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Administrative History as a Core Dimension of Public Administration¹

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“It is through experience that we will not so much aspire to cleverness (for the next time) but to wisdom (for ever).” (Jacob Burckhardt)

Introduction:

What is Administrative History?

Administrative history, that is, the history of government and of its study (public administration), concerns sedentary populations who seek to cope with the challenge of growing population size and density in, increasingly, imagined communities (Anderson, 2006) through some degree of centralized governance. It documents societal efforts to channel aspirations, conflicts, and resources through the more or less formalized means of a government which is established to provide stability and to organize solutions to social problems.

Itinerant, nomadic hunter-gatherer societies with a group size of, say, 150 people have no need for a specialized institutional arrangement such as government (Wade, 2006:72).² They communicate directly and pursue solutions to communal problems on the basis of face-to-face interaction. There is a high context society where everyone knows everybody else and much information is shared, both explicitly and implicitly, throughout the group (Hall, 1983: 56). There is also a society that does not require formalization of

customs and rules in written language. Once, however, people flock to and settle down in, i.e., concentrate, a particular area (whether through migration or through conquest) and become a population of a size where personal acquaintance with every individual is no longer possible, they will establish some rules, procedures, and structures that help them achieve desires and solve problems that cannot be tackled without cooperation. That system for community-wide cooperation is called government and is initially created by fairly small communities that, at some point, may decide to establish inter-organizational networks (e.g., network of city-states). Such networks can, over time, become a larger, unifying jurisdiction (e.g., a province, a small state) or become part of (i.e., are annexed, are amalgamated in) a larger jurisdiction (e.g., provinces, regions into a national state).



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There were and are small specific purpose governments, such as the arrangements for common pool resource management of which Dutch waterboards (going back to the 10th century) are but one example (Ostrom, 1990; Van der Meer, 2005). When covering a substantial area, such as empires in Antiquity and nation-states (emerging since the 12th century), governments are generally organized at local, regional, and 'national' levels through a mixture of specific and general purpose governments.

Once government is considered necessary, people (or their elites) decide upon what governs them and upon how they wish to be governed. That which governs them concerns, as Schein called it (1985), the basic underlying values shared throughout society. This could be called the constitutional level, i.e., that what constitutes society as a whole (Raadschelders, 2003:55). How they wish to be governed concerns the structure and functioning of government itself, i.e., the collective arena of decision making and the operational arena of action.

Implicit in the text above are three elements of a more formal definition of administrative history: the structure and functioning of government itself, the interaction between society and government, and ideas about government-in-society. *Administrative history narrowly conceived* (i.e., proper) is focused on "...the study of structures and processes in and ideas about government as they have existed or have been desired in the past and the actual and ideal place of public

functionaries therein." For instance, this would include attention to human resource management, organizational structure, territorial subdivisions (regions, provinces, local governments), policy areas, civil service, etc. *Administrative history in a broader sense* is concerned with the development of ideas about and actions by government in relation to society. This includes attention to political and administrative theory, political-administrative relations, civic education, citizen participation, and so forth (definitions from: Raadschelders, 1998a:7-8; and Raadschelders 2003:162). In other words, administrative history studies how collectivities – mostly governments – have provided stability and organized solutions to social problems between particular groups of people. The dominant viewpoint in administrative history appears to be that of the administrator (either as top official and/or as civil servant).

In this introductory text various topics are discussed that together provide a foundation upon which a class in administrative history can be taught. This introduction is thus especially useful for the instructor and provides her/him with ideas on the content of the first week of class. For administrative history to move beyond the mere, and boring, chronology of facts, it is necessary to delve into the nature of time (section 1), to discuss the influence of history as tradition upon the practice of government and the study of public administration (section 2), to outline why and where we study administrative history (section 3), to address the central debates in this area of study (sec-

tion 4), and to briefly discuss sources and themes (section 5), and methods (section 6). Sections 4, 5, and 6 are shorter than the first three sections, but that is because information on those topics is easily available in the literature (especially Raadschelders, 1998a, chapters 1-4). There is one exception: in section 5 material is provided that updates earlier data about developments in the attention for administrative history. The issues addressed in sections 1 to 3 are gathered from a wide-ranging literature and is put together here for the first time. This introduction will be concluded with some ideas about teaching administrative history in general and with some more specific comments regarding the syllabus (section 7). The reader will notice that little attention is paid in this introduction to the development of public organizations, public policy, civil service systems, citizenship, etc., in a particular country. Again, this is because that literature is easily accessible through the thematic chapters 5-10 in my 1998 handbook.

1. The Nature of Time, Development, Change, and Progress

History is about development over time and includes attention to *continuity*, *diversity*, and *change* (Tholfsen, 1967). In the study of public administration, it seems, there is much more attention to change. Continuity is perceived more in terms of stagnation or even regression, while diversity is addressed through attention to comparative studies. But change is the big focus of

public administration, which, after all, is a study that seeks to contribute not only to the understanding of government in our time, but also to practical solutions of social problems. Public officials and citizens are almost continuously on the lookout for best practices elsewhere and how these practices can be of use in their own system. Thus a student of administrative history should also look at the degree to which experiences between governments are exchanged (Saunier, 2003; Westney 1987). In this section the nature of time itself and different conceptualizations of change are discussed.

Conceptions of Time and Progress

Two basic perceptions or conceptualizations of time are specifically relevant to administrative history: cyclical and linear time. In the ancient world and the Middle Ages a cyclical perception of time dominated. In the extreme a cyclical perception is timeless, without beginning or end. Time is like the seasons, ever-repeating, predictable. In cultures that accept everything as is, time is generally perceived as cyclical or even a mere illusion. This immortal perception of time changes with the Hebrews sometime during the second millennium BCE. Their God is one who intervenes and who changes the course of history, who influences individuals, and who makes life unpredictable. Their God also entrusted mankind with his creation, and allowed freedom of will. After all, in the Garden of Eden story Adam and Eve were given a choice (to eat or not to eat the fruit from one particu-

lar tree). Once that choice was made, they were to be the stewards of creation. This influenced the sense of time. It was no longer only cyclical but also linear and irreversible. Individual choice was recognized and the idea that the future was predetermined, discarded. It also provided a sense that creation should not only be looked after but could be actively improved. Indeed, in ancient Canaan a sense of individualism was born (Gardet et al., 1975:149, 156). This was exceptional in the ancient world. Equally unusual was the Hebrews' secular emphasis. One could improve upon life for life itself.

The notion of linear time and the matching idea of the possibility of improvement or progress were quickly adopted in Christianity. St. Augustine advocated that life on earth had to be worthwhile in view of the afterlife. Earthly life was thus a time for spiritual growth. To him history is one big cycle from the big bang to the apocalypse. The promise of the Messiah betrays a linear vision, since time unfolds toward an end.

The Greeks too had a consciousness of a long past and generally viewed time as a phenomenon of birth, growth, maturity, and decay. They believed that the Cosmos could be subjected to rational conceptualization, that the Cosmos was governed by laws of reason that were legal and formal in nature. They contrasted this divine order to the sense/sensory order of human beings. While the divine order could not be altered, the sense order was subject to intervention. Their

most famous lawgivers, Solon and Cleisthenes, were among the first to develop the idea of a created, planned society (i.e., social engineering), thus, like the Hebrews before them, breaking through the predetermined nature of time. After them, Aristotle developed the idea that history was a narrative of unique and accidental events. The Hebrew notion of divine direction combined with the Greek notion of a planned society would dominate well into 16th century. After that, a linear sense of time came to the forefront in the Western world that emphasized material progress. Indeed, in any culture that pushes for progress and change, time will quickly be perceived as linear. This does not mean that cyclical perceptions disappeared. Indeed, one can find this in the writings of Herder, Duganne, and Woodrow Wilson (see on the last two, section 5 below).

The linear developmental perspective we are most familiar with is that of Charles Darwin (Nisbet, 1986:44) (more about Darwin in the section 1.b). In the course of the 17th and 18th centuries the idea of spiritual growth was slowly superseded by the notion that development could include material progress in terms of improving the circumstances of life on earth. Why wait for a better life until the afterlife? (Nisbet, 1969:104) Government today is mainly concerned about the improvement of material life conditions.

This linear conception of time is basically vertical, that is, development over time or history is generally reconstructed as a sequence of stages or phases (e.g.,

Antiquity, Middle Ages, Early Modern period, Modern period). Sometimes this reconstruction of the past is conducted in terms of contemporary models, theories, and frames of reference. This is known as *anachronism* and does not necessarily do justice to the past. It is as if we look at the past through an inappropriate lens. For instance, we can only apply our contemporary notion of political-administrative relations (i.e., elected officeholders v. civil servants) to the time since the late 18th century. Before that time, such a distinction had not been made. But then, is it really possible to judge and interpret the past in terms of ideas, perceptions, and so forth, of people at that, their own, time? The past can also be reconstructed with an eye on contemporary outcomes and this is known as *present-mindedness*. This is especially detrimental to administrative history since present-mindedness only makes us look at developments (or paths) that continued up to the present and blinds us to developments and paths that came to an end before the present. Anthony Giddens was sensitive to this point when he argued that too often evolutionary approaches to history assume an inevitable direction and outcome that suggests that individual behavior is predetermined (See on this Seidman, 2008:138).

Administrative history, that is the historical approach within the study of public administration, generally focuses on the degree to which the past continues into the present (Fesler 1982). But, and in line with ancient Hebrew conceptions, while recognizing that the past is embedded in the present, administrative history can also operate upon the notion that the

present is not predetermined by the past (Raadschelders 1998b; Bevir, 1999:200-201; Bevir et al. 2003:7).

There are also horizontal conceptions of time as ever-widening circles or as a layered phenomenon. An example of time perceived as ever-widening circle is provided by E.O. Wilson who distinguishes between four types of time: biochemical time (the level of molecules, atoms), organismic time (the level of humans), ecological time (the level of nature), and evolutionary time (the level of cosmos) (1998:82-83). Another example is from the sociologist Pitirim Sorokin who distinguished metaphysical time, physicomathematical time, biological time, and psychological time (1962a:675). The best example of time as a layered, embedded phenomenon is that by Fernand Braudel who distinguishes a *longue durée*, a *conjoncture*, and a *histoire événementiel* (1958). The latter is the time of the daily events such political or military actions that span a few weeks up to a few years. These daily events are framed by a *conjoncture*, which concerns the middle-range development and spans from a few years to several decades. The most well known of these are economic cycles, such as the Kondratieff cycle of major technological innovations (40-60 year cycles), the Kuznets building cycles (15-25 years), the Juglar investment cycles (7-11 years), Hansen's business cycles (8.35 years), and Kitchen's inventory cycles (40-50 months). Some of these cycles are long-term rhythms, some are shorter term (a distinction also made by Sorokin; 1962b:395). Finally, the *longue durée* represents long-term developments that can arch one century up

to several centuries or even millennia. One can think of climate change, of rationalization, and of bureaucratization as examples. Administrative history generally focuses on short-term (past 50-100 years) and middle-range developments (past 100-200 years). Some scholars, though, tackle the long term, and Max Weber is an excellent example.

One final aspect to conceptions of time is how people and their cultures perceive it. Edward Hall (1983) and Hofstede & Hofstede (2004) distinguished short from long-term orientations of people in different cultures. Americans are said to have a rather short-term orientation, whereas people from South-East Asia have a much longer-term orientation. Smith (1988:97) distinguished between the waiting time of Economic Man (long run perspective, deferring immediate gratification for future profit) and the waiting time of Political Man (short run perspective seeking immediate gratification). Hall also distinguished cultures in terms of monochronic and polychronic time. In monochronic time societies the use of time is determined by the clock, the schedule, and the agenda. The willingness to wait is limited because time is money. The United States and several northwestern European countries (e.g., Germany, the Netherlands) are excellent examples of M-Time societies. These are also low context societies that operate on the bases of elaborate formal rules. In polychronic time societies, on the other hand, people may do several things at same time. They also may wait doing something if they find other things more important. They are high context socie-

ties that operate much more on the basis of informal rules and long, established trust relations (Hall, 1983:43).

Time as Development and Change

In public administration literature analyses of organizational structure and functioning are frequently cast in language borrowed from biology (e.g., population-ecology model; adaptation, selection; punctuated equilibrium). There is, however, one fundamental reason why analogous reasoning does not quite capture social reality. In the natural world external stimuli will generally lead to instinctive responses. In the artificial human societies responses to external stimuli are a consequence of both instinctive responses as well as of conscious actions. This is one reason why one can never say that the present is predetermined by the past.³ Sometimes the present appears more as a continuation of the past, because little change is perceived. But, at other times, the present baffles contemporaries because of rapid new developments of which the consequences cannot yet be adequately assessed. Examples are revolutionary periods with lasting effects in politics (e.g., the Atlantic Revolutions of the 1780-1790s), and/or in economy and technology (e.g., Industrial and Technological Revolutions). Hence, time is sometimes experienced as development and sometimes as change

This distinction is also implicit in much of the public administration literature. Thus, analyzing the intensity

of organization change, Warner Burke distinguished *transactional* or *evolutionary change* from *transformational* or *revolutionary change*. Only 5% of organizational change can be labeled as transformational (2002: 12 and 67). Dimaggio and Powell, as referenced by Reid, distinguished between *isomorphic* and *metamorphic change*, i.e. gradual and incremental change v. fundamental re-orientation (Reid, 1999:157-161; 2004:177-178). Transactional or isomorphic change is comparable to what Eisenstadt calls *marginal change* and *accommodable change*, the former referring to a situation that requires little to no adaptation. The latter signifies some degree of change, but is clearly different from what he calls *total change* (1963:313).

Braudel's three levels concern the scope of time under consideration. Pierson refines that perspective by considering short- and long-term time horizons of both causes and of outcomes (see table 1).

Short-term outcomes can have short- and long-term causes. An example of a short-term cause and a short-term outcome is elections. An example of a short-term outcome with a long-term cause is the regime change during a revolution which had been long in the making (e.g., growing anger with absolutist government leading up to the French Revolution). In turn, long-term outcomes can have short- and long-term causes. For instance, a meteorite impact is a short-term cause but with long-term cumulative effects such as changes in the diversity of flora and fauna. The decision to develop a particular polity is a short-term cause but with long-term outcomes. An example is the construction of the interstate highway system in the United States in the 1950-60s. Finally, state-making and nation-building are long-term cumulative causes with long-term effects.

Table 1 *Time Horizons of Causes and of Outcomes* (after Pierson, 2003:179).

		Time Horizon of Outcome	
		Short	Long
Time Horizon of Cause	Short	Changing incumbents of political appointee positions	Civil service reform; civil service acts
	Long	Notion of threshold, e.g., separation of politics and administration at end of 18 th century	State-making and nation-building; party or partisan re-alignment; elite change as part of demographic change

Further refinement of how change can be conceptualized has been offered by Hernes. He distinguished between *simple reproduction*, *extended reproduction*, *transition*, and *transformation* and linked these with three basic aspects of organizational structure. The *output structure* represents the distribution of results; the *process structure* specifies the logical form of the process that generated these results; and the *parameter structure* constitutes the configuration within which these processes and outputs occur. (1976/77:523-532). How type of change and aspect of structure are linked in terms of the assumed impact of change in society is depicted in the table 2 below.

Simple reproduction represents a static situation (cf. marginal change) where the system at large functions

to satisfaction and there is no perceived need for change. An example is the structure and functioning of politics in the Western world. That is, parliaments and cabinets still function very much the same as twenty years ago (Bourgault and Savoie, 1988:16, as quoted in Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000:148)

Extended reproduction represents a change in terms of growing and expanding existing activities. An example would be the expansion of welfare services *after* the establishment of the welfare state. The output structure changes (new welfare provisions, new organizations), but neither the process that generates that output (for instance increased demands from citizens) nor the parameter values change (for instance what is held important in society at large).

Table 2 *Institutional Change and Stability at Three Levels: The Intensity of Reform*

(adapted from Hernes, 1976-77:524)

Change in	Type of Change			
	Simple	Extended	Transition	Transformation
Output structure	no	yes	yes	yes
Parameter values	no	no	yes	yes
Process structure	no	no	no	yes

Transitional change is more involved because it affects parameter values as well, especially the boundaries within which politics and government are shaped (i.e., the decision-making arena). In general the expansion of the franchise since the mid-19th century is an excellent example requiring redefinition of electoral districts (in the U.S.A.) and new mechanisms to ensure population-wide participation (i.a., through emergence of political parties). More specific to the 20th century is the incorporation of territorial units into a larger whole (i.e., amalgamations of local governments; annexation) requiring changes in both output structure (new tasks, new territorial jurisdictions) and parameter values (to reflect the increased complexity of values) are altered.

The final type, transformation, is the most invasive. An excellent example are the Napoleonic reforms in government structure and processes since output structure (new tasks for government, changes in organizational structure), parameter structure (new values: separation of church and state, non-ownership of public office, separation of political and bureaucratic officeholders) and process structure (formal hierarchy, pension system, use of statistics, codification, introduction balanced budget, expanded use of statistics as main source of information for public policy) changed.

With Hernes we arrive at a continuum ranging from minor to major change. Following Heraclitus (Panta Rhei, i.e. everything is in flux) and Xenophanus

(change occurs within an enclosed, unchanging system), Leibniz, in reference to the natural world, argued that 'nature never makes leaps' (*natura non facit saltum*) (Nisbet, 1986:44). Translated to social developments, this emphasizes the continuity visible around us. As far as public administration is concerned, one can think of Charles Lindblom's incrementalism as an example of this type of thinking. However, there are times that we experience change more intensely. It is suggested that periods of relatively long steady states (equilibrium) are disrupted (punctuated) by brief periods of high change. This is referred to in the literature as *punctuated equilibrium* a concept derived from Gould's distinction between equilibrium and change (Burke, 2002:64). This contrast actually goes back to a debate between Charles Darwin and his cousin the statistician Francis Galton. Darwin argued that the nature of change that drives evolution consists of continuous, small, and individual differences. Galton, on the other hand, believed that changes were much more discontinuous and large (Gregory, 2008:474). In all likelihood, both are probably correct. That is, in some cases there has been development, in other cases clear change. Obviously, in administrative history attention has to be given to the various different types of development and change at the various societal, organizational, and individual levels.

One final observation is in order. In the study of public administration, and especially in studies of organizational and managerial change, many authors suggest

that the rate of change has accelerated in recent decades. The decades unto the 1970s are alleged to show mainly incremental change, while change since then has become much more transformational (e.g., Burke, 2002:4-5; for a brief discussion of various authors on this issue, see Raadschelders and Bemelmans-Videc 2007:279-280). However, is this really the case?

First, time perspective needs to be taken into account. If limited to a few decades, one cannot really say anything about the intensity of change since comparison to earlier decades is left out. If the time perspective is about five to six decades, one can perhaps contrast between intensities of change, but then it is important to specifically discuss the indicators and measures upon which that conclusion is drawn. And, if the time perspective is several centuries, it will be very difficult to argue that present changes are more intense than ever before. By virtue of presence, each generation has a much better appreciation of developments in its own time and much less understanding of the impact and perceived intensity of developments in decades and centuries before they were born. We may very well overrate impact and intensity of change in our time. Consider, for instance, the upheavals in France of 1792-93, in Germany of 1933-1945, or in Russia in the 1930s? In all three cases, these were times of extreme uncertainty and change.

Second, when increased intensity of change is perceived for the last three decades or so it concerns technological change, economic change (in terms of

globalization) and perhaps political change (from dictatorship to democracy). Can we really say that social and cultural changes in the past 30 years have been as intense as technological, economic, and political changes without proper contrast with, for instance, the change brought about by the industrial revolution, or the change brought about by the introduction of the printing press and increased literacy?

Time as Tradition and/or as Progress:

The Rationalist Heritage

Government action in Western countries is heavily motivated by the wish to progress from an undesirable present to a better situation. Consequentially, public policy making in the twentieth century has been dominated by a rational and linear conceptualization where the process starts with acknowledging a problem, then identifying alternative solutions, selecting the best possible solutions, to planning and implementation, and (if there is time and money) evaluation and recasting. This image of the policy process has only been challenged since the 1990s when various authors suggested that change processes are not linear, i.e., involve cycles of change (Buchanan & Badham, 1999:160; Bryson, 1995; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993:3) and are much less tidy and predictable than the initial linear model suggests (Buchanan & Badham, 1999:185-186; Van Wart, 1998:206). But, the long-time notion that the policy process is not as rational as we assumed does not challenge the idea of progress. Indeed, not only progress, but also reason is

influenced by what was and is, i.e. by tradition. After all, the past is often perceived as a tradition that limits present actions and leaves legacies to be confronted.

Any appreciation of administrative history must include an effort to understand the force(s) of tradition in relation to reason and progress. That requires a brief excursion into the influence of rationalism.

In the 20th century rationalism comes, as far as scientific study is concerned, mainly in the guise of the positivist assumption that we can learn about social reality through the observation of objective facts. The interpretation of their meaning and value does not belong to science (cf. Simon). This view originated in the late 17th century and further developed in the course of the 18th century. Philosophers such as Bacon, Locke, and Hume argued that reason and social life are the product of cooperation between free individuals. Knowledge of the world could only be acquired through sensory experience on the basis of induction (Locke) and resulting in probabilities rather than certainties (Hume). They also held to the idea that as there were laws of mathematics and physics there probably were self-evident and universal laws of social life to be discovered through empirical research.

Rationalist philosophers believed in universality, objectivity, rationality, and in the capacity to provide permanent solutions to social problems. Anyone with powers of observation and logical thinking had access

to rational methods (Berlin, 2000:243, 263).

Several authors of note objected to these Enlightenment ideas, including Vico, Hamann, Herder, Burke, and Fichte. Vico challenged the notion of universal culture. Hamann regarded rationalization as a distortion of reality. Herder advocated *Einfühlung* (i.e., empathetic understanding) as counterforce to rationalism (Berlin, 2000: 248, 251, 253). Burke argued that the Enlightenment's idea of reason was free-floating, disembodied, smacked of irresponsible speculation, and was indifferent to the consequences of action (Lasch, 1991:130). Fichte suggested that we are moral agents rather than vessels of experience. His was a more idealist perception of the empirical world and, in the course of the 19th century, this idealism was contrasted to positivism in the social sciences. Implicit in the critiques of rationalist beliefs was the notion that reason held history to be efficient, and that rationalists had little need to consider the past when responding to challenges in the present and when charting a course for the future.

The 18th century empiricism became the 19th century positivism and this contrasted starkly with the 17th century understanding of rationalism as it departed from the idea that knowledge could only be acquired by deduction and on the basis of reason alone (cf. Descartes, Leibniz). 17th Century rationalists separated reason from the sense or sensory order, not unlike the Greeks before them. In their view reason could be imposed from above. Rational order would

be achieved through the state and not through the irrationality and arbitrariness of individual instinct (cf. Hobbes). Hence, the concept of *raison d'état*: a government based on reason.

The divide between rationalists (17th c.) on the one hand and empiricists (18th c.) on the other was bridged by Kant who argued that neither exclusively conceptual (i.e., 17th century rationalists) nor purely sensory (i.e. empiricists/positivists) knowledge are possible, paving the way for a positivism (19th c.) emphasizing both the rational and empirical – nothing would count as scientifically legitimate unless verified rationally (mathematics) and empirically (data).

Is all this relevant to administrative history? Public administration scholarship in general has for much of the 19th and 20th century been enamored with a positivist approach to knowledge and focusing on the present and the future rather than on the past. In a positivist public administration and in a progress-oriented government there is little room for administrative history. This reflects perhaps the most important and enduring legacy of the Enlightenment: i.e., a material sense of progress, the desire that civilization is ever moving forward and upward, never regressing. Any sign of stagnation or decline should be considered a violation of the sacrosanct principles of improvement, reform, and change, so characteristic for much of the public administration literature and for policy making desires in the public sector. This strong belief in progress makes scholarship conceptualize the

past as change. Consequentially, there was much less attention for, as Nisbet wrote (1986:64), the fixity, persistence, and inertia that are inevitably part of any developmental process. It appears that in the study of public administration there is much more attention to diversity (e.g., various patterns of state making etc.), change (e.g., the neo-institutional literature), and the need for change (e.g. New Public Management literature) than for continuity and, thus, tradition. Social evolution in the study of public administration is still conceptualized in terms of paths and/or stages. The concept of progress, increasingly understood in materialist terms only, has been complemented by the concept of path-dependency in academic research (Raadschelders, 1998b).

2. Tradition in Government and the Study of Public Administration

To what extent does the past and its traditions play a role in day-to-day government and in the study of public administration? Traditions do play a significant role both in the practice of government as in the study of public administration. Yet, administrative history is not a systematic part of any curriculum.

How Tradition is Perceived and Used in the Practice of Government

There is one feature that conceptual maps, as used in public administration and as used in government, have in common and that is that tradition is approached as inheritance, handed down as belief or practice, such as, e.g., the established practices of scientific research (Polanyi, 1951:26 and 1964:52). Tradition is thus fashioned down time and "...simply denotes a process by which some feature of the social order is transmitted from one generation to the next and leaves unexplained the source or origin of that feature." (Lindblom, 1988a:12). But, tradition not only concerns that which is handed down, but, upon shared background, also enables people to reach agreement. The question is how and why? Assuming that tradition itself does not form (i.e. makes) but only communicates agreement, it is insufficient to explain why people agree (Lindblom, 1988b:131). Thus far, public administration literature has focused mainly, if

not exclusively, on tradition as inheritance.

It is surprising that much less attention is given to the influence of tradition as creation or invention even though it is a common 'strategy' of modern governments. Hobsbawm spoke of Invented Tradition (IT) and defines it as "...a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historical past." (1983:1). While IT is of all times, he argues that it occurs more frequently when rapid transformation in society weakens or even destroys 'traditional' social patterns. This is as true of the emerging chiefdoms (i.e., regional polities) in prehistory (Johnson & Earle, 2000:259) as it is in the past 200+ years. IT has been especially used to buttress feelings of social cohesion and national togetherness in an increasingly imagined community. The concept of imagined community defines a society where people live together, share a common past (language, history, culture), yet do not know everyone personally (cf. Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft* turning to *Gesellschaft*). In tribes and in the local settlements of colonial New England and Australia people knew and relied upon each other. In modern society the only role that people really share is that of citizens living in the same territory. A nation today is an imagined community that needs symbols to identify them as one. People are aware that their nation has

roots in the past, without exactly knowing when it was born. Was America as a nation born when the term 'Americans' was first used in the mid-18th century? Or was it born in 1776, 1787, or after the conclusion of the Civil War? Settling such a question requires retrospective manipulation by government creating a narrative of identity. In the words of Anderson: "Because there is no Originator, the nation's biography can not be written evangelically, 'down time', through a long procreative chain of begettings. The only alternative is to fashion it 'up time' - toward Peking Man, Java Man, King Arthur, wherever the lamp of archaeology casts its fitful gleam." (Anderson, 1995:205).

Special celebrations such as the bicentennials in 1987 in the U.S. or in France in 1989 mainly serve to fix collective identity in the present (Wolin, 1989:3). A sense of historical belonging may be fed by reference to a mythic past where a certain people are presented as ancestors. Thus, the Dutch rebellion against Spain in the late 16th and early 17th centuries was legitimized at the time by reference to the Batavian people in revolt against Roman occupation (Van der Meer & Raadschelders, forthcoming). In that case a (mythic) past was used to legitimate particular events in the present. Feelings of national belonging have also been served through the creation of a 'Golden Age', usually an age of prosperity, tradition and community (Nisbet, 1975:118). A Golden Age often characterizes a period with presumed low levels of uncertainty about behavior and morals. This IT is based in a nostalgia

that idealizes and undermines intelligent use of the past (Lasch, 1991:80-83, 118).

In terms of the study of public administration the function of tradition ought to deserve much more attention than it has attracted so far for the simple reason that political-administrative traditions to smaller or larger extent shape national culture and traditions. Especially in the past 200 years or so states have increasingly regarded themselves as custodians of national heritage (Raz, 2001:31-32; Scheffler, 2007). Governmental use of tradition, i.e., fashioning identity 'up time', is an example of what Dahl & Lindblom called 'manipulated field control' where symbols of reality are fashioned to influence an individual's understanding of reality (1953:119). One of its functions, if not the main one, is that it operates as an instrument of social control. Since it feeds upon (sometimes raw) emotions, it is a far better form of social control than direct command (ibid, 121). Other examples of manipulated field control include using the past as a function for the advancement of social cohesion, and creating 'traditions' to establish a national identity through flag and anthem, both widely adopted in the 19th century (the British national anthem is the first dating back to around 1740; the French flag is the first national flag dating back to around 1790) (Hobsbawm, 1983:7), legislative directives defining national languages, and the oath of allegiance in the U.S. and Canada (which, as far as I know, are the only examples of such an oath for a citizenry at large).

How is Tradition Conceptualized in the Study of Public Administration?

In the study of public administration most empirical research departs from or confirms the existing conceptions of governing traditions. Original research that results in meaningful types of governing (i.e., traditions other than the traditional English/American-French-German triad or quartet) and that probes the role and meaning of invented tradition is limited. There is some research into the influence of the past upon policy and decision making (Neustadt & May, 1986, a case study approach). Brändström et al. made an intriguing and convincing distinction between *past*, (individual and organizational) *memory*, and *history* (2004:193), each representing a stage in the process of reducing and interpreting the past, where history constitutes the sections of the remembered (memory) past which we desire to record. They argue that the use of past, memory, and history by policy and decision makers can be analyzed through three mechanisms: intentional or spontaneous remembrance of the past, cognitive or political (manipulative) use of the past, and constraining or enabling effects on policy making (ibid., 195). Manipulative use is evident with invented traditions. Constraining and enabling effects are generally referred to as path-dependency. How these three mechanisms operate is nicely illustrated in two case studies. When studying tradition the researcher must be aware that it is possible to conceptualize tradition either as a force of conservation or as a source of innovation.

The notion that tradition prohibits change, i.e., that it merely serves to defend the status quo, dates back to the Enlightenment (see section 1.c) and is quite prominent in public administration. For instance, the authority that individuals hold as incumbents of high office or as public leaders of some sort has often been legitimized in terms of tradition, that is, the tradition of passing on authority to an heir (traditional authority), or the tradition of accepting authority from charismatic people (charismatic authority), or the tradition of accepting authority when its exercise is rooted in law (legal authority) (Raadschelders & Stillman, 2007). Another example of the presumed influence of tradition is the assumption that states belonging to the *Rechtsstaat* tradition are slower to respond to social, economic, and political change than, e.g., Anglo-American states, because the former require actual reforms to be prepared in law and because legally trained civil servants may have difficulty adapting to a more managerial and performance-oriented perspective (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000:53-54). Yet another example of tradition perceived as conservative force is found in critiques of Lindblom's incrementalism. Thus, Dror argued that incrementalism reinforces the "...pro-inertia and anti-innovation forces prevalent in all human organizations." (1964:155) and Etzioni observed that "...incrementalism would tend to neglect *basic* social innovations as it focused on the short run and sought no more than limited variations from past policies." (1967:387).

Actually, the notion that tradition was a conservative force standing in the way of reason and innovation was challenged even before the Enlightenment. Polanyi noted that the authority of science is essentially traditional in that its positivist tradition of inquiry since the 16th century upholds an authority that cultivates originality (2003:13-14). Some Enlightenment's philosophers equated tradition with social inertia but were quickly challenged in the 18th century (see section 1.c) and by the Romanticists in the early 19th century. In our time this critique is prominently highlighted by Gadamer who observes that:

There is no such unconditional antithesis between tradition and reason. [...] the fact is that tradition is constantly an element of freedom and of history itself. Even the most genuine and solid tradition does not persist by nature because of the inertia of what once existed. It needs to be affirmed, embraced, cultivated. (1975:250).

In other words, whatever is passed to us 'down time' must be acknowledged, reinforced, and confirmed in the present. It appears that Gadamer's point of view is gaining some ground. For instance, Bevir suggests that tradition provides the authoritative context within which reason manifests itself (1999:223). Tradition, defined as an initial set of understandings acquired through socialization (whether inherited or invented), operates as a first influence upon people and as a starting point for action (Bevir, 1999:200-201; see also Bevir et al., 2003:7). People can be influenced as much by tradition as they are by the particular social

context in which they operate. They may well find that existing beliefs and/or practices require change. Thus reason and agency are not necessarily and automatically constrained by tradition. Instead, reason and agency on the one hand and tradition on the other stand in creative tension to each other. How the chips may fall in each particular situation (i.e., toward conservation or innovation) is anyone's guess, but tradition serves as one source of inspiration and information in any complex decision situation.

Scholars of public administration would do well to empirically investigate and map the extent to which tradition is a conservative force or a starting point for change. It might very well be that tradition stifles change in one case, while, at the same time, it leads to change in another.

3. Why Administrative History and Where?

Following Gadamer's point that tradition and reason are not antithetical there is every reason to incorporate administrative history more systematically in the study of public administration. In table 1 below various arguments pro and contra the use of administrative history can be found, drawing from a variety of sources (scholars, novelists, poets, politicians, journalists), and organized according to their relevance for the individual, the academic, and the practitioner.

This will not be discussed in detail, because most of the arguments speak for themselves.

perspective.

It seems that there are more arguments in support of studying administrative history than against. This could be a reflection of the bias of this author. Where, at first glance, my interests are eclectic and catholic, my publications (e.g., books on water management, political-administrative relations, church-state relations, local government, and articles/chapters on organizational structure, corruption, representative-ness, wartime administration, etc., etc.) almost always are cross-time comparisons spanning usually two centuries and in several cases going back much further. But, arguments in favor and against ought not to be regarded as a choice. Instead, studying administrative history requires sensitivity to the use of the past, when to use the past and when not. In other words, we should study administrative history for all the reasons listed in table 3 on the following page.

One reason, though, is fundamental and that is that government is a product of human action not of forces of nature. Understanding in the natural sciences does not require historical analysis since it is concerned with universal laws. In the social sciences, and by implication in public administration, however, knowledge of administrative history is indispensable. One could even say that all human endeavors are purposive and so inquiry into the development of this/these endeavors inherently involves a historical

Table 3 Table 1 Arguments Pro and Contra Attention to Administrative Traditions

ArgumentsFor....and Against
<i>for the Individual</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sensitiveness to social change (Albrow, 1996), help to deal with today's challenges (Luton, 1999:217) - creation of identity (De Beauvoir, 1969:51; Lippmann, 1955:137) - to emotionally involve those of us who were not there, and to make us understand (Goldman, 1976:51-52) - strengthens bond between citizens and government through understanding why government is what it is now (Jeserich, 1978:363; Marini, 1994:6; Hofstadter, 1968:194) - appreciation of heritage as a civilizing and liberating influence to improve understanding of society, human nature and civilization, and creates wisdom (Fesler, 1982:2; Karl, 1976; Kammen, 1987:68; Waldo, 1984) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - '...the centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul...' (Emerson, 1972:176) - the tyranny of the past over the present (Kammen, 1987:53) - past has been more used as source of revenge than as source of experience (Raadschelders, 1998a:270) - that wisdom emerges from studying the past is only an assumption
<i>for the Academic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - l'art pour l'art (Schlesinger, 1992:136-137) - generalization (Caldwell, 1955:454), grand theory (Nash, 1969:63), macro-causal analysis (Skocpol & Somers, 1980:175-180), path-dependency (Thelen & Steinmo, 1992) - uncovering facts instead of perpetuating fiction (Skocpol, 1992; Stivers, 1995, 2000) - cross-time comparison to test theory (Meyer et al., 1985) - solution to identity crisis (Ostrom, 1974) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - causality and path-dependence can only be determined in retrospect (Raadschelders, 1998b) - current knowledge has advanced beyond the knowledge of the past (Howe, 1998:46-47)
<i>for the Practitioner</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do not re-invent the wheel (Caldwell, 1955:454; Miewald, 1994:325) - organizational memory (Rohr, 1980) - problem-solving potential, the usable past (Caldwell, 1955:458; Hume, 1980:436; Meyer, 1985; Stivers, 1995:522 and 2000:2) - understanding for decision makers (Adams, 1992; Neustadt & May, 1986; Waldo, 1984; W. Wilson, 1892; Brändström et al., 2004) - recognizing when history is interpreted for partisan and political reasons (Kammen, 1987:68) - to move beyond enthrallment with science and rationalism (Adams, 1992:370; Schachter, 1998:16; Wamsley & Wolf, 1996:16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - history is efficient (Crozier & Friedberg, 1980:264, 268, 317 note 21; March & Olsen, 1984:737) - focus on past promotes conservatism and caution - history cannot offer lessons, for it is too much dependent upon <i>judgment</i> (Raadschelders et al., 2000:778) - the past is dead and gone (Caiden et al., 1987:7)
<i>for All</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> political-administrative traditions partly fashion national culture (Raz, 2001:31; Scheffler, 2007) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tradition inhibits innovation and focuses on the short term (Dror, 1964; Etzioni, 1967).

The extent to which administrative history is an object of scholarly study varies with political-administrative culture. As indicated above, various European countries have extensive traditions in studying the administrative past. France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom stand out particularly. But, the bibliographic articles annually published in the *European Yearbook of Administrative History* have shown that most European countries have a fairly rich tradition in this research area. Perhaps this is in part because most European countries had bureaucracies since, at least, the 12th century, and once they started to grow (in terms of personnel, organizational size, etc.), as a foundation to the newly forming states, it became necessary to study it as well. The first handbook of public administration was published in one of the German principalities in 1656. Those who have visited Europe have seen it is steeped in history. Simply looking at old bridges, medieval cathedrals and castles, cobblestone streets, etc., provides that sense of history. But there is more. Until recently (say the 1960s) most European countries had fairly homogenous populations, who shared a past, a language, particular customs, and so forth. In countries with a strong sense of the past, one can expect administrative history to be an object of research. Oddly enough, it is seldom also part of the curriculum. I know of one chair⁴ in administrative history in Europe, and that is at the University of Pavia, Italy.

Unlike in many European countries American unity is

not based in shared history or ethnicity but in common politically defined rights and obligations (Mead, 1986:256). Lippmann noted that the American immigrants at large left behind the old landmarks of class, culture and history and that thus the continuity of life was broken (1929:57-58). Bellah, et al. argued that a 'community of memory' is a real community, one that does not forget its past (1996:153). Obviously, the Founding Fathers had an eye on the past and were, indeed, students of history (Nisbet, 1975:77). True, Americans are taught about the colonial days of the 17th and 18th, the Wild West and Civil War in the 19th, and the *Pax Americana* of the 20th century. But, that kind of memory appears to serve nostalgia for the good old days of real community in the colonies, or for the heroism and sacrifice involved in advancing the frontier, or for the epic battle to protect the union, or for America's accepted global leadership during the 1940s-1970s.

Since the early 20th century Americans gradually lost a sense of history. The verdict delivered upon America's appreciation of the past is relentlessly consistent. In the late 1940s, Hofstadter wrote that underlying the "...overpowering nostalgia of the past fifteen years is a keen feeling of insecurity." and that this was testimony of a sentimental appreciation rather than a critical analysis of the past (1975 [1948]:xxxiii). Lasch was equally relentless when he wrote that "Our culture's indifference to the past [...] furnishes the most telling proof of that culture's bankruptcy." (1978:xviii). Nostalgia idealizes the past, he continued,

and inhibits understanding of how the past influences the present and the future (Lasch, 1991:118). In his 1991-study he called nostalgia, which undermines an intelligent use of the past, the ideological twin of (material) progress, which curiously weakens the inclination to provide for the future (1991:80-83). To date, many Americans, including many incumbents of political and administrative office, are still 'aggressively ahistorical', to use Sykes's characterization (1992:29), and are said to harbor a knowledge about the past that is orchestrated by Hollywood (Wills, 1999:247-249).

It is in the context of this a-historical society that an argument for more administrative history, both in academic curricula and in policy and decision making arenas of the real world, is quickly discarded as irrelevant. Can citizens and public servants make intelligent use of the past? And, more importantly, why would they venture to move beyond nostalgia or beyond, as Schlesinger called it, the exculpatory history that vindicates the status quo and the compensatory history that demonstrates the superior virtue of the oppressed (1992:48-49)?

Most of the Founding Fathers believed that an education in history helped young people to judge the actions and designs of human beings, yet they were also wary of the tyranny of the past (Kammen, 1987:53, 68, 116). The educators in and designers of the Johns Hopkins curriculum in the 1880s were equally convinced that the study of history had a place in a public

administration curriculum next to, but not limited to, for instance, economics, law, ethics, politics, statistics, engineering and technological science, and sanitary science, just to name a few (Hoffmann, 2002:16, 21). One of its faculty members wrote an extensive comparative and historical study of government, although he is mostly and incorrectly remembered as the founding father of the study of public administration in America (Wilson, 1892; Van Riper, 1983:479; Raadschelders 2002). However, following the calls for a(n) (usable) administrative science in the first part of the twentieth century, the curricula turned distinctly a-historical, with research and teaching increasingly focused on present challenges and desired futures. In spite of this, the initial interest in administrative history did not go underground entirely, for a steady stream of articles and books was published throughout the 20th century (for overview see Raadschelders, 1998a; for USA see Raadschelders, 2000). It was, however, considered outside the mainstream of the study.

The 'Usable Past': For Success and/or for Insight?

The concept of a 'usable past' was perhaps first used by Van Wyck Brooks in a 1918 article entitled 'On Creating a Usable Past' (Lasch, 1991:353). It was again used by John Gaus in a 1930 book entitled *A Study of Research in Public Administration*. For Gaus, a usable past for public administration involved the recovery of the historical, intellectual and, as Stivers stressed, gender dynamics that shaped the study (Stiv-

ers, 1995:522, 2000:2). After the Second World War, however, it came to be understood in a more utilitarian sense. Given that the most important source of government legitimacy is the adequate solution of social problems, administrative history was considered as instrumental to that objective (Caldwell, 1955:458; Hume, 1980:436). There was some debate as to whether the study of the past can and should be expected to provide such usable knowledge or lessons. It might just be that the current notion of 'usable past' is once again understood in its potential for identity creation and regarded as a civilizing and liberating influence not only by historians but also by administrative scientists. History may not provide theory in a positivist, natural-science sense, but it is most certainly part of each individual's world view. What is regarded as scientific theory is a-contextual and a-historical, expressed in statistical models since only that is believed to hold the promise of becoming universal laws across time and place. However, they may not be so useful when attempting to assess the nature and direction of social change and the challenges it brings (Nisbet, 1975:67). In a provocative analysis, Albrow advanced the thesis that we are in the midst of an epochal change, comparable to the transitions from Antiquity to Middle Ages and from the Middle Ages to Renaissance and (Early) Modern times. If so, he argues, we need to develop new frameworks:

...a different kind of theory is relevant to practice. It is historically grounded. It clarifies concepts in the light of

the contingencies in which they were conceived and to which they relate. [...] much of what purports to be theory today ignores the past to invent new technical concepts out of thin air. They have no real purchase on the present because they ignore the way the past lives on in the prevalent concepts and practices of our times. (Albrow, 1996:116-117).

He believes that administrative history must be part of such a framework. For this to happen, it must be taught, and the question then becomes how (section 7).

4. Central Debates:

History versus Social Science and l'Art pour l'Art versus Utility

Is there any debate in the study of public administration about administrative history? Should we have/do it or not? How should we do it? What purpose does it serve? These are questions that do not generate strong passions. Administrative history is a hobby usually 'discovered' toward the end of a career. The late work of the American public administration scholar Leonard White is an example (White, 1948, 1951, 1954, 1958). If there is debate it is of two different kinds. First, it is discussion between the 'traditional' historian, who favors descriptive studies that stick to the facts, and the social scientist who works with explicit theories and models in order to develop new insights into past realities. Second, it is between those who study the past for its civilizing influence versus

those who search for lessons for the present. Each of these will be briefly addressed.

The 'traditional' historian searches in primary sources (for instance: archives) in the hope of establishing undisputed facts (and thus separating fact from fiction or idealized past) through document research, meticulous archival research, and interpretation (using critical philology) (the following based on a debate between Thuillier and myself, 1995). This results in a history that presents the past as a continuous series of chronological events. Any application of theories, concepts, and models, such as they are used in the social sciences, will inexorably lead to a distortion of the past, forcing the past in a contemporaneous framework (cf. anachronism). It is fundamentally descriptive and seeks objectivity through 'sticking to the facts'.

Enter public administration that, as a social science, works with theories and models for several reasons. First, models help in the interpretation of facts. One cannot expect that chronology itself is sufficient to provide understanding of events. Second, models simplify and focus the search for facts. In fact, they may actually help raise questions otherwise overlooked. Third, and perhaps most important, the use of theories and models in administrative history is necessary when we wish to identify similarities and differences in the administrative history of different countries. Systematic comparisons are impossible without an explicit theoretical framework.

In the past 40-50 years or so the gap between historians and social scientists interested in studying the past has been bridged. That is, historians have come to work with models, and social scientists have rolled up their sleeves to gather original data in archives rather than only relying on datasets created by others (Kammen, 1987: 3-63).

Is there debate between those who study administrative history for its own sake (*l'art pour l'art*) and those who study it to derive lessons for the present? Well, not really. As a study that is predominantly focused on solving today's problems for tomorrow's society, the large majority of scholars do not dabble in administrative history beyond the obligatory introductory comments. Also there are simply not many administrative historians and however often and eloquent they advocate research and teaching in administrative history, it does not really bear much fruit beyond their own publications. This is understandable. So, there really is not much debate. But, who would really argue that the past is dead and gone and serves no purpose today? Even Gerald Caiden et al. (1987:7, see table 1) was facetious rather than serious.

5. Sources and Themes of and Attention for Administrative History⁵

Sources and Themes of Administrative History

The most important distinction that can be made in this regard is between primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are documents (letters, newspapers, menus, inventories, etc. etc.) that are stored in archives for safekeeping. The climate-controlled archives in Europe contain miles and miles of primary sources going back to, at least the 13th century, and in some cases much further. Documents relevant to administrative history include minutes of meetings (e.g., city council), ledgers reporting annual revenues (e.g., taxes), correspondence between public officeholders, formal charters and treaties, letters from citizens, and so forth. In fact, European archives are repositories to an astonishingly wide range of documents that allow the scholar to collect new data from existing materials. The administrative historian in the United States finds himself in a different situation as already observed by Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1830s:

...the acts of society in America often leave less trace than the actions of a simple family... The only historical monument of the United States are newspapers ... in fifty years it will be more difficult to gather authentic documents on the details of social existence of Americans of our day than on the administration of the French in the Middle Ages. (De Tocqueville, 2000:198).

And this is still true. While in Europe any document or set of documents that express government action in writing will have to be kept for several years in the organization that generated it. After a specified number of years it must, by law, be deposited in an archive that meets certain conditions. Not so in the U.S. One city manager told me that at the end of the year 95% of all correspondence is shredded. The only documents kept are the city council minutes, the budgets, and official charters. While I cannot be certain to what extent this anecdote is representative of the U.S. in general, it does illustrate the point made by De Tocqueville.

Secondary sources are publications in the form of books and articles in journals. With regard to books a distinction can be made between handbooks and specialized studies. The two oldest handbooks on administrative history of the world that I know of were written by Americans (Duganne, 1860; W. Wilson, 1889)! There are three contemporary handbooks: Gladden, 1972; Finer, 1997; Raadschelders, 1998a. The first four handbooks are all chronological treatments of administrative history of the world 'down time'. My handbook is the only study that organizes administrative history thematically, but it only concerns Western countries from the 12th century up to the present. Then there are numerous specialized studies on particular countries and on particular organizations. White's monumental administrative history of the United States (1789-1901) is a generic study but focuses on organizational structure, managerial customs,

and personnel. Specialized studies can focus on an individual organization, on the growth of government, a particular policy area, origins and development of the welfare state, careers of public officials, development of intergovernmental relations, civil service systems, political-administrative relations, etc., etc. Three themes have particularly attracted continued attention as far as administrative history proper is concerned: bureaucratization of personnel (emergence and size of civil service; standardization of selection, recruitment, promotion), bureaucratization of organization (emergence of government departments, formalization of hierarchy, territorial administration), and careers of important administrators. The predominant topic of administrative history in the broader sense is the emergence and development of the welfare state. There has been also increasing attention for the development of citizenship.

As far as articles are concerned, they can be found in many journals, especially so in public administration (e.g., *Administration & Society*, *Public Administration (UK)*), in history, and in sociology (for the latter two: *Comparative Studies in Society and History*). There are also at least three journals that focus on topics relevant to

administrative history: the *Journal of Policy History* (since 1989), the *Journal of Management History* (since 1999), and *Management and Organizational History* (since 2006). The *European Yearbook of Administrative History* (since 1989) has been mentioned earlier.

Attention to Administrative History in Some Journals⁶

Perhaps the title of this introductory text in the foundation series should really be concluded with a question mark. Based on analyses of major articles in six public administration journals, two political science journals and one historical journal, I observed that administrative history is of limited interest to scholars in the study of public administration (Raadschelders 1998:28-30). The data collected for the period 1973-1992 was, though, reason for some optimism, since they indicated a slowly increasing interest for the topic. Has this trend continued?

Based on analyses of seven major journals⁷ it appears that the attention to administrative history has been declining since 1992. The question is why? In general and tentatively three main reasons can be suggested.

Table 4: Percentage of Articles on Administrative History: 1973-2007

	73-76	77-80	81-84	85-89	89-92	93-96	97-00	01-04	05-07
1	3.5	5.0	10.0	6.9	6.9	6.0	13.8	11.0	4.4
2	10.8	18.2	15.4	18.2	33.0	10.4	3.7	3.7	4.3
3	4.1	10.2	7.4	10.2	6.9	2.3	0	0.8	2.5*
4	5.0	2.9	5.1	5.5	6.3	2.3	3.0	0	0
5	11.6	7.4	21.1	3.7	10.4	9.1	5.0	10.2	2.2
6	2.8	2.3	3.6	10.4	6.8	6.7	1.1	1.6	4.7
7	**	**	24.2	10.6	18.6	17.8	10.0	11.5	4.9

Legend: 1: Administration & Society; 2: Comparative Studies in Society and History; 3: International Review of Administrative Sciences; 4: Political Studies; 5: Public Administration (UK); 6: Public Administration Review; 7: Revue Française de Science Politique.

* The last issue of 2007 is not included. ** Information not available.

First, attention has always been scattered but seems since 1992 more concentrated on special issues celebrating some historical event. Second, the intellectual attention moved in the course of the 1980s strongly towards public management (e.g., performance man-

agement and measurement, New Public Management, reinventing government). The domination of these topics continues to date. Added to this, from the late 1990s on, articles on governance emerged. Hence, the study of public administration has embraced an even

Table 5: Number of Articles on Administrative History Proper and Broader in Comparison to the Total Number of Articles

	1973-1992			1993-2007		
	Total	Proper	Broader	Total	Proper	Broader
1	367	4	23	409	17	21
2	491	15	75	414	4	19
3	546	5	38	465	5	1
4	514	24	5	630	8	1
5	434	39	7	584	25	14
6	974	28	25	878	21	11
7	382	47	19	396	6	17
Total	3708	162	192	3776	86	84

Table 6: Number of Articles on Administrative History from a National and a Comparative Perspective

	1973-1992		1993-2007	
	National	Comparative	National	Comparative
1	24	3	30	8
2	53	37	15	8
3	36	7	4	2
4	19	10	8	1
5	40	6	35	4
6	38	15	28	4
7	58	8	14	9
Total	268	86	134	36

more contemporary focus than before. Third, and related to the second point, among scholars of public administration, those trained from the early 1980s on may have had less exposure to administrative history than those who completed their studies before that decade. Fourth, there are not many scholars in public administration who would call themselves administrative historians. Hence, training in teaching and research in administrative history is very limited if not absent.

Is the study becoming more ahistorical? Perhaps the enthrallment to assessing government's productivity, efficiency, and effectiveness by means of quantitative data, leads scholars away from considering the extent to which past actions contributed to current successes (nota bene: that would make for an interesting article). If this is the case, than this may only be a phase, and administrative history will gain renewed interest. In light of developments in the past 15 years, though, it seems not likely to happen soon.

6. Methods of Administrative History

There are no methods specific to administrative history. Administrative historians collect primary data and thus create new datasets in the manner of the traditional historian. They also work with datasets collected by others. How these datasets are used depends upon richness and completeness. Allow me to provide an example.

In the mid-1980s I spend 4,5 years in several local archives in order to collect data on the development of local government between 1600-1980 in The Netherlands (see for English article on this: Raadschelders, 1994). This resulted in a descriptive dataset of personnel size and composition at 10-year intervals for 39 points in time that could be used not only to show fluctuations in the growth of local government and in the changing composition of the workforce over time, but, more indirectly, also to reconstruct developments in organizational structure and in local government tasks and services. This material was

published as a book in 1990. I used these data as an historian, but reporting and interpreting them in the context of a social science framework of theories. The study was predominantly qualitative in nature. The main reason was that the data for the dependent variables (personnel size and composition) were as complete as anyone could wish, but comparable datasets for the independent variables were not available. Just imagine the amount of work involved if one wishes to explain the development of local government for a period of 380 years in terms of environmental developments (in economy, politics, culture, population size, etc.). Satisfactory independent variables should be compound variables each consisting of several indicators. For instance, the development of GDP is not the only indicator representative for economic development at large.

One can guess that the use of quantitative-statistical methods in administrative history is limited by the availability and completeness of archival sources. When possible, quantitative-statistical data is generally limited to a few decades at best and provides a series of snapshots of particular moments in time. It does not necessarily reveal the dynamic of change over time. Quantitative-statistical researchers will generally work with datasets that have been collected by others, but that is because they have been trained as social scientists rather than as historians.

Whether qualitative or quantitative research is conducted, little attention is paid to the fact that adminis-

trative history is a cross-temporal comparison that requires attention to the specific methodological challenges of this type of comparative research. Such, however, is seldom done (Bartolini, 1993:131).

Administrative history can be approached in a variety of ways. Some of these will be discussed by way of illustration without pretending to be complete. Most commonly known in the social sciences is the use of an ideal-type, first developed by Max Weber. An ideal-type is a heuristic instrument designed to compare reality to a mental construct, i.e., a pure or theoretical type (Fry & Raadschelders, 2008:25). His most famous ideal-type is that of bureaucracy and it has been frequently used to capture the process of bureaucratization over time. A second approach is to confront different theories about the same event and see how this enriches understanding of that event. One example is Graham Allison's study of the Cuban Missile Crisis. A third approach is to contrast contexts (Skocpol & Somers, 1980: 178-181, 192-193). For instance, bureaucratization is a global phenomenon, but there are differences between countries. Why? Is it a consequence of differences in culture? If not, why not? More challenging, a fourth approach, is macro-causal analysis which focuses on the development and analysis of causal hypotheses about macro phenomena (Skocpol & Somers, 1980). Macro-causal analysis is often comparative by nature and is then referred to as comparative historical analysis (Thelen, 2003). These four approaches can be used to analyze continuity, diversity and change. A fifth approach, path-

dependency, is useful for studying continuity and, perhaps, diversity. Two examples will illustrate this. One could say that the current degree of politicization of the American top civil service is in line with an historical path where top career civil servants are kept at arms-length from the political executive/appointee (Lee & Raadschelders, 2005). But consider then the French case with a civil service that historically enjoyed high social status and was close to the political top. The politicization at the top of the career civil service system cannot be explained by the historical path and much more by environmental circumstances (such as, e.g., European integration, and growing distrust of government) (as reported in Suleiman, 2003:229-240). The five approaches discussed so far are mainly concerned with administrative history for its own sake. The sixth approach, studying by analogy, uses case-studies to develop lessons for present-day policy makers (e.g., Neustadt & May, 1986).

7. Teaching Administrative History

Dwight Waldo firmly believed that, as an educator, he was charged with teaching his students how to think, not what to think (Waldo, 1996). With this in mind, most would agree with the observation that administrative history for (aspiring) public servants is valuable as a civilizing influence. In the course of the 20th century a variety of academics have pointed to the need of balancing specialized knowledge with general, broad based education. Commenting upon a reading

list for a particular program, retired US Air Force colonel Dale Condit observed that it

...appears to be quite narrow in its focus and lacking the balance of readings one might expect for airpower professionals. Concentration on these books, while worthwhile, risks producing only a technical specialist. What of the generalist – the leader? (1999:3)

Public administrators should receive wide-ranging education and administrative history provides one avenue towards understanding the challenges of government in various settings (i.e., in time and space). This is important because they are engaged in the 'authoritative allocation of values'. Sound public policy suffers from the short time frame citizens and politicians have and that civil servants, given the electoral cycle, are forced to work with. Instead, citizens, politicians and civil servants should adopt a long-term perspective and consider inter-generational responsibility (Bok, 1996:364; Frederickson, 1994, 1997). Also, administrative history is useful in placing certain convictions into the proper perspective. Waldo's observation with regard to the origins of the politics-administration dichotomy, Van Riper's corrections of important mistakes in our reconstruction of the content and motive for civil service reform a century ago (1997), and Stivers' efforts to uncover the role women that played in the creation of the administrative state (1995, 2000) are each dismantling long-held conceptions and replacing these with less (culturally and gender) biased knowledge.

General Observations

There are four ways in which administrative history can be used in the classroom (see table 7).

The first and second advance the history of government as a study for its own sake relevant to all (as *administrative history proper* and *administrative history expanded*). Administrative history can be taught as a full-fledged class during a semester, which is obviously

public budgeting and finance, policy analysis and evaluation, public management, federalism and inter-governmental relations, and so forth, will have some historical introduction to their subject area and relate this to the development of theories about it. But in many cases, that is where it ends for these are often obligatory introductions that are followed by "...a jump into the present time with no historical analysis at all." (Adams, 1992:365).

The third and fourth way focus on the history of the

Table 7 *Administrative History in the Curriculum*

	<i>Focus on Development of Government</i>	<i>Focus on Development of the Study of Public Administration</i>
<i>Separate Course</i>	History of government	Field seminar for Ph.D. Students
<i>Part of any Course</i>	Historical introduction to HRM, budgeting and finance, organization theory, policy making, etc.	Development of theory in a specialization

attractive. Usually, however, it is taught as an introduction to the development in a particular area of teaching and research (for instance, the history of the civil service in a class on human resource management). Thus many classes of and handbooks about organizational theory, human resource management,

study of public administration, that is, with attention for the development of the study as a whole (over time, its theories, etc.) and attention for the development of theories in each of the specializations.

I suggest that a combination of both a course in administrative history and attention to the historical components to specific subject areas is desirable, because the structure and functioning of government and its relations with society are inherently historical (Raadschelders et al., 2000).

This does not mean that the study of public administration should become a study of administrative history. Far from it. History is one among many bodies of knowledge that are relevant for understanding the development of government's role and position. The expectations must be modest, though:

It may not lead to usable knowledge but will make us aware of the portée, to use Montaigne's concept, or reach of our knowledge at present and over time, and - better still - it may make us to '... be lowly wise ...', which Milton claimed in Paradise Lost to be the highest form of knowledge (Shattuck, 1996:29, 72-73). In the same spirit Jacob Burckhardt wrote almost 150 years ago: "Wir wollen durch Erfahrung nicht sowohl klug (für ein andermal) als weise (für immer) werden." (in translation: It is through experience that we will not so much aspire to cleverness for the next time, but to wisdom for ever). (Raadschelders, 2003:167).

Suggestions Concerning the Syllabus

The course description provides the basic framework of a class in administrative history. The content is structured in units or modules. Some units are indispensable in any class. Thus Unit I week 1, provides a general conceptual foundation that has been detailed

in this introduction. Unit II (weeks 2 – 4) focuses on three universal features in the development of government throughout history:

1. The idea that government is a function of population size and density that calls for political and administrative centralization. The degree to which that happens varies. (briefly addressed in beginning of this introduction; for centralization see Silberman, 1993)
2. Specialization of government in terms of territorial (sub) division, expertise requirement for public office, and organizational differentiation (this is not addressed in detail in this introduction since available in Raadschelders, 1997, 1998a).
3. Governments copy practices from one another, either through colonization (which is really imposing practices) or through exchange.

Unit III (weeks 5-8) concerns a chronological overview of American administrative history since the early 17th century and is organized in periods that are relevant to the USA. This unit can easily be one on the administrative history of Argentina, of France, of Japan, of New Zealand, of Nigeria, of Saudi Arabia, and so forth, but will then most likely organize available literature in a different periodization. The literature for this unit is exclusively American but can easily be replaced by literature about another country. Hence, PAR articles on or relevant to administrative history, have more usefulness in the U.S.A. than elsewhere. Fortunately, this is not a big problem since ample literature is available on many countries (for overview,

Raadschelders 1998a: 279-363).

Unit IV (weeks 9-10) concerns the development of public administration as a study. Again, the literature is American based, but most public administration programs in other countries do have some literature on the development of the study in their country. Unit V (weeks 11-13) gives the instructor the opportunity to familiarize students with the administrative history of some of public administration's specializations and/or areas of interest. In the syllabus the instructor will find topics relevant to administrative history in the broader sense and several topics concerning administrative history proper. Finally, unit VI (weeks 14-15) is used for student presentations and discussions.

NOTES

¹ Parts of sections 3 and 6 have been drawn from my inaugural lecture as Henry Bellmon Chair of Public Service at the University of Oklahoma, April 8, 2002; sections 1.c and 2 were in slightly different form part of a paper presented at a conference at Australia National University, Canberra, 12-14 December 2008.

² Government emerges especially when group size reaches a threshold where interpersonal conflict can no longer be resolved through personal persuasion. Also, disputes become more frequent once a tribe becomes too large. The number 150 has been suggested as that threshold by Wade.

³ It does seem that this also holds in biological life, but then only at the DNA (possibly RNA) level where mutations can occur randomly that result in a change at the species level. In artificial human societies changes can actually be pursued at the social system level.

⁴ 'Chair' in European academe does not refer to an individual who heads a department. Instead it refers to a full professor who, by virtue of appointment, is invested with the authority to advance a defined body of knowledge. That is, s/he serves as the trustee or guardian of that defined body of knowledge: the chair in administrative history, the chair in ancient Greek, the chair in comparative government, the chair in Renaissance Art, the chair in Russian literature, the chair in theoretical physics, etc.

⁵ For more detail on sources of administrative history see Raadschelders, 1998: 24-29.

⁶ This section was written with Kwang-Hoon Lee, ABD, Department of Political Science, University of Oklahoma.

⁷ These are the same seven as reported on in 1998. We have relied for the French political science journal on the table of contents and the abstracts. The German and the Dutch public administration journals could not be accessed on line. We have only counted full text articles, not brief research notes, reports, and book reviews.