

Comparative Public Administration in a Globalizing Society*

David K. Jesuit
Won K. Paik
Department of Political Science
Central Michigan University
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859, U.S.A.

*This paper is prepared for delivery at the conference “Principles and Best Practices of Public Administration in Italy and United States: the State of the Art,” University of Macereta, Italy, May 20-22, 2009.

Does globalization present public administrators in different national bureaucratic systems with a set of common challenges and opportunities? If so, have scholars or practitioners developed best practices to contend with these threats or take advantage of such opportunities? Alternatively, do the preferred actions of public administrators depend upon a national or local economy's location in the global capitalist system? For example, perhaps there are a different set of best practices for public administrators operating in a resource-rich economic system than for those working in an economy producing manufactured goods. Finally, are the values of public administrators converging towards what has been termed a "modern" value system?

In this chapter, we first argue that Keohane and Nye's notion of "complex interdependence" helps us better understand the interaction between national bureaucratic systems and international actors and institutions. In this section we also review the relevant literature that has adopted a similar theoretical perspective. Next, we briefly review the efforts that have been made by the United Nations to promote best practices for public administrators and offer a discussion of value convergence. A brief example of public administration in the globalized world is then offered. We conclude with agenda for future research as well as our own observations.

Public Administration and Globalization

Keohane and Nye (1989) contend that we live in an age of interdependence. Because our era is marked by both continuity and change, Keohane and Nye provide a coherent theoretical framework for the political analysis of interdependence. To understand the role of power in interdependence, they distinguish two dimensions: sensitivity and vulnerability. Sensitivity involves degrees of responsiveness within a

policy framework—how quickly do changes in one country bring changes in another, and how costly are the effects. It is measured not merely by the volume of flows across borders but also by the cost of changes in transactions on societies and governments. Sensitivity means the ability to costly effects imposed from outside before policies are altered to try to change the situation. Vulnerability can be defined as an actor's ability to suffer costs imposed by external events even after policies have been altered. Since it is usually difficult to change policies quickly, immediate effects of external changes generally reflect sensitivity dependence. Vulnerability dependence can be measured only by the costliness of making effective adjustments to a changed environment over a period of time.

According to Keohane and Nye (1989), complex interdependence has three main characteristics. First, multiple channels connect societies, including: informal ties between governmental elites as well as formal foreign office arrangements; informal ties among nongovernmental elites; and transnational organizations (such as multinational banks or corporations). Second, the agenda of interstate relationships consists of multiple issues that are not arranged in a clear or consistent hierarchy. Many issues arise from what used to be considered domestic policy, and the distinction between domestic and foreign issues becomes blurred. Third, military force is not used by governments toward other governments within the region, or on the issues, when complex interdependence prevails. It may, however, be important in these governments' relations with governments outside that region, or on other issues.

The three main characteristics of complex interdependence give rise to a distinct political process, which translates power resources into the ability to control outcomes.

Under this process, one would expect some officials, particularly at lower levels, to emphasize the variety of state goals that must be pursued. Each bureaucracy will pursue its own concerns, although several agencies may reach compromises on issues that affect them all. One of the many features of this political process is linkage strategies in which strong states will dominate a variety of organizational settings and a variety of issues, by linking their own policies on some issues to other states' policies on other issues. And economic linkage by the strong is limited by domestic, transnational, and trans-governmental actors who resist having their interests traded away. In addition, under complex interdependence we expect the agenda to be affected by the international and domestic problems created by economic growth and increasing sensitivity interdependence.

In a similar vein, Cerny (2000) contends that the central problematic of the era of globalization is whether and how complex processes of globalization alter, shape or potentially even undermine the capacity of states to continue to constitute effective areas of collective action and sources of credible commitments. A prospect of significant transformation has become feasible since the second half of the twentieth century by what was once thought to be more internationalization or interdependence among states, but which is now viewed as a more complex and crosscutting process called "globalization." This transformation has three main interlocking dimensions. The first dimension involves a change in the character of the state's domestic task, roles, and activities in which public goods are perceived, pursued and provided. The second dimension involves a fundamental reorientation of how states interact economically as well as politically with each other. Rather than perceiving the international tasks, roles,

and activities of the state as stemming from traditional inside/outside distinction, state actors are increasingly concerned with the promotion of competitive advantages of particular production and service sectors in a more open and integrated world economy. The third dimension deals with the relationship between structure and agency, those individuals and groups who actually bring these changes about, directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally.

In sum, complex globalization undermines, alters, and transforms the state's structural capacity to constitute an effective arena of endogenous collective action and to make credible exogenous commitments. These new sets of opportunities and constraints have their origin in the internationalization and trans-nationalization of key aspects of economic life, aspects which constitute an exogenous independent variable or set of preconditions for political structuration. At the same time, complex state responses, rather than merely filtering or mediating globalization pressure, actually internalize the environment (Cerny, 2000).

Bernstein and Cashore (2000) similarly articulate that governments appear increasingly constrained in their ability to make independent policy choices in an era of global economic finance and communication. They focus on attempts to change domestic policy through transnational actors using what the authors call "the four paths of internationalization," which include (1) Market Dependence, (2) International Rules, (3) International Normative Discourse, and (4) Infiltration on the Domestic Policy-Making Process. The first three paths potentially challenge state autonomy, and possibly even state authority associated with the Westphalian conception of sovereignty, because they bind or push governments to make policy choices in response to direct pressures

from outside the domestic political jurisdiction. The fourth path is distinct, because actors following it do not directly pose an external challenge to state autonomy or authority, nor do they coerce or directly use international mechanisms. Overall, no pathway is mutually exclusive; instead they are very much intertwined and future research might discover alternative pathways. The study analyzes how transnational actors interact with global markets, binding international rules, international normative discourse and domestic policy networks to influence domestic policy outcomes. The authors conclude that internationalism is an important source of domestic policy change.

Feiock, Moon, and Park (2008) examine the debate between two contending views regarding globalization. On the one hand, Friedman (2005) claims the “world is flat” and that globalization in the information age has diminished the importance of location as a competitive edge in fostering economic growth. On the other hand, Florida (2005) argues that the world is spiky and that while globalization has exposed many regions to heightened competition, the world is far from flat. It is still quite mountainous or “spiky,” because it is full of clusters where location matters, most notably in cities. The authors conclude that globalization has produced a world that is neither flat nor spiky. More apt is a metaphor portraying the economic world as, if you will, more clustered and rough (regionally focused) than flat (globally focused) or spiky (locally focused). Put simply, economic development success gravitates toward interconnected regional entities whose competitive advantages lie in collaboration. Thus, regional strategies matter most, can serve as bridges linking flat and spiky world diagnoses and prescriptions, and require proactive and effective governance that overcome collective action disincentives to cooperate. In fact, a recent national survey of local development officials reports that

political institutions and intergovernmental networks among both elected and administrative officials facilitate regional economic development initiatives (Feiock, Moon, and Park, 2008). Relationships with neighboring jurisdictions also produce cooperative action and provide a set of reliable partners from which to develop joint ventures.

Global “Best Practices” in Public Administration

Intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank have played important roles in promoting global best practices. For example, in 1948 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly first tasked the Secretary-General with creating an “International Centre for Training in Public Administration” (<http://www.unpan.org/>).

This effort was designed to promote socioeconomic development and development administration continues to be the main focus of international public administration.

Presently, the UN’s Department of Economic and Social Affairs maintains the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM). In 1999, the UN also created the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN), which is a “global networking tool that connects relevant international, regional, subregional and national institutions worldwide for the promotion of better public administration” (Ibid).

UNPAN provides workshops and training materials in order to further its mission, which is to

promote the sharing of knowledge, experiences and best practices, throughout the world by means of ICTs, sound public policies, effective public administration and efficient civil services, and through capacity-building and cooperation among Member States, with an emphasis on South-South cooperation and UNPAN's commitment to integrity and excellence (Ibid).

More recently, the UN established the Project Office on Governance, which claims to be the “Global Hub on Good Governance” (<http://www.ungc.org/>). This Office was created at the Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government in 2005, which was organized by the government of the Republic of Korea with the support of the United Nations. The Korean government and the United Nations selected "Toward Participatory and Transparent Governance" as the main theme of the Sixth Global Forum. The goals of the Sixth Global Forum were (1) to introduce countries' experiences in government reinvention and to seek a framework and strategy for future innovations in governance; (2) to promote cooperation between governments, the private sector, and civil society organizations to improve the quality of governance at the national and local levels; (3) to discuss key issues regarding participatory and transparent governance that would meet the Millennium Development Goals; (4) to identify potential areas for south-south and north-south cooperation and action at the local, national, and international levels to enhance countries' capacity for participatory and transparent governance and to cope with the challenges of globalization; and (5) to lay the foundation for a global network for reinvention that interconnects the key players in governance-- government, business, and civil society (Kim et al., 2005). One of the main themes of discussions was government reform and innovation. As many participants noted, governments need to continue their reinvention efforts by institutionalizing innovative practices and by working in close cooperation with societal actors to improve state capacity and the scope of public services. More than 5,000 people attended the Sixth Global Forum: representatives of 140 UN member states as well as experts from international organizations, business, academe, and civil society organizations.

Finally, Inglehart and Welzel (2006) provide us with broader perspective on the universality of best practices in public administration. Namely, they argue that socioeconomic development brings major changes in society, culture, and politics by transforming people's basic values and beliefs. Although socioeconomic development tends to bring predictable changes in people's worldviews, cultural traditions—such as whether a society has been historically shaped by Protestantism, Confucianism, or communism—continue to show a lasting imprint on a society's worldview. History matters and a society's prevailing value orientations reflect the influence of tradition. Further, modernization is not linear. It does not move indefinitely in the same direction but reaches inflection points at which the prevailing direction of change, changes. Thus, modernization goes through different phases, each of which brings distinctive changes in people's worldviews. In addition, the inherently emancipative nature of self-expression values makes democracy increasingly likely to emerge. Modernization brings cultural changes that lead to the emergence and flourishing of democratic institutions. The growth of human autonomy is the theme underlying the processes of modernization, rising self-expression values, and democratization. To conclude, socioeconomic development brings increasingly favorable existential conditions and diminishes external constraints on intrinsic human choice. Favorable existential conditions contribute to emerging self-expression values that give individual liberty priority over collective discipline, human diversity over group conformity, and civic autonomy over state authority (Inglehart and Welzel, 2006). In short, the norms of citizen engagement and transparency, among others, are seen as universal values.

A Timely Example of Globalized Public Administration

The recent proposed merger between Chrysler LLC and Fiat SpA offers a good example of interdependence and the internationalization of public administration. The outcome is yet unknown, since Chapter 11 Bankruptcy was just declared in the US by Chrysler on April 30, 2009. Nonetheless, it is already evident that communications via multiple formal and informal channels and the participation of both public and private actors facilitated this agreement. For example, three governments, the US, Canada and the province of Ontario, have played a direct role in the “trans-boundary bail-out” (“The auto bailout,” 2009). In addition, two unions, the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), as well as Fiat and, of course, Chrysler LLC and Chrysler Canada, Inc., have signed-off on the merger.

In a joint Statement from Canada’s Prime Minister Stephen Harper and US President Barack Obama, it was confirmed that the three governments have pledged a total \$10.5 billion (USD) to ease the corporation through bankruptcy, with \$8.08 billion coming from the US and \$2.42 billion from the governments of Canada and Ontario (Joint Statement: President Obama and Prime Minister Harper, 2009). In exchange, the US government will own 8% of Chrysler and the Canadian governments 2%. The US government will also appoint four members to the new Board of Directors; the Canadian central and provincial governments will share one appointment. Three Fiat appointees and one from UAW complete the Board (Benzie and Whittington, 2009). Canadian officials have indicated that the Board Member they appoint would not be civil servant or politician but rather a “business person with relevant experience” (Ibid).

This merger also clearly reflects the fact that the distinction between domestic and foreign policies has become blurred. In fact, the agreement came about due to the results

of US President Obama's "Auto Task Force," which is composed of Cabinet Secretaries and other high-level public officials from relevant departments such as Transportation, Labor and Commerce ("Geithner, Summers Convene," 2009). President Obama has also created another task force entitled "Recovery for Auto Communities and Workers," with Ed Montgomery, the former Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer at the U.S. Department of Labor in the Clinton Administration and chief economist of the U.S. Department of Labor, named as the Director. President Obama outlined the mission of the organization in a statement on April 30, 2009 when he sent Director Montgomery to Michigan to meet "...with representatives from all the key government agencies represented here, reaching out to our hardest-hit areas, cutting through red tape, ensuring that the full resources of the federal government are getting to the workers, the families, and communities that need it the most" (Obama, 2009). Indeed, local media are replete with calls from Governors, such as Michigan's Jennifer Granholm, mayors and other local officials from communities that will be affected by plant closings ("Granholm wants Fiat," 2009; Salter, 2009).

Meanwhile, in Italy the proposed merger has been praised by Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and his government. Recently, Italian Industry Minister Claudio Scajola vowed to help Fiat move forward with agreements between the automobile unions and Fiat ("Italy gov't vows," 2009). To make this relationship even more complicated, Fiat Chief Executive Sergio Marchionne met with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and the German state of Thuringia's Economic Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg on May 4, 2009, to discuss a possible acquisition of GM's European unit Opel ("Fiat CEO," 2009). This meeting was criticized by the

Opel's labor union IG Metall, which said in a statement that there are "significant doubts among staff, if an economics minister should in fact pursue the sale of a company" ("GM Opel Labor," 2009).

In sum, public servants from four central governments, including a President and two Prime Ministers; at least three provincial/state governments; and numerous local elected and non-elected officials from these countries are responsible for promoting this partnership. Private sector partners include leaders from 4 labor unions and at least 4 companies or subsidiaries of companies. Clearly this example reflects the complex interdependence that is emerging from the process of globalization. Significantly, such complex arrangements rely upon civil servants to shape and regulate the financial transactions that govern these global partnerships.

Concluding Remarks

As the study of comparative public administration entered its second quarter century, Heady (1998) proposed that the activities of the American Society for Public Administration's (ASPA) Section on International and Comparative Administration (SICA) be partially redirected. Heady believes SICA has not yet succeeded in its longstanding mission of bringing together comparative and international public administration. The task is a complicated one because the intellectual history of the two subfields has been so different. But there are areas of overlap and problems that would benefit from a more integrated point of view. Additionally, collaboration between professional organizations such as International Studies Association (ISA), the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), the American Political Science Association (APSA), and the International Political Science Association

(IPSA) can facilitate improvements. With a slight reorientation of focus, SICA can facilitate substantive progress in both fields.

Likewise, Jreisat (2005) argues that comparative public administration, in method and in content, has not been successfully integrated with the main field of public administration, to the detriment of both. With globalization and changes in information technology, the current separation impairs public administration education. This assessment is based on a literature review and an appraisal of the contributions of comparative scholarship. Suggestions for future research strategies are to promote viable, integrative, and relevant cross-cultural studies. They emphasize (1) the utilization of cooperative teams of researchers instead of individual efforts; (2) the use of multi-case analysis instead of the traditional single-case approach; (3) improvement of the definition and verification of cultural influences on administration; and (4) expansion of middle-range analysis to examine specific administrative practices across national boundaries as a strategy for enhancing relevance. Jreisat (2005) concludes that comparative public administration opens the door for effective adjustment and transition from traditional, ethnocentric perspectives to a wider scope that integrates knowledge from various places and cultures.

What is the best practice of public administration in a globalizing society? We draw our conclusion from the analytical framework of Keohane and Nye's complex interdependence and Inglehart and Welzel's human development sequence. Interdependence, globalization, and the information revolution are here to stay and they are gaining momentum toward the next phase of a value revolution.

First, we conclude that globalization has both exogenous and endogenous effects on administrative actors. Globalization has created complex interdependence in which multiple channels of interactions among administrative actors at the local, regional, and international level, as noted by Keohane and Nye. For example, local authority has to accommodate Multinational Corporations for foreign direct investments in terms of tax rules, job creation, resource allocations, and general political stability. Another example is a demand for policy change by intergovernmental actors and international treaties such as the European Union and North American Free Trade Agreement. At the same time, different administrative actors have varying levels of vulnerability and sensitivity to changes with regards to scale of economies, and the size and complexity of bureaucracies. Evidence of this administrative complexity can be seen in the example of Fiat and Chrysler's merger.

Second, we conclude (along with Feiock, Moon, and Park) that the world is more clustered and rough (regionally focused), rather than flat (globally focused) or spiky (locally focused). Put simply, economic development success gravitates toward interconnected regional entities whose competitive advantages lies in collaboration. Thus, regional strategies matter most, can serve as bridges linking flat and spiky world diagnoses and prescriptions, and require proactive and effective governance that overcome collective action disincentives to cooperate. Thus, regional collaboration or regional collective action is a primary concern for comparative public administration in the Twenty First century. Once again, our example of collaboration between the public sectors in the US, Canada and the province of Ontario suggest that public officials are attempting to take advantage of the regional cluster focusing on the automotive industry.

Third, we contend that there are at least two primary challenges confronting public administrators as they work to establish global best practices. The first challenge is the importance of transparency and anti-corruption in public sectors in general and public administration in particular. Borrowing from Singaporean example, Jones (1999: 7) states that “Greatly aiding the fight against corruption has been the policy to pay civil servants and employees of statutory agencies adequate salaries and wages, significantly reducing the temptation to take bribes of extortion and embezzle money.” In addition, Jones continues that in order to combat corruption, there has been the strict anti-corruption ethos throughout the public service. The second challenge is the quest for good governance as articulated by Kim et al., which highlights the importance of reinventing government and good governance that are being discussed and taking place around the world.

Finally, we contend that the value revolution in public administration is a long term prospect as argued by Inglehart and Welzel. Socioeconomic development brings increasingly favorable existential conditions and diminishes external constraints on intrinsic human choice. Favorable existential conditions contribute to emerging self-expression values that give individual liberty priority over collective discipline, human diversity over group conformity, and civic autonomy over state authority.

References

Balint, Tim, Michael Bauer, and, Christoph Knill (2008). "Bureaucratic Change in the European Administrative Space: The Case of the European Commission." *Western European Politics*. 31(4), 677-700.

Bernstein, Steven and Benjamin Cashore (2000). "Globalization, Four Paths of Internationalization and Domestic Policy Change: The Case of EcoForestry in British Columbia, Canada." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. 33 (1), 67-99.

Benzie, Robert and Les Whittington (2009, May 1). "All aboard with Chrysler's plan." *The Toronto Star*. Retrieved May 1, 2009 from <http://www.thestar.com/News/Ontario/article/627066>.

Cerny, Philip (2000) "Structuring the Political Arena: Public Goods, States, and Governance in a Globalizing World," In Ronen Palan, ed., *Global Political Economy: Contemporary Theories*, pp. 21-35, New York, N.Y.: Routledge.

Feiock, Richard, M. Jae Moon, and Hyung Jun Park (2008) "Is the World "Flat" or "Spiky"? Rethinking Governance Implications fo Globalization for Economic Development." *Public Administration Review*. 68(1), 1-19.

Fiat CEO to meet German govt on possibly buying Opel (2009, May 2). *Reuters UK*.

Retrieved May 3, 2009

from <http://uk.reuters.com/article/motoringAutoNews/idUKL204431620090502>.

GM Opel Labor Union IG Metall Criticizes German Econ Minister (2009, May 4). *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved May 5, 2009

from <http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20090505-713985.html>

Granholm wants Fiat small cars to be made in Michigan (2009, May 1). *The Lansing State Journal*. Retrieved May 2, 2009

from <http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20090501/NEWS03/90501001/1004/NEWS03>

Heady, Ferrel. (1998). Comparative and international public administration: building intellectual bridges. *Public Administration Review*. 58 (January/February), 32-39.

Heady, Ferrel (1966) *Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel (2006) *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*. New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.

Italy gov't vows to help Fiat-Chrysler tie-up (2009, April 30). *Automotive News Europe*.

Retrieved May 2, 2009

from <http://europe.autonews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090430/ANE02/904309985>

Jones, David (1999) "Public Administration in Singapore: Continuity and Reform." In Hoi-kwok Wong and Hon S. Chan, ed., *Handbook of Comparative Administration in the Asia-Pacific Basin*, pp. 1-22. New York, N.Y.: Marcel Dekker, Inc.

Jeisat, Jamil. E. (2005). "Comparative Public Administration Is Back In, Prudently". *Public Administration Review*. 65(2), 231-242.

Keohane, Robert and Joseph Nye (1989) *Power and Interdependence*. 2nd Ed., Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Kim, Pan Suk, John Halligan, Namshin Cho, Ceol Oh, and Angela Eikenberry (2005). "Toward participatory and transparent governance: Report on the Sixth Global Forum on Reinventing Government". *Public Administration Review*. 65(6), 646-654.

Kim, Pan Suk (1999) "Government Reform in Korea." In Hoi-kwok Wong and Hon S. Chan, ed., *Handbook of Comparative Administration in the Asia-Pacific Basin*, pp. 163-178. New York, N.Y.: Marcel Dekker, Inc.

Rhodes, Martin (2000). "Comparative public policy." *The American Political Science Review*. 94(2), 475-6.

Salter, Jim (2009, May 1). "Fenton mayor, UAW leader not giving up." *Associated Press*. Retrieved May 2, 2009 from http://license.icopyright.net/user/viewContent.act?tag=3.5721%3Ficx_id=D97TLS2G1

Subramaniam, V. (2001). Comparative public administration: the prismatic approach versus the political economy approach. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*. 67(2), 335-342.

The auto bailout had to be done. (2009, May 1). *The Toronto Star*. Editorial. Retrieved May 1, 2009 from <http://www.thestar.com/comment/article/627031>.

Tummala, Krishna (1998). Comparative study and the Section on Comparative and International Administration (SICA). *Public Administration Review*. 58 (January/February), 21.

Whitehouse (2009, February 20). “Geithner, Summers Convene Official Designees to Presidential Task Force on the Auto Industry.” [Press Release] http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Geithner-Summers-Convene-Official-Designees-to-Presidential-Task-Force-on-the-Auto

Whitehouse (2009, April 30). “Joint Statement: President Obama and Prime Minister Harper, United States-Canada Support for Chrysler LLC” [Press Release] http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Joint-Statement-President-Obama-and-Prime-Minister-Harper-on-United-States-Canada-Support-for-Chrysler-LLC/

Whitehouse (2009, April 30). “Remarks by the President on the Auto Industry.” [Speech] http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-the-Auto-Industry/