may have leaped to excessively remote and comprehensive abstractions, misjudging also their degree of originality.

But the need to move beyond uniqueness through other than historical means is widely acknowledged and the early work of Comparative Public Administration in this direction, in spite of any shortcomings, seems to carry considerable promise.
