P03 / Traditions of Public Administration Research: Should they be Celebrated?

Topic : COMPARATIVE PUBLIC POLICY

Chair : Alasdair Roberts (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

Second Chair : Etienne Charbonneau (ENAP)

Third Chair : Chris Eichbaum (Victoria University of Wellington, NZ)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

In his 2014 Braibant lecture (Pollitt, 2015) Christopher Pollitt noted the existence of a multiplicity of administrative traditions, some long-standing but new entrants to the international and comparative conversation, and observed that there was now the potential for that conversation, while difficult, to be a rewarding one. The panel will examine four questions. The first is to consider whether such traditions exist, and the ways in which traditions differ -- such as the range of questions posed, and methods applied. The second question is whether these traditions are likely to persist, or whether they are fading as a result of the "globalization" of the scholarly enterprise -- that is, the homogenizing effects of globalized publishing, conferences, and academic hiring. The third question is whether the fading of traditions, if it is evident, should be regarded as a cause for concern. To put it any other way, should we be pluralists, celebrating diversity in approaches, or should we encourage global convergence? The fourth question: if we aim to be pluralists, how should we advance the conversation proposed by Pollitt in 2014? The panel will aim for gender balance and also representation from at least one major country outside the developed world, such as India.

Candler, Gaylord George. 2014. "The Study of Public Administration in India, the Philippines, Canada and Australia: The Universal Struggle against Epistemic Colonization, and Toward Critical Assimilation." Revista de Administração Pública 48 (5):1073-1093.

Charbonneau, Étienne, Luc Bernier, and Nicholas Bautista-Beauchesne. 2018. “Punching below its weight: Canadian public administration scholarship on the world stage.” Canadian Public Administration 61 (3): 359–382.

Gow, James Ian. 2009. "Evolution of Disciplinary and Paradigms in the Study of Public Administration in Canada." In The Evolving Physiology of Government: Canadian Public Administration in Transition, edited by O.P. Dwivedi, Tim A. Mau and Byron Sheldrick, 40-73. Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa Press.

Pollitt, Christopher. 2015. "Towards a New World: Some Inconvenient Truths for Anglosphere Public Administration." International Review of Administrative Sciences 81 (1):3-17.

0Roberts, Alasdair. 2017. "Our Asian Challenge." Governance 30 (4):537-539.

CALL FOR PAPERS

In his 2014 Braibant lecture (Pollitt, 2015) Christopher Pollitt noted the existence of a multiplicity of "administrative traditions" -- that is, distinct ways of thinking about the domain of public administration and engaging in practice within it. Some of these administrative traditions are very old, and some new. Some dominate the "mainstream" journals while some are neglected. Pollitt made the case for a conversation among administrative traditions, which he believed to be challenging but also potentially rewarding.

This panel will take up Pollitt's invitation to have a conversation about administrative traditions. We invite papers that address any of these four questions:

1. Whether such traditions exist, and the ways in which traditions differ -- such as conceptualizations of the field and its goals and problems, the range of questions posed in research, and methods applied.

2. Whether these traditions are likely to persist, or whether they are fading as a result of the "globalization" of the scholarly enterprise -- that is, the homogenizing effects of globalized publishing, conferences, and academic hiring.

3. Whether the fading of traditions, if it is evident, should be regarded as a cause for concern. To put it any other way, should we be pluralists, celebrating diversity in approaches, or should we encourage global convergence?

4. And if we aim to be pluralists, how should we advance the conversation proposed by Pollitt in 2014? For example, do our journals and conferences adequately represent major administrative traditions? How should we change these institutions to assure fair representation and encourage dialogue?

SOURCES:

- Candler, Gaylord George. 2014. "The Study of Public Administration in India, the Philippines, Canada and Australia: The Universal Struggle against Epistemic Colonization, and Toward Critical Assimilation." Revista de Administração Pública 48 (5):1073-1093.
- Charbonneau, Étienne, Luc Bernier, and Nicholas Bautista-Beauchesne. 2018. “Punching below its weight: Canadian public administration scholarship on the world stage.” Canadian Public Administration 61 (3): 359–382.
- Gow, James Ian. 2009. "Evolution of Disciplinary and Paradigms in the Study of Public Administration in Canada." In The Evolving Physiology of Government: Canadian Public Administration in Transition, edited by O.P. Dwivedi, Tim A. Mau and Byron Sheldrick, 40-73. Ottawa, ON: University of Ottawa Press.
- Pollitt, Christopher. 2015. "Towards a New World: Some Inconvenient Truths for Anglosphere Public Administration." International Review of Administrative Sciences 81 (1):3-17.
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Session 1Traditions of Public Administration Research

Friday, June 28th 10:30 to 12:30 (MB 2.255)

The Anglophone Administrative Tradition: viable or vulnerable?

John Halligan (University of Canberra)

Administrative traditions reflect values and principles that are influential in shaping structures, behaviours, and cultures (Painter and Peters 2010). An administrative tradition focus speaks to the culture of the countries' systems (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011).

The combination of the British tradition and the circumstances that emerged in different new world settings is the production of a set of shared components in this administrative tradition. These can be identified in terms of the relationship between public servants and politicians and two aspects of administrative and political culture and style: instrumentalism and pragmatism. The combination of elements is distinctive and has significant implications for the machinery of government, processes of change and relations with society.

In comparison with other traditions the areas of difference have continued to be in the handling of political-bureaucratic relations, the intensity of the focus on managerialism, the performance focus and the choice of instruments, including markets and contracts.

The Anglophone group continues as a tradition, if more ambiguously than before, which is acknowledged for its differences from other traditions, but less so. The underlying principles remain relevant (even if their application has changed). Anglophones were revered for their ability to reform public sectors, and interpretations dwelt on the conditions that allowed this to occur, but their approach is no longer the international model.

There are variations between the Anglophone countries on several dimensions, but politicisation is pronounced (more so in the federal systems) and in combination with managerialism continues to produce unintended consequences including system imbalances. Not unsurprisingly, bureaucratisation is also apparent. Consequently, an Anglophone tradition can still be recognised, but its identity has become more vulnerable.

Halligan, J. (2019), Reforming Public Management and Governance: Impact and Lessons from Anglophone Countries, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, forthcoming.
Painter, M. and B. G. Peters (eds.) (2010), Tradition and Public Administration, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
Pollitt, C. and G. Bouckaert (2011), Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis: New Public Management, Governance and the Neo-Weberian State, 3rded., Oxford University Press, Oxford.

A Transfer of Ideas Approach to the History of Public Administration: USA, Germany and France

Fritz Sager (University of Bern)

Céline Mavrot (University of Lausanne)

This paper proposes an innovative perspective on comparative research and theory in Public Administration. It provides an overview of the transfer of ideas between German, French, and U.S. Public

Administration during the 20th century, based on a wide range of primary sources from the three countries. In fact, largely uncontested assumption persists that the French, German, and U.S. intellectual traditions have followed distinct and separate ideational paths. However, evidence shows that these three classical administrative traditions have experienced significant exchanges and hybridizations. The chapter notably examines the question of the politics-administration dichotomy in the three countries, and offers a reflection on the changing conception of the trias politica across time. By going beyond a comparative perspective and proposing a transfer-of-idea approach, this chapter also provides a theoretical framework for a transnational analysis of the circulation of administrative and managerial ideas. The study period ranges from the end of the 19th century until the technological and neo-liberal turn in the 1970s.

By analyzing the hybridity of administrative traditions in the 20th century, the chapter presents a new approach to the history of ideas of Public Administration, which is also fully relevant the contemporary period. We argue that it is important to learn from the past in order to make Public Administration more realistic in theory and more context-sensitive in practice.

While New Public Management (NPM) doctrines were initially regarded “as a generic medicine” (Olsen 2006, 13), we know today that the success of administrative reforms depends on different political and administrative contexts. In this vein, critical reflections on concepts of public administration as well as the appropriate normative framework guiding evaluations and recommendations for reforms have gained ground. Empirical research revealing ambivalent effects of administrative reforms, the re-discovery of bureaucracy, and the continuing discussions on the crisis, transformation, or revival of the modern state have led to increasing uncertainty about the developments of administrative theory (Public Administration) and practice (public administration).

Comparative literature explains the failure of NPM against the background of its misfit with existing administrative traditions. In the sense of inherited ideas about the history of government in a specific national context, intellectual traditions are commonly regarded as cultural variations, historical legacies, or path dependencies. In our chapter, we contest the dominating perspective of path dependent national silos. We show that learning from other traditions in no way is a new phenomenon and has happened before NPM entered the stage. Therefore, we propose to conceive of intellectual administrative traditions as hybrid and open for exogenous ideas.

The paper is based on our book:

Sager, Fritz, Christian Rosser, Céline Mavrot, Pascal Y. Hurni (2018). A Transatlantic History of Public Administration. Analyzing the USA, Germany and France. Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar.

The Italian administrative tradition and the rejection of the neo-managerial reforms

Lorenzo Castellani (LUISS GUIDO CARLI)

The paper aims to analyze the Italian administrative tradition and its influence on administrative reforms. To accomplish it the paper traces the main characteristics of the Italian public administration which have been developed through its historical path. The research focuses particularly on the reaction of the administrative system to the neo-mangerial reforms attempted in the last three decades and it gives a wide picture, with a historical approach, of the Italian administrative system at the beginning of the twenty-first century.
The theme is relevant as the Italian state has always been characterized by high levels of political patronage and legalism with a substantial abuse of politics over the public administration that has hindered the formation of an effective and stable public administration. The paper looks into administrative reforms, with the tools of the institutional historian, and it demonstrates the prominence of the Italian administrative tradition over the paradigm of the New Public Management/Governance which shaped the reforms of the eighties, nineties and early 2000s.
The article investigates, with a historical approach, the development of the Italian public administration considering, on the background, the legacy of a hard process of political and administrative unification in the nineteenth century and a difficult State-building for the peculiarities of the Italian State’s history.

To achieve this aim the author uses as sources: laws, regulations, civil servants and ministries' diaries, parliamentary papers and debate.

The discovery of the Italian administrative tradition is a fundamental achievement to acquire an in-depth knowledge of the relationship between an international public management paradigm, as neo-managerialism was, and the peculiar characteristics of a national administrative system as shaped by its national history.

Faculty and Students in Public Affairs Education: Shaping Education and Practice through Scholarly Interests and Hiring Preferences

Adam Williams (University of Illinois Springfield)

Derek Slagle (University of Arkansas at Little Rock)

This study explores findings from data collected on doctoral dissertations and through a survey on hiring practices in higher education Public Affairs programs. The survey examines program and institutional preferences in candidate selection of future faculty in Public Affairs. Coupled with data on doctoral dissertations, the question of direction of the field and subsequent traditions for Public Administration is addressed. ProQuest Dissertation database is accessed for dissertations in 2000 and 2015 to explore the changes to Public Administration and Public Policy – defining the primary disciplines of Public Affairs – for changes to the focus of these dissertations. This discussion details the subject matter of these dissertations and how the discipline takes shape. Additional discussions are also provided on the differences in US and Canadian dissertations. Survey results further this discussion through the examination of American institutions and their shaping of the education of students of the discipline by identifying how those same students producing dissertations are evaluated. Furthermore, an evaluation of narratives pertaining to departmental and institutional expectations for faculty produce arguments on how the development of faculty aid in shaping the apparent ‘traditions’ in Public Affairs. Implications are explored for education, scholarship, and the practice of public administration and policymaking.