



## CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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### ABSTRACT

This paper is an exposition into the conceptual and methodological approaches to the study of comparative public administration. Essentially, the comparative approach to public administration has serious inclination to research and theory-building. It similarly promises to take public administration closer to the scientific status/destination which it desperately covets through empiricism. The ingredients and procedures for attaining this were articulated in this paper. Some of the theories and models considered useful in analysing administrative / political systems were also identified and discussed in the paper.

**Keywords:** Comparative public administration, development, types of authority, organisations

### INTRODUCTION

The controversy among academics and intellectuals on the inception date, origin and scope or overarching issues constituting comparative Public Administration (CPA) is a matter of polemics.

A school of thought traced the subject to a conference held at Princeton University in September 1952 at the instance of Public Administration Clearing House. A sub-committee to develop “criteria of relevance” with the underlisted terms of reference was inaugurated to:

- Identify major research needs and priorities;
- Suggest ways and means of stimulating research in CPA;
- Review and assess the existing state of knowledge in the field of CPA;
- Prepare a general research guide/design for such studies.

In publishing its report a year later, the sub-committee identified research priorities and methodology for the study of CPA thus:

- That all administrative systems are guided by hierarchy in the ordering of relationships.
- That the questionnaire instrument offer valuable and reliable method of obtaining data on administrative patterns.

Financial constraints however stymied the implementation of the above action plan, but academic interest and awareness were generated and increased therefrom.

Another School of thought opined that CPA dated back to the late 1940s when some American universities already taught CPA in their Political Science and Public Administration Programmes (Henry, 1999:32). This School of thought posited further that by early 1950’s, the American Political Science Association, the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) and the Public Administration Clearing House were forming special committees or sponsoring conferences on CPA. The latter part of this averment offers an indirect testimony to the first school of thought. The divergence however lies in

the fact that this second school of thought traced academic programmes in CPA in some American universities to an earlier period (late 1940s), while the first school of thought traced the origin of CPA to a conference in the 1950s.

The Comparative Administration Group (CAG) was founded in 1960 by the ASPA and the real impetus came in 1962 with a financial aid from Ford Foundation totaling \$500,000.00. This support from the Ford Foundation underscored two vital issues- Development of administration (Institutional Development) as a core arm of Development administration (D.A.) essentially in the LDCs and the political expediency of arresting the “advance of communism” especially in Asia by entrenching bureaucratic establishments made up mainly of local elites (capacity building as a factor in Development Administration). This dimension of locating the origin of CPA and the concomitant juxtaposition with another sub-field of Public Administration; that is Development Administration reinforces the controversy or polemical debates on the origin, but more for the scope of CPA as identified earlier in this paper. The logical questions emanating from this ambivalence are: Is the origin of CPA being traced to D. A? or is D. A. being located as a branch of CPA?, Can CPA and D. A. as sub-fields of Public Administration be seen as one or taken together for better understanding?. All these controversies have in no way resolved the issue at stake. The resolution may therefore constitute a subject of another research. It is however noteworthy that the initial decision by Ford Foundation to give support in the area of CPA, even though with a Development Administration inclination or motive came at the height of the cold war. Ironically, the recipients of the grants did not share the motivations of the foundation in its funding.

Ferrel Heady (1984) in Henry (1999:32-33) posited that CPA addresses five “motivating concerns” thus:

- as an intellectual enterprise – the search for theory;
- the urge for practical application;
- the incidental contribution of the broader field of comparative politics
- the interest of researchers trained in the tradition of administrative law; and
- the comparative analysis of on-going problems of Public Administration.

Henderson (1971:236) observed that the Riggsian ideas dominated the earlier works in the field of CPA, having chaired ASPA’s Comparative Administration Group (CAG) between 1960 and 1970 when issues in Development Administration became dominant in CPA (see Heady 1964:15-16 for details). Perhaps, the above allusions may in a way clear the blurring of boundaries between CPA and D.A, and consequently help or facilitate an understanding/resolution of the issues at stake.

The intention of F. W. Riggs and other Comparative Public Administrationists was to utilize the field to provoke and strengthen theory in Public administration. Riggs opined that CPA is to do this by being “empirical, nomothetic and ecological”, which implies being factual, scientific, abstracted and generalizable, systematic and non parochial (Henry, 1999:33).

The above averment essentially implies that CPA is theory based which underscores a basic difference that CPA has with the wider discipline – Public administration. Public administration is basically “practitioner- oriented” or practical for short emphasis. From its inception, CPA has focused more on “theory-building”- seeking knowledge for the sake of knowledge, and one wonders what all these theorizing amount to.

Another basic difference CPA has with Public administration is that the latter is culture-bound, while the former with its emphasis on theory is abstract and non-parochial. Public administration on its own is parochial with its inclination towards specific culture which reinforces its practical nature.

Notwithstanding the theoretical inclination of CPA as presented by Henry (1999), Fried (1990:322-325) observed that the mainstream scholar of CPA are still trying to construct a theory and that “Universal theory remains elusive”. This he noted thus: that national administrative systems are far more difficult to study than other social institutions in view of the difficulty of performance measurement, indeterminable boundaries, cultural variations among nations, and other uncertain phenomena.

On the contrary however, Wart and Cayer (1990:238) observed on the basis of indepth research that articles on CPA were far “more practitioner-oriented, more empirically rooted, more likely to make policy recommendations and more concerned with developing methodologies than were articles on this topic in the past”. They concluded however that CPA lacks features giving it clear identity and largely remains ambiguous.

If an exploration of the overarching issues constituting CPA has not resolved the core matters of inception date/origin and scope, let us examine the essence of CPA, perhaps it may assist in that direction or facilitate clearer understanding of the subject.

## **METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

### **PURPOSES OF CPA OR WHY COMPARISON IS NECESSARY**

- Comparison is fundamental to all human thought.
- It is the methodological core of the humanistic and scientific methods
- It is the only way a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political systems can be obtained.
- Comparison in phases (past and present) and experiences of nations aid indepth understanding of political and administrative institutions.
- Comparison of politics and administration of other societies affords the benefits of identifying political alternatives and remedying short comings in our national life.
- It widens our horizon of political possibilities by taking us beyond the precincts of familiar arrangements and assumptions.
- It assists in developing explanations and testing theories relating to how political and administrative processes/changes occur.
- As a corollary, it affords the opportunity of assessing the developmental models, theories, assumptions, phases or processes of nation-states in relation to others.
- The comparative approach facilities an initiation of general theories of political, economic and socio-cultural relationships between countries.
- By comparing the experiences of many institutions and settings with underlining political theories, the comparative method offers a potent tool for thought and analysis.

### **METHODS OF CPA OR HOW TO COMPARE**

The study of CPA entails description, explanation and prediction which are essential ingredients of the scientific process.

Description involves conceptual framework or apparatus. The easier this is, the better for the study of CPA. Conceptual frameworks are not generally right or wrong, but useful to the task at hand.

Explanation implies seeking to identify relationships between political and administrative phenomena of nation-states. A good example may involve identifying the correlation between democracy and international peace. Are states peaceful because they are democratic or vice-versa or peaceful and democratic because they are prosperous, or prosperous because they are peaceful and democratic? By the causal-effect of explanation, theories are developed, tested or proved.

Prediction is enabled or made possible from the above process. In the example above, repeated studies or research may import an inference or conclusion that democratic states are peaceful or prosperous. After continuous trials and experiments, a theory may result from research to the effect that democratic states are stable because they are peaceful.

Comparative method contains the underlisted attributes:

- Conceptualisation using theoretical frameworks or models.
- Formulation of hypotheses
- Testing of hypotheses by validation or rejection
- Elaboration of tentative classification scheme

In summary, comparative method entails classification, conceptualization, hypothesizing and testing or verification of hypotheses. Procedurally, the scientific basis of any comparative method involves:

- Precise statement of problem leading to formulation of hypotheses showing causal relationships among variables which are operationally defined.
- Definition of the relationship (of the problem) to a general theory of public administration, viz: How the problem fits into a theoretical orientation.
- Formulation of a conceptual scheme model
- Proposed research methods
- Verification of hypotheses and discussion of research findings.

### **SUBJECT MATTER OF CPA OR WHAT TO COMPARE**

Comparison entails things that are to some extent similar. Theories, models, practice or experiences can be very similar, thus necessitating comparison. At this juncture, a brief note on what theory or model means is necessary for proper understanding.

Osuala (2001:20) posits that “a theory is an attempt at synthesizing and integrating empirical data for maximum clarification and unification”. It is noteworthy that theories could be based on postulates and assumptions of varying degrees informed by adequacy and truth which lends credence to crucial and accurate inference or deductions.

Mandler and Kessen (1959) in Baridam (2002:7) conceptualized “theories as a set of statements understandable to others which make predictions about empirical events”.

Baridam (2002:7) however puts it simply by opining that “a theory is an explanation of why something happens and sometimes, how something happens as well as a statement of what happens”.

From the above definitions, Baridam (2002) identified three critical elements of a theory which are:- theories are understandable statements, implying that they are communicable and public. Theories make predictions which means that to some extent, they anticipate systems. Theories deal with empirical events. This presupposes that every theory must be tied to events and objects or some sort of observable referent about which people agree.

The foregoing converges with the view expressed by Osuala (2001:21) that theories permit the prediction of occurrence of phenomena; theory acts as a guide to discovering facts by stimulating research into areas that are lagging; theory permits deeper understanding of data and translates empirical findings into easily and readily understood, retained and adoptable form theories underlie facts and facts underlie theories, thus making theories and facts mutually reinforcing.

A model however is an abstraction of reality in which detail is sacrificed for elegance and explication. It is deducible from the foregoing that CPA is heavily concerned with theoretical frameworks, and the ultimate task of theory in CPA is to clarify the differences and similarities among various administrative systems and to demonstrate meaningful relationships. Scholars have therefore constructed various theories to achieve these objectives. The underlisted theories/model would be explored.

- Weberian Bureaucratic model or theory
- David Easton’s system model
- Almond’s Structural-Functional theory
- L. W. Pye’s Political culture model
- Riggs – Prismatic and Agrarian/Industrial model.

## **THEORIES / MODELS IN COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Max Weber (1864-1920) was a German Sociologist who combined great analytical abilities with painstaking research and philosophical orientation. His theory on organization centered on why people throughout history obey their rulers, and he discovered three reasons for such obedience coinciding with three types of authority or organization, namely traditional, charismatic and legal-rational or bureaucratic organisations.

### **Traditional Authority**

This type of authority is personalized but rests on customarily identifiable groups. The leader in such a traditional organization has his authority derived from the status he inherited. Status is therefore not based on achievement or other forms of merit. The extent of the leader's legitimate power is fixed by customs. Rules based on customs and beliefs have no scientific basis, encourage dogmatism and reinforce superstition. Traditional societies characterized by feudalism and extreme communalism may typify this authority.

### **Charismatic Authority**

This is also a highly personalized authority, implying that powers are absolutely concentrated in the hands of one person. Subordinates find the charismatic leader so magnetic that his authority or powers are accepted without question. In the exercise of this authority, subordinates obey the directives of the charismatic leader not because of rules but because of personal devotion.

This rests on the fact that the basis of authority lies on the personality of the leader, and commands are based on his inspiration and myths. Charismatic organization has in-built instability. Examples of this type of organization include some esoteric organizations/bodies and personalized religious organizations.

### **Rational-Legal Authority**

The bulk of Weber's writings and theoretization inhere in this type of authority which is highly impersonalized and mostly associated with bureaucratic organisations. Authority rests in the positions in accordance with rules and regulations that are usually formalised.

The ability to reward or punish to exact obedience is viewed as legitimate, while the presence of experts or professionals in organizations is a recognition of the legitimacy of the office holder.

The features of bureaucracy according to Weber are as follows:

- Hierarchy which implies structure
- Promotion based on professional merit and skill as guides for recruitment
- The development of a career service in the bureaucracy
- Reliance on and use of rules and regulations that are scientific
- Impersonality of relationships among career professionals in the bureaucracy and with their clientele. Henry (1999:54-55)
- Specialization along functional lines
- Authority and responsibility
- Documentation or record keeping.

The usefulness of bureaucracy to organisations notwithstanding the theory has been severely criticized as follows:

- Specialisation is most likely to create professional myopia
- Separation of personal property from official property may lead to perfunctoriness.
- Excessive documentation may result to redtapism or administrative immobilism
- Rules and regulations which must be scientific could breed excessive rigidity.

It should also be noted that not all personnel matters require rigid application of rules, flexibility and compromise in negotiations ought to be guiding principles in human affairs.

In addition to the foregoing M. J. Balogun (1987) posited thus:

- Politics and administration are intertwined and inseparable as the ideal construct wants us to believe and uphold. The emphasis on ends and means, factual and value judgment arguments/controversies should be noted very carefully.
- Legal provisions could be nullified by changes in personalities and the environment and not as Weber affirmed that formal legal aspects of behaviour is synonymous with actual substantive behaviour.
- Legality, hierarchical conformation, documentation or record keeping which has been extolled as principles of bureaucratic organisations is likely to culminate in constraint and a “regime of robots”. Furthermore, bureaucracies that operate purely along legal rational lines are likely to be anti-deductive reasoning, inhibit innovation and may lead to institutional weakness.
- Weber’s model appears paradoxical. It is logically inconsistent that a theory which stresses hierarchical conformation could at the same time emphasise specialization. For example, Alvin Gouldner has criticized Weber’s as seeing bureaucratic organisations as a “two –edged sword” which on a side sees administration as being based on expertise and on another as based on discipline.
- The model appears micro. Although Weber claimed to rely on deductive thinking and method in his analysis of formal organisations, there can be no doubt that he progressed from particular to general. That is, he premised his analysis of all bureaucracies on the workings of Prussian bureaucracy. Thus the attachment to a familiar model made him quite insensitive to other environments, to that extent; he undermined the role of constitutional framework and general socio-political environment to the effective and actual operation of an ideal bureaucracy.

## **SYSTEMS THEORY**

The systems approach may view an explainable phenomenon as a system which comprises several parts with each part interacting with each other. Each system functions in its environment, and there is a continuous interaction between the system and its environment. The environment influences the system in the form of “inputs” which are “converted” into “outputs” by the system or systemic interaction. Through a process of “feedback”, outputs cause the emergence of new inputs.

The application of the systems theory to CPA lies in the fact that nations, administrative, socio-political and economic processes of nation- states among several other indices are construed in terms of systems and sub-systems which interacts within, among and between themselves in line with the operations of the system approach.

Systems theory is basically concerned with problems of relationships, structure and interdependence. It is common knowledge that open systems possess permeable or flexible boundaries which makes interaction with the environment possible. The major characteristics of the open systems are as follows:

- Importation of energy from the external environment
- Transportation process allows for activities and service provision
- Open systems export some product (output) into the environment
- The pattern of activities of the energy exchange is cyclic in character
- Open systems acquire negative entropy, implying that the importation of more energy from its environment than it actually expends, avert organizational/systems collapse or disintegration (or death which no living/biological organism can escape).
- Through the feedback mechanism, open systems re-process negative information and correct deviations from normal course. Negative feedback therefore serves as a regulatory device.
- Resulting from the importation of energy to arrest entropy, open systems attempt to cope with external forces by injecting them or acquiring control over them, thus maintaining steady state of affairs referred to as “Homeostasis”.
- Open systems have greater capacity for increased performance and functional specificity.

- Open systems attain their goals/objectives through a diversity of methods and approaches. This refers to the principle of equifinality.

The systems theory however has been accused of the following pitfalls:

- It is silent on hierarchy and narrows issues to horizontal or equilibrium balancing. Predicated on Weber's analysis on organisation, that without structure, an organization cannot function, then systems theory appears too micro and its use limited and relative to situations.
- The "boundary" is difficult to determine especially between internal and external environment.
- It tries to maintain the status-quo by its emphasis on equilibrium. To that extent, it strikes a balance between systems, sub-systems and super systems.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the political system is a set of institutions and agencies charged with policy formulation and execution or implementation of the collective goals of a society or constituent groups.

### **STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONAL THEORY**

The thrust of this theory by Almond (2000) is that government or states perform functions (maintenance of law and order, education, health services, defence, foreign and diplomatic services and so on) through certain institutions, agencies or organs of government which can be termed as structure. Almond (2000:39) posits that within the political system, six types of political/administrative structures are discernible, namely: political parties; interest groups; legislature; executive; bureaucracies and courts.

In order to implement governmental activities, there are specialized agencies or structure like the legislature, executive and judiciary performing functions which enables government to formulate, implement or enforce its policies. The policies are the goals of government while the agencies/structure provides the means.

This theory as an approach to the study of politics and CPA has been described as being conservative in methodology, in view of its strong bias for status-quo, since it describes a set of institutions at a particular time. However, as a model in CPA, it attempts to provide historical variation of governments or political regimes at different times and makes for precision and comprehension of political institutions.

As an illustration of the above, regimes like that of Nazist in Germany can be compared with democratic, peaceful and prosperous states like Sweden and Switzerland. The comparison using the structural functional approach explains what changes occurred in regimes and the various dimensions. It also helps our understanding of political process interaction at any one period. It similarly aids an analysis of political development and change in countries.

With respect to structures and functions, similarities exist; such as the six structures identified above are present in Britain and China. The temptation may arise in thinking that if one understands how such structures work in a country, the insight can be applied to others, however, this is not always the case. For details, see Almond G. A. et. al (eds.) (2000:39-42).

### **POLITICAL CULTURE MODEL**

In order to understand the past, present and future behaviour in a nation-state, an enquiry into attitudes and values held dear by citizens is necessary. The functioning of political and administrative institutions reflects the attitudes, norms and expectations of the citizens to an extent, which in effect dictate actions and behaviour. Examples of this will include the strong feelings of patriotism by the Americans, Japanese attitude to work and time, and the inclination of the French towards dissent and protest. Public support as a factor of legitimacy, constitutionalism and respect for rule of law underscore political culture in civilized and well ordered societies.

A nation's political culture can be measured by citizens' orientation towards the political system; policy-making process and policy output and outcomes. The system level involves what citizens and leaders hold as values and organisations that bind the political system together, and examples will include

national pride, national identity and legitimacy of government plus orderly transition or change of regimes. The process level implies expectation of how politics should function and individuals relationship to the political process. This is exemplified by principles of government, role of citizens in the political process and perceptions of political rights. The policy level deals with citizens and leaders policy expectations from the government. The defining characteristics of this will be government's policy goals and means of attaining them. Examples include the role of government and policy priorities. (See Almond, G. A. et. al. (eds.) 2000:50-54 for details.)

Note the role of political structures and political culture as mutually reinforcing stable political systems in cultural congruence. Participation strengthens democracy while authoritarianism and other forms of dictatorship or iron rule/tendencies weaken democracy and stable political atmosphere. Also worthy of note is the influence of consensual and conflictual political culture. That is, how are decisions made or arrived at, and the means of attaining issues of public policy, views on legitimate governmental and political arrangements and the resolution of major problems facing the society.

Political culture and values are transmitted from one generation to the other through the socialization process. Socialization can be direct or indirect and it is a continuous process lasting through life. Socialization patterns in a society can be unifying or divisive.

Agencies of political socialization are: the family; educational institutions; religious and esoteric bodies; mass media; social class and gender movements, interest and professional groups; political parties; and direct contact with public bureaucratic structures.

#### **PRISMATIC MODEL – FRED W. RIGGS**

The prismatic model is intermediate between “fused” model in studying primitive societies and the “refracted” model useful for the analysis of government and administration in the advanced/industrial Western Societies. It is feasible to construct sub-models within the prismatic society for its various structures which includes political, administrative, economic and social.

The administrative sub-model in a prismatic society is referred to as the “Sala”. The word or term “sala” derives from current usage in larger parts of Asia where it refers to office or bureau which can therefore imply the typical or “ideal construct” of administrative behaviour in the refracted model. It is noteworthy that the diffused uses to which the Sala is put suggests the multi-purpose, undifferentiated character of the “home” or “court” as locus of administration in a “fused” society, where a separate administrative machinery or structure cannot be found, compared to other functions of the society.

#### **ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF THE SALA MODEL**

**Heterogeneity:** A major characteristic of a prismatic society is a high degree of heterogeneity which implies admixture of fused characteristics and modern refracted traits, such as a sophisticated intellectual class, Eastern style officers and other traits juxtaposed with undeveloped rural communities ruled by traditional chiefs and/or councils of elders. The mixture is a set of new administrative structures and traditional institutions characterized by charismatic and ascriptive status. This also means that there are differences in ways of life.

**High degree of Formalism:** This refers to the degree of discrepancy or congruence between formerly prescribed and effectively practised norms and realities. The greater the congruence, the more realistic the situation; the greater the discrepancy, the more formalistic it is.

In traditional and fused societies and in modern industrial or refracted societies, a relatively high degree of realism prevails. Complete realism does not exist. The degree of formalism in our society is a measure, perhaps, of the extent to which we are not fully refracted, to which prismatic conditions are to be found. It can be arguably inferred that the American administrative system especially in the local government and in the more “underdeveloped” parts of USA is quite prismatic. The prevalence of formalism is a distinguishing feature of the prismatic system.



Simply expressed, actual official behaviour may diverge from the laws on the statute books and constitution. This does not imply that law is irrelevant to behaviour, the official may insist on literal performance/observance of the law or he may disregard it utterly, and in well ordered societies/systems, the defaulter should be prepared to face the sanctions. What permits formalism is the lack of pressure towards programme objectives, the weakness of social power as a guide to bureaucratic performance and inclination to administrative arbitrariness, recklessness and autocracy. The inclination or presumable advantage an official wields determines whether a law is enforced to the letter or its gross violation. It is discernible therefore that administrative discretion of this type invites corruption.

From the above, some implications for administrative reform should be evident. If reform is based on a change in the law, re-organisation or re-definition of positions and duties to mention but a few, probably no effective change in behaviour will follow the change in norms and prescriptions. However, in a refracted model, where a high degree of realism prevails, acceptance of a change of law/regulation can be taken as equivalent to corresponding changes in administrative behaviour. Predicated on the refracted model, the administrative specialist may conclude that similar changes in a basically prismatic system will have similar results. Were the specialist familiar with the Sala model, he might consider such formal changes useless, and seek first to achieve a higher degree of realism which indicates a closer approximation of practice to prescription.

Overlapping: the formally differentiated structures of a refracted type co-exist with undifferentiated structures of a fused type, symbolizing the concomitant existence of formal and informal behaviours. Thus overlapping implies social schizophrenia (mental disorder) of contradictory formal (conscious) and informal (unconscious) behaviour patterns.

In neither refracted nor fused models, do we find substantial overlapping. In the refracted models, insofar as the structures perform realistically their “manifest functions”, there is no overlapping. The existence of one major set of structures for all functions in the fused model also imply no overlapping. This may however indicate a high degree of abstraction; making it very difficult to comprehend, but the Sala model is an effective aid to comprehension in this regard.

**Nepotism, the Sala, Family & Ethnicity:** In refracted societies, family loyalty or considerations are effectively divorced from official conduct. The new formal structures of an office are superimposed upon the family in some systems where this distinction is taken for granted and lip service is paid to a new set of official norms. However, in fused societies, it may not be appropriate to refer to nepotism in their administrative systems in view of the hereditary/patrimonial and ascriptive basis of succession and appointments characteristic of the model. If in the refracted model, an elected president or prime minister were to replace himself with his son or nephew, then the term would apply.

Overlapping of the family with the office occur in other aspects of Sala behaviour. The formal rules of the Sala prescribe universalistic norms for the administration of the law, the general programmes and policies of a government or agency. However, family influence prevails, so that the law is applied generously to relatives and stringently against strangers. This becomes a matter of importance in law enforcement; contracts administration; purchase and supplies; tax enforcement; granting of licences, foreign exchange control; import and export permits (etc) to outside observers. Thus the typical Sala official appears “individualistic” in view of his inclination in ranking private and family goals over and above corporate goals of the organization, agency, government or country.

Other features of the Sala model include the following:-

- Corruption
- Superstitious beliefs
- Lack of consensus on ground rules by participants, that is, new sets of rules based on the experiences of developed Western Societies are superimposed on traditional societies which results in conflict or substantial lack of consensus.

### **FRED W. RIGGS AGRARIAN AND INDUSTRIAL MODEL**

This model seeks to provide a system of hypothetical categorization or classification and analysis of administrative transition. The underlying assumption of this approach is that every society comprises a network of interrelated parts, anyone can be understood in relation to the whole. Riggs observed that administrative behaviour is not erratic and without cause, but constituting an integral interacting part of government and society as a whole.

The model establishes two types of society-agricultural and industrial. Each contains a hypothetical system of Public Administration which may provide a basis for analysis of empirical administrative system. This model derives heavily from the structural-functional approach for its scope, approach and bias. The continuum stretching between the agrarian and industrial model is not so much a historical dimension as a functional theoretical type, depicting the interdependence of administrative systems and the societies in which they operated at two distinct periods.

It has been argued that an industrial system always has an agrarian characteristic or system in it. The major concepts used are so general ranging from particularism, ascription, universalism and achievement that they subsume many facets of behaviour which could be better investigated, appreciated and understood if conceptually differentiated.

### **CONCLUSION**

The comparative approach to the study of public administration emphasizes systematic and organized way of seeking knowledge which underscores the dominance of theory- building and research based on empirical foundations. The search for a science of (public) administration started with the seminar work of Woodrow Wilson in 1887, it can be arguably construed as “work in progress” now and must continue. The paper explored the conceptual and methodological basis of comparative public administration including theories and models considered applicable to comparative public administration.

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