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Adams contends that the American cultural preoccupation with modernity has shaped the study of public administration into an statistical and temporal field that stresses technical commonality and has limited capacity to address critical questions facing society. This approach to public administration puts its emphasis on professionalism and the " scientific" and " rigorous" study of the field. Adams calls for greater attention to history that produces a " genuinely open inquiry" in the field.

Much has been written in the last decade on knowledge and theory development in the field of American public administration (White, 1986; Ventures, 1987; Hummel, 1991; Box, 1992; McCarty and Clearly, 1984; Perry and Kramer, 1986). Although beneficial, none of these analyses has taken a self-consciously historical approach to questions of knowledge and theory development in public administration.' This article seeks to place this discourse in its historical context. The most important aspect of the historical context is the culture at large within which American public administration is practiced, researched, and taught.

Today, the culture at large may be characterized as one of modernity (Turner, 1990; also Bernstein, 1985; Banana, 1989; and Rabbinical, 1990). Modernity is the culmination of a centuries-long process of modernization. Intellectual strands of modernity reach back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but as the beefing characteristic of our own culture, modernity coalesced only within the past century. Modernity describes a social, political, and economic world increasingly characterized by "... Acculturation, the universalistic claims of instrumental rationality, the differentiation of the various spheres of the life-world, the bureaucratically of

economic, political and military practices, and the growing modernization of values" (Turner, 1990, p. 6). Our culture of modernity has as one of its chief constituents technical rationality (Barrett, 1979)- Technical rationality is a way of thinking and living that emphasizes the scientific-analytical mindset and the belief in technological progress. In the United States, the cornerstone of technical rationality was laid down just before and during the Progressive Era (1896-1920).

A confluence of two streams occurred during this period which unleashed a flood of ideas and practices into the social and political world (Webb, 1967, up. 145-163). One of the two streams emerged from the then recent history of epistemology in Western culture. This first stream was the scientific-analytical mindset that was the legacy of seventeenth century Enlightenment thinking. The second stream was the product of the Great Transformation of the nineteenth century and comprised the technological progress characteristic of this period of industrialization with its unparalleled succession of technological developments.

Public Administration Review ; July/August 1992, Volvo. 52, No. 4 In this article, I examine the state of historical scholarship within the field of public administration. The development of technical rationality, along with professionalism and the emphasis on science and efficiency are closely examined. I suggest that the belief system of technical rationality accounts for the persistent temporarily of social science in general and public administration in particular.

The implications of temporarily for knowledge and theory development in public administration are discussed. In spite of considerable historical research, the field of public administration continues to echo themes of technical rationality in repeated calls for professionalism and for more "rigorous" and "scientific" research. The identity question of public administration is linked to the culture at large as comprising both a political dimension and an epistemological dimension.

Given the satirical context of modernity, a context of technical rationality, the prospects for knowledge and theory development in public administration are discussed, and ways in which historical analysis can offer a renewed, critical perspective on the field of public administration are suggested. Historical Scholarship in Public Administration Attention to the historical roots of public administration has ebbed and flowed in the last half century. Dwight Wallow's *The Administrative State* (1948) is clearly the seminal work on the larger cultural context of American public administration.

Well into the post-World War II era, those joking to public administration history found little enough beyond Leonard White's four volumes (1948, 1951, 1954, 1958) on the development of public administration institutions, although Paul Van Ripper's *History of the U. S. Civil Service* (1958) appeared in the same year as White's last volume. The decade of the sass saw the publication of Frederick Mosher's *Democracy and the Public Service* (1968), along with two historical studies of the civil service (Hegemony, 1961; Ransom, 1964).

The benchmarks of the past were David Held's *Federal Service and the Constitution* (1971) and a pair of articles, one by Linton Caldwell (1976) and the other by Barry Kari (1976), in the bicentennial issue of *Public Administration Review*. An important book by Stephen Kerosene, *Building a New American State* (1982), appeared early in the next decade but received spotty attention in the public administration literature. Later in the same decade, Ralph Chandler's *A Centennial History of the American Administrative State* (1987) represented a significant contribution.

Some of the more recent research on the historical development of public administration has focused on the Founding Period, which is one of the key periods for the understanding of contemporary public administration. John Rorer's (1986 and 1985) work on the constitutional basis for public administration is a prominent example. Some have appropriately focused attention on the writing of Alexander Hamilton, who stands out among the founders for his attention to matters related to public administration, and certainly for his relevance to the later development of public administration (Green, 1990; Caldwell, 1990).

The tension between democracy and administration, both as they were construed in the American founding and as their meaning has altered wrought time, has powerfully affected how the public sector in the United States has evolved. A recent article by Laurence Toolod, Jar. (1987) illustrates how this tension manifested in the doctrines of separation of powers beginning with the Founding Period and later in the Progressive Era in the politics-administration dichotomy.

The linkage between the Founding Period and the Progressive Era has also been emphasized in two pieces by Jeffrey Sedgwick (1987 and 1986), which focuses on similarities in the theories of administration between the founders and Woodrow Wilson. Both of these articles show clearly the relevance of these historical periods for contemporary thought in public administration. The focus here on modernity suggests further discussion of the period just before and during the Progressive Era.

The Progressive Era: A Second Hamiltonian System The dominant image of the Progressive Era, the period from 1896-1920, is perhaps still that of the age of reform (Hovercrafts, 1955). The Progressive Era was a time of popular outrage against the depredations of big business, social ills, and exploitation of all kinds. The result was a wave of progressive reform: child labor legislation, minimum wage, women's suffrage, direct election of senators, income tax, trust busting, as well as eliminating patronage, instituting clean government, and regulating industry. The image obscures as much as it reveals.

The Progressive Era saw Jeffersonian language emphasizing a laissez-faire, limited government used by conservative businessmen (especially small businessmen) (Weinstein, 1968). The reformers, on the other hand, used Hamiltonian language, promoting an active, assertive national government in the service of not just economic aims but social principles as well. The Progressive aim was a Hamiltonian national government in the service of Jeffersonian ideals. In many instances, this was altered in practice to become a Hamiltonian national government with Jeffersonian rhetoric in the service of commercial interests.

Gabriel Kola (1963) aptly called this age of "reform," the "triumph of conservatism." Clientele agencies such as the Department of Commerce, which was formed in 1913, straightforwardly served their "client's" interests. Regulatory agencies, created in response to public outcry, often became, to all intents and purposes, client agencies of the regulated (M. Nelson, 1982). The Progressive Era Legacy for Public Administration Considerable attention has been paid in the public administration literature to the Progressive Era (Caddie, 1984; Chandler, 1987; Kari, 1987; W.

Nelson, 1982; Setter, 1988; Stimulant, 1991; and Ventures, 1987). This period of time is widely acknowledged as the beginning of public administration as a field of study, with Woodrow Wilson, a prominent Progressive himself, almost universally cited as the founder of modern public administration (Walker, 1990; Link, 1964). However, the 20-year period before the Progressive Era Public Administration Review * July/Augustness, Volvo. 2, No. 4 (1877-1896), during which the civil service reformers were active, must also be included as central to the development of modern public administration (Reasonable, 1971).

The civil service reformers set the stage for important developments which came together later in the Progressive Era. Two of the strongest historical analyses (Webb, 1967; Kerosene, 1982) use 1877 as a beginning date and 1920 as an end date. There is no inclination here to conflate long term historical trends definitively within the 20-year bounds of the Progressive Era. The end of the Reconstruction period in 1877 and the close of World War I in 1920 represent about as clearly defined boundaries as one can achieve with historical analysis.

With some noteworthy exceptions, however, most contemporary public administration literature leaps immediately from Willow's time to the New Deal era of the sass, or to the World War II period, when, it is thought, institutions and practices that most closely resemble the present ones came together (Henry, 1990). Most often in the contemporary literature, a ritual mention of Wilson is followed by a jump to the present time with no historical analysis at all. The legacy of the period before and during the

Progressive Era for contemporary thought in public administration is considerably greater than is generally acknowledged. Laurence Toolod, Jar. , (1984) persuasively argues that basic reform principles and practices endemic in the public administration literature date from the Progressive days. The "new public administration," he states, rather than springing De novo from the ethos of the sass, shares the same ideology of reform that was elaborated at the turn of the century. I contend that the fundamental trajectory of knowledge and theory development in public administration dates from the opened 1877-1920 as well.

The broad structural and ideological outlines of the modern welfare liberal state came together in the Progressive Era, rather than much later as the conventional wisdom has it. As Weinstein (1968) puts it, "... The political ideology now dominant in the United States, and the broad programmatic outlines of the liberal state (known by such names as the New Freedom, the New Deal, the New Frontier and the Great Society) were worked out and, in part, tried out by the end of the First World War" (p. 'x).

A similar argument, made in part by Kerosene (1982; also Lusting, 1982) holds for public administration. The basic armaments and trajectory of the field became visible during the period just before and during the Progressive Era, and the evolution of public administration since that time, both in practice and in thought, has not deviated significantly from that framework. Kerosene analyzes the reconstitution of the federal government during this period, reaching back to the end of reconstruction in 1877 for the beginnings of this process (see Highs, 1987).

This transformation began as patchwork efforts to repair first one area and then another, often in response to the political pressure brought to bear by one or another socially powerful group. These efforts often went awry (M. Nelson, 1982). After the watershed presidential election contest of 1896 between Bryan and McKinley, however, a more enthralled with modernity movement so to speak in the contemporary literature, a ritual mention of fission scaffolds by a jump to the present time with no historical analogy at all. Systematic reconstruction was undertaken.

Thus, the federal government, according to Kerosene, was reconstructed during the Progressive Era to serve new goals and interests that were growing more and more important. The themes of this reconstruction were 1) the promise of a new democracy, 2) the embrace of corporate conservatism, 3) the lure of professionalism, and 4) the quest for administrative rationality (Kerosene, 1982, p. 18). Technical Rationality and Professionalism The scientific-analytic mindset and technological progress which combined during the Progressive Era unleashed a powerful current of technical rationality and professionalism.

Impressed by the tremendous achievements of science and technology in the physical world, the Progressives naturally wanted to apply them in the social and political world, to achieve science-like precision and objectivity in these spheres as well (Bened, 1956; Grabber, 1987). Technical rationality led irresistibly to specialized, expert knowledge, the very life blood of the professional, and then to the proliferation of professional associations in the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries (Larson, 1977).

Without the legitimacy derived from specialized knowledge, the professional could not have gained the social status nor the autonomy and control over the practice of the profession, which are the ultimate goals, even if sometimes unstated, of every profession. The compartmentalizing of knowledge demanded by technical rationality also inevitably led to a contexts, or timeless, practice (egg. , witness the lack of historical consciousness across the professions and disciplines. The practice of a profession with little or no sense of context has precluded meaningful engagement with the larger ethical and political sconces of a society (Grouchier- Ramose, 1981). That is to say, professionalism, fed and nurtured by technical rationality, led inexorably to a naked public square. This is the antipollution dimension of modernity (Aren't, 1954). It is important to note that the Progressives and the civil arrive reformers who preceded them were not uniform in their thought (Noble, 1938, 1970; White, 1957).

Many differences in their thinking were interwoven in their debates. James Setter's (1990, 1986) work, for example, points to the tension between organic idealism and scientific pragmatism, which is visible both in Woodrow

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Willow's (1887) writing and Mary Parker Fillet's (1918) work, a moon g others. Nonetheless, technical rationality, with its emphasis on the application of scientific method and procedure, won the day (Miller and O'Leary, 1989).

The modern model of professionalism was conceived ND tried out in the period just before and during the 365 Tile scientific-analytical mindset, then, represents neoprene of the confluence that occurred in the Progressive Era; technological developments comprised the other. Progressive Era as well. The development of professional associations of all kinds began in the mid-nineteenth century, at first more rapidly in England and then in the United States (Larson, 1977, p. 246).

The characteristics of professions, which were filly visible around the Tums of the century, include a professional association, a cognitive scientific base, institutionalized training (usually thin higher education), licensing, work autonomy, colleague control, and a code of ethics (Larson, 1977, p. 208). Larson emphasizes the connection between the development of professionalism and the broader process of modernization , "... The advance of science and cognitive rationality and the progressive differentiation and rationalization of the division of labor in industrial societies" (p. lii). Modernity and Technical Rationality In the context of modernity, technical rationality is the convergence of the scientific-analytical mindset and technological progress (Tumor, 1990). Beginning in the Progressive Era, it was applied to the social world and placed on the political agenda. Technical rationality is quite similar to " functional rationality" as described by Karl Anaheim (1940).

Anaheim saw functional rationality as the logical organization of tasks into smaller units, originally in the Interest of efficiency.

Anaheim contrasted this with " substantive rationality," the ability to understand the purposeful nature of the whole system of which a particular task is a part. Technical rationality is also closely akin to the notion of " instrumental reason" discussed by Max Herkimer (1947). Instrumental reason is the narrow application of human reason solely in the service of instrumental aims. Until the modern era, reason was conceived as a process incorporating ethical and normative concerns as well as the consideration of merely instrumental aims.

In the public administration literature, similar points have been made by Alberta Grouhier-Ramose (1981). Recent History of Epistemology To understand how technical rationality became pervasive in the social and political world, and therefore in the public administration world as well, a brief look at the recent history of epistemology may help. By the time of the vehement century Enlightenment, science, as physical science, had emerged on the scene and had begun to exert a powerful influence.

Epistemology became preoccupied with a quest for the stubborn and irreducible facts of existence. By the eighteenth century, the split between European and Noncommercial epistemology and philosophy had begun to be visit- able (this split has blurred considerably more recently). European philosophy may be represented as a series of attempts to resuscitate epistemology and metaphysics from the problems posed by science and its method of empiricism (Hegel, 1965; Heidegger, 1926; Nietzsche, 1956).

Noncommercial philosophy, in contrast, may be represented as a series of attempts to reconstruct the sciences of philosophy according to the insights of science and its method (Whitehead and Russell, 1910; Wittgenstein, 1922). In our culture, the scientific-analytical mindset captured the way we thought, and the study of epistemology was largely reduced to commentaries on the history of science. The scientific-analytical mindset, then, represents one part of the confluence that occurred in the Progressive Era; technological developments comprised the other.

The Confluence of Science and Technology The astonishing succession of technological developments during the Great Transformation of the nineteenth century provided the physical, tangible embodiment of the sheer power of scientific thinking. What could have been more convincing? What could have been more plausible than to apply technical rationality to the social world in order to achieve science-like precision and objectivity?

Frederick Taylor found a ready audience for the notion of scientific management during the Progressive Era (Noble, 1977; Merle, 1980; Huber, 1964). Technical rationality became the vehicle of hope in the social and lattice world and created a wave that before World War II prompted new professionals, managers, behaviorists, social scientists, and industrial psychologists toward a world view in which human conflicts appeared as problems fit for engineering solutions (Benedict, 1956; Jill, 1954).

By the present time, as William Barrett stated (1979, p. 229): it would be silly for anyone to announce that he is 'against' technology, whatever that might mean. We should have to be against ourselves in our present historical

existence. We have now become dependent upon the increasingly complex and interlocking network of reduction for our barest necessities. The Persistent Temporality of Public Administration The tendency to ignore and downplay history and context is not unique to public administration.

This impoverished historical consciousness is found across the professions and academic disciplines and, more broadly, is deeply embedded in the culture at large (Smith, 1990). That part of the belief system of modernity which finds expression in technical rationality is fundamentally temporal. Borrowing its approach from Turn-of-the-century physical science, social science remains eminently committed to the notion of developing knowledge or certainty through temporal causality (or the closest available approximation thereto) (Falconer and Williams, 1985).

Human action is to be explained through the development of general laws and models independent of Public Administration Review ; July/Augustness, Volvo. 52, No. 4 time and space. There is, in this view, no need to include history and culture in accounts of human behavior. This somewhat bald and radical statement of method is only rarely the overt, stated methodological or epistemological perspective of current-day researchers in social science and in public administration (McCarty and Clearly, 1984, p, 50), However, it remains deeply embedded in the culture at large.

Although there may be impediments and some accommodations may be needed, the application of scientific method should yield up certain knowledge (or at least knowledge as certain as possible). This belief represents a root assumption of modernity within American culture and

helps account for public administration's persistent temporarily, which logically entails a diminished place for historical analysis, an approach concerned fundamentally with time.

Diminished Historical Consciousness in Public Administration I do not wish to suggest that the scientific method was adopted within public administration at the turn of the century and little has changed since then. There have been large differences within the practice of research as to what "science" and "scientific method" have meant. What has remained constant is the scientific-analytic mindset, the attachment to application of scientific method, however defined, as the best way to knowledge by most researchers in the field.

At the turn of the century, doing science meant in part the application of the new method of tactics,' Richard Ely (1982, p, 282) in his founding statement in 1886 for the American Economic Association called for the application of statistics, while William Allen (1907) exalted the role for statistics further: At first glance there is hope in the far-reaching remedies suggested: universal education, referendum, manual training, proper home surroundings, opportunity for child play, wholesome recreation, civil service reform, woman suffrage, municipal ownership, Christian spirit, prohibition of the liquor traffic, doing good, electing good men to office, etc. But important as each remedy may be, we have abundant testimony that none is adequate of itself There is one key-? statistical method-? which offers to trusteeship, a prompt record of work accomplished and of needs disclosed (up, 11-13), The emphasis on statistics was no accident. In the classical formulations of the seventeenth century enlightenment, science meant a grand explanation of

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some aspect of nature. By the Progressive Era, science came to mean the application of scientific method: " Science had become a procedure, or an orientation, rather than a body of results" (Webb, 1967, p. 147).