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Globalizing Public Administration: Today's Research and Tomorrow's Agenda

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What is the relationship between public administration scholarship and the study of developing countries?

This article answers this question by presenting the intellectual history of administrative studies of the global South and by examining recent empirical studies of developing country administration. The results suggest that administrative research on the developing world published in leading international publications has become a small-scale, disparate, descriptive, qualitative, and noncomparative subfield dominated by researchers from the global North. This empirical finding provides a platform to end a false North–South administrative dichotomy and advance a vision for public administration as a global social science.

In a 2008 *PA Times* article, the president of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) hinted that public administration's future was bound to be a global one as commonplace distinctions between foreign and domestic public administration collapsed under global challenges, communication innovations, and cross-national interdependencies (White 2008). Meanwhile, in his first address to a joint session of the U.S. Congress in February 2009, President Barack Obama identified convergences between American and international interests because “we know that America cannot meet the threats of this century alone, [and] the world cannot meet them without America.”¹ To what extent are claims of interdependency such as these actually breaking down barriers between public administration scholarship and the study of third-world public administration?

[W]e recommend turning public administration into a globally inclusive endeavor in which developing country administrative research can strengthen both American and international administrative science.

This article begins by analyzing research on developing country administrative systems by considering its status within public administration and by reviewing articles published in leading social science journals.² Through a content analysis, we identify a number

of predicaments facing non-Western administration research. In doing so, we create a platform for articulating and advancing a vision for public administration as a global social science.

The first section briefly traces the intellectual evolution of third-world administrative research across comparative public administration, development administration, and international public management. Our second section examines articles on developing country administrative systems published in 10 leading journals that span these three subdisciplines. This analysis reveals that administrative studies of the global South have fractured into a small-scale, disparate, noncumulative, descriptive, and noncomparative field dominated by researchers with Northern institutional affiliations. The third section considers why the study of developing country administration finds itself in this weakened state, arguing that its current condition hampers theoretical and methodological development of American, developing country, and international administrative science.

From this analysis, we recommend turning public administration into a globally inclusive endeavor in which developing country administrative research can strengthen both American and international administrative science. A global public administration that moves beyond a North–South administrative dichotomy can build knowledge cumulatively through collaborative arrangements that collapse geographic, methodological, and disciplinary boundaries. It can inform some of the most

intractable and disconcerting global challenges that we face today. Ultimately, global public administration flourishes to the benefit of American public administration in the United States, the global South, and the world at large.

The Scholarship of Developing Countries and Their Administration

The intellectual history of public administration science in the global South crosses both epochs and disciplines. It begins in the early days of the postindependence era, when fledgling governments in Asia and Africa restructured newly sovereign administrative environments. Against this backdrop, comparative public administration established itself as a sizable, identifiable, and complex contemporary movement, a branch of public administration focused on the comparative analysis of administrative processes and institutions (Guess and Gabrielyan 2007; Heady, Perlman, and Rivera 2007; Otenyo and Lind 2006b; Raphaeli 1967). The establishment of the Comparative Administration Group within ASPA in 1960 had as its “overriding interest” the “administrative problems of the ‘developing’ countries” (Riggs 1970). Financial assistance provided by the Ford Foundation to the Comparative Administration Group further cemented an association between comparative public administration and developing country administration (Jreisat 2005; Otenyo and Lind 2006b; Van Wart and Cayer 1990). In parallel, the other branches of public administration scholarship retained their focus on American problems for which American solutions were sought (Heady, Perlman, and Rivera 2007, 607; Otenyo and Lind 2006a, 2). In a sense, the late 1960s and early 1970s marked the pinnacle for comparative public administration as the field grew in numbers, funding, and academic prestige (Van Wart and Cayer, 1990, 239).

Extending the traditional bureaucratic model of public administration in the United States to other nations became an early purpose of development administration (Hughes 2003, 225; Turner and Hulme 1997, 12). Fred W. Riggs offered two early meanings for development administration: (1) the administration of development programs and methods to implement policies and plans to meet development objectives and (2) the development of administration as strengthening administrative capabilities (Riggs 1970). From an early date, development administration was largely an applied offshoot of comparative public administration (Brinkerhoff 2008). In Great Britain, initial suspicions of development administration as a veiled attack on the colonial record gradually gave way to an applied vision of training overseas administrators through pragmatic, experience-based curricula (Clarke 1999; Schaffer 1969). Development administration gradually carved a distinct identity from comparative public administration, for example, as a valued subject in British development studies programs and faculties and a task for applied policy research institutes.³

The mediocre economic success of developing states, the failure to analytically predict administrative reform outcomes, and the rise of authoritarian regimes in many parts of Africa and Latin America contributed to a general disillusionment with the study of public administration in developing countries (Hirschmann 1981; Schaffer 1969; Van Wart and Cayer 1990). This poor performance in developing countries was partly to blame for the growing uncertainty around comparative public administration’s viability as a subdiscipline from the mid-1970s onward (Otenyo and Lind 2006a; Peters 1994; Sigelman 1976). Other contributing factors included its ambiguous identity as both an applied and academic science

(Jreisat 2005; Otenyo and Lind 2006a); its predilection for grand abstract theories with little bearing on or relevance in reality (Heady, Perlman, and Rivera 2007); and conceptual fragmentation and dispersion relating to levels, units of analysis, and dependent variables (Jreisat 1991, 2005; Peters 1994). All of this resulted in the “bubble” of interest in comparative public administration “burst[ing] as rapidly as it had formed” (Van Wart and Cayer 1990, 239).

Comparative public administration’s status as subdiscipline of public administration has since been an issue of perennial contestation. Since the early 1970s, developing country administrative research has evolved separately and autonomously from mainstream American public administration. It is now a popular subfield within other social science disciplines such as political science, sociology, and economics (Jreisat 2005, 234). Perhaps the most prolific of these disciplinary invasions has come from new institutional economics (Clague 1997; North 1995). Here, formal and informal rules and incentive structures are examined at the expense of actual micro-level behaviors inside organizations. New institutional economics’ disciplinary assumptions of bureaucratic life have misunderstood Waldonian assumptions of dynamics within American public administration, depoliticizing administrative life in the developing world by explaining it in terms of bounded rational actors operating within path-dependent institutional arrangements.

Nevertheless, there is a new wave of optimism about the state of comparative public administration, and particularly developing country administrative research. For better or for worse, this reemergence almost certainly is tied to the influence of a “new” public management agenda within public administration (Hood 1991; Kaboolian 1998; Kettl 1997). New Public Management has thrown up analytical and interdisciplinary issues relating to international administration by fostering interest in new subjects such as governance, outsourcing, contracting, performance management, and accountability (Brinkerhoff 2008;

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Brinkerhoff and Coston 1999; Heady, Perlman, and Rivera 2007). Meanwhile, international actors such as the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development seek greater analytical clarity on ways to enhance the capabilities of the third-world administrative state (Grindle 1997; Sahlin-Andersson 2001; World Bank 1997).

The influence of public management on administrative systems in the global South also is witnessed in a changing vocabulary. The term “development administration” has been replaced with the label “international development management” or simply “development management.” Development management understands the state in the context of its relationships to nonstate actors, including the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and hybrid organizations such as social enterprises (Brinkerhoff 2008; Guess and Gabrielyan 2007, 571; Hughes 2003; Turner and Hulme 1997). For many European scholars, however, the shift in terminology is indicative of the colonization of managerial logics in administrative reform processes in developing countries (Cooke 2004; Cooke and Dar 2008; Hughes 2003). The field of development management is divided between those who would “radically” reject the

neocolonialism and neoliberalism of development management and those who would “reform” it to improve its theoretical and practical contributions to improved living standards and livelihoods (Gulrajani 2010, 2011). Interestingly, such debates occur outside the comparative public administration community, perhaps because development management has found new territories of inquiry beyond the administrative systems of developing countries as it moves to the study of international aid actors, the relationship between global and local political economies, and new administrative instruments for achieving development. Development management is now a subject commonly found in the interdisciplinary curricula of master’s programs in public policy, security studies, and international development rather than a feature of public administration and public management programs.

The implications of these trajectories for the study of administration in the global South remain uninvestigated. What has been the nature of recent research exploring developing country administrative systems given these shifts and trends? If we believe that public administration scholarship can and should improve the lives of those in poor nations and advance the twin aims of security and peace (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2008), there is value in knowing, rather than simply presuming, that a robust and rich science of developing country administration actually exists.

Examining Administrative Studies of Developing Countries: A Content Analysis

An exploration of the contemporary status of developing country public administration requires empirical study of its published outputs. Nevertheless, the evolution of administrative studies of the global South suggests that any endeavor to understand the state of play in developing country administration must, by definition, look beyond the subfield of comparative public administration. As such, we conducted a content analysis of leading social science publications representing the three subdisciplines associated with administration in the global South: comparative public administration, development administration, and public management. A key assumption for this study is that the highest-quality research on developing country administrations is published in top-rated journals representing these three social science subfields. While acknowledging that drawing from leading journals limits the sample to English-language publications published mainly in North America and Europe, this also represents the developing country administrative research that is achieving some of the highest standards of research excellence. We recognize that by drawing the circle tightly, we do not include an assessment of many national journals published in languages other than English in which studies of developing country administrations are likely to feature prominently. Surveying these journals would have also been problematic because of access and language difficulties.

We undertake this empirical analysis by modeling our literature review on previous surveys of comparative public administration published in *Public Administration Review* (Sigelman 1976; Van Wart and Cayer 1990).⁴ Sigelman (1976) undertook a content analysis of full-length articles appearing in the *Journal of Comparative Administration* between 1969 and 1974 and concluded that the field of comparative public administration had not benefited from the interaction of theory and data, opting instead for abstract

deductive theorizing that resulted in a vicious cycle of academic underdevelopment. A subsequent review by Van Wart and Cayer (1990) involved a content analysis covering 20 journals spanning comparative and development administration articles published between 1982 and 1986. Their results also suggested that comparative administration research was a discipline that largely relied on description and avoided theory testing. Interestingly, the findings of both surveys echoed the conclusions of content analyses conducted of public administration more generally (Houston and Delevan 1990; Lan and Anders 2000).

In the analysis here, 10 journals representing key publication outlets for third-world administration were selected. Given that existing citation databases do not rank journals on the basis of the subdisciplinary categories of interest here, and, given that, to the best of our knowledge, no similar study of developing country administration has been undertaken, the sample of journals was selected in two main ways. First, we drew on the journals used in Van Wart and Cayer (1990) that had high international content and represented comparative and development administration. Second, we drew on journals that are informally recognized as providing important contemporary outlets for administrative studies of developing countries in all three subdisciplines. For the comparative public administration journals, we chose the journals that Van Wart and Cayer (1990) identified as publishing the highest frequency of comparative public administration research (*Public Administration Review*, *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, *Public Administration*, *International Journal of Public Administration*). In international development, four development journals were selected; two drawn from Van Wart and Cayer’s original sample (*Development and Change* and *Journal of Developing Areas*) and two highly reputed outlets for developing country research excluded from their study (*Public Administration and Development* and *World Development*). Finally, we examined two public management journals (*Governance* and *International Public Management Journal*), limiting our choice to only two because of their explicit international orientation.

Our nonprobabilistic sample of developing country administrative articles was selected from every third volume of the 10 journals starting in 1996.⁵ All full-length research articles⁶ journal issues published in 1996, 1999, 2002, 2005, and 2008 were inspected.⁷ Unlike the two earlier surveys of comparative public administration, we chose a periodic rather than a continuous longitudinal examination of our selected journals in order to capture a time interval exceeding five years. To be chosen, articles had to deal with the realities of administrative systems in a developing country or a set of countries. The term “administrative systems” was understood as any arena of public sector decision making, including bureaucracies, legislatures, political parties, public corporations, and courts (Riggs 1970, 21). We then selected articles that substantially focused on an embedded setting of public administration, excluding conceptual and/or commentary-based pieces. To qualify as a developing country, the countries examined had to be one of the 142 eligible recipients of World Bank concessional and nonconcessional financing.⁸

Using these criteria, our sample included 295 articles relating to public administration in developing countries out of a total population of 2,049 journal articles (see table 1). Articles concerning the administrative systems of developing countries thus made up

Table 1 Frequency of Third-World Administration Articles in Sample (1996–2008)

Subdiscipline	Journal	Number of Articles in Sample	Total Population	Percent of Published Articles on Third-World Administration
Comparative Public Administration				
	<i>International Review of Administrative Sciences</i>	39	157	24.8
	<i>International Journal of Public Administration</i>	25	107	23.3
	<i>Public Administration Review</i>	12	314	3.8
	<i>Public Administration</i>	1	203	0.5
Development Administration				
	<i>Public Administration and Development</i>	100	175	57.1
	<i>Development and Change</i>	28	176	15.9
	<i>World Development</i>	63	654	9.6
	<i>Journal of Developing Areas</i>	8	87	9.2
Public Management				
	<i>Governance</i>	14	105	13.3
	<i>International Public Management Journal</i>	5	71	7.0
	Total	295	2,049	14.0

only 14.0 percent of the sample, suggesting that research on developing country administration remains a relatively small-scale affair in the leading publications of comparative public administration, development administration, and public management. Only in *Public Administration and Development* did third-world administration constitute a majority of published articles during the time period examined. If we exclude *Public Administration and Development*, just 10.4 percent of the sample focused on public administration in the global South. *Public Administration Review* (PAR) has not been a key outlet for empirical research on the administrations of developing countries, even though it serves as an important outlet for comparative public administration research generally. While this result may be understood by the fact that PAR serves as the flagship journal of ASPA, it is also somewhat surprising given the introductory quote by the former president of ASPA as well as PAR's commitment to international and comparative public administration.⁹

Six questions guided the content analysis of our sample. These questions targeted specific dimensions of developing country administrative research as well as paralleled previous surveys of comparative public administration and public administration more generally. The first dimension of interest involved an assessment of the geographic and thematic loci of the articles. Second, information on the theoretical or conceptual standard adopted in the sample data was sought. Next, the kinds of methods used in the empirical study conducted were subject to examination. We then explored whether these articles adopted a comparative approach to their examination of developing country administration. And finally, we asked whether these studies were engaging researchers located in the global South to any significant degree. As per the methods adopted in previous reviews by Lan and Anders (2000), Houston and Delevan (1990), Van Wart and Cayer (1990), and Sigelman (1976), the title, author information, abstract, and primary research question of all the articles in the sample were reviewed. Where this still did not reveal sufficient information to answer the questions of interest, the entire article was read. Next we discuss the approaches we took to investigating each dimension and present our findings.

Is Research Focused on a Small Set of Geographic Locations and Topics?

Sigelman (1976) argued that established fields of study ought to be focused on a small set of common issues. This logic is applicable to

geographic and research foci in developing country administrative studies. To assess geographic focus, we coded all articles according to the developing country discussed using the World Bank classification scheme. Out of a possible 142 developing countries, our sample of 295 articles dealt with 90 developing countries. Fifty-two papers were oriented toward regional groups that included a developing country region (e.g., Africa, colonial countries, failed states, Eastern Europe, post-tsunami countries, etc.). This suggests a tremendous dispersion of countries examined. Excluding regional studies, an average of only 2.7 articles concentrated on any given country. While there is some concentration in the emerging markets of Brazil, India, South Africa, and China (see table 2), there is a vast geographic area covered within third-world administrative scholarship. With the exception of the 10 countries listed in table 2, there is a relatively small frequency of articles for the remaining 80 developing countries (i.e., where the article frequency is fewer than eight). This is suggestive of limited concentrated and cumulative knowledge generation of administrative processes in the developing world. While a closer reading of the specific articles relating to each developing country could confirm this claim, this lack of country-based concentration is tentatively indicative of the limited depth of developing country administrative scholarship.

To assess the level of topical focus in the subfield of developing country public administration, we chose to code articles on the basis of the ASPA section categories. The reason for this choice is that the ASPA sections list provides established categories of key subject groupings within public administration and thus provides a high degree of face validity as proxies for major research areas within public administration.¹⁰ While this coding may suffer from construct

Table 2 Frequency of Geographic Focus in Sample

Country	Number of Articles
China	31
South Africa	17
India	17
Brazil	13
Tanzania	11
Indonesia	11
Philippines	10
Ghana	9
Malaysia	8
Mexico	8

validity problems, this is no less the case in previous attempts to code articles by subject areas (e.g., Lan and Anders 2000). If more than one thematic area applied to an article, the dominant theme was coded. If no code seemed applicable, we indicated as much (see table 3).

Our results show that the topics treated by third-world administration research do not fit neatly within standard thematic areas of American public administration scholarship, as 30 percent of all articles could not be classified using the ASPA section categorizations. Instead, examined topics often dealt with issues specific to problems in the developing world, for example, food policy, postconflict themes, human rights administration, studies of authoritarian transitions, and so on. While we cannot necessarily conclude that developing country administrative research is more or less diverse than public administration at large, we can state that relevant topics and themes for third-world administrative study do seem to be distinct.

Our results also suggest that there may be no single prioritized “sector” in third-world administration, with perhaps the exception of environmental and natural resource management (in the area of water resources and forest management especially). In *World Development* and *Journal of Developing Areas* in particular, the state most often is discussed in the context of its public budgeting and financial management functions. This is natural given that those journals orient themselves to economic topics such as public expenditure management, liberalization, industrial policy, and growth. We also found that public law and administration (in the context of corruption and postconflict reconstruction) remain recurrent themes. The variety of themes and the lack of topical concentration is suggestive of significant width, but limited depth within third-world administration research. Overall, these results tentatively indicate that the

Table 3 Research Areas Examined in Sample

ASPA Categories	Total Number of Articles	Percent of Total
N/A	89	30.17
Environmental and natural resources administration	34	11.53
Intergovernmental administration and management	23	7.80
Personnel administration and labor relations	23	7.80
Public budgeting and financial management	23	7.80
Democracy and social justice	19	6.44
Public performance management	16	5.42
Ethics	11	3.73
Science and technology in government	11	3.73
Health and human services administration	10	3.39
Public law and administration	10	3.39
Public administration research*	8	2.71
Complexity and network studies	6	2.03
Women in public administration	4	1.36
Emergency and crisis management	3	1.02
Criminal justice administration	3	1.02
Transport policy and administration	2	0.68
Total	295	100.00

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

identity of developing country administration is a disparate one, both geographically and thematically.

What Kinds of Theories Are Used?

Many reviews of comparative public administration have pointed out that a shift from ideographic (distinct cases) to nomothetic approaches (studies that seek explicitly to formulate and test propositions) is one way to improve comparativist scholarship (Jreisat 2005, 237; Riggs 1991, 473). To determine whether a rigorous theoretical-conceptual standard in our sample is utilized, each article was coded as having one of three “styles,” per Van Wart and Cayer (1990). One category included a “descriptive” style of a particular empirical reality. A “thesis assertion” category offered a well-articulated statement or proposition around which data and arguments were structured, while a “hypothesis or model testing” category required hypotheses or relationships to be identified prior to data gathering in order to test theoretical assertions.

Our results in table 4 indicate that 53.9 percent of the sample fell within the “descriptive” category, with “thesis assertion” not too far behind at 34.9 percent. Hypothesis testing only made up 11.2 percent of all articles. This suggests that there is more description and less thesis assertion than in the case of comparative public administration two decades earlier (Van Wart and Cayer 1990). It also parallels the findings of those who claim that public administration research is engaged in little theory testing (Houston and Delevan 1990). It appears the third-world administrative studies have not sufficiently developed explanatory theories or even worked toward developing such theories that can account for changing properties and problems in administration. The comparison with comparative public administration and public administration more generally may be relevant here, as the slow scientific development of both fields is attributed to their practical orientations and concerns (Guess and Gabrielyan 2007; Heady, Perlman, and Rivera 2007; Houston and Delevan 1990, 679). The same practical orientation also may be hindering the advancement of administrative scholarship on developing countries.

What Methods Are Used?

Following Sigelman (1976) and Van Wart and Cayer (1990), we ask whether our administrative studies relied on systematic modes of analysis. Are the modes of analysis essay based, including broad theoretical and conceptual pieces? Are they empirical nonquantitative, including narrow empirical studies (mainly case studies) that do not employ quantitative techniques? Or are they empirical quantitative, including (1) studies that employed only simple counting or percentizing techniques which Sigelman (1976) identified as “low level” or (2) studies that used more than nominal measurements including tests of significance (designated “more powerful”)?

Table 4 Theoretical Approaches in Sample

	Number	Percent
Descriptive	159	53.9
Thesis assertion	103	34.9
Hypothesis/model testing	33	11.2
Total	295	100.0

Our results in table 5 indicate that 11.5 percent of articles adopted high-level quantitative methods and 17.0 percent the lower-level quantitative techniques. Most articles fell within either broad essay or summary pieces (38.3 percent) or those using empirical nonquantitative techniques (33.2 percent). The imbalance between quantitative and qualitative methods is striking and suggestive of greater preponderance of small-*N* studies in investigations of developing country administrative systems. Although this result matches the findings of earlier surveys of comparative public administration, it does not parallel the field of public administration more broadly, where a more even split between qualitative and quantitative research methods has been found to exist (Houston and Delevan 1990, 670; Lan and Anders 2000, 150). This is not to claim the superiority of quantitative methods over quantitative approaches or of small-*N* studies over large-*N* ones. Rather, there is a danger that with such a low usage of quantitative methods, research on administration in the global South may be suffering from some amount of “barefoot empiricism” (Jreisat 2005; Peters 1994). A more even uptake of research methods, including greater use of mixed methods, would suggest greater sophistication and vibrancy within developing country administrative research.

Is an Explicitly Comparative Lens Adopted?

The “dangers” that lurk within the single case study include implicitly assuming that each case is “either so particular that no others need be compared, or is so general that all others are like it” (Peters 1994, 83). Peters argues that American researchers tend to assume particularity for other countries and generality for the United States. Comparative analysis can guard against such unsubstantiated assumptions by increasing the likelihood of dependable results, enhancing the evaluation of hypotheses, and encouraging stronger verification of conclusions (Dahl 1947; Jreisat 2005, 239; Riggs 1991). Nevertheless, identifying what constitutes comparative research is sometimes tricky. We adopted three categories to assess comparison, inspired by Van Wart and Cayer (1990): (1) single case studies that did not compare; (2) single cases that involved internal comparison, for example, if subnational or cross-sectional comparisons were drawn or if hypothesis-testing used longitudinal data; and (3) multiple country studies that are, by definition, comparative.

Table 5 Methods Adopted in Sample

	Number	Percent
Essay-based	113	38.3
Empirical nonquantitative	98	33.2
Quantitative (low)	50	17.0
Quantitative (high)	34	11.5
Total	295	100.0

Table 6 Comparative Approaches Used in Sample

	Number	Percent
Single case studies: no comparison	160	54.2
Single case studies with internal comparison	58	19.7
Multiple case studies	77	26.1
Total	295	100.0

Somewhat “dangerously,” we find that 54.2 percent of our articles were single case studies with no comparisons attempted (see table 6). Multiple country case studies constituted 26.1 percent of all articles and single case studies with some internal comparative element made up 19.7 percent of our sample. The finding that most published research of developing countries is noncomparative parallels the finding by Van Wart and Cayer, who noted that two-thirds of all comparative public administration published between 1982 and 1986 were single case studies. This tendency to refrain from comparative analysis, coupled with the dominance of descriptive approaches and essay-based methods underlined previously, suggests highly constrained possibilities for generalizability within administrative research on the global South.

Where Are Authors Located?

Our content analysis also explored whether authors were affiliated with universities and research institutions in the developing world. This approach differs from existing surveys of public administration that have concentrated on authors’ university faculty, departmental affiliation, and level of academic rank (Houston and Delevan 1990; Lan and Anders 2000). Understanding whether internationally recognized research is being undertaken by researchers located in the developing world, or whether it still remains the domain of those trained and financed in the North, can help us understand whether top-rated administrative science of the developing world is situated in developing countries. This is important as we consider whether cutting-edge research on third-world administration is a truly global endeavor that has potential positive externalities and contributions for educational establishments in the global South, or whether the field still is defined and constituted by those trained and/or employed in the North.

We chose to use the location of the institutional affiliation of the author rather than an author’s nationality given many developing country nationals train and subsequently secure academic employment in North America and Europe. While these academics are contributing to developing country administrative science at the highest levels by exploiting their local/cultural knowledge of their home countries, they also inadvertently may exacerbate a brain drain from South to North that undermines capacity building and local knowledge development in national administrative systems.

To examine author affiliation systematically, we developed a coding system in which articles for which all authors were affiliated with non-Western institutions at the time of writing received 3 points. In cases in which half or the majority of authors were affiliated with non-Western institutions, we allocated 2 points, while if a minority of authors claimed such affiliations, 1 point was awarded. If no author cited institutional affiliations located in the third world, we allocated no points. For this analysis, we disregarded the 22 articles for which institutional affiliations were impossible to discern because of journal formatting.

In our sample, 69.6 percent of articles did not have a single author affiliated with a developing country institute or universities, indicating that authors located in the global North overshadow non-Western writers of third-world administrative studies in the leading academic journals. In 19.4 percent of our sample, all authors were affiliated with organizations located in the developing world.

Collaborations between developed and developing country researchers remain extremely rare; only 3.6 percent of articles had minorities of developing country authors, while 7.3 percent had half or a majority of authors from the developing world.

Overall, this content analysis indicates that the administrative study of the developing world is a small-scale, disparate, descriptive, qualitative/empirical, noncomparative affair that is based predominantly in the North, which altogether limits our ability to build a cumulative body of social science research. The study of third-world administration remains in almost all cases a minority of published articles within leading public administration journals, development journals, and public management journals. Most published research across the three fields falls within the descriptive category, with those having well-articulated statements and theoretical propositions a distinct minority of studies. Methods used are largely qualitative and essay based, with quantitative studies of both the low- and high-strength variety still limited. Research was infrequently comparative, with most research designs utilizing single case studies. Finally, a growing but nonetheless small minority of articles had authors with institutional affiliations in the global South, suggesting that internationally recognized administrative study of developing countries largely occurs by researchers located outside the developing world.

Why Is Administrative Research of Developing Countries in This State?

Why do the highest levels of scientific knowledge of developing country administration in the contemporary period exhibit the characteristics of a small-scale, descriptive, qualitative/empirical, and noncomparative subfield dominated by researchers with Western affiliations? We offer three possible reasons that may explain these findings.

First, the perennial insecurity of comparative research within the parent discipline of public administration keeps administrative studies of developing countries a minor subinterest within public administration. In the United States, this is partly a consequence of the politics of knowledge within graduate schools of public administration. Comparative and development administration courses remain electives in most U.S. graduate programs, if they exist at all, while core courses concentrate on American subjects with little examination of international phenomena (Farazmand 1996, 253; Heady 2001, 393). While the host nation of any education program should rightly be the country of focus for training, American students risk being underexposed to international phenomena compared to their counterparts located elsewhere in the world (Heady 2001, 393). This may create an assumption among future public administration scholars that the problems of the world are unimportant, that they are equivalent to those in America or at least reflective of the American experience, without treating any of this as a matter for further investigation.

The study of foreign administration thus remains a luxury rather than a necessity, an intellectual indulgence or altruistic act (when directed toward the developing world, for example) rather than an intrinsic part of building a more accurate understanding of American public administration. Moreover,

until comparative public administration can significantly inform mainstream American public administration, there is a sense that third-world administration never will gain the global and scientific acceptance that it strives for (Riggs 1991, 475).

Second, with comparative public administration relegated to secondary status within public administration, research on “foreign” administrations has been either kept distant from mainstream public administration or migrated to disciplines more welcoming to their interests (Jreisat 2005, 234). Multidisciplinary interest in third-world administration has further fragmented research geographically, conceptually, and methodologically. If anything unites administrative studies of the global South, it has been the ability to capture the “local realities” of administration in full contextual specificity. With methods of comparison generally absent and little attempt to build coherent and cumulative literatures across topics or geographies, the ability to generalize from this local context to other locations and conditions and/or develop monothetic theories, whether in the developed or developing world, remains unviable.

Finally, to make sense of the limited presence of administrative studies in developing countries in leading publication outlets, as well as the paucity of authors with affiliations to third-world institutions, one must ask whether such research confronts institutional obstacles. Currently, leading journals are published in English, mainly in the United States and United Kingdom, and constituted by editorial boards made up of scholars trained in Western academic canons and traditions. Researchers affiliated with institutes in the developing world are less likely to have been educated abroad, and therefore may be less aware of Northern academic protocols, less familiar with their theories, empirical traditions, and the English language, and less frequently immersed in key networks of association and influence. Without such experience and socialization, publishing in highly rated academic journals can be a real challenge. In some part, the obstacle for scholars from the developing world is a problem of financing, as ensuring that they can compete with graduates of Northern institutions requires investments in local research environments and higher education establishments. Similarly, the demands of teaching in many developing countries also can severely limit the time available for research. In other instances, however, there are real difficulties in changing parochial interests that keep the study of developing country administrations strictly within domestic boundaries, national languages, and local journals. Overall, the challenges of publication for scholars of public administration might be described as systemic, financial, and cultural.

Toward a Global Public Administration

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

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This content analysis underlines the need to bring together administrative scholarship of all national jurisdictions (Farazmand 1996, 1999; Heady 2001; Riggs 1991). The false North–South administrative dichotomy that characterizes the field of public administration must be avoided. This requires mainstreaming the study of developing countries within public administration scholarship at the same time as public administration perspectives are better integrated with other social science disciplines with interests in the developing world. The term “global public administration” captures the need to collapse the disciplinary distinctions that restrict cumulative scientific engagement on developing country administration. The “global” label also highlights that globalization drives the changing character of the modern state in such a way that it requires inclusive international collaboration when examining any administration, developing country, or otherwise (Farazmand 1996, 1999). A “global” designation seems especially relevant today given the noncumulative, noncollaborative, and geographically circumscribed nature of developing country administrative studies.

So what would a global public administration look like? Its foremost aim would be to foster collaborative research organized around geographies, units of analysis, instruments, methodologies, or substantive issues transcending vested disciplinary and national interests. This could build a rigorous administrative science that has the potential for generalizing internationally without losing hold of its empirical foundations (Jreisat 2005, 238; Peters 1994, 87). Fostering greater collaboration between researchers located in the North and South could be one tangible step in this direction. This also could encourage greater two-way exchange of knowledge, where experience and dynamics in the global South also begin to inform public administration in the global North. As in the case of law, where case specifics are interpreted through larger principles and frameworks, so, too, can the administrative sciences only become a universal science by “going global.” While access to robust data from developing countries may be a continuing challenge, a global public administration will adopt innovative strategies to overcome such challenges. This includes building data sets that permit comparative global analysis, thereby challenging the monopoly (and perhaps even the biases) of the World Bank and other international organizations over developing country administrative data. Global public administration ultimately would become a cumulative and collaborative social science enterprise, one that links theory, methods, and data in robust and defensible ways.

A global public administration is important to the extent that we strive to ensure security, peace, and livelihoods in an increasingly interconnected world. Future work that could benefit the developing world directly includes research on essential public service delivery; examining the politics–administration dichotomy in developing countries with a view to improving governance; exploring the science of state building in failed and fragile states; considering the administrative backdrop for protecting human rights; or investigating ways that administration impedes the transnational supply of global health and climate change. This is a nonexhaustive list; there are many topics that currently do not feature in public administration but nevertheless exhibit tremendous potential to improve the lives of millions. At the same time, a global public administration also could exploit these new vistas to inform the core concerns of public administration scholarship today, including areas such as emergency

and crisis management, nonprofit management, criminal justice, public performance management, ethics, health and human services administration, and science and technology, to name but a few.

In conclusion, a global public administration offers opportunities for clearer understandings of the strengths and weaknesses of administrative systems, processes and instruments the world over. A more inclusive and robust scholarship can encourage a wider array of solutions for the administrative challenges that hinder prosperity, security, service provision, and human rights in any country. A global public administration is an enterprise from which American public administration, developing country administration, and, most importantly, the world at large all stand to benefit.

Notes

1. See http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/remarks-of-president-barack-obama-address-to-joint-session-of-congress/ (accessed September 14, 2011).
2. The terms “third world,” “global South,” “non-Western world,” and “developing countries” are used interchangeably to refer to countries not located in North America and Western Europe. We do not use the label “third world” or “developing” in any pejorative sense. We include both developing and postcommunist transition countries in this designation.
3. For example, Birmingham University’s Development Administration Group was formed in 1968, while Manchester’s Institute for Development Policy and Management was set up in 1958.
4. A number of essay-based articles also have attempted to explore the state of comparative public administration (Farazmand 1991; Heady, Perlman, and Rivera 2007; Jreisat 2005; Waldo 1976).
5. Exceptions included the *International Journal of Public Administration*, for which we were unable to access the 1996 and 1999 volumes, and the *International Public Management Journal*, which began publishing only in 1997.
6. Book reviews, editorial introductions, and in memoriam pieces were disregarded.
7. We missed three issues because of a lack of online and hard copy access in two university libraries. This included the *International Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 31, no. 12 (2008), and the *Journal of Developing Areas*, vol. 35, no. 2 (2002) and vol. 32, no. 3 (1999).
8. A full list of these countries can be found at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/DATASTATISTICS/0,,contentMDK:20421402-pagePK:64133150-piPK:64133175-theSitePK:239419,00.html#IDA> (accessed September 14, 2011).
9. For a statement of this commitment, see http://www.aspanet.org/scriptcontent/index_par_philosophy.cfm (accessed February 18, 2010). Promisingly, as of summer 2010, ASPA had begun to consider the creation of an international chapter.
10. While ASPA section categories do not all represent categories of research within public administration, they provided a useful replacement in the absence of formal categorization. Nevertheless, some exclusions had to be made. For example, we excluded the ASPA Section on International and Comparative Administration (SICA) because we are exploring the administrative study of developing countries, which largely dominates SICA’s research agenda. We also excluded the Section on Chinese Administration because it is a geographically circumscribed group; the Conference on Minority Administration because it does not have section status; the Section on Historical, Artistic and Reflective Expression because it represents a method of studying administration rather than a topic; and Certified Public Management because it seems to be largely an applied category.

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