

**Tradition in the Study and Practice of Public Administration:
Explorations and the Case of Negotiable Authority**

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1. Introduction

The question of tradition in a generally forward looking study such as public administration is not at the top of the research interest because it might suggest that scholarship is less concerned with problem solving now than it is with the past. Nonetheless, two groups of tradition studies can be distinguished. Neo-institutional studies aim to develop theories of change using concepts, borrowed from biology, such as path dependency, punctuated equilibrium, and (especially when studying organizational development) adaptation and selection. These studies use the evolving historical-institutional context to explain development(s) up to the present. They are not particularly interested in tradition, though. A much larger group of research consists of historical-comparative studies (also: administrative history) and is mainly descriptive and, e.g., categorizes patterns of state making, of welfare state development, of policy development, etc.. Given that most of these categories assume continuity, this group of studies does consider tradition, but only implicitly.

In the past three decades attention for the impact of the administrative past has increased significantly (Fesler 1982). Missing are, as far as I know, explorations into the role/usefulness of 'tradition' in the study and the practice of public administration. In this paper I seek to provide such an exploration and focus mainly on the role that tradition plays in study (e.g., conceptual maps of development) and in practice (e.g., the influence it may have on policy and decision making). Tradition is a universal phenomenon but the only way that its impact can be assessed is by considering specific country and/or regional traditions.

The exploration in this paper is organized as follows. First, the intellectual roots of Western thought about tradition will be briefly discussed (section two). Next, examples are provided of how tradition is mapped in the study (section three). Against this background it is interesting to explore how tradition is used in the study as well as the practice of public administration (section four). Then I will discuss the two main conceptualizations of tradition, i.e. as conservative force and as starting point for change, in general as well specifically to public

administration (section five). Considering that the extent and limits of tradition's influence upon today should be considered, a brief case-study is presented on how authority has been conceptualized over time drawing upon an earlier publication (section six). Finally, I provide an overview of motives pro and contra for considering tradition as an element in the study and its curricula (section seven).

2. An Enlightenment Heritage: Tradition versus Progress and Reason

The conceptualization of tradition in the Western world is heavily influenced by the legacy of the Enlightenment period which regarded tradition and authority as something that stood in the way of reason and progress. At that point the rationalism of the natural sciences had been in ascendance for about two centuries, and by the 18th century its methods were perceived as equally desirable and attainable for the social sciences. Enlightenment philosophers held to the belief that human nature was the same at all time and place, thus necessitating the development of scientific methods and applying them to understanding social relations. Rationalists rejected the authority of revelation, sacred writings and their interpreters, tradition, and every form of non-rational, transcendent source of knowledge. They believed in universality, objectivity, rationality, and the capacity to provide permanent solutions to problems. Anyone with powers of observation and logical thinking had access to rational methods (Berlin, 2000:243, 263). Indeed, the first serious doubts about the existence of God and the objective(s) of organized religion emerged in the 18th century (Armstrong, 1993: 392; Paine, 1794:248).

The Catholic church and several authors of note objected to these Enlightenment principles, including Vico, Hamann, Herder, and Burke. Vico challenged the notion of universal culture. Hamann regarded rationalization as a distortion of reality. Herder advocated *Einfühlung* 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). Implicit in their critique was the notion that reason held history to be efficient, and that there was no need to consider the past when responding to challenges in the present and when charting a course for the future..

One important and enduring legacy of the Enlightenment was the notion of progress, reflecting a desire that civilization is ever moving forward and upward, never regressing. Any sign of stagnation or decline should be considered as 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 is 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 for diversity (e.g., various patterns of state making etc.) and change (e.g., the neo-institutional literature) than for continuity. 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 replaced by the concept of path-dependency in academic research (Raadschelders, 1998b). In the practice of everyday government, though, the notion of progress, understood as improvement is as strong as ever.

3. How is Tradition Mapped in the Study of Public Administration?

Conceptual maps provide a way of organizing and comparing potentially complex social realities and are developed on the basis of ‘what is’. Hence, in this section I focus on “tradition” in terms of “what is”.

A famous mapping of social development is Barrington Moore’s 1968-study of three paths toward modernity (i.e., liberal democracy, fascism, and communism). Where the paths he distinguished are clearly separate, the roads toward nationalism in modernity which Greenfeld (1992) analyzed are more intertwined (England, France, Germany, Russia, USA). A third example is of three traditions of conflict resolution: a ‘pyramid of people’ model where conflict between employees is first and foremost handled by managers (e.g., France), a ‘well-oiled machine’ model where conflict is resolved by following the rules (.g., Germany) and the ‘village market’ model where conflict is resolved by considering the specific situation at hand (e.g., the English-American model) (Hofstede & Hofstede (2005:244).

Perhaps the most familiar example in the public administration literature (including comparative politics and public policy studies) is the ‘families of state’ notion that includes, for instance, categories of the political culture, the legal system, the governmental and organizational structure, civil service system patterns and beliefs underlying welfare policy attitudes.

Based on an empirical study of five states (U.S., U.K., France, Germany, and Mexico) Almond & Verba (1963) distinguished between parochial, subject, and participant political cultures or traditions. In the parochial culture political roles are hardly differentiated from other social roles. In the subject culture role differentiation exists but the citizen is only passively

engaged. Finally, the participant culture is characterized by active and interactive relations between political institutions and citizenry at large. The latter was labeled as a homogeneous civic culture (US,+ UK) in contrast to the more fragmented and legalistic *Rechtsstaat* culture (continental Europe) that stresses the importance of formal rules. The *Rechtsstaat* tradition is also contrasted to the public interest tradition where the former is slower to reform than the latter (Pierre, 1995; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2000). Another well-known contrast is that between the Westminster (UK) and the consensus models (Belgium, Netherlands, Germany) of democracy, where the former are majoritarian and the latter are multi-party systems (Lijphart, 1999). With regard to positive law the Roman or civil law tradition (the latter concept used by Christensen & Wise, 2007:186-187), where law precedes justice, is contrasted to the common law tradition, where justice precedes law and which involves a much more prominent role for precedence. Characteristic for these three examples is that they are presented as analytical contrasts with countries mentioned by way of example. However, it appears that countries do serve as conduit in the initial formulation of such a contrast. What is more, the contrasts take on a stereotypical dimension. For instance, translating *Rechtsstaat* as constitutional state, is it reasonable to argue that the UK are less based on constituting laws than, say, France or Germany, or that formal rules are less important in the pluralist US than in, say, legalist Germany? With regard to contrasting Roman and common law traditions, it is clear that in countries originally dominated by common law, such as the U.K. and the U.S., Roman law or statute law (the latter only concerns regulation of large groups or society at large, while Roman law also includes regulation of interaction between individuals; Hurst, 1977:139) superseded common law (Page, 1995a, 25-29; Raadschelders, 2003:126-127) (for clarity, common law countries did have statute and Roman Law as well).

One of the best known traditional contrasts with regard to governments' organizational structure is that between Napoleonic, Germanic, and Anglo-Saxon states (e.g., Wunder, 1995). The Napoleonic model of administration is highly centralized, with a territory uniformly divided into general purpose jurisdictions, with an administration clearly separate from politics, and with a professionally trained civil service. The Germanic model does have such a professional civil service, works with a generally depoliticized civil service, has unified general purpose governments, but - a big difference with the Napoleonic model - operates upon a strong tradition of local self-government (see also Page, 1991). Finally, the Anglo-American tradition is one of strong local self-government, decentralized, with a mixture of general and specific purpose governments, and, different from the French and German models, a tradition of amateur civil service (that is, until the late 19th, mid-20th century). This type of categorization has been

extremely persistent, in part because the English and the French exported their governing tradition to the colonies (e.g., Durand, 2006). With regard to the British influence another category is available, namely Westminster systems (in contrast to, e.g., a presidential constitutional system such as the U.S.A.).

Zooming in on civil service systems and bureaucracy specifically, Page (1995b) distinguishes between six different patterns. In the Southern European pattern the civil service has low status and operates through extensive patronage in a legalist culture (e.g., Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Belgium). The Scandinavian pattern is one of a professional, non-politicized civil service that enjoys high status (Scandinavian, and the Netherlands). In the Germanic pattern civil servants enjoy high status, they are segmented according to agency, the higher ranks are politicized, and they are predominantly lawyers. The least politicized and not segmented senior civil service that of the British and Irish pattern. A big difference with other patterns is that the civil service concept refers only to the higher ranking bureaucrats. The French pattern is one of its own and is characterized by high status for civil servants, politicized top levels, and segmentation in *Grand Corps*. Finally, in the Eastern European countries are placed together that face the challenge of creating a new democratic administration (Page, 1995b:278-280). A comparable distinction based on commonality of political and legal tradition (or lack thereof) is made by Francis Castles: an English speaking family, a Scandinavian or Nordic family, a continental Western European family, and a Southern European family (1998:8-9). A truly global listing of 'major families and groups' was recently presented by Painter and Pierre (2007): Anglo-American, Napoleonic, Germanic, Scandinavian, Latin American, Post-Colonial South Asian & African, Confucian (East Asian), Soviet/Post Soviet, and Islamic. They observe that this categorization combines geographical, historical, and cultural features (Painter & Pierre, 2007:14).

With regard to welfare policies the literature appears to be dominated by Esping-Andersen's distinction between liberal, corporatist, and social-democratic welfare regimes (1990:2, 26-27, 52; see also Goodin et al., 1999). In liberal welfare states state support and social insurance plans are modest and private initiative is welcomed (e.g., US, Australia). In corporatist regimes the state provides welfare services but does rely upon group-based mutual aid for the distribution of services (e.g., Austria, Germany, France, Italy). Finally, in social-democratic regimes the state serves as the prime redistributor of welfare services. The liberal tradition is rooted in a culture of individualism while the corporatist and social-democratic traditions originate in collectivist cultures.

Characteristic for most of these conceptual maps (except Barrington Moore and

Greenfeld) is that they are rather static. First, they are developed in the present and then extrapolated into the past, instead of developed out of the past. Second, they assume that particular features of this extrapolated past are as relevant in the present. They do not and cannot take the dynamic of social change under consideration. Is the American public service still less legalistic than their French and German counterparts? Does the notion of an amateur civil service not clearly belong to the past (as argued by, e.g., Fischer & Lundgreen, 1975)? What do so-called Westminster systems have in common today other than having been colonized by the British Empire at some point in the past? Indeed, what remains varies from country to country, depending on whether a Westminster tradition was transferred (as in Australia and New Zealand) or whether it was implanted (as in commonwealth countries with an indigenous population) (Patapan & Wanna, 2005:249). Whatever the object of conceptual maps, most appear to be based on the assumption that traditions of administrative and political culture persist. Whether a conceptual map is presented in terms of analytical categories or geographical regions, it seems that shared or intertwined geography, language, and history determines to which family a state belongs. Such an approach categorizes governing traditions as a whole. But, what about the possibility that multiple administrative traditions may exist across levels of government, across policies, across organizations, across political ideologies, and that there may well be multiple sectoral-professional traditions (Yesilkagit, 2007:11-12)? The latter is especially important in a time that the boundaries between public, semi-public and private sectors are not as clear as they seemingly were before. A final characteristic is that public administration scholars use but do not appear to generate conceptual maps. That is left to the political science colleagues. Hence, why I conclude for the moment that in the study of public administration tradition is not an object of systematic, empirical research.

4. How is Tradition Perceived and Used in the Practice of Government?

There is one more 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? (see also section six below) Assuming that tradition

itself does not form but only communicates agreement, it is insufficient to explain why people agree (Lindblom, 1988b:131; see also section six). 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 a tribe 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 living in the same territory as citizens. 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 bicentennial 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 referring to an age of prosperity, tradition and community (Nisbet, 1975:118). A Golden Age often characterizes a period with presumed very low levels of uncertainty about behavior and morals. This IT is based in a nostalgia that idealizes the past and undermines an intelligent use it (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' such as 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. (which, as far as I know, is the only example of such an oath for a citizenry at large).

5. 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) (section three) and that probes the role and meaning of IT (section four) 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). How these three mechanisms operate is nicely illustrated in two case studies. When studying tradition, though, 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 (section two) 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, or the tradition of accepting authority when its exercise is rooted in law. 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 or 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. Dror argued that incrementalism reinforces the "...pro-inertia and anti-innovation forces prevalent in all human organizations." (1964:155). In the same vein, 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. The process of rigorously validating existing knowledge and methods had been common practice in the world of science since the 16th century. 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 two) and 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 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, 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.

6. Negotiable Authority: A New Legitimizing Tradition?

Enlightenment’s rationalism embraced the possibility of discovering truth and predicting future events so that human comprehension of and control over reality could be enhanced. The Enlightenment’s concept of Truth was inspired by the discovery of universal, inanimate, and irreversible laws of nature. With regard to social phenomena it was expected that the discovery of comparable social laws would only be a matter of time. This hope remained strong well into the late 19th century. In his Rede Lecture the British political historian E.A. Freeman declared in 1872 that the discovery of universal social laws (i.e. grand theory) was imminent, to be expected within a decade (Lijphart, 1971:687; Momigliano, 1986: 237-238). Lacking such discoveries social scientists settled for middle-range theories from the mid-20th century on. Perhaps the closest to a lawlike generalization (n.b., not a universal law) is the notion of spontaneous control of which Adam Smith’s invisible hand and Michael Polanyi’s and Charles Lindblom’s mutual adjustment are examples. The analyses available so far of the mechanism of the market’s invisible hand and the political system’s mutual adjustment overlook one feature common to modern, mostly Western, political-administrative systems: whatever is decided now is potentially

subject to discussion again tomorrow. Whatever is negotiated to an authoritative conclusion today, can be - and in today's understanding of democracy: ought to be - renegotiated to another authoritative conclusion if and when people (i.e., political and administrative officeholders, citizens) find that changing social, economic, political, etc., consequences warrant such renegotiation. Hence, human beings in modernity solve and resolve their social challenges through *negotiable authority*.

The question what this has to do with tradition will be discussed below through the lens of the, admittedly idealistic, political theory of pluralist democracy. The possibility that the legitimate use of authority serves purposes of coercion and subjugation, a more cynical perspective, is discussed elsewhere (e.g., Tilly, 1985). How authority as distribution of power balances out with authority as coercion in disguise varies from system to system and will not be addressed in this paper simply because, as far as I know, any empirical material on this is non-existent (hence, an important research agenda item). As for using the lens of pluralist democracy, I assume this not only to be relevant to the US but to all Western democracies since the governments in each of these countries has increasingly had to learn coping with multiple publics.

Above I observed that tradition as an object of study is neglected in public administration. An example of that neglect is the study of (administrative) authority. Authority, generally perceived as a force of tradition, has been mainly defined in terms of hierarchy. The last serious study of authority in public administration is that of Peabody (1964) comparing definitions of Weber, Urwick, Simon, Bennis, and Presthus who focused on supervisor-subordinate relations. For all intents and purposes, Weber's three idealtypes of authority (traditional, charismatic, and legal) are hierarchical because each of these types considers authority in the context of relations between those who govern and the governed.

From a historical point of view, and until recently, authority was accepted as authoritative because it was grounded in a master narrative that operated "...as the unchallenged first principles of a political order, making any given hierarchy appear natural and just to rulers and ruled." (Migdal, 1999:213, 230). That master narrative or, as Siedentop called it (2001:189), moral identity, in the Western world was a combination of Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman values and beliefs. Some argue that this master narrative of the Western world has come under the pressure of multi-ethnicity and religious pluralism. If that is the case the question arises whether the traditional hierarchical conceptualization of authority, in the context of a uniquely Western master narrative, sufficiently captures what is nowadays regarded as authoritative?

To answer that question we need to consider the definition of authority. Conceptions are

not static but emerge over and are molded in time (Raz, 2001:66). In the case of authority I argue that there are at least four different traditions in the conceptualization of authority (for extensive discussion and references see Raadschelders & Stillman, 2007). When defined in terms of formal or informal hierarchy, authority is regarded as a property (of an expert, or of an officeholder). This understanding of authority as property has its roots in the earliest sedentary societies. From the earliest up to contemporary public administration literature (17th century) authority is basically understood and defined in terms of property.

A second meaning, also originating in ancient times, is that authority can only be exercised in a special designated space or place (Lincoln, 1994:138). We still pass laws in a legislative chamber; adjudicate in a court of law; confer an academic degree at a university; marry before the magistrate and/or in church, etc., etc. In other words, this meaning of authority continues to be relevant as well.

A third meaning of authority emerges when, in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, the notion of sovereign people takes hold in political theory. The first and second traditional meanings of authority are rather static, expressed as a legal manifestation in the abstract (authority as property of office), as a manifestation of personal expertise (property of individual), and as exercised in designated (i.e., authoritative) places. The notion of authority as people, and especially authority as emanating from the participation of multiple publics in public policy making, results in a more dynamic meaning of authority without, though, discarding the traditional definitions of property and place.

The notion of multiple publics leads, almost automatically, into the fourth meaning of authority, unique to modern times, that considers authority in terms of authoritative process. Specifically, "...whatever is regarded as authoritative in contemporary Western society is only so regarded because it is subject to negotiation." (Raadschelders & Stillman, 2007:26). That is, the authority of decisions rests upon publicly announced consent and enduring acknowledgment (Gadamer, 1989:127). The importance of negotiation in the management of the public realm has been observed in various settings and disciplines. Nisbet, for instance, wrote that the Western sense of law is one that reflects reality and serves as a means of creating reality (1975:172). In the same year Pressman wrote (in a study about the relation between federal grants and city politics) that: "Donor and recipient need each other, but neither has the ability to control fully the actions of the other. Thus, the aid process takes the form of bargaining between partly cooperative, partly antagonistic, and mutually dependent sets of actors." (1975, pp. 105-106). Studying solid waste policy in Spokane, Luton noticed that "In this system, no one element has sufficient power to control the system's overall response to a given problem. To the question of

who governs the answer is everyone does. In this system, everyone is interconnected (1996:261). Recent studies of networks emphasize interaction rather than competition. Network processes are less characterized as "...a competitive market than a negotiated network." (Kettl, 1993, in Light 2003:168). Or consider Charles Lindblom who argues that mutual adjustment (MA) is open-ended while hierarchy seeks closure, that MA is fed by ideas and initiatives from each participant while hierarchies operate upon narrow channels of input, that decisions made through MA remain open to challenge while hierarchies tend to dignify decision as right and final, and that "MA has its sleeves rolled up; hierarchy has its shirt stuffed." (Lindblom, 1994:211-212). The civil servant is no longer only the executor of political wishes, nor just a policy expert, but also a midwife mediating between stakeholders and facilitating cooperative/collaborative solutions to complex social problems (Catlaw, 2006). The literature increasingly recognizes the importance of bureaucrats as process managers (Koppenjan & Klijn 2003:203-210). But the literature does not acknowledge that authoritativeness today depends upon rather indeterminate processes of mutual adjustment which only acquire authority when integration of rather than compromise between different viewpoints is achieved upon the tacit understanding that any decision can be reviewed again.

The traditional meanings of authority as property and place have been augmented with authority as people (in the abstract) and with authority as process (concretely). The abstract notion of people as sovereign became concrete, first, with enfranchisement of the adult population (1850s-1920s) and then with increased opportunities for participation in policy making (since the 1960s). The contemporary definition of authority is compound: property and place are as important as people and process. Hierarchy is still a necessity in the organization of large and middle-sized public agencies. The idea that policy and decision making are authoritative only when its process is one of negotiable authority has not replaced bureaucracy. Given the involvement of bureaucratic experts in policy and decision making, bureaucracy is much less at odds with Weberian procedural rationality than it seems. Indeed, since the 1880s bureaucracy has taken on many new responsibilities, several of which have been suggested and pursued by civil servants (Carpenter, 2001; Van der Meer & Raadschelders, forthcoming).

The concept of authority has expanded beyond being defined in terms of property and place, to include people, and - finally - to acknowledge process. Nowadays, the exercise of authority is only considered authoritative (i.e., legitimate) when

- a) formal procedures of interaction (i.e., decision making at constitutional level and the structure of the decision making arena at the collective level) are subject to discussion and agreement,
- b) the process of network interaction (i.e., the operational level) is open to anyone who expresses

the desire to participate, and

c) participants know that any decision can be renegotiated when circumstances warrant such.

This is what I called negotiable authority (2003:57-59) and for which a theoretical framework was developed to support empirical research (Raadschelders & Stillman (2007). The study of how authority, as a compound concept of property, place, people, and process, is manifest and used in the public sector is only in its infancy. A dynamic view of what makes contemporary public authority authoritative should include attention for actors other than the top-level political and administrative officeholders. Steps in that direction have been taken by Page & Jenkins (2005) but, given the notion of multiple publics, citizens should also be included.

7. Attention for Tradition: The Administrative Past providing Wisdom and Understanding

Attention for traditions in the administrative past vary from country to country and vary over time, but it is fair to say that there is significantly more attention for this in Europe (that is, in the descriptive administrative history) than in the United States. This was not always so. The founding fathers (Nisbet, 1975:77) and 19th century practitioners and scholars (Raadschelders, 2000b:503-504) in the U.S.A were very sensitive to understanding the past and to developing an American tradition of governing. In fact, American scholars and public servants frequently used historical perspectives up to the 1930s (Raadschelders, 2000b:518). In this section the changing American attitude toward tradition is considered and arguments pro and contra the use of tradition are provided.

America's unity is not primarily based in shared history or ethnicity but in common politically defined rights and obligations (Mead, 1986:256). Lippmann noted that the American immigrants generally left behind the old landmarks of class, culture and country, breaking through the continuity of life (1929:57-58). Americans today are taught about the colonial days of the 17th and 18th centuries, about the Westward expansion and the Civil War in the 19th century, and about the *Pax Americana* in the 20th century. But, that kind of memory appears only to fuel nostalgia for the good old days of real community in the colonies, the heroism and sacrifice involved in advancing the frontier, in protecting the union, and in America's expected leadership in the international arena even at a time that this is only reluctantly accepted.

Since the 1940s the verdict delivered upon America's appreciation of the past is relentlessly consistent. Hofstadter believed 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: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 present and future of society (Lasch, 1991:118). In his 1991-study he called nostalgia the ideological twin of progress, weakening the inclination to provide for the future (1991:80-83). To date, many Americans, including many incumbents of political and administrative office, are alleged to be ‘aggressively ahistorical’ (Sykes, 1992:29) and 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 more attention for tradition and for administrative history, both in academic research and curricula and in policy and decision making arenas of the real world is advocated. Especially in the real world, the big question is whether and how citizens and public servants can 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 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). In their view knowledge of history provides wisdom and understanding of time and context. One of its faculty members wrote an extensive comparative and historical study of government (Wilson, 1892; Raadschelders, 2002).

Following the calls for an administrative science in the 1930s, American 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 in this area throughout the 20th century (see Raadschelders, 2000b; Raadschelders et al., 2000). It was, however, considered outside the mainstream of the study. In the past three decades the call for more administrative history has intensified. Why I do not know, but arguments pro and contra its inclusion in public administration curricula and praxis are summarized in Table 1.

[table 1 about here]

8. Concluding Remarks

Can we use the past and its traditions intelligently? The concept of a 'usable past' was perhaps first used by Van Wyck Brooks in a 1918 article entitled 'On Creating a Usable Past' (as referenced in Lasch, 1991:353). It was again used by John Gaus in a 1930 book titled *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 (Stivers, 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 an acceptable solution to social problems, administrative history was considered instrumental to that objective (Caldwell, 1955:458; Hume, 1980:436). There was some debate as to whether the study of the past and its traditions can and should be expected to provide such usable knowledge or lessons, or whether one should settle, instead, for a notion of 'usable past' that underlines its potential for wisdom and understanding, i.e. as a civilizing and liberating influence. The past, memory, and history (cf. Brändström et al., 2004) may not provide theory in a positivist, natural-science sense, but it is most certainly part of each individual's theory or world view. What is regarded as scientific theory in a narrow sense is a-contextual and a-historical, expressed in mathematical and statistical models since only these are 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 recently defended the thesis that we are in the midst of an epochal change, comparable to the transitions from Antiquity to Middle Ages, to the Renaissance and to (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 and others believe that attention for governing traditions, and thus administrative history, should be part of such a framework. But this does not mean that positivist approaches to

understanding government and governance must be discarded as a dream belonging to the (Enlightenment's) past. Quite the contrary. If anything, the Enlightenment's service to contemporary scholarship is a strong belief in rational methods. It is up to contemporary scholars to probe how traditional conceptualizations of knowledge and of scholarship (cf. the German *Wissenschaft*) can be profitably fused with rationalist and positivist traditions (cf. the English *science*) (see on this, e.g., Raadschelders, 2005). The empirical study of negotiable authority can use both hermeneutic and rationalist traditions. So far, these two traditions attract protagonists, each claiming to be superior. However, to understand the power and limitations of negotiable authority a productive way of interaction between different research traditions must be pursued. Without such interaction, public administration scholarship will suffer from a rather petty debate about methods and will not acquire understanding of, for instance, the nature of authority and tradition in the public realm.

Table 1 *Arguments Pro and Contra attention for Administrative Traditions*

<i>Arguments</i>	<i>....For....</i>	<i>....and Against</i>
<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 (Steinmo & Thelen, 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, 1987:7)

<i>for All</i>	political-administrative traditions partly fashion national culture (Raz, 2001:31; Scheffler, 2007)	tradition inhibits innovation and focuses on the short term (Dror, 1964; Etzioni, 1967).
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