

Public Administration in Asia Book Review

Evan M. Berman, ed., *Public Administration in Southeast Asia: Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Macao (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2011)*. 581 pp. \$125.95 (cloth), ISBN: 9781420064766.

Evan M. Berman, M. Jae Moon, and Heungsuk Choi, eds., *Public Administration in East Asia: Mainland China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2010)*. 658 pp. \$159.95 (cloth), ISBN: 9781420051902.

Meghna Sabharwal and Evan M. Berman, eds., *Public Administration in South Asia: India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2013)*. 496 pp. \$129.95 (cloth), ISBN: 9781439869116.

Curiosity about neighboring systems of government and administration probably dates from when one settlement first clashed with another and confronted something that it could not quite fathom. Why are those others so different, and are they better led than us? Could we learn anything from them that would give us superiority, or should we fear their superiority over us? This was no idle speculation of strangers, such as sparked the discoveries of a Marco Polo or a Christopher Columbus. Finding out could be useful knowledge to advantage or a warning of possible danger. In recent centuries, everything was to the advantage of Europeans and their overseas settlers, with the exception of countries that isolated themselves or that the Europeans could not conquer. Europeans could otherwise concentrate on themselves, their colonies, and the colonies that had gained independence or were so far away from the homeland that they were given much independence over local matters.

Globalism shattered all of this parochialism when the Europeans and their associates competed among themselves for overseas possessions, international trade, religious association, allies in wartime, and friendly relations in peacetime. Still, much went the

Europeans' way (and still does) until other regions and countries began to flex their muscles and go their own separate paths. Then it was realized that not all that much was known about how those others really operated, how their governmental and administrative systems worked, how their different cultures and value systems affected their working arrangements, how they might be assisted to mutual advantage, and possibly what could be learned from them. At this point, international and comparative administration came into its own and an essential part of the discipline of public administration for open-minded students who were not just curious but also realized that in order to operate in a global society, they had to know the similarities and differences in their craft around the world and how much should be taken seriously instead of being dismissed as of little concern.

Because of the difficulties of international travel, reliance had to be placed on what information foreign governments were prepared to release about themselves, as well as outside observers stationed overseas and talented, objective insiders whose sources could be trusted. These were scattered and confined to a limited audience. Contemporary information technology has transformed all that. Even so, there has not been a handy one-stop shopping place where much of what one wanted to consult could be found. Moreover, there were sufficient expert native insiders fluent in English and other international languages and recognized as international scholars of renown available at frequent professional gatherings to be able to contribute their expert knowledge. Why could they not be brought together to fill this gap? This simple idea was discussed for several years until it sparked a meeting in 2007 in Seoul that transformed it into a reality, giving birth to these three volumes on public administration in 17 Asian countries altogether, presumably forerunners of similar efforts in other regions around the world outside North America and Western Europe, if carefully planned to avoid the fate of so many other collaborative projects that were never completed or finished below expectations.

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The meeting in Seoul was crucial to prevent such failure. Past attempts had suffered from the bankruptcy of the original publisher or its takeover by another publisher that had insufficient interest in continuing the project; the dropout and turnover of supposedly committed contributors, the distractions of other contributors that prevented their completion, or the submission of hastily assembled, poorly researched, and quite unoriginal work below publishable standards; refusal to rewrite and submit, disputes among editors and contributors about the subject matter, findings, and editorial alterations; and incessant delays caused by the slow coaches. Then again, editors were accused of being too harsh or too soft, too political or not political enough in their choice of contributors and in their editing, not providing sufficient leadership and guidance and too lenient with their interpretation of academic freedom to provide continuity, being too authoritarian in their handling of dissenting contributors, ignoring production requirements, being unmindful of the potential market and audience, and the outdating of the final submitted draft by unexpected events and sheer bad timing. Nobody gets to know how much the editors backstage had to rewrite unseen and unknown to make the final product more presentable, understandable, coherent, and focused.

All editors have their own stories to tell about how reluctant they would be to repeat the experience. There are always exceptions who pride themselves in being resourceful, hardworking, and enterprising, whose hidden hand is greatly appreciated in improving the final submission for publication. These are sought after by publishers and contributors alike because they are worth their salt. The more imaginative, innovative, and bolder their participation and effort in adding to new knowledge and instruction and invoking enthusiasm from readers and an unforeseen audience, the more they are to be praised. Even more is this the case when the content crosses disciplines, languages, cultures, complexities, ideologies, and disparate practices, as in this example of comparative public administration. When parochialism was the rule, enlightened scholars and practitioners in public administration had to battle their way to convince their colleagues about the value of their new discoveries and about the pressing challenges of internationalism and globalism to find solutions and compromises to avoid improvisation and untenable outcomes.

The success of the Seoul meeting and subsequent efforts is testimony that the battle is at last over. This should help overcome the claims of narrow, imperious technocrats that they have all the solutions that can be applied universally. The fact remains that the variety and complexity of reality continues to baffle and confuse. Everywhere is different. Not much socially can be borrowed and copied as is. Everything has to

fit into local circumstances. How to get people to work together harmoniously, let alone more effectively, in common cause is difficult and, to outsiders, may well appear chaotic. Yet things do get done after a style, even in the most unpromising circumstances. Public administration works, sometimes exceedingly well and at other times not at all well, but it still could be the margin between life and death for many who cannot support themselves. It may well fall short of our dreams, ideals, and aspirations, like so much else. Because of our disappointments, we tend to dwell on our failures and our frustration in not doing that much better than our predecessors. Yet we do not give up. Although public administration may not be the leader it once was, it stills play a substantial role in governance and still attracts the cream of society into its service in pursuit of progress and development in all 17 Asian countries. Hence, these three books were able to attract top academic talent to participate as coordinators, advisors, readers, and consultants, enabling the editors to succeed and the publishers to provide a well-sought-after product. This alone is a significant achievement of their collaboration.

So how did they succeed where so many others have failed? The focus was confined solely to the public administration system, not to government or governance. Within that huge arena, some important topics were deliberately omitted as not lending themselves to comparative analysis, although one suspects that access to accurate information was difficult and censorship threatened, as, for instance, in the absence of public finance and budgeting, given that most Asian countries are admittedly systemically corrupt and stealing from the public purse is endemic. Revelation would probably have provoked intervention to prevent publication and perhaps would have jeopardized the careers of the contributors. Another subject that cannot be found is the role of public enterprise, public ownership, and public-private relations, especially lobbying, favoritism, kickbacks, and bribes, although the chapters on public ethics and corruption are quite enlightening. An important third topic in Asia is that of civil-military relations. The absence of such important areas is not just nitpicking and cannot be dismissed as not lending themselves to comparative analysis or international interest. Finance is the lifeblood of the administrative system. Without it, not much can be done. With it, there can be too much waste, diversion, profiteering, and indifference to other people's well-being. The public sector's importance in political, economic, and social development cannot be underestimated whenever a country runs into trouble. The presence of the military and the use of military power in the public mind cannot be overlooked in public attitudes toward public authority. These topics alone determine how the very mission of public administration is perceived both by the practitioners and by their clients.

Each book is based on a detailed understanding of what the chapters should cover, allowing comparison across these books as well. In the book on East Asia, exactly what was expected was spelled out in great detail in the subsections of seven chapters covering, in order of appearance for each country, (1) its administrative history and context, (2) policy processes and citizen participation, (3) intergovernmental relations, (4) public service ethics and corruption, (5) performance management reforms, (6) civil service systems, and (7) e-government. The authors of each chapter were to stick to their turf assignment and not wander off. They were given a list of specific questions to answer. There could be variations as the situation in each country demanded, so that, for instance, Taiwan and Hong Kong could deal with their relations with mainland China and India could cover freedom of information, but these were exceptional.

Besides the subject matter, a list of country experts, each with a guaranteed track record and known reputation, was drawn up. Many already knew of the project and had already been approached. All were to be willing volunteers committed to collaboration, expected to follow the instructions and advice of country coordinators and both international and national consultants and advisors. Those who turned down the invitation to participate would be excused without questions asked; this proved to be a problem in the case of countries for which the number of local experts was small and no ready substitutes were available. This meant leaving those countries out altogether; this is quite noticeable for what used to be called Indochina (Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) and border countries such as Nepal and Bhutan, about which little is known to English-language audiences. Those who did respond favorably showed their enthusiasm and completed their assignments with distinction, although at different speeds that delayed publication. This way, contributors did not work at cross-purposes and did not get in one another's way. Whatever friction did occur is well hidden.

Once the manuscripts came in, they were subject to peer review to see that they came up to standard and that they had complied with expectations as to coverage, accuracy, currency, and objectivity. They were returned for any rewriting suggested by coordinators and international experts. Then, they were gone over again by the editors, who concerned themselves with language, expression, readability, and comparability. Finally, the staff of CRC Press/Taylor & Francis put everything into its publication format. Nothing was put together slap-dash or hurried into print. Congratulations to all the different parties involved are well deserved. These are valuable lessons that can guide further collaborations that can avoid missteps and point to the necessity of a committed loyal publisher of standing, expert and devoted contributors, and top-notch editing.

When it comes to reviewing the contents of each closely printed book, a total of more than 1,700 pages—where does one start? Each country is a law unto itself. The individual contributors have done their job. Open to any page and the reader will be rewarded, stimulated, and engrossed. Each region is different, and every country within a region contrasts with the others. Whatever the reader is looking for can be easily located by headings and the helpful index. The complaints begin not so much with what is there as what is not there. Reference has been made to some important areas of public administration that are missing, and readers will have to go back to whatever can now be found on the Internet, in mass media, and in libraries. Otherwise, most should be satisfied by what is provided. All three books will become standard references that will not be readily outdated.

To answer the question, the recommendation is to begin with the first chapter of each book provided by Evan M. Berman as an introduction to each region and the differences among countries, based on a précis of what the succeeding chapters say. In the first volume on East Asia covering mainland China, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, any improvement in the lives of residents seems to be more of a trickle-down effect of elitism rather than ideologically sought or the result of representative government. All four countries are proud of their distinctive cultures and intent on maintaining their separate and unique nationhood, although they share several common administrative traits. They are strongly centralized unitary states, somewhat autocratic, dirigiste, highly bureaucratic and bureaupathologic, meritocratic, professional, secretive, pragmatic, paternalistic, legalistic, and conformist, blending deeply rooted Confucianism and Buddhism with their values of respect for education, hard work, self-reliance, and familism. This gives rise to several contradictions. The political and the administrative are blended, not separated, so that public officials mix careers and are not expected to be neutral. Instead, they are expected to lead and take the initiative, but the emphasis on harmony slows down decision making to await consensus, so that much of their hard work may achieve little. The mandarins at the apex are drawn from the best and the brightest, and at each level of the bureaucracy, there are entry tests for competence, although actual selection may be determined by cronyism and patronage. Nonetheless, respect for a public calling and for hierarchical status is high, with the supposition that everyone is of good character, virtuous, loyal, honest, polite, respectful, humane, benevolent, and self-reflecting. Yet nonconformists can be treated harshly and inflexibly behind rigidly enforced laws that curb discretion and avoid conflict. Outsiders have much difficulty trying to understand how things work, but clearly they do, judging by what is achieved. Globalism presents many

challenges to tradition and to the status quo from democratization, consumerism and materialism, pressures from unrepresented stakeholders to participate, and decentralization.

What follows are detailed descriptions of the formal appearance that are fairly well known and must be known to be able to understand the different administrative systems. What is new is the extent to which the authors are prepared to go behind the scenes and lift the veil on what really goes on that belies or contradicts the formalities. This is what the authors were given license to do and where their academic freedom was given full rein. Many took advantage of the opportunity to explain how much more complicated and contradictory is the practice of public administration locally. These eye-openers are invaluable. Readers should not expect that much new and revealing from the chapters on history and context, policy process, intergovernmental relations, and civil service reforms. But there is much to be learned from the chapters on public administrative philosophy and values, public service ethics and corruption, managerial reforms and performance, and e-government. The pickings are many and the comparative analysis beneficial. In this first volume, mainland China gets the most space, as it is the largest in area and by far the largest in population and fast challenging the United States for superpower status. As South Korea comes next, one wishes for a comparative study with North Korea. Taiwan is ahead of Japan, which gets the least coverage. Of course, quantity is no guide to quality, but it is probably more indicative of the size of the local academic pool and English fluency and acquaintance with English-speaking scholars.

With regard to the second volume on East Asia covering Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Macao, Berman's introduction and overview repeat much of his coverage in the first volume but this time give more attention to their different colonial legacies and the lasting impacts that this heritage has had. Once again, local cultures are stressed concerning how public administrators see themselves, how they are viewed by political leaders, and how they get on with the public generally and at the street level. Personal ties are strong, especially kinship and close-knit relationships. Kinship takes precedence over professionalism. Aspirants need patrons to advance in the public bureaucracy, and it is advantageous to be part of a well-connected political network, although less so in Hong Kong than in the Philippines. Another contrast is the decentralization of the state, with layers of regional and local governments that involve a certain loss of central control and uniformity in policy and practice. Unfortunately, local levels are less professional, competent, and capable, lacking in sufficient resources to accomplish much, but they do encourage

experimentation and innovation and collaboration with nongovernmental organizations. Again, there are wide variations between, for instance, Hong Kong and Thailand. Chinese culture predominates in Hong Kong and Macao, which are part of mainland China, although they have considerable autonomy in local administration. Both are given 90 pages each, just behind Malaysia, which is far behind the Philippines and Thailand, neither of which outdistances Japan. Another major difference is the extent to which corruption is openly admitted and institutionalized and how ineffective anticorruption measures have been, with the exception of Hong Kong. So far, the New Public Management movement has yet to make a real impact on corruption, which obstructs effective performance and impedes urgent administrative reforms.

In Thailand, the administrative culture has been shaped by five masters in turn, namely, kings, military elites, politicians, big business, and, most recently, citizens. The king still rules and is expected to lead no longer so absolutely, although the tradition of authoritarian rule, centralization, and big government continues regardless. Decentralization has taken its time and cannot match central resources. Corruption at all levels impedes national development, performance, and budgeting reform, which are given special attention alongside civil service reform. Little is said about the ethical, religious, and cultural problems that plague Thailand. They cannot be avoided in Malaysia, where they continue to smolder in disharmony and impede collaboration. Yet the country moves on rapidly through dedicated leadership. So does Hong Kong, with its meritocracy, joined-up governance, and professionalism. The Philippines remains a headache for every government, with its divided autonomous and overlapping jurisdictions, endemic corruption, administrative deficiencies, disappearing public finances, and familism. Macao is the oddball, for it is an experiment in state socialism in progress that required considerable reorganization and reconceptualization in governance to overcome the inertia and inefficiency of a complacent public bureaucracy. Whether its reforms work remains to be seen.

It should not surprise anyone who is conversant with the Indian subcontinent that the third volume, covering India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, should be the last to appear and contain many well-known academics, as English has probably been their first language since they were very young, as it was part of their British colonial legacy. The volume is edited again by Evan Berman (National Chengchi University, Taipei), this time with Meghna Sabharwal (University of Texas at Dallas).

South Asia is a region in agony and turmoil, with wars, civil wars, rebellions, terrorism, devastating floods and droughts, and communal hatreds that

would tax any administrative system, no matter how outstanding. All four countries have the common heritage of a reputedly well-administered colonial system that was split and slowly disintegrated under the burdens of catering to a rapidly expanding population, such that governance could barely cope. Despite many adverse circumstances, it has done so in all four countries and has not gone backward. The promise is that its time will eventually come. Meantime, people should continue to be patient and not expect instant miracles.

This book goes beyond the previous two. It covers more ground, and it is more truly comparative. It includes more about poverty, access to public services and information, governmental openness, accountability, bureaucratization, and national security. Of course, like China, the Indian subcontinent had a long and rich administrative experience before being colonized, and again, its roots have never been forgotten, let alone abandoned. Public bureaucracy has always been powerful, its performance surprisingly good under the circumstances, much decentralized, corrupt, somewhat mediocre at lower levels, defiant against reform, and with an impressive aristocratic dignified bearing. India is a complexity of peoples, religions, races, languages, local cultures, ideologies, passions, rivalries, and divisions par excellence. How anything gets done at all surprises, but it does, and progress is made somehow.

India draws most attention because of its size and increase in population and its presence on the world's stage. The immediate focus is on the all-India services consisting of the Indian Administrative Service, the Indian Forest Service, and the Indian Police Service grounded in the principles of constitutional protection, political neutrality, permanency, anonymity, and merit that opened the gap between public officials and citizens and made it necessary to grease palms to get anything done. This sharp division brought about an unresponsive and apathetic bureaucracy that has become more rigid and indifferent, riddled with casteism, and strictly adherent to the politics (policy) and administration (implementation) divide and between popular mandate and expert professional advice and experience, often leading to friction and bad blood overcome by safe play and pliancy. Actually, civil servants have become more citizen-centric, especially since the 1990s, when the country adopted the process of liberalization, privatization, and globalization in the switch from the state as interventionist, producer, regulator, and seller to facilitator, promoter, and partner, accompanied by a national plan to make the public bureaucracy more accountable, responsive, open, effective, and corruption free. Unfortunately, the plan has not been all that successful in improving the quality of public services, to the mounting displeasure of the populace. Public officials are too

well protected, while their failings are becoming better known, thereby fueling discontent with a bloated bureaucracy that is perceived to be corrupt and inefficient. There are so many ailments that administrative reforms, experiments, and innovations are inevitable. Almost all of the contributors list many such changes in progress and in the works, all of which make for delightful reading.

Democratic India invites public discussion on its administrative system and an openness that is rare in Asia. Comments and charges fly in abundance, such that they probably make the situation worse than it is, not at all helped by exaggeration, generalization, and restrictions on civil servants to respond to unjust criticism. They often find themselves scapegoats for everything that goes wrong, even though they are blameless and accused in situations not of their making over which they have no control. Many such examples are given in which they are helpless and angels would fear to act. Again and again, the point is made that all administration is local, that much depends on the circumstances, and that possible solutions are inevitably unsatisfactory and could make the situation worse, not better. Citizen participation is a mixed blessing, sometimes feared for delaying action and based on ignorance and, at other times, welcome for making for more harmonious collaboration and consensus building. Many contributions are so comprehensive and detailed that sometimes the forest is hidden by the trees given the thoroughness accorded to the assignment and follow-up references. Some overlapping is inevitable but adds reinforcement to the analysis.

Bangladesh was originally part of Pakistan at independence in 1947 until 1971, when, with the help of India, it became a sovereign state. It also has a rich history characterized by collectivism, hierarchy, religious bigotry, and fatalism, and it is dominated by a benevolent elite that is more feared by the populace than revered. Modernization has barely changed the nature of its governance, which is characterized by competition among elites for state power, people always expecting more than they receive, and an administrative system that has to accommodate competing policies while interacting with the populace. The traditional and the modern coexist uneasily. In theory, Bangladeshi bureaucrats advocate democracy, equity, accountability, and responsiveness, but in practice, they have an affinity for power, money, centralized authority, unequivocal loyalty, and submissiveness. The law is applied inconsistently and often is used to extract rents with impunity from service seekers. Democratic administration is still far off. Although most administrative reforms are halfhearted, the initiatives being made by public agencies for social development provide for interesting reading.

Pakistan has yet to succeed in nation building, as there are several different Pakistans. Its eastern half was hived off in 1971 as the new state of Bangladesh, which did not have much in common with its western half other than religious affinity, its British colonial heritage, and the imperative of improvisation. One crucial difference was that Pakistan devolved much government power to regional and local authorities and so became fragmented despite hanging on to centralized governance. To cut through the complexity, case studies are employed to reveal the persistent process of institutional change that confuses all stakeholders and probably academics, too. Things alter overnight and few can keep pace, a situation compounded by jurisdictional disputes, as in other unstable federations. Public service ethics are almost oxymoronic, again illustrated by cases studies of self-enrichment. Corruption is so rampant that, once again, it undermines administrative reforms.

Finally, there is Sri Lanka, which is split among the Sinhalese, Tamils, and Moors, unstable, disrupted by internal crises, and fearful of disintegration. Emergency circumstances enforce authority and a wartime secrecy that permits the release of formalities without revealing much of what transpires in its administrative system. At times, Sri Lanka comes close to a failed state, for many of the same reasons as other countries around the globe. Comparative analysis is valuable, pointing not just to what makes for success but also to what contributes to disaster, a warning to what might be in store that has to be avoided for large states as well as small.

These thumbnail sketches give some of the flavor of these three books. While they are invaluable for anyone who deals with Asia, what appeal do they have for anybody else? The parochialists engrossed with public administration problems in their own countries will claim that they do not have much to learn from outsiders who do not understand their own special local circumstances. But if public administration is universal, as it is, and both international and domestic experts have similar problems, how can they ignore developments elsewhere, and when called upon, as they are these days, to advise and suggest what they might do in the local foreign circumstances, how can professional pride alone cause them to plead ignorance? The experience of looking elsewhere might well be enlightening and profitable, as no one has a monopoly on knowledge and innovation.

For the comparative administration specialists, how can they be so sure that there is little they do not already know? There is always food for thought and something that sparks stimulation, if only to nitpick or take issue. Asia involves intellectual issues of great import. It confronts the issue of whether public administration is purely an instrument that can be

used for good or ill or an institution that is capable of transforming the nature of the global society, the international arena, and how governance operates for the better not for the worst. Can humanity not learn anything from past experience? The whole idea of the United Nations Charter was to prevent a third world war and to provide a universal institutional framework that would bring all peoples together to work for the fulfillment of human dreams and aspirations. Things have not worked out that way at all, although more because of luck than intent. So far, another disastrous war that could wipe out humanity and other living creatures has been avoided. Nothing has stopped other gross crimes against humanity, huge disasters, widespread fear, insecurity, and misery, extremes of wealth between rich and poor, and the violation of individual human rights. Has public administration nothing at all to contribute to the fate of humankind?

Asia confronts the clash between collectivism and individualism. It has striven to find a balance and has not yet succeeded. Nor has anywhere else. The administrative state, that is, public policy and management, came into being to find workable solutions that would satisfy most people, never completely but as a means of a shifting, flexible compromise that would avoid the need for periodic disruptive, chaotic, and destructive revolution. No other social institution undertakes this mission. Like any other social institution that has to administer people on a large scale, it employs bureaucracy, which works better than any other form of organization. Because nothing is perfect, it has its bureaupathologies. With the good comes the bad. The administrative state alone is responsible for the wide variety of public goods and services on which civilization depends. Without them, society would quickly collapse. Even when any one of them falters, all those who rely on them immediately find the quality of their lives in jeopardy. When public administrators do what they have to do, that is, perform public service without regard to self, all stakeholders are appreciative, even though they may not show their gratitude. But then again, true public servants do not expect any reward for getting on with a career to which they are devoted as helping their fellow human beings, other living disappearing creatures, and the threatened global environment.

Asia has to deal with the dysfunctions of corruption, not just as a bureaupathology but as a societal malady, a cultural phenomenon, a prime cause of social injustice, and a universal contributor to victimology. Asian religions have always singled out corruption for special condemnation and have always faulted the cream of society the most for its existence. They have prized individual integrity as the key to preventing its contamination of everything that humans touch. Political ideologies have followed suit. The many victims of so many different forms of corruption, particularly those

of systemic corruption, find it distasteful, unpleasant, and menacing, and yet they find themselves powerless to do much about it. They look to public administration as one institution that might be able to help and use state power to reduce its incidence. In Asia, Singapore and Hong Kong have been relatively successful in demonstrating what can be achieved. If the rot does start at the top, the failing is not solely attributable to public administrators, but the ineffectiveness of anticorruption measures can be blamed largely on it for not standing up to the corrupt, the lawless, and organized crime.

These samples of universals in public administration raise the issue of universal theories and the paucity of grand general theories in public administration and the social sciences, akin to those in the natural sciences. Unlike the latter, nothing is identical, least of all complex administrative systems. Variety, not uniformity, may well be the spice of life. How to get individuals to work together harmoniously, let alone more effectively in common cause, is astonishing when to outsiders all appears to be random and

dumbfounding. Yet things do get done after a style, and most smoothly and competently even in the most unpromising of circumstances. Thanks to governance, government, and public administration, people get fed, clothed, housed, taught, employed, socialized, treated for illness, and entertained, just as they have always been since the dawn of history. Some live exceedingly well, others do not. Too many still survive at the margins. Because of the civilizing mission of public administration, humanity has come a long way but still remains well short of its dreams, ideals, and aspirations. Because of our disappointments, we tend to dwell on our failures and our inability to improve as much as we would like. Nonetheless, we continue to strive to do better, we never lose our devotion to progress, and we refuse to retreat. Although the administrative state is no longer the leader it used to be a few decades ago, it still plays a substantial part in the continuing progress of humanity, not only in the richest countries but also in some of the poorest. To ignore what has been achieved and is being achieved outside one's immediate circle is to keep one's head buried in the sand.