

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

BHM 783



Comparative Public Administration **Module 1**

BHM 783

Comparative Public Administration

Module 1

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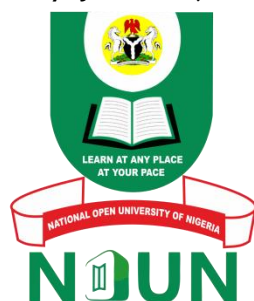
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Unit I Evolution Of Comparative Public Administration

1.0 Introduction

There was not much of literature on comparative Public Administration before the second world war. In the early writings on the subject, scholars such as L.D White and F.W. Taylor or the human relations movement adopted a “management” approach and their main concern was building a science of administration through the articulation of certain “Universal” principles of administration. However, the turn of events during and after World War II changed the state of literature on comparative public administration. A number of studies by Dwight Waldo, Ferrel Heady and Stokes made significant contributions in making public administration a universal science.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of the unit, students would be able to:

- list the motivating factors that led to the systematic study of comparative public administration;
- acknowledge the influence of World War II and the assistance programme initiated by the United States in the study of comparative public administration from general managerial approach to contextual and situational approach; and
- explain the concern of public administration scholars searching for “Science of Administration” and the influence of behavioural movement in Social Sciences in the development of theoretical constructs with cross-cultural and cross-national comparison.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Stimulants to Comparative Public Administration

The major shift from this periodical thinking of public administration to comparative approach was stimulated by a number of factors starting with the World War II. During the World War II, there were post-war military occupations and accelerated technical assistance programmes sponsored by the United Nation, United States and some private foundations like the Ford Foundation. Numerous students from the USA at the time participated in the Aid programmes. This offered them the opportunity and exposure to government systems and cultures of other foreign countries (often non-western). The result of this exposure was the stimulation of a sense of “comparativeness” in general, while raising a number of questions about the appropriateness of principles and devices that had been adjudged as good or scientific principles of administration previously.

During and after the world war II, the traditional school of public administration consisting of Woodrow Wilson, William Willoughby, L. D. White and F. W. Taylor came to be criticized for its failure to undertake a comparative study of the administrative system. Robert Dahl considered the claim of public administration to be a “science” as hollow as long as study was not comparative.

The World War II is often regarded as the dividing line between the old and new literature on the subject of public administration, as a new discipline under the name of new public

administration came into being. In the field of comparative public administration, emphasis shifted from general managerial approach to contextual and situational approach.

Beside the World War II, there were a number of factors which attracted the attention of American scholars to the comparative study of public administrations:

- 3.1.1 New scientific, theoretical and technological developments influenced the structures of administration stimulating interest in the comparative study of administrative;
- 3.1.2 The emergence of free nations after the world war and efforts by these nations to achieve rapid socio-economic development, created new problems before public administration which led to scientific investigation and empirical studies in the field of public administration.
- 3.1.3 The assistance programmes initiated by the United States to help the newly independent countries in the task of their national development insisted on the establishment of modern personnel, budgeting and planning agencies by the recipient states. But when these countries failed to respond, it led the academic critics to point out that the American patterns of improvements were “cultures bound” and could not be transported to the countries having different cultures soon it came to be recognized that “exogenous” technical change required a complete understanding of the culture context of the administrative institution and behaviour in foreign countries, “which developed ecological perspective among the students of public administration working developing countries.
- 3.1.4 New intellectual developments in comparative Sociology, Anthropology, politics and other areas stimulated the students of Public Administration to develop theoretical constructs with a cross-cultural, cross-national and cross-temporal relevance in their field.
- 3.1.5 The behaviour movement in Social Sciences led the students of Public Administration to move away from the traditional legal formal approach and to concentrate on the facts of actual behaviour of human beings in an administrative organization (Bhagwan and Bhushan, 2006:58); and
- 3.1.6 The concern of Public Administration scholars searching for “science of Public Administration”

3.2 Developing Comparative Public Administration as a Discipline

There was increased awareness towards developing Comparative Public Administration as a discipline. There were several new developments in this field and important new literature was created. However, Comparative Public Administration emerged in 1952 when a committee was set up in the United States by the American Political Scientists. This committee was named “SHARP” Committee headed by Professor Walter Sharp. The aim of this committee was to look into the study of Comparative Public Administration in a scientific way. In 1953, another committee was set-up by the society of American Public Administration, called “Comparative American Group” headed by Fred. W. Riggs and was affiliated to American Society for Public Administration. This committee was to look into the development of Comparative Public Administration and to develop criteria of relevance and objective. These two committees were set up in order to move the discipline forward.

Moreover, the Comparative Public Administration movement received a major boost, when it received the first professional recognition in 1953 through the appointment of an adhoc committee on comparative administration by the American Political Science Association, which led to the establishment in 1960 of the Comparative Administration Group (CAG) and was affiliated to American society for public administration. Fred W. Riggs was appointed the chairman of CAG. The Comparative

Administration Group in the United States has done commendable work in the field of Comparative Public Administration. It has prepared more than one hundred research papers on various aspects of comparative administration. The group received generous grants from Ford foundation in 1962, through the American society for public administration and was publishing quarterly journals of Comparative Administration. It has sponsored experimental technique projects and promoted field research in comparative administration. Comparative public administration as a subject was included in the courses of study in several colleges and universities in the United States and other developed countries. Dwight Waldo started comparative public administration as a course of study in the University of California(Barkley) in 1948. Thereafter, it began to receive much greater attention which widened the scope of the study.

Self-Assessment Test

What are the factors that led to the emergence of comparative public administration?

4.0 Conclusion

Comparative Public Administration has widened the horizons of public administration by opening the doors of the discipline to all kinds of social science. The study of comparative Public Administration has not only improved intellectual and scholarly writings of researchers, it has helped to eliminate its parochialism or narrowness. Today, the principles of Public Administration are analyzed in a cross-cultural and cross-national contexts.

5.0 Summary

This unit has been able to explain the evolution of comparative public administration. It has been able to highlight the motivating forces leading to its emergence as a course of activity and a course of study in universities, especially during and after the World War II. As an activity, it has widened the horizons of public administration analysis in a cross-cultural and cross-national contexts. As a course of study, it has improved the intellectual and scholarly writings of researchers. Today, comparative public administration has received greater attention as a course of study in many colleges and universities in many developed and developing countries of the world.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

What role did the scholars in behavioural sciences play in the emergence of comparative public administration as a course of study in colleges and universities ?

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Unit 2 Meaning Of Comparative Public Administration

1.0 Introduction

The comparative study of administrative system has grown up with the comparative study of politics. Both share common characteristics such as : general outlook identified by behaviouralism, effort to be interdisciplinary in interests and techniques and efforts to arrive at concepts and theories that can be analyzed in cross-cultural and cross-national contexts. However, the study of comparative politics has placed emphasis upon voting behaviour, political attitudes, the activities of interest groups, and so on. It is only now when the concern has come to rest more on the performance of government and the processes of policy making, that the focus of inquiry has been shifting back to institutions. Bureaucracy, being the institution most clearly associated with performance has become the focus of study. In this unit, we shall examine the meaning of comparative public administration.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of the study of this unit, students would be able to:

- explain comparative public administrative as a systematic study of political systems with the aim of developing scientific theories; and
- enumerate comparative public administration as a field of study that can be applied in different socio-political environments.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Conceptual Clarification

Comparative Public Administration was described by the Comparative Administration Group of the American Society for Public Administration as “the systematic study of political systems with the aim of developing scientific theories, which could be applied to diverse cultures and national settings and the body of factual data, by which it can be examined and tested” (CAG, 1963). Riggs (1973) noted in his definition, that the term “comparative” should be used only for empirical, homothetic studies. He outlines three trends in the comparative study of Public Administration:

- From normative approach towards more empirical approaches;
- Shifts from ideographic (individualistic) toward homothetic (universals);
- Shift from a predominantly non-ecological to an ecological basis for the study of Public Administration.

From this definition, it is apparent that the focus of comparative public administration was a major developmental issues faced in American public administration. According F.W. Riggs (1973), the first trend observed from the definition is fairly well established and the other two trends are perhaps only fast emerging.

Self-Assessment Test

Describe the concept of comparative public administration?

4.0 Conclusion

It is now apparent that comparative public administration was viewed as a developmental issue embedded in specific cultures and political settings, . As such, the study of the principles of public administration is inadequate. Therefore, for public administration to be regarded as scientific, it must have pure and applied aspects, as contained in the meaning of comparative public administration.

5.0 Summary

We can, therefore, identify certain components of emphasis of Comparative Public Administration, which include;

- Studies of different administrative systems in their ecological settings
- Emphasis of empirical study is based on rigorous methods, such as: field observations, field-experiment and organization- like groups;
- Inter-disciplinary orientations;
- Inter-action between administration, socio-economic, cultural and political phenomena.
- multi-organizational nature of Public Administration and importance of interactions among organizations at different levels of government; (local, state and national)
- widened horizons of public administration (Bhagwan and Bhushan, 2006:58).

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Describe the major areas of emphasis of comparative public administration?

7.0 References And Further Study

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Unit 3 Importance Of Comparative Public Administration

1.0 Introduction

The study of comparative public administration is not merely an intellectual exercise of the scholars, nor is it limited to mere comparative studies. Its contributions have important bearing on the whole range of public administration. In this unit, we shall examine the important role comparative public administration has played in bringing politics and public administration closer to each other.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of unit, students would be able to:

- Know the basic contributions in the study of public administration ;
- Know how comparative public administration methodology has broaden the field of social science research; and
- Know how comparative public administration has encouraged the process of social research analysis from normative to empirical approaches.

3.0 Main Contents

There are contributions of comparative public administration, which include:

3.1 The Academic Study of Public Administration

It is believed that generalizations relating to administrative structures and behaviour, emerging out of comparative studies in different nations and cultures can help to formulate theoretical constructs, which can provide a scientific basis to the study of public administration.

Knowledge Of Individual Characteristics Of Different Cultures

Comparative Public Administration contributes to a greater understanding of the individual characteristics of administrative systems, functioning in different nations and cultures.

3.3 Knowledge of Differences of Administrative Systems

It helps to explain factors responsible for cross-national and cross-cultural similarities as well as difference in the administrative system.

3.4 Relevance of Ecology of Public Administration

It helps academicians, policy makers and Administration know the causes of success or failure of administrative structures and patterns in different environmental settings.

3.5 Administrative Practices of Other Countries

Lastly, through comparative studies, we learn about the administrative practices of other nations, which can be adapted to our own systems.

Self-Assessment Test

What are the major contributions of comparative public administration as a discipline and activity?

4.0 Conclusion

Comparative public administration has contributed immensely in eliminating the narrowness of the subject of public administration. It has made the subject broader, deeper and useful, especially in its cross-cultural and cross-national contexts. Lastly, it has encouraged the process of broadening the field of social analysis.

5.0 Summary

The importance of comparative public administration has been significant. It has not only eliminated its narrowness in terms of empirical analysis, but broaden the field of social science research. Comparative public administration has brought politics and public administration closer to each other.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Highlight major contributions of comparative public administration in social science research?

7.0 References/Further Readings

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Unit 4 Theoretical Perspectives

1.0 Introduction

Comparative public administration is a specialized branch of administration that scholars believe need inquiry. Besides the literature on comparative politics, what should influence its study among others, are the general literature on organisation theory and management theory. The development and management theory can assist in our understanding of comparative public administration, but we should not expect all the answers to come even from that fertile field.

There are a number of approaches, models and theories presently characterizing the subject area of Comparative Public Administration. Particularly after Second World War, a number of approaches have emerged in Comparative Public Administration analysis. Much of this effort is based on an adaptation of the developments in Comparative politics approach, organization theories and models. A model may take different names like: paradigm, ideal-constructs, intellectual framework, conceptual framework, etc. Whatever name it bears, a model represents a framework for developing hypothesis and it can be used to test “cause and effect” relationship between variable.

The inter-disciplinary nature of the study of Comparative Public Administration makes it imperative to use models in analyzing data. The inter-disciplinary borrowing is extensive and comes from Sociology, Economics, Psychology and other Social Sciences. It has become difficult to develop a general administration theory that can be used as a framework that would give broad, cross-cultural explanations of cluster of concepts that would be helpful in classifying administrative systems around the world in terms of rich and poor bureaucracies or weak and strong states. Many reasons have been advanced in this regard. They are:

1. National Administrative systems are more difficult to study than other political institutions. For example, parties, mass publics, legislatures and courts, particularly when studied in terms of performance. Outputs of other political institutions are more readily available and in quantitative form. For example, electoral outcomes (votes or seats); legislative outcomes (seats); judicial outcomes (decisions). The outcome of administrative system is difficult to study because there are many kinds of agencies doing many kind of things.
2. The boundaries of administrative systems are difficult to establish. Since comparative Public Administration is a comparative study of policy implementation, all kinds of actors not belonging to regular public administrative machinery are involved in implementation, such as ; courts, mass publics, mass media, local governments and private organizations. Therefore, delimiting these sets of actors involved in each country becomes extremely difficult.
3. There is complexity in implementation networks as it may vary in function, such as: task, problem, natural, history, constituency, technology, centralization and dominance (Yates, 1982). It is difficult to use the term “bureaucracy” when implementation networks vary according to function.
4. The problem of change is also a factor. Administrative arrangements are constantly changing. It is difficult for international organization to keep up with changes in many

countries at the same time, especially when international data on socio-economic indicators, for example: demography, health, housing, etc, are not available.

5. There is also the problem of research. There is the problem of research. Comparative Public Administration research has been behavioural. Behavioural research trying to penetrate bureaucracy with its legal-rationality is difficult. Moreover, many countries and agencies are not equipped to provide accurate data on performance.
6. There is the issue of divergent theories. There are expression of divergent theories by many states, including peripheral capitalist societies. This gives room to many expressions of concepts, definitions, methods and assumptions, making it impossible for acceptable comparative Public Administrative theory.

As a result of these reasons, models are often used in Comparative Public Administration because it has wide variety of cultural and political contexts.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of the unit, students would be able to:

- Understand organisational theories that can be adapted to study comparative public administration;
- Understand management theories that are relevant to comparative public administration;
- Understand middle-range theories and models that are applied in comparative public administration

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 The Nature of Comparative Public Administration Research

The development and state of Comparative Public Administration are strongly dependent on the definition of comparative public administration research. There were stringent and relaxed definitions of comparative public administration research, which emphasizes uniformity of research approach and structured design. In essence, such definitions call for research in several countries, with data being collected according to a certain regime, guided by a central research question. If not quantitative in nature, cases are chosen according to a most similar systems design or carefully replicated along the relationship between dependent and independent variables in order to control intermediate variables and produce robust evidence or counter-evidence. The goal of such comparative design is most ambitious in that it seeks to test hypotheses from certain theoretical perspectives and rule out rival explanations.

Another variant to this, was secondary analyses, for which monographs and journal articles have provided a mass of information, with the admitted flaw of possible reduced validity by not always offering to discern which statements are really based on empirical evidence and which are more loosely funded on works that are primarily theoretical and impressionistic in nature (Egeberg, 1999:160).

Another variant of comparative public administration research was the single case studies, which appeared in major public administration journals. The stringent definition made some

reviewers of the journal articles to regard comparative public administration research as hypotheses testing (Heady, 1979:41).

3.2 General Or Grand Theory

The problem of operational definition and measurement hamper the basic dependent variables of administrative systems, and their cross-national and cross-time comparison. There was failure to produce a general theory of administrative systems. Several observers advised comparative public administration to move its theoretical efforts from grand theory development of cosmic dimensions (Prestus, 1959:26; Jreisat, 1975:663; in Heady, 2001:33) to a more incremental production of middle-range theories.

3.3 Middle-Range Theories

The development of middle-range theory can be seen from two dimensions: problem-driven and discipline-driven (Peters and Pierre, 2007:272-275). In problem-driven dimension, theory development seeks to codify, classify and understand structural or behavioural phenomena of public administration or developments in its environments that are politically and socially perceived as problematic or in a state of flux. The problem of 1980s economic world crisis brought about the concern for efficiency and economy, which favoured an agenda for comparatively investigating public sector size and growth (Rose, 1985). Again, the problem of down-sizing bureaucracy towards privatization and deregulation policies brought comparative studies of public sector variance (Vickers and Wright, 1988). Furthermore, the problem of corruption pushed the issue of administrative ethics on to the agenda. However, comparative research on causes of corruption gained momentum in USA and other parts of Europe. This brought concern on moral standards in public life (Della Porta and Meny, 1997; Williams, 2000a; 2000b; Williams and Robin, 2000; Rohr, 2001).

On the other hand, in the late 1950s and 1960s, comparative public administration became discipline-driven, especially focusing on bureaucratic model as conceptual framework of analysis (See Arora, 1972, quoted in Heady, 1979:14, 60). Then, bureaucratic model was conceived either as a checklist instrument or a broader model for comparing the major structural and functional characteristics of different administrative systems (Waldo, 1964). Middle-range theory development in the comparative public administration discipline was much informed by the applications and alterations to the bureaucratic model.

Several important development came from translating generic organization theory to bureaucratic organization and bureaucratic behaviours (Peters, 1989:7; Jorgensen, 1998:550).

3.4 Organisational Theories

Organisational theory did much to articulate the role of environmental differences. Contingency theory, for instance, tried to match characteristics of the environment of organizations and their mode of production to the most appropriate structures. It was criticized for not acknowledging incidences of organisational closure due to environmental influences and for over-insulating structural variables from institutional transfer (Peters, 1989:7). Ecology theory offered a perspective on organization inertia, change and transformation (Kaufmann, 1976; Hogwood and Peters, 1983).

Other influences from organizational theory emphasized cross-national differences in organizational cultures (Crozier, 1963; Presthus, 1959; Lammers and Hickson, 1979, quoted in Peters and Pierre, 2007:274).

Another important source of modifying the bureaucratic model came from formal theorizing on the dysfunctions and ills of bureaucracy (Peter, 1996); the institutional public choice approach (Dunleavy, 1991); and Allison's (1971) method of triangulation of bureaucratic power and politics (Kettle, 1993:412).

3.5 Models (Single Paradigm)

From these analyses, it is obvious that comparative public administration lacks a single paradigm as conceptual framework. In other words, there is no "grand or general" theory for comparative public administration. Rather, middle-range theories and approaches abound in the discipline. Moreover, scholars choose questions on agreed concepts and find answers to them. In other words, they agree on what to study and organize data collection and theory development around core dependent variables. Such approach clearly departs from comparative public administration as a grand theory exercise, as administrative systems or transformations as a whole is no longer focused on the subject (Peters and Pierra, 2007: 276). However, the relevance of this approach is recognized by many scholars, but views differ as to which variables to include. Some scholars acknowledge that since grand theory of comparative public administration is to be substituted by middle-range theory, progress was best achieved by studying "the backgrounds, attitudes and behaviours of bureaucrats and those with whom they interact (Sigelman, 1976:624; in Heady, 2001:33). This view recognizes environment of those with whom bureaucrats interact but it remains quite narrow in that its focus on individuals is behavioural only. Heady, (1979; 2001) takes a broader view. He specifies the environment of public administration by identifying the areas in which bureaucrats interact with others, that is, the broader political system and society in general. He also adds an organizational focus and emphasizes the importance of relying on several levels of analysis for understanding the complexity of public administration (Heady, 2001:34). Maor and Lane (1999) take "Actors, structures and behaviour" as building blocks for comparative public administration. These concepts operate as part of internal dynamics of the public sector. However, it is easier to operationalize "Actors" and "structures" as "public employees" and "public organizations", respectively. Comparative analysis can be undertaken on variables of public employees – their socio-economic conditions of their employment, recruitment and career patterns in the civil service and reward systems. Moreover, the term, public organization can be operationalized as the civil service, which can provide a mass of material for secondary analysis. Both variables can present answers to central explanatory and normative questions in public administration. However, the operationalization, classification and explaining of behaviour is more problematic because of the absence of a theoretical paradigm on the nature of human behaviour in general. Peter's (1988) choice of dependent variables: public employees, public organizations, bureaucratic behaviour and politico-administrative relations., changed the situation, even though, he adds "politico-administrative relations". In any case, one established way of approaching comparative politico-administrative relations is from role theory (Aberbach et. al, 1981). In this tradition, attitudes, roles and behaviour are investigated by interviewing large samples of administrative and political elites in a number of countries and compare. This approach has empirically helped to erode the classic politics and administration dichotomy.

Pierre's approach (1995) to comparative public administration is probably the most comprehensive in taking three sets of variables. He adds an explicit focus on the administration's relations with civil society, which in Peter's scheme are not absent but captured under bureaucratic behaviour. The three sets of variables in Pierre's comparative public administration project are: the intra-organisational dynamics of bureaucracy, which comprises such variables as: actors, structures and behaviour, politico-administrative

relations; and the relations between administration and civil society. The relations between administration and civil society, according to him, serve to highlight the changes or challenges to contact points between public administration and civil society. Attention to the relations between public administration and civil society are not new and neither are certain tools to reduce the distance between them (Lasswell, 1960). Classification, such as: weak –strong states, for example, have been useful in comparing the bureaucratization of society or the encroachment of society on the autonomy of the state. Another established research tradition comes from studies that compare differences in trust and consent (Almond and Verba, 1965) and more recently of the value of social capital for government performance (Putnam et al., 1994).

Self-Assessment Test

Conceptual framework and models are used to compare public administration, instead of a general theory. Discuss.

4.0 Conclusion

As illustrated above in this unit, there is no grand or general theory of comparative public administration. The middle-range theories that are variants of organizational theory and other approaches formed general conceptual framework of analyses. The nature of comparative public administration research calls for borrowing of concepts from organization theories, management theories, and behavioural science approaches. This approach is justified because of the public nature of administration and need to understand the social, cultural and political settings of organisations.

5.0 Summary

Comparative public administration is a specialized branch of administration because of the public nature of the discipline and socio-cultural and political settings. As a result, it is difficult to develop a general or grand theory that can be applied universally. Rather, concepts are borrowed from organizational theories, management theory, middle-range theories and behavioural science concepts to analyze and compare institutions based on contextual and situational settings.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Scholars have observed that the study of comparative public administration cannot rely on a general theory. Do you agree?

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Unit 5 Criticisms And Prospects Of Comparative Public Administration Movement

1.0 Introduction

Comparative public administration has been criticized by many scholars. The inadequacies have been found in the angle of its development. Critics have observed that comparative public administration did not develop a goal-based empirical theories. In this unit, we shall examine various criticisms levelled upon comparative public administration.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of the unit, students would be able to:

- The inadequacies outlined by scholars in the study of comparative public administration as a social science;
- Understand the theoretical underpinnings of comparative public administration; and
- Appreciate the need to borrow concepts from organizational theories, management theories, behavioural science approaches since there is no single paradigm or general theory that can be used for analysis universally.

3.0 Main Contents

Some scholars have observed certain inadequacies in the study of comparative public administration. They include:

3.1 Identity Crisis

The most frequent complaint is that Comparative Public Administration has failed to establish itself as a field of study with a generally accepted restricted range of topics to be addressed and despite the inclination to theories, that no consensus has been achieved. They assert that comparative public administration is inadequately developed as a social science and only fitfully applies its methodology for academic analysis.

3.2 Lack of Goal-Based Empirical Theory

Another criticism of Comparative Public Administration is that there is unseemly addiction to theorizing and a lack of ability to offer theories which can win acceptance and be tested empirically. According to critics, there is inadequate methodological base, lack of experience and tradition for goal-based empirical research.

3.3 In-Built Value Judgment

Scholars also criticized the traditional comparative government literatures on the grounds that they were “culture-bound and non-comparative in character” (Basu, 2004:392).

Self-Assessment Test

What the criticisms levelled against comparative public administration?

4.0 Conclusion

In spite of these scathing criticisms, the prospects of the study of comparative has been firmly located in examination of the backgrounds, attitudes and behaviours of bureaucrats and those with whom they interact. Much is happening in the field, which primarily focuses on Comparative Public Administration across political system. No matter the criticisms, Comparative Public Administration has come to stay and now a course of study in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration in colleges and Universities of many countries of the world.

5.0 Summary

The criticisms levelled upon comparative public administration have centred on identity crisis, as it relies on other disciplines for its study, lack of goal-based empirical theory and in-built value judgment. However, the crisis suffered by comparative public administration during the last decade in terms of methodology and the applicability is not severe enough to make it disappear altogether. It might have lost its impetus in recent years, it has still that potentiality to remain alive because of its identity though faint in the conceptual range of modern social sciences.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Scholars have criticized comparative public administration as having identity crisis, lack goal-based empirical theory and possess in-built value judgement. Discuss.

7.0 References/Further Readings

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