

## Panel 6: Administrative History

Chaired by: Drs. Toon Kerkhoff (Leiden University), Prof. dr. Mark Rutgers, (University of Amsterdam) and Dr. Pieter Wagenaar (VU University Amsterdam),

### Introduction

The previous years we have organized an NIG panel around the question whether historians and social scientists studying the history of public administration could learn from one another. As we found out they actually could, we aim at repeating the exercise. Much, after all, can still be achieved by focusing on interdependency and exchange between these disciplines. Two year's ago a small website<sup>1</sup> and a discussion group on LinkedIn<sup>2</sup> have been launched to pursue these aims. Meeting face to face at least once a year remains a necessity though.

### The Panel: What did we aim for?

With a panel on Administrative History we had two main goals in mind. First, we aimed to present current work being done by scholars in the Netherlands on administrative history. While different departments of different Universities across the Netherlands are actively working on different aspects of Administrative History, much can be done to improve knowledge of each other's work. What, we wished to know from this panel, are people working on? Which questions are being asked? Which themes are being addressed? What methods are being developed? What conclusions are being drawn and can we learn from interdisciplinary approaches? The panel thus aims to promote interdependency and explore possibilities for enriching our ways of conducting research. The second aim of the panel was to increase our knowledge of public administration and politics in the Netherlands in past and present.

### A call for papers

Papers ideally followed the aforementioned two basic aims of the panel. First, this means that we especially welcomed contributions on methods of (comparative) historical research; interdisciplinary theoretical approaches and papers that might lead to discussions on the strengths and limitations of interdisciplinary approaches in administrative history and the current state of affairs within the discipline. Second, it means that we are especially welcoming papers on 'administrative history proper', defined as "*the study on origins or evolution of administrative ideas, institutions and practices*"<sup>3</sup> or as "*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*"<sup>4</sup>.

This broad definition offers plenty of possibilities for a wide variety of papers with an emphasis on structures and processes, organizations and institutions and individuals within public administration and politics. However, **we especially welcomed contributions** regarding the following theme:

***Historical perspectives on values, ethics and morality in Dutch public administration***

### Linkage to NIG research program sub-themes

The types of questions raised above are (or should be) obviously closely related to the general themes within the NIG research program. In principle, any understanding of present-day issues and questions stated in any of the three research themes can benefit much from a historical, comparative approach.

<sup>1</sup> [www.socialsciences.leiden.edu/publicadministration/research/ah-forum.html](http://www.socialsciences.leiden.edu/publicadministration/research/ah-forum.html)

<sup>2</sup> [www.linkedin.com/home](http://www.linkedin.com/home)

<sup>3</sup> Caldwell, Lynton K. (1955). The relevance of administrative history. *International Review of Administrative sciences*, 21, 455.

<sup>4</sup> Raadschelders, J.C.N. (1998). *Handbook of administrative history*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 7.