Is American Public Administration Detached from Historical Context?

On the Nature of Time and the Need to Understand it in Government and its Study

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Abstract

The study of public administration pays little attention to history. Most publications are focused on current problems (the present) and desired solutions (the future) and are concerned mainly with organizational structure (a substantive issue) and output targets (an aggregative issue that involves measures of both individual performance and organizational productivity/services). There is much less consideration of how public administration (i.e., organization, policy, the study, etc.) unfolds <u>over time</u>. History, and so administrative history, is regarded as a 'past' that can be recorded for its own sake but has little relevance to contemporary challenges. This view of history is the product of a diminished and anemic sense of time, resulting from organizing the past as a series of events that inexorably lead up to the present in a linear fashion. In order to improve the understanding of government's role and position in society, public administration scholarship needs to reacquaint itself with the nature of time.

> "Wir wollen durch Erfahrung nicht sowohl klug (für ein andermal) als weise (für immer) werden." (Jacob Burckhardt)[1]

> "…excluding useful [memories and histories] because they carry an undesirable residue from the past renders public administration dialogue weaker and less effective in dealing with current problems for the future." (paraphrased after Box, 2008, p.104)

1. *Introduction: One More Irony in American Public Administration*[2]

It is ironic that contemporary American public administration scholarship has limited sensitivity to and interest in the past since the founders of this country and – later - the founders of the study of public administration in the U.S. were keenly aware of the importance of understanding the past. The Founding Fathers drew upon their broad educational background in classics, history,

political theory and the sciences as much as they did upon their experiences in and knowledge of the structure and functioning of European governments and histories at the time (especially those of England, France, and the Dutch Republic). The first scholars to write a global administrative history were Americans: Augustine Duganne (1860) and Woodrow Wilson (1889) (Raadschelders, 1997; 2002a). With regard to the possibility of a science of government Surgeon-General (of the middle department of the Continental Army) Benjamin Rush observed that this "…can only be advanced by a careful selection of facts, and these are to be found chiefly in history." (Kammen, 1987, p.53) The earlier curricula and training programs in American public administration included, as a matter of course, a historical component and two examples are the curricula at Johns Hopkins in the 1880/90s (Hoffmann, 2002) and at the Training School for Public Service (TSPS) that was affiliated with the New York Bureau of Municipal Research (McSwite, 1997, p.61).

What is left of that sensitivity to a historical perspective and context? The answer is not clear-cut. On the one hand, studies in administrative history have been published throughout the 20th century (see for overview Raadschelders, 2000), while, on the other hand, several public administration scholars observed a decline of historical interest both in the study as well as in society (section two). It does seem that the lack of attention for the meaning of the past in the study of public administration at large begs for tentative explanations and these can be found at the societal, organizational/scholarly community, and individual levels (section 3).

One could, of course, wonder whether this limited attention for administrative history is a problem at all. After all, the times of the Founding Fathers and the early Progressivists are far behind us, and today there are far more sources of information to draw upon. History is only a pastime of a hobbyist and of little use in the present, let alone in public administration. This type of reasoning, however, exhibits a profound lack of understanding the influence of time upon individual and collective perceptions of the present and upon the varied nature of societal development. In order to determine what administrative history can mean to the study and practice of public administration, a discussion of the contemporary understanding of time (section 4) and of the past as memory and history (including definitions of administrative history) (section 5) attempt to re-acquaint the public administration scholar with literature seldom referenced in the study. The assumption that knowledge of the past is useful ought to be evaluated by perusing general arguments for and against (section 6). Also, examples should be

provided as to how knowledge of the past has been used by governments and in public administration scholarship (section 7). Sections four to seven pull various literatures together in a manner not done before. The sections two to seven provide the ammunition for an answer to the question raised in the title of this article (section 8).

This article develops a basis for the systematic exploration of historical knowledge in order to advance the understanding of government and (possibly?) helping toward the solution of contemporary challenges. Whether knowledge of administrative history helps when dealing with the present and when charting the future is for each individual to determine, but it depends upon perception and interpretation of the meaning of the past for the present and the future. However, discarding the past as mere baggage runs the risk of throwing the baby (present and future) out with the bathwater (past).

2. *Concern for Declining Interest in Administrative History?*

The decades spanning the time that Johns Hopkins and TSPS offered courses with a strong historical and descriptive content is known as the progressive period, but was really split between, what Karl called, Old and New Progressivism: "The old reformers had sought to expand democracy; the new sought to preserve it within limits now imposed by science and technology." (Karl, 1983, p.17; see on this also Hofstadter, 1955, pp.12, 18, 121, 131-135 who, though, does not label it that way). During the early progressive era public administration scholars focused on context and thus had much attention for law and history using, mainly, descriptive methods. In the early 20th century their energy shifted to a new "core" that centered on efficiency to be achieved through scientific method. There is no clear-cut moment when administrative history started to wane. Perhaps one could say that, for a while, p.a. scholarship lingered between 'exploring the past for understanding the present' and 'analyzing the present in order to create a better future.' That seems to be case when knowing that Luther Gulick, who had been involved with TSPS, acknowledged the importance of the past (as reported in Karl, 1963: 153; see also Gulick, 1987) while his co-author for a contribution to the Brownlow committee report, Lyndall Urwick, believed that administration and organization could be studied without attention for the constitutional, political, and social theory underlying their creation (cf. Spicer, 2008, p.55).

By the 1930s the embrace of science and efficiency had won the day, much to the distress of some contemporaries. To Gaus public administration ought to recover the historical and intellectual dynamics that changed the study and (I add) government (1930; as mentioned in Stivers, 1995, p.522 and 2000, p.2; see also Dimock, 1936, pp.116, 120). Perhaps not all was lost. In the early forties the Public Administration Committee of the Social Science Research Council had established a subcommittee on administrative history chaired by Leonard White (Nichols, 1943, p.240; White, 1948, p.ix). In the year that White's first of four volumes on American administrative history was published, Gaus, in a review of the first volume wrote that "…assumptions concerning administration were not based upon or influenced by a re-examination of origins of modern government…" (1948, p.289) In the same year the historian Hofstadter wrote that the "...overpowering nostalgia of the past fifteen years…" was testimony of a sentimental appreciation rather than a critical analysis of the past (1975 [1948], p.xxxiii). Lasch was equally relentless: "Our culture's indifference to the past [...] furnishes the most telling proof of that culture's bankruptcy." (1978, p.xviii) Nostalgia idealizes the past, and, he continued, inhibits understanding of how the past influences society's present and future (Lasch, 1991, p.118). In his 1991-study Lasch called nostalgia the ideological twin of progress (see also section four), undermining an intelligent use of the past and curiously weakening the inclination to provide for the future (1991, pp.80-83). Observing there was little attention for history in the study, Beyer noted that better understanding (of, in the case of his article, current public personnel practices) required a longer historical perspective (1959, p.243). Caldwell pointed out that the normative, pragmatic response in the study to the rapid changes in society since the 1880s deprived it (i.e., the study) of 'historical depth'. In his words: "There was little interest in placing contemporary developments in public administration or government on a time trajectory in which their possible futures might be conjectured. Thus, poverty in the historical dimension of public administration, as studied in the United States, meant also impoverishment in the substance of public administration theory." (Caldwell, 1968, p.213) To date, many Americans, including many incumbents of political and administrative office, are still considered 'aggressively ahistorical' (Sykes, 1992, p.29) and are said to harbor a knowledge about the past that is orchestrated by Hollywood (Wills, 1999, pp. 247-249). The study of public administration is not helping to ameliorate this. Wamsley and Wolf, wrote that the study "…is incredibly lacking in a historical perspective." (1996, p.12) Osborne's and Gaebler's recommendations for

reinventing government were branded as inconsistent and "…uninformed by history…", displaying an "…ahistorical understanding of public administration." (Williams, 2000, p.522)

This declining sensitivity to the past is not limited to scholars and citizens in the United States. For instance, Dutch Members of Parliament demonstrated little knowledge of their country's major historical events (HN, 2000). Another survey indicated that the average Dutch citizen scored a 5.2 (a failing grade in the Netherlands) on a 10-point scale. Interestingly, this was only 0.3 higher than the scores of foreign-born Dutch citizens (*Volkskrant*, 3-26-2008). An inquiry (early 1980s) into high school education in history in Canada showed that it was limited to Canadian history since the First World War and then only in four of the nine provinces at the time. The other provinces 'dealt' with snippets of history in a social studies curriculum (Maddocks, 2000). These three examples illustrate lack of historical perspective in some Western societies, but they are not representative of the public administration scholar. Some evidence about scholarly attention can be provided by considering publication trends in the past 36 years in some leading journals in and relevant to public administration.

Table 1: *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. (n.b.: data for 1993-2007 collected with help from Kwang-Hoon Lee, ABD, University of Oklahoma; in the original table

the leading German journal *Verwaltungswissenschaft* and the Dutch journal *Bestuurswetenschappen* were included. These, unfortunately, could not be accessed on line; the current batch of seven includes two leading American Journals (PAR and A&S), the leading British journal (PA), two political science journals (PS and RFSP) and two international journals (IRAS and CSSH).

Publication trends in some journals for the 1973-1992 period appeared to suggest that the interest for administrative history was slowly increasing (Raadschelders, 1998, p. 28). The data for the 1993-2007 period in table 1 above appear to indicate that attention for this topic has been declining overall, although the moment of decline varies. For some journals decline started after 1992, for two (PAR, A&S) after 1997, and for two others (PA, RFSP) a brief resurgence is noted. At the same time, however, one could argue that administrative history continued to attract at least some interest in the U.S. and certainly in Europe (Raadschelders, 1998). Illustrative of this is the publication of journals specifically focused on aspects of administrative history. Europe has a *European Yearbook of Administrative History* since 1989. In the U.S.A. three journals have been established that are highly relevant to administrative history: the *Journal of Policy History* (1989), the *Journal of Management History* (1999), and *Management and Organizational History* (2006). In Korea there is even a *Journal of Korean Public Administration History*, which could explain why attention for that topic in the study's main outlet (*Korean Journal of Public Administration*) is limited.

Also, consider an overview of U.S. administrative history published several years ago that shows substantial interest in the topic (Raadschelders, 2000). The references in that article show that there is no topic within the study that lacks historical analysis (in addition to the references in Raadschelders, 2000, see also Cooper, 2007, ch.4; Rohr, 1986; and Shields, 2008). Additionally, appreciation for historical analyses has been noted by the authors of the Blacksburg Manifesto (see, e.g., Wamsley & Wolf, 1996, pp.12-21) and by authors writing from postmodern and critical perspectives (e.g., Farmer, 1995; Stivers, 2000; Box, 2008). Finally, various hand- and textbooks include one or more chapters on history (by way of example, see various chapters in Rabin et al., 1989, and the first two chapters in Riccucci & Naff, 2008). Thus, the problem could really be that historical work is not widely read by contemporary scholars and that they thus fail to acquaint themselves with the intellectual history of what they study. Perhaps it is

most accurate to say that administrative history resides on the fringes of public administration scholarship. Why is this so?

3. *Tentative Explanations for the Marginal Interest in Administrative History*

It seems reasonable to conclude that the position of administrative history in public administration is ambivalent in terms of (journal) publications. When looking at U.S. curricula in public administration it seems it has no place as an independent subject of study, but courses are likely to have a historical component. There are several, tentative, explanations for this situation and they can be placed on a continuum from societal, via organizational/scholarly community, to individual levels.

With regard to the societal level reasons can be listed that are comparable to those Spicer suggested when explaining the dwindling attention for political theory (2008, pp.56, 59):

a) A strong belief/faith in reason and science, prompting preference for 'hard' quantitative research rather than for the 'soft(er)' qualitative analysis;

b) The state is regarded as purposive rather than facilitative. I suggest that this means that public servants expect from themselves and are expected by citizens to act rather than to reflect;

c) The American pragmatist tradition that prefers applicable knowledge over interpretative understandings. (It must be noted, however, that elements of American classical pragmatism were internalized in American public administration instead of being visibly adopted; see Shields, 2008, p.207).

Scientism, purposive state, and pragmatism are inspired by a notion of science that emphasizes objectivity and positivism and reduces social reality to measurable facts and social challenges to technical problems that require the input from trained experts, not from citizens. This view originates in Plato's notion of a society governed by guardians and philosopher-kings that found support in the U.S. from, e.g., Santayana (García, 2006, p.185) and Lippman (cf. "…no guardian to think for us…", 1961, p.111 and 1957, p.257). The same attitude is found in the following words of John F. Kennedy, spoken during a press conference in May 1962:

The fact of the matter is that most of the problems [...] that we now face are technical

problems, are administrative problems. They are very sophisticated judgments, which do not lend themselves to the great sort of passionate movements which have stirred this country so often in the past. [They] *deal with questions which are now beyond the comprehension of most men ....* (Lasch, 1978, p.77; emphasis added)

In a society that expects practical solutions to social challenges, developing policy through systematic attention for the past is but a luxury. Attention for history in the K-12 curricula and in college-level general education classes hardly goes beyond the level of factual highlights of national (public) history. It is this lack in probing the meaning of the past that, e.g., Hofstadter, Lasch, and – recently - Box ("…many people are not particularly interested in how the past has shaped the present.", 2008, p.107) criticized.

Not surprisingly, this societal context transfers into attitudes at the organizational and scholarly community level in various different ways. First, I suspect that systematic training in research and methods of administrative history is sorely missing in public administration higher education at all levels. The best proof is that essays applying historical lenses to help understand contemporary challenges appear to be written only written by scholars who were educated before the 1980s (e.g., Kettl, 2002; Lynn, 2006). Second, scientism, purposive state and pragmatism are currently buttressed by the specific *Zeitgeist* in which scholars of public administration have been working in the past two decades: New Public Management, reinventing government, performance management, etc., all stress the production of usable knowledge, hands-on instruments, and measurable outputs (much less: outcomes). In this atmosphere it is actually remarkable that there are still publications that can be labeled as administrative history (some recent examples include: Carpenter, 2001; Hoffer, 2007; Lee, 2006; Lee, 2008; Stivers, 2000).

These societal and scholarly community contexts influence scholarship at the individual level. First, the predominant focus among the hugely increased number of researchers in the various specializations is on mining quantitative data that are easy to acquire (through survey instruments or using data-sets collected by others) rather than on unearthing new data from archival sources (which is more difficult in the U.S. than in Europe since there is much less a tradition here of archiving documents as De Tocqueville already observed, 2000, p.198). The latter method takes much more time and can be quite tedious especially if one has had no training in it. Related to the first reason is that authors, and especially those in tenure-track

positions, are focused on the production of articles, rather than on the creation of knowledge (Starbuck, 2006, pp.74, 84). Also everybody "knows" that tenure decisions are easier to make on the basis of quantity rather than quality of publications. This pushes the effort toward a single, solid book or a few outstanding articles to the backburner in favor of a series of article publications. Moreover, proper assessment of quality requires in-depth familiarity with subject matter on the part of both departmental colleagues as well as external reviewers.

One could reasonably ask: so what? History may have been considered important at one time, but we live in a different time and have access to so many more information sources. The skeptic might even suggest that historical analysis, at best, may only provide some context to contemporary problems. It cannot provide elements of a solution. That line of reasoning, however, indicates a profound lack of understanding the various ways in which the conception of time influences individual behavior in any society. Thus in the next four sections I will explore the nature of time, how it permeates our lives and how it influences government and public policy. Hopefully this will help to make contemporary scholars more sensitive to the importance of historical analysis.

4. *The Western Conception of Time: Change and Progress v. Development, Evolution, and Tradition*

Time is elusive. It passes by rather quickly when viewed as historical time, i.e. the time organized in the spans of life of human beings (generations), and rather slow when perceived in terms of geological time, i.e. the record of, for instance, fossil deposits on earth (eras). It is also elusive because we want – at some times more, at other times less – to pretend we are distant observers while simultaneously knowing that we are part of a reality in which time passes and in which we organize time. Being simultaneously an observer of the passage of time and a subject to and organizer of time is a situation that few human beings have been able to deal with adequately because they hold to a narrow conceptualization of time as will become clear below.

Throughout history most people conceptualized time as cyclical and thus were bound to see it as a process of birth, growth, maturity, and decay, accepting the inevitability of a 'cycle of life'. In these societies time was not perceived spatially, i.e. in terms of 'before' and 'after'. Once that understanding emerged it was possible to see time as linear, unfolding history (Jaynes, 1976,

pp.159, 221, 250). The ancient Israelites were the first to conceptualize time as a string of unique events with a beginning and an end (Gardet et al., 1976, pp.117, 149). Their linear view of time was augmented in the Western world with a notion of an inherent direction of time, generally in terms of universal progress (Gould, 1987, p.13). In that view the present holds the keys to a better future through effort, discipline, and conviction, believing in the possibility of progress through stages of spiritual and/or material growth. In the Western world time has been conceptualized as a period of spiritual growth since St. Augustine (5th century CE) and as an opportunity for material betterment since, at least, the 18th century. This linear view of time was buttressed by the great improvements in mechanical timekeeping in the 17th and 18th centuries that, in Mumford's view, helped to "…dissociate[d] time from human events and helped create belief in an independent world of mathematically measurable sequences…." (in Whithrow, 1998, p.127) The concept of an objectively observable and measurable reality has also enveloped those who trumpet quantitative-statistical methods as the superior and only way to knowledge, throwing by the wayside Vico's idea that anything in social reality (including time measured in increments) is human-made and thus can only be understood historically (Whithrow, 1988, p.149; see also Berlin, 1997, p.247-48, and Radkau, 2009, p.257).

Contemporary public administration is enamored by, and surely blind about the degree to which its scholars embrace, a linear conception of time in which 'progress' is evaluated as positive and good. That progress can also be perceived as a progression away, a distancing, a withdrawal from origin (Gebser, 1985, pp.38, 41) seems not to be considered. Public administration scholars wish to show how well they assess present problematic conditions and then help to resolve them for a better future. What role is there for understanding the past?

Is it to be regarded as mere development over time, an unfolding of (usually) trivial and (sometimes) big events (the 'punctuated equilibrium' point of view of the 19th century British statistician Francis Galton) or is it to be seen as a more gradual (incremental) evolution of inexplicable, yet irrevocable, mutations (the view of Galton's cousin, Charles Darwin) (Gregory, 2008, p.474)? In contrast, the historian Tholfsen argued that time is simultaneously continuity, diversity, and change (1967: 6), a view reinforced by Thelen who observes that in "…almost any institution that survives major socioeconomic transformation […] or political disjuncture […], the story of institutional reproduction is likely to be strongly laced with elements of institutional transformation – through layering, conversion, or some other mechanism." (2000, p.106)[3] Public

administration scholarship seems more focused on the punctuated changes that ought to be and/or might happen (think of the motives upon which reform efforts have been launched, e.g., PPBS, MbO, reinventing government, NPM, civil service reform, etc.) and on the diversity of experiences with change through comparative cross-time (now vs. future) and cross-national (here vs. there) research. With the exception of the decision and policy making theory of incrementalism the study is much less focused on time as continuity (past to present to future).

In the Western mindset time-as-continuity is very much judged as equal to stagnation if not regression. Time perceived as continuity is also equated with tradition, the customs, habits, and rules, etc., of old that prevents human beings to escape into something new and uncharted. It is especially in the Western world that the idea of a future ordained was supplanted by a desire for a malleable future as far back as the 18th century belief in material progress. It may even partially originate in the reformationist's zeal to break away from the existing traditions of organized religion (i.e., the Catholic Church), which ultimately resulted in the secularized, relativized, and pluralized society of today (Smith, 1988: 41) where government is the only institution left that binds the population as a whole, that is, as citizens. The idea that time-as-tradition stood in the way of time-as-progress stems from the 18th century, which was when Western philosophers firmly came to believe in the possibility of government policies to improve present conditions and thus the idea that one did not have to wait for salvation until after death. Clearly, contemporary government policies are much inspired by the idea that life on earth can be improved. It is what citizens expect.

But, time can also be perceived as a possibility to learn from and grow beyond the past. In that perspective, time-as-tradition is a necessary pre-condition for assessing whether continuity is preferable over change. Again Santayana and his student Lippmann can be referenced. The former observed that "Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement; and when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." (Santayana, 1905, p.284) In comparable fashion Lippman wrote that the art of governing has to be learned, transmitted from old to young, with habits and ideas maintained as a seamless web of memory: "A society can only be progressive if it conserves tradition." (Lippmann, 1955, p.136) Sometimes tradition warrants status-quo, while at other times it may call for agency. At the very

least, tradition only exists by the grace of affirmation (Gadamer, 1975, p.250; Bevir, 1999, p.223) and might, unexpectedly or not, well serve as legitimation for change (Bevir & Rhodes, 2003, p.7).

Implicitly, time-as-tradition recognizes that there is a cyclical aspect to time as well and it seems that public administration scholarship is warming up to this possibility. The best example is the change in how the public policy process is conceptualized. For most of the 20th century it was conceptualized as linear by nature, progressing from problem identification, analysis of alternative solutions, selection of best alternative, planning, implementation, and (if time allowed) evaluation. Decision trees, in-/output flow-charts, forward and backward mapping, evidence-based-practices, etc., fit this linear conception of the policy process and suits the predictability desired by policy experts. However, in the past 15 years or so this linear view has been supplemented with non-linear conceptions. Take, for instance, the idea that sociotechnical change processes are endless circles of change (Buchanan & Badham, 1999, p.160; Bryson, 1995; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p.3) or the notion that organizational decision making is less linear, much more complex, and much less predictable and controllable than generally admitted (Van Wart, 1998, p.206).

Time can be development, evolution, change, progress, and tradition. Past, present, and future fold into one another in and over time. How do people and scholars organize and perceive the past?

5. *Past, Memory, History*

How the past is conceptualized theoretically (previous section) is different from how people experience it psychologically. In a philosophical or theoretical mode one could say that time can be seen as punctuated development v. gradual evolution, as change and progress v. continuity and tradition. What is possible in the armchair of the philosopher is not quite comparable to day-to-day experience. That is to say, to most and probably all human beings the past is basically everything that happened before today.

The past is not just 'the' (universal) or 'a' (particular) past, it is also memory in two ways. First, it is the memory of an individual past, literal and physical, through being witness to or experiencing some momentous event. Individual memory and experience influence positions

public officeholders take, so these memories can be relevant to understanding government. Second, and certainly relevant to public administration, it is the memory of a collective past through learning about previous achievements. Individual and collective memories are reconstructed whenever felt necessary. What is considered 'memorable' and how it is to be remembered is, as far as personal memory is concerned, guided by concerns of social desirability and reflected in autobiography, and, as far is society is concerned, determined in social groups (Burke, 1989, p.98). The past has the potential to become memory through lived experience and through socialization. What is done with that memory, i.e. recording it as history, is another matter altogether (see section seven).

Through writing history, that is the recorded time of human actions and the interpretation of and meaning of these actions, humans provide a particular and, usually favorable, account of their collective past. There is no agreed upon history of any country or people today. The recorded past, i.e., history, represents what we wish to remember as much as what we wish to forget (Burke, 1989: 105).

This is highly relevant to public administration scholarship in general and to administrative history in particular. In general, much of public administration scholarship focuses on the manipulation and interpretation of statistical data about one snapshot or a series of snapshots in time without considering whether that record is 'correct' and whether – in the case of a series of snapshots – that record actually provides a complete representation of historical development. With regard to the first issue, what is considered 'correct' today may very well be considered incorrect tomorrow (e.g., in terms of political correctness and/or methodological sophistication and/or data collection rationale). With regard to the second issue, data sets generally do not include all potentially relevant independent variables. Indeed, how could they! More specifically, much of the literature that can be labeled as administrative history considers the past as something that requires recording in itself. However, neither the analysis of quantitative data nor the – equally admirable – qualitative description of events in some past (i.e., in a defined period of time) do much service to administrative history in the study of public administration and in government. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses fall short of gauging the impact of the past in the present. This can be done in at least two ways. First, at the organizational level we can, e.g., a) analyze historical trajectories to the present (one example of this are the studies published through the History of Government working group of the

International Institute of Administrative Sciences), b) consider antecedents to contemporary practices (e.g., Williams & Lee, 2008), and c) investigate the extend to which inherited policies limit change and innovation (see, e.g., Rose and Davies, 1994). Second, at the individual level, we can consider time perspectives and orientations of public officeholders and see how this influences their input in policy and decision making.

Since there is so much less literature on the latter, i.e., the influence of time perspectives and orientations upon policy and decision making, it is useful to pay a little extra attention to this. By way of proposition Banfield suggested that lower class people are only capable of an extreme present orientation, live from one moment to the next, with little to no interest in the future, and thus with little value for work, sacrifice, self-improvement, and community service. The working class is a little more future oriented but less so than the middle class. In turn, the middle class is less future oriented than the upper class (1990: 54, 57-61, 235, 303 note 6). Lee developed conceptual map of elite attitudes toward change (1968, pp.6-39). Some people have a negative attitude toward change and desire to preserve. The true escapist looks back at the past in nostalgia, thinking about the 'good old days'. This is most characteristic for the rural, traditional elites. Then there are those who do not like change but focus on the present. Elite behavior in that situation is more erratic, clinging to rituals, precedents, and routines. This is especially found among the new urban dwellers that have left their countryside community. A third group of people who dislike change are those who fear the present and seek refuge in utopian dreams, sometimes pursued through desperate and irresponsible actions.

The dominant role of those who are ambivalent about change is exploitationist. This role is most characteristic for opportunists (e.g., corrupt civil servants, big spending politicians) who have no desire to make sacrifices for the future. Some may be more focused on the past and they operate upon a sense of missed chances. Their elite is divided in factions, fighting among one another for power, and, once getting it, tending to reward their supporters (spoils). The ambitious among them observe the failures and weaknesses of incumbent officeholders and take over by unconstitutional means (*coup d'état*). They act upon a notion that the future will pass by if they do not act quickly. Generally, those who are ambivalent to change are focused on consumption and are thus more inclined to waste public resources.

Finally, there are elites who regard change positively. The dominant role is that of the developmentalist whose attitude is prospective and who regards the future as a reservoir of

novelty and creativity. These are the leaders in politics, business, and civil service who innovate upon a desire to further social-economic development. Those who regard the past as an inheritance, use it as a resource for, e.g., nation-building. The attitude of the charismatic leader is the best example. A third category includes those who are focused on the present, such as business elite and investors driven by capital formation. What connects these three positive attitudes to change is the desire to produce.

The conceptual framework Lee developed contains much more detail and is presented as a means to analyze how change in developing countries is influenced by elite attitudes. His framework, though, is useful to characterize attitudes toward time and change in general. After all, a single and undifferentiated elite is as unlikely as a society without multiple interests and preferences. In politics and administration it is not difficult to simultaneously observe conservative, hesitant, and progressive evaluations of and opinions about the nature of environmental change and the need for a government response.

6.   *Why Study Administrative History?*

We have to rekindle the appreciation for why administrative history is useful (or not) since systematic education in, sensitivity to, and acquaintance with the past is sorely missing. This can be repaired by carefully considering arguments pro and contra, but not in order to decide which side wins. Indeed, both sides are equally important. In table 3 below reasons for and against studying administrative history are organized by their particular relevance to citizens, to scholars, and to practitioners. Some of these reasons are relevant to more than one category.

There are, however, three reasons why understanding the administrative past is important to anyone. First and foremost is the fact that government is a product and function of human action and not a consequence of natural forces. Human behavior is purposive, focused on progress (in whatever sense) and/or on dealing with the challenges of daily life. The outcome of that purposive behavior can only really be understood when that what motivated particular behavior/action is placed in its temporal and geographical context.

Related to this, second, is that many aspects of social reality are best comprehended as a temporal process. Whatever 'is' has not come out of the blue, and the impact of what is started now (output) often does not become clear until a significant amount of time has passed

(outcome; see also next section). Social reality unfolds over time and without a historical perspective the why and meaning of this unfolding is lost. This is especially problematic for political officeholders who are focused more on short-term (output) solutions to problems, because of, i.a., the short electoral cycle, pressure from interest groups, and a desire to show results. However, many of the seminal national and international challenges play out in the long-term (outcome). To balance this pressure for quick results with more long-term perspectives is perhaps the biggest challenge that career public administrators face. Considering the past will facilitate such a balancing act.

Table 2 *Arguments Pro and Contra attention for Administrative History* (expanded from Raadschelders, 2008)

Arguments	....For....	....and Against
for the Citizen	- 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)	- "...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 - "Never look back. The Past is a textbook of tyrants; The Future the Bible of the Free." (Herman Melville, as quoted in Schlesinger, 1992:23)
for the Academic	- 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)	- 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)
for the Practitioner	- 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 et al., 1985; Stivers, 1995: 522 and 2000: 2) - lessons 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)	- the past is dead and gone (Caiden et al., 1987: 7) - 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 *judgment* (Raadschelders et al., 2000: 778) - governing by historical analogy can compound previous mistakes (Newsweek, 2008) - the only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn from it (Mansfield, 1951: 51)
for All	- political-administrative traditions partly fashion national culture (Raz, 2001: 31; Scheffler, 2007) - important aspects of social reality are best comprehended as temporal processes, the unfolding of processes over time (Pierson, 2000a: 264) - "…those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it." (Santayana, 1905:284)	- tradition inhibits innovation and focuses on the short term (Dror, 1964; Etzioni, 1967). - the responsibility to pass on lessons of the past to the younger generation may be more based on belief in these "lessons" than on knowledge (Box, 2008: 48)

Third, national cultures are shaped by political-administrative traditions (see next section) and this is especially the case in the Western world. While many cultures are still shaped by the traditions of various institutions of governance, such as government, corporate business, organized religion, tribe or clan, and so forth, in Western culture government is the only social phenomenon left that binds a collection of disconnected people (cf. Anderson's 'imagined communities', 2006) into a whole through defining and uniting them as citizens.

In the light of history this is a quite recent development going back to the 19th century. Indeed, for most of history people identified with those in their immediate surroundings, i.e., the village and – possibly – the region, not with all those others whose lives were also controlled by (a) ruler(s) in a far away castle or capital. Today we interpret such close identification with a particular community as evidence of too much social control that stifles individualism. Perhaps this is strongest in the United States, a country where, in the words of Allan Bloom, souls are constructed without a basement (1987, p.157). Bloom notes: "This indeterminate or open-ended future and the lack of a binding past mean that the souls of young people are in a condition like that of the first men in the state of nature…" (ibid., p.87) But there is a positive side to the social control of a community: "We fail to acknowledge, on the one hand, how full of anxiety our society is, how its lack of assigned roles leaves so many individuals woefully isolated, permanently nervous about the random fluctuations of their fortunes. If, on the other hand one could say, "I am the shoemaker of Trier, as was my father before me, and will be my son after me; I am an integral part of my community, even necessary to it; my neighbors respect me and depend on my skill.", one could own an abiding peace that eludes all but a very few children of the twenty-first century." (Cahill, 2006, p.9)

Nowadays, in the Western world, people do not only identify as individuals with their immediate community but also as citizens with the abstraction of the state and its flag and anthem. A sense of community always grows 'bottom-up', down-time, but a sense of nationality is imposed and created up-time (see next section). Neither the uniqueness of this identity creation nor government's crucial role in it will be understood without the historical context in which this unfolded (the merging of nation-building and state-making between the 12th and 19th centuries; see Raadschelders, 1998, pp.253-257).

These three reasons can be evaluated as positive and as negative, but that depends upon the eye of the beholder. They are, though, as relevant in a linear as they are in a cyclical view of

time since in both perspectives actions and their outcomes unfold and we need to understand how and why. In reference to Jacob Burckhardt's observation (see motto at opening of paper) the least we can expect from studying administrative history is some degree of wisdom and possibly usable knowledge. But, expectations must be modest: "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." (Raadschelders, 2003, p.167; see also Shattuck, 1996, pp.29, 72-73).

7. *Government and Scholarship Using the Past*

Knowledge of the past can and has been used in a variety of ways: to establish national culture, to legitimize the status quo, to emancipate the oppressed, as a source of lessons, and as source of theory development.

First, and most visible to anyone, is the creation of a national identity and culture (Fisch, 2008). This has been successfully done by governments since the 19th century in the desire to establish a sense of togetherness in a society where people no longer had close ties with everyone. While tradition is generally perceived as that which is handed down from the past, it can also be created. Hobsbawm spoke of Invented Tradition, occurring especially when rapid changes disturb or even destroy traditional social patterns and communities (1983). Industrialization (i.e., alienation from the production process), urbanization (i.e., leaving behind the familiar community of the countryside), and unprecedented population growth in the second half of the 19th century changed the social and political landscape dramatically (enfranchisement, labor unions, political parties) and prompted governments to establish a sense of unity in a fragmented society and among imagined communities. The only role that people shared was that of citizenship and this needed affirmation.

Closely related to this is, second, the idea that a national identity and culture serve to legitimize government and society as they are now. This is what Schlesinger called the exculpatory history that vindicates the status quo. Paradoxically, it could be that those in power, or those who have gained power, can afford to forget the past. Those who lost, though, can not take the past for granted because they 'lost' it (Burke, 1989, p.105). They write compensatory

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history, as Schlesinger called it, that demonstrates the superior virtue of the oppressed (1992, pp.48-49). In the latter case, third, history can be used to elevate and possibly emancipate the disenfranchised.

Fourth, history has been used as a source of experience relevant to policy and decision making. To date, this is specifically done through case-studies, but cases as "lessons" of the past may not reach beyond the idiosyncratic. More important, the case-study approach is not able to extrapolate from a past case into present circumstances (see for examples of attempts to do this: Neustadt & May, 1986; Brandström et al., 2004), because a particular type of event (e.g., revolution, civil service reform, budgeting reform, etc.) never repeats in exactly the same way (see also Jervis, 2000, p.98). The environment, the personalities involved, and the relative strength of factors involved, change. Is it the similarity or the variation between two events that is most significant (Mansfield, 1951, p.52)? To Mansfield "lessons" can be found at different levels and he discusses that in a review of a book on the British war economy. The philosophical or commonplace observations are the least specific, such as, e.g., the consent to control agricultural prices was easier to obtain once "…industrial prices and wages were under corresponding restraint." More concrete are the analytical or problem-solving techniques, such as providing the next generation of price controllers with the analytical tools to tackle problems because there is always need for price control. Finally, the most detailed are the administrative techniques concerning a specific way (procedures, rules) of handling comparable cases (Mansfield, 1951, pp.52-54).

To use history as source of experience, and not so much as a "lesson" (a concept that generates higher expectations) requires the systematic application of a temporal dimension. Box distinguishes three temporal dimensions in the definition of the public interest (2007, pp.595-596; 2008, p.61). If used separately, each of these is insufficient to inform the public interest and cannot enrich policy making. In the substantive model the public interest is static or changes slowly over long periods of time. In such a situation minority opinions may be overlooked or marginalized and then potentially cause discontent and conflict. The aggregative model regards public interest as a 'one-time' measure of individual preferences, reducing history to a series of consecutive views without connecting these snapshots in a meaningful way. Finally, in the process model public interest stretches across some span of time but misses an independent conception of public interest (which the other two models have). Of these three, the aggregative

model is the one most popular today both as a foundation for governmental policy and decision making as well as for academic research. The substantive model assumes too much continuity with the past and is thus believed to inhibit progress. The process model appears to gain some support (think, e.g., of network and process management, of collaborative or participative management) but only concerns the quality of interaction and discourse between participants in a policy making process. It does not include attention for how policy, organization, etc., unfold over time as a combination of a various incremental and punctuated events and decisions. Again, the linear perception of time reduces a historical perspective to sequencing events and mere process management (i.e., the use of a neutral, third party mediator or interventionist to resolve internal organizational problems).

In combination, though, these three models can offer powerful guidance to practitioners and scholars both. The data of the aggregative model concern the recent past and thus provide some sense of and information about the present, while the trends discerned through the substantive model indicate how and why current policies were (in)formed. It is imperative to combine these two, because measurement of individual preferences and assessing these in the context of existing institutional arrangements may well indicate that minor or major policy adjustment is needed. If, however, such redirection is conducted without extensive consultation of stakeholders (i.e., by way of process management in the current sense) and without historical analysis (i.e., the process of unfolding over time), it may well fall flat. Thus, the importance of using the process model for it assumes, first, a discourse conducted in fundamental respect for diversity of opinion and a commitment to seek consensus (we all win) rather than compromise (we all lose some) (cf. Mary Parker Follett and Charles Lindblom; see on their ideas Fry & Raadschelders, 2008, pp.119-120, 277-278) and, second, an analysis that takes account of the nature of environmental developments (stable, intense, intertwined, etc.) and the type of intervention they require (i.e., extended, transitional, or transformational change; see below table 3). Historical analysis, thus, complements rather than competes with substantive and aggregative approaches (see for a comparable argument: Snooks, 1993, p.9).

But, there is more to the argument that public policy making is best served when the substantive, the aggregative, and the process models are combined. The substantive model is concerned with the structure, i.e., the institutional arrangements, within which policies are made. The aggregative model is focused on outputs, i.e., the short-term and measurable consequences

of actions. Finally, the process model addresses functioning, i.e., with how 'things' have been done so far. It is important to remember that, as Lowi observed, "…processes have historical bases, yet both their structures and their outputs can be judged and to an extent reformed…" (Cameron et al., 1988, p.158) With Lowi's remark in mind I suggest that structure and output are perhaps easier to reform than process, but this needs to qualified. Process can refer both to quality of interaction between stakeholders at one moment in time as well as to events simultaneously and/or sequentially unfolding over time. Process in terms of 'quality of interaction between individuals' can be subject to intervention (e.g., Organizational Development, action research), but process defined as 'unfolding events' is too unpredictable to serve as a basis for intervention.

Finally, a historical perspective may help to understand the nature, the intensity, and the time-span of change. It is important to remember that historians generally perceive time simultaneously as continuity, diversity, and change. In a way there is always change (cf. Heraclitus' *panta rhei*), but some types of change are more invasive than others. And even when change is perceived as threatening or jeopardizing the status quo, there are still 'elements' of continuity. For instance, as disturbing as the French Revolution was to contemporaries, incumbent public servants continued to provide the services they were hired for. Given an anti-aristocratic *Zeitgeist* several civil servants of noble birth simply declared to be a *citoyen*, thus avoiding the guillotine. Nature, intensity, and time-horizon of change have been well captured by Hernes and Pierson respectively.

Hernes looks at intensity of change and to what extent this influences existing organizational structures, organizational/societal values, and functioning.

Table 3: *Institutional Change and Stability at Three Levels: The Intensity and Extent of Reform* (adapted from Hernes, 1976-77, p.524)

Type of Change

Change in

	Simple	Extended	Transition	Transformation
Output structure	no	yes	yes	yes
Parameter values	no	no	yes	yes
Process structure	no	no	no	yes

Simple reproduction represents the situation where the system at large functions to satisfaction and there is no perceived need for change. Extended reproduction represents a change in terms of growing and expanding existing activities, comparable to Pierson's 'self-reinforcing event sequences' that are propelled by incremental changes and positive feedback (2000b, p.4) (cf. the economists' notion of 'increasing returns', more commonly referred to in public administration and political science as 'path dependency'[4]). An example would be the expansion of welfare services *after* the establishment of the welfare state. The output structure changes (new welfare services, new organizations), but neither the process that generates that output (e.g., organizational processes) nor the parameter values change (for instance what is held important in society at large). Transitional change is more involved because it affects the parameter values. By way of example, the incorporation of a territorial unit into a larger whole (i.e., amalgamations of local governments; annexation) requires changes in both output structure (new tasks, new territorial jurisdictions, new organizations) and parameter values (to reflect the increased complexity of values). The final type, transformation, carries the most consequences. 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 of the balanced budget, standardization of weights and measures, etc.) changed. Policy and decision makers would benefit from contemplating which type of change they are dealing with. In the case of transition and transformation, the interaction effects of different processes unfolding simultaneously ought to be investigated (Pierson, 2000b; Thelen, 2000, pp.107-108). This is seldom done because how output and outcome (dependent variables) are influenced by on-going change processes in the environment (independent variables) is much less predictable in the case of transitional and transformational change than in the case of simple or extended reproduction.

Policy and decision makers would also benefit from taking into account that causes and outcomes can have a short-term respectively long-term dimension or time-horizon. Above I observed that policy and decision making is often informed by short-term causes and focused on short-term outputs, with much less attention given to the long-term causes and the long-term

outcomes of actions. Short and long time horizons of causes and outcomes can be put together in a matrix (see table 4 below).

Table 4: *Time Horizons of Causes and of Outcomes* (expanded after Pierson, 2003, p.179).

		Time Horizon of Outcome	
		Short	Long
Time Horizon of Cause	Short	Changing incumbents of political appointee positions; desire to provide quick results of policy implementation	Civil service reform, professionalization, civil service acts, construction of interstate highway system in the 1950s in the USA
	Long	Notion of threshold, e.g., separation of politics and administration at end of 18th century	State-making and nation-building; party or partisan re-alignment; elite change as part of demographic change

Political officeholders are highly guided by a short time horizon both for causes (i.e., only a brief stretch of past time is taken into consideration when making policy) and for outcomes (the sooner the results the better, i.e., output). The pressure to quickly deliver solutions to pressing societal problems, translates into a demand for immediate redistribution of social and economic benefits (Smith, 1988, p.44). Success is claimed on the basis of short-term output measures: "Concerns that ought to be formulated in terms of the wealth of historical time, such as social, political, and fiscal policies, are posed and solved in terms of immediate needs. Judgments that should be based on long-term memory and expectations, and in full awareness of the plurality and ambiguity of human needs, are replaced by calculations." (Fraser, 1987, p.328) Thus, immediate gratification triumphs over intergenerational fairness (Frederickson, 1997, p.142). Career civil servants, who, by virtue of their position, have a longer time horizon, are limited by the short-time perspective of political officeholders.

Then there are the short-term causes (spanning a period of a few decades) that have long-term consequences. An excellent example of that is civil service reform in the United States, the desire for which increased between 1850 and 1880 and culminated in the Pendleton Act of 1883. The construction of the American interstate highway system is perhaps an even better example. Initiated by President Eisenhower, Congress adopted the Interstate Highway Act in 1956. It is probably impossible to capture the complex long-term outcomes of this decision for the economy, for social mobility, for road-safety (Light, 2002, p. 93), and so forth. Yet another

example is the relatively quick emergence in the U.S.A. of government intervention to alleviate the distress caused by the economic depression of the 1930s: it resulted in a welfare state. Hence, government actions grounded in short-term causes do result in long-term outcomes, but these, obviously, can only be assessed in retrospect. Hence, policy making can only be based on approximations of expected and/or desired long-term outcomes. What connects the two cells in the upper part of table 4 is the notion that most policy disputes about the proper role and position of government in society "…are in reality disagreements over the long run or the short run." (Smith, 1988, p.97) The more problems are politicized, the shorter the time horizon (Smith, 1988: 100). Politicization forces decision making away from considering long-term outcomes.

Napoleonic reforms that involved the parameter structure are an excellent example of long-term causes with short and long-term outcomes. For instance, the separation of church and state had been explored since the 12th century but was not codified as a principle until the late 18th century and, though to varying degrees, it still is fundamental to contemporary relations between church and state in the Western world (Raadschelders, 2002b, pp. 6-7). The same can be said for the idea to separate office and officeholder (and, as consequence, of politics and administration) so as to avoid nepotism and personal ownership of public property. This had been first suggested by Pope Leo I in the 5th century and by Martin Luther in the 16th century (cf. Moulin, 1965), but was not formally codified until the late 18th, early 19th century. The act of codifying this separation can be seen, on the one hand, as a short-term outcome of long-term causes, while, on the other hand, it can be regarded as a short-term cause with long-term outcomes (e.g., depoliticization and professionalization of the civil service). It is in the analysis of long-term causes that policy making is most deficient.

8. *Administrative History: From the Margins Back to the Mainstream*

P(p) A(a)dministration[5] cannot but deal with continuous changes in political, economic, social, and cultural contexts on the basis of varying, and often conflicting, perceptions of (the need for and the speed of) change. It is illusory, perhaps even arrogant, to think that the rate of change has accelerated in the past 30 years (see on this Raadschelders & Bemelmans-Videc, 2007: 279). This assessment overemphasizes the intensity of contemporary change and downplays that of earlier times. Is today's change really that much faster and larger in scope and intensity than the

changes in politics and administration during the 1780-1820 decades or than the unprecedented changes brought by the combined effects of industrialization, urbanization, and population growth during the 1860-1920 era? How can we measure this, taking into account that what is perceived as fast or rapid will vary from individual to individual? The idea that we live in a time of accelerated change speaks of a profound lack of understanding the nature of time and the study of public administration should inform the public and practitioners about the various ways that the past influences the present.

Administrative history is best suited to take up this task, but its position in the study of public administration is, at best, ambiguous. Historical analyses are not grist for the mill of mainstream public administration, because of a focus on solving current problems for a better future. This present-future orientation both in government and in the study is further compounded by a bias in favor of using statistical data and quantitative-statistical methods of analysis. To be sure, it is important to continue using statistical data and methods, but not as the only source of information for policy. Why not add longitudinal analyses that combine statistics (if available) with descriptive evaluations? While studies of administrative history continue to appear they generally lack in outlining their relevance for today, because systematic training in concepts, theories, and methods of administrative history is sorely missing. Make no mistake, administrative history as *l'art pour l'art* is important, but an effort should be made to connect historical and social scientific methods even when "Good social science and good history are hard to mix." (Ashford, 1991, p.362). This quote from Ashford may appear to contradict the statement that the gap between history and social science has been bridged in the past 50 years (Raadschelders, 2008: 26). As it is, both Ashford and Raadschelders are correct, but each at a different level. At the level of individual scholarship, history and social science have teamed up fruitfully as is illustrated by various publications. At the level of the study as a whole, though, any training in how to study the administrative past (i.e., combining history and social science) is absent. However, understanding the past in its (non-)relevance for the present and the future is not explored during pre-college years and, thus, to re-introduce administrative history in public administration's curricula will be a challenge (Gibson & Stolcis, 2006).

How can we bring administrative history from the margins back into the mainstream of the study? First, at the conceptual and perceptual levels it is necessary to be aware of the fundamental linear and cyclical nature of time (Gould, 1987, p.18).

Second, at a psychological level it is important to recognize individual attitudes toward change and how these influence positions that citizens and practitioners hold with regard to policies. What propels some people into embracing change and others into resisting it could simply be explained by age (young v. old, "eager or cautious"), or experience in a job (e.g., "it did not work then, why would it now?"), or a sense of security (i.e., "why fix what is not broken?"), or a (political, religious) belief in something,. Common sense, perhaps, but not systematically investigated in public administration. Whether and how it is in other social sciences is a question for another article.

Third, at the organizational level, undergraduate and graduate education can incorporate an historical perspective more systematically. The ways in which this can be done have been outlined elsewhere (Raadschelders, 2008). Education is vital. The current generation of practitioners and academics cannot be expected to work with a historical perspective when they were never familiarized with it. Historical knowledge will enable practitioners to inform policy on the basis of knowledge rather than belief (Box, 2008, pp. 86, 113) even when that knowledge is undesirable (see motto at opening of paper).

Finally, at the societal level awareness of the impact of the past should go beyond mere recitation of facts and events. The past can not be judged in terms of good, just, and beautiful versus the bad, unfair, and ugly. Such black-and-white perspectives either generate nostalgia for the past, complacency with the present, or yearning for a utopian future, that prohibit a nuanced consideration of what we want the future to be and how we want the future to become.

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Endnotes

[1] 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).

[2] In "A Short, Ironic History of American National Bureaucracy", *The Journal of Politics*, 44(3): pp.747-778, Michael Nelson discusses seven ironies in American bureaucratic history of before 1933.

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[3] 'Conversion' refers to the possibility of turning existing organizations or rules to new purposes.

[4] It is important to remember that in economics 'path-dependency' is a theory that explains counter-theoretical outcomes, while in political science is has become a "description of permanence, stasis, or tenacity…", see Bridges, 2000:110).

[5] Following Waldo who used 'Public Administration' when referring to the study and 'public administration' when meaning government.