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BOOK REVIEW: COMPARATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS by Armenia ANDRONICEANU

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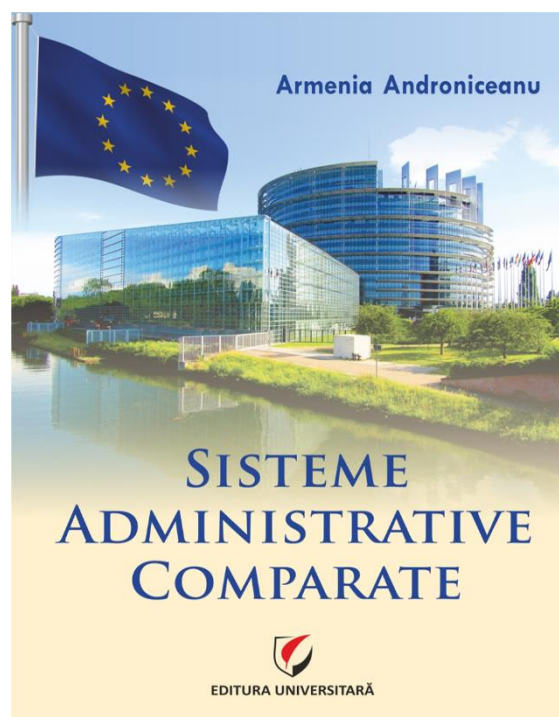
COMPARATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

by Armenia ANDRONICEANU

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The book "Sisteme Administrative Comparate" (Comparative Administrative Systems) written by professor Armenia Androniceanu from Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Faculty of Administration and Public Management, Romania provides readers not only knowledge but also new beliefs, which can contribute to changing perceptions and mindsets. One of these beliefs is that the state authorities and institutions from an administrative system represent the backbone of that system. Thus, the state of health of a society is a clear projection of the state of health of this "living organism". Armenia Androniceanu explains that the efficient organization and functionality of an administrative system directly influence the

level of development of a state and the living standards of its citizens. The author claims that an administrative system can be analyzed based on outputs in all areas of economic and social life. The author reveals that it would be appropriate to know and analyze macroeconomic and social, human development, and standard of living indicators, to establish the effectiveness of a well-managed administrative system. Also, these indicators can show the economic power of a state, the quality of life for citizens in a country, the level of happiness for these citizens, how strong is the national currency, how clean is the air that people are breathing, how healthy these citizens are, etc. The author argues why it is



essential for the administrative apparatus of a state to have a well-organized and efficient institutional structure. In these organizations highly skilled and effective human resources should work, that possess the capabilities required to strengthen the rule of law and the prosperity of citizens.

The design and redesign of administrative systems or their components are extremely complex and expensive processes, but the changes need to be implemented every time if the sectoral analyses prove that the respective modifications are required. According to the author, there are different administrative systems in the world, some of them are well-organized, and others are less well-organized or even poorly organized. Thus, based on the situation, it can be stated that highly developed, middle-developed, and low-developed or underdeveloped states exist. Thereby, it is not the natural resources and/nor the geostrategic position that generate differences between states, but the organization and functioning of the rule of law and the institutions integrated in the administrative systems. In this context, professional human resources and politicians are essential. This method of operation will always be one of the key factors of success, that will make the difference between states.

Countless changes should occur in the administrative systems of different states, the first level where change should take place being the mental one. Representatives of the political class and professional civil servants, as well as citizens of a country, need to be convinced that they are the main "artisans" of the economic and social life in their countries. Those who are part of the system, in positions and political and administrative roles, can adapt the system according to needs expressed in the electoral vote by persons from outside. The relationship is extremely simple and it should be developed with consistency in successive progressive iterations, until the administrative mechanism provides what a country and its citizens demand: a functional rule of law, liberty, and prosperity, essentially.

Armenia Androniceanu proposes a new theory entitled the Administrative Theory based on Objectives and Results, as a simple and clear tool, that can help administrative systems of the states to "reinvent" themselves in such a manner that they would obtain both efficiency and effectiveness constantly.

The book is divided into five chapters, that provide the reader not only data and insights about different administrative systems but also concepts, models, and new and challenging approaches for a modern and efficient administration.

The first chapter brings to the attention of the reader three concepts quite rarely used in administrative systems, respectively: mission, purpose, and objectives of an administrative system. The author states that, after the priority problems/needs that an administrative system needs to solve are known, administrative objectives must be set and distributed. Then, the persons from the involved institutions should be accountable. Further, some fundamental notions are presented and explained, such as administrative-territorial organization; and administrative-institutional organization. These are basic

concepts necessary for the reader to understand the functioning characteristics of European state administrations.

The second chapter is reserved for an extremely complex process that is taking place in the European Union and to which all member states contribute – the europenization. Context and content details are presented, as well as various approaches to the process, the mechanisms and models of europenization, also, its effects.

The third chapter is dedicated to the presentation and explanation of a new administrative theory entitled the Administrative Theory Based on Objectives and Results – Androniceanu (TABOR-A). The theory is a simple and clear tool that assists state administrations to adapt continuously to the needs of the citizens and to be efficient in the complex process of administrative "transformation". This can significantly contribute to "freeing" state administrations from bureaucracy, inefficiency, and incompetence. TABOR-A is based on a new model of thinking and understanding the mission and the role of administrative systems, the content and purpose of administrative processes, the essential contribution of human resources, and the constant need for efficient spending of public funds. All of these are obtained by permanent reference to the priority needs of each state and those of citizens.

The fourth chapter presents a synthetic and systematic review of some of the most important and relevant administrative systems from the European Union. The organization and functioning methods, their comparative advantages, and significant similarities and differences of these administrative systems are detailed. The selected and presented administrative systems belong to the following states: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Sweden.

The fifth chapter contains a new administrative dimension, with an economic basis, that the author considers essential in the new European and international context. Frequently, political representatives of different states claim that the functioning of the administrative systems in their states is costing more and more and these increases in public spending are not equally reflected in the evolution of the main macroeconomic and social indicators. Beginning with the general construct of economic efficiency, this book presents and explains new concepts, such as administrative efficiency and effectiveness. In this complex current context of most countries in the world, the purpose and mission of administrative institutions and authorities are increasing significantly. To support administrations and their representatives, who aim for real and lasting administrative reforms, the new administrative theory and the models of economic and administrative efficiency provide the theoretical and practical coordinates required for modern, functional, and efficient administrative systems in all European states.