

PREFACE

“The Selected Readings in Comparative Public Administration” is a teaching guide designed to help and encourage students who study the course “Comparative Public Administration”, included in the Bachelor Degree Program “Administration and Management” taught in English. Its purpose is to provide an introduction to the system of public administration and management in a number of different countries. It is also concerned to demonstrate the importance of the public sector to effective government and management in different systems, and the extent to which these systems may be merging in their structure and processes through the process of globalization.

Politicians in charge of governments may change radically, reflecting shifts in public opinion, but in general they must exert their power through the medium of established central and local bureaucracies whose values, traditions and methods of operation will not be subject to change, despite the vagaries of public opinion. In some regimes, politicians have some capacity to restructure the bureaucracies of their countries but are rarely able to exert complete control, whilst in other countries the established systems for public administration have been relatively impervious to political control. This teaching guide, therefore, aims to provide students with an introduction to systems of public administration and their role within the wider political system and democratic framework within their states.

The methodological format and design of “The Selected Readings in Comparative Public Administration” seek to interrelate many of the authoritative conceptual works in comparative public

administration with the key topics of the course. The text encourages a careful examination of theoretical and practical administrative problems that demonstrate the complexity, the centrality and the challenges of the administrative processes of public organizations. Thus, it also seeks to promote a deeper understanding of the relationship between the theory and practice of comparative public administration by allowing readers to test for themselves the validity of major ideas about public administration in the context of actual situations.

This approach develops a keener appreciation of interdisciplinary dimensions of comparative public administration by presenting conceptual articles and works from a wide variety of sources. The immense quantity of literature in the field has always made selecting the writings a challenge. The arrangement of the selections follows an order of topics used by many instructors in the field, moving from a comparative public administration as a field of study to increasingly important and specific issues such as public governance theories and types of politico-administrative systems. Readings have been carefully selected with an eye to readability and contemporary appeal to ensure that the text stays current and continues to reflect the ideas and events shaping comparative public administration today.

The first chapter emphasizes the comparison in the study of public administration whilst the second chapter presents the theories and analytical frameworks of comparative public administration. The third chapter considers the classical and modern approaches to public administration. The fourth chapter explores the concept of governance and major public governance theories. The fifth chapter outlines the nature and model of public management reform, while the trajectories of modernization and reform are presented and explained in the sixth chapter. The seventh chapter is focused on the different types of politico-administrative systems. The last two

chapters enhance understanding of the administrative systems in liberal democracies and in post-communist countries. The selected countries representing liberal democracies are France, Britain and the United States, while the selected countries representing the post-communist model of administrative development are Russia, Estonia and Romania. It is recognized that systems of public administration are not static phenomena; even when isolated from immediate party political pressure they will evolve to reflect the social and economic pressures placed on a particular nation. In recent decades these have included strong pressures in many regimes that the public sector administrators adopt more competitive business like policies that are said to typify the private sector. Arguably, even more insidious are the pressures created by globalization.

All the authors, whose works are included in this volume, have had an intensive academic engagement with and/or professional experience in public administration. I do hope that the readers, besides students and academicians of public administration, will find “The Selected Readings in Comparative Public Administration” of some interest and of reference value.