



# II Colóquio Internacional de Epistemologia e Sociologia da Ciência da Administração

Florianópolis - SC - Brasil (Março/2012)

## **THE STUDY OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE OUTSIDE OF THE ‘CORE’: THE UNIVERSAL FIGHT AGAINST EPISTEMIC COLONIALISM, AND FOR ‘ CRITICAL ASSIMILATION’**

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The study of administrative science has long featured a strong international focus, as both governments and scholars have sought to learn from the experience of other societies. Within Brazil a major dimension of this outward-looking approach has been which countries are looked to for inspiration. While in a perfect world one would expect a sort of pragmatic catholicism, instead many scholars have tended to draw from either one country, or a single cultural reality. So within Brazil the influence of the United States has long been noted, while a handful of others have looked more to the French experience. At a conference being held in Santa Catarina the Germanophiles cannot be ignored, and of course the Soviet model was influential in the mid-twentieth century. Others, such as Boaventura de Souza Santos, urge greater engagement with the Latin American experience. Finally, Alberto Guerreiro Ramos warned that while the ‘critical assimilation’ of lessons learned from elsewhere was healthy, one should avoid what was later termed epistemic colonization.

The modest contribution which this paper seeks to make toward this colloquium is to draw on a number of experiences rarely brought in to the discourse on public administration in Brazil: Canada, Australia, India and the Philippines. With reference to subtopics emphasized at the “II Colóquio de Epistemologia e Sociologia da Ciência da Administração,” special emphasis will be given to the following:

- the origins and development of administrative science,
- the influence of ideology,
- attitudes toward multi-paradigmatic approaches, and
- the complex tension between global theory and local practice.

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## The origins and development of administrative science

It is widely asserted that Brazilian administrative practice (and what theory there was) had its origins in the Portuguese inheritance, generally recognized as sub-optimal. Classic works such as Paulo Prado's *Retrato do Brasil* (1928), Gilberto Freyre's *Casa Grande e Senzala* (1933), Nelson Wernecke Sodre's *Formação da Sociedade Brasileira* (1944), and Victor Nunes Leal's *Coronelismo* (1948) all note the authoritarian, family-based individualism of Brazil's early settlement. Patrimonialism and clientelism, coupled with the debilitating socio-cultural impact of slavery, came to characterize early Brazilian public administration (Freyre 1978, pp. 19; Leal 1948; Prado 1928; Sodre 1944, pp. 73-104). Given the weakness of the Portuguese model and intellectual legacy, French traditions and sources tended to dominate intellectual discourse. North American influences began to filter in at least from the 1950s (Warlich 1965, p. 62), leading to an amplification of the earlier concerns of individuals like the Viscount of Uruguay regarding the indiscriminate adoption of foreign administration theory (e.g. Guerreiro Ramos 1965, Serva 1990; Carvalho and Vergara 1996).

The influence of Guerreiro Ramos was seminal, and provides useful context for this discussion. The central insight of his *A Redução Sociológica* was that much social science developed in the developed countries might not be relevant to developing countries. In what was probably his most evocative illustration of this, in a published 1956 lecture he likened the indiscriminate adoption of foreign ideas by Brazilians, to eighteenth century Tahitians burying iron in the soil after the departure of the early European explorers, in the expectation that iron would grow like a tree. Instead, Guerreiro Ramos argued for the 'assimilação crítica' of foreign theory (1965, pp. 14-15), and practice (pp. 80-3). Given the importance of context in administrative practice, theory needed to be deeply cognizant of local social realities (1966, pp. 38-41). Finally, with regard to the brief discussion of ideology in the development of administrative theory in the countries that are the focus of this paper, note that Guerreiro Ramos's 'redução sociológica' rejected both the market-driven 'stages' model of development advocated from the USA, as well as the planned approach of the USSR (Ventriss and Candler 2005, pp. 350-1).

This paper seeks to make two modest contributions to this conference. The first is to point out that there is a universal tension between global 'theory' and local practice, not to mention a challenge in developing a national hybrid theory from the global theoretical rootstock. The second contribution is that this tension exists even within 'the north', as Canadian and Australian scholars also struggle to avoid both epistemic nationalism and epistemic colonialism, and to 'critically assimilate' that part of the 'global' intellectual patrimony useful in their countries, while also contributing to this body of knowledge.

## The Philippines, India, Canada and Australia

Despite crude dichotomies -- such as 'South' (Brazil, India, Philippines) v. 'North'; and Periphery (Brazil, India, Philippines, Australia and Canada) v. Core -- a first insight from a look at the origins and development of administrative science in Australia, Canada, India and the Philippines<sup>1</sup> is that these four countries all have a unique approach to the topic. Raul deGuzman,

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<sup>1</sup> To give the reader some sense of the author's relative expertise (or lack thereof) in these countries, my background in Brazil and the Philippines is purely from secondary sources. A change of planes in India, and even 8 ½ months in

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writing in the Philippine context, made this point especially well, simply stating the obvious in answer to the rhetorical question ‘is there a Philippines public administration’:

“Yes, there is a Philippine Public Administration as there is American Public Administration, French Public Administration, and Thai Public Administration.” (1993, p. 3)

For de Guzman, the distinct characteristics of how government functions in the Philippines makes Filipino public administration a distinct field of study.

It should also be noted in opening that even the national focus of these analyses reflect crude generalizations, as cultural differences exist within countries. From my own previous research (Candler 1999), one need only think of the differences at least in the practice of administration between Santa Catarina (e.g. Hering 1987), and Sergipe (Passos Subrinho 1987). Such regional differences are hardly unique to Brazil. Leivesley, Scott and Kouzmin argue that in the 1990s Australian organization theory reflected peculiarities depending on the state in which it was taught (p. 367-9). There was little to distinguish South Australia from New South Wales, but the differences were more within the institutions both teaching public administration and practicing it. More significant cultural differences were found by Demers and Gow in a study of senior public managers working for the Québec provincial government, and Franco-phone federal senior public managers, also based in Québec. Despite similar cultural backgrounds and living in the same province, provincial officials were more resistant to these reforms than their federal counterparts. Demers and Gow attribute this to organizational culture: the federal government had experienced over twenty years of ‘public management’ reforms, while “les Québécois ont accepté avec enthousiasme l’idée de l’État comme instrument de promotion collective et la bureaucratie comme mode d’organisation des services publics” (p. 533).

These qualifications having been stated, to turn more directly to the countries that are the subject of this study, John Halligan writes that

The four Anglophone countries of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom have formed a coherent group by way of a common tradition and historical and continuing close associations and interactions. The ‘Old Commonwealth’ – or the ‘Westminster parliamentary democracies’ – forms a natural group with institutional roots in the British tradition. (2009, p. 292; see also Corbett 1996, p. 13-16)

On the surface, Canada and Australia would appear to be two of the most similar countries on earth: like Brazil, both are settler societies occupying continent-sized territories. Beyond this<sup>2</sup> differences develop, with Canada and Australia differing from Brazil more superficially in having much sparser population but more significantly in their English, rather than Portuguese origins. Beyond the earlier onset of market-based NPM reforms in Australia, two other major differences between Canada and Australia are readily identified. The first is the ‘French fact’ in

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the Philippines (well before my academic career) leaves me little in the way of rich engagement with these societies. My background is much stronger in Australia (resident for seven years, received degrees from Griffith and Deakin Universities, and have published in the *Australian Journal of Public Administration*) and Canada (multiple trips totaling just short of a year in country, including having taught two classes in Nonprofit Management at Dalhousie University, and published two articles in *Canadian Public Administration*).

<sup>2</sup> While the numbers are readily enough appreciated, it is worth stating them: even though Australia, Brazil and Canada are of roughly equal size (7.5 to 9m square kilometres), Brazil’s population is over 190m, while Canada has barely 30m, and Australia 20m population.

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Canada, and so “public administration in a bilingual and bicultural country” (Gosselin 1963) has been an enormous area of scholarly interest. Distinctions between public administration in English Canada (Hodgetts 1997; Gow 2009) and French Canada (Parenteau 1997, Gow 1993) have also long been recognised in the Canadian literature.

Returning to the Philippines, if Australia, Brazil and Canada are European ‘settler societies’, and so wholly European creations of the process of colonization, deGuzman’s Philippines reflects the effects of arbitrary colonial boundary drawing. The archipelago had no unifying political entity, relatively little in the way of complex societies, and so little sophisticated government prior to the Spanish imposition of colonial rule. The long term influences of the Spanish period, similarly, are generally dismissed, save perhaps for developing various administrative pathologies that persist to this day (Reyes 2003, pp. 41-4).

The American occupation, belatedly, gave the Philippines much of its modern administrative infrastructure, however the country suffered the fate of much of the former colonial world in poor preparation for independence, with this especially evident in terms of thinking about the administrative needs of the country. Ricote notes “public administration was officially brought into the Philippines under a technical assistance agreement with the United States in 1952” (2008, p. 169), six years *after* independence, and 17 years after responsible self-government. The American influence had other problems, beyond its tardiness: DeGuzman adds that “at one time, in the College of Public Administration there was even a course on ‘State Governments in the U.S.’, but not many courses on the Philippine Administrative system” (1993, p. 8). At the time of his 1993 writing, nearly half a century after independence, deGuzman lamented the absence of indigenous teaching materials, as well as the development of Filipino administrative theory (p. 9). As Danilo Reyes concluded

“Much of the problems conceived in the United States have filtered indiscriminately to developing nations where even the academic community is known to suffer some of the vestiges of colonial thinking, of empathy with issues and problems perceived by Western scholars.” (1993, p. 32; see also Tapales and Alfiler 1993, p. 615).

If the Philippines was an administrative *tabula rasa* on European colonization; and Brazil, Australia and Canada were European ‘settler societies’ that represented a dramatic rupture from the cultures that existed in their regions earlier; India reflects a much different experience. Home to ancient cultures, contemporary Indian scholars date the history of administration in the sub-continent to the Harappan culture as long as 5000 years ago (Shendge 1982, pp. 863-5).

Evidence of this ancient administration includes

“the alignments of roads and houses, the pottery characteristic of the Harappan culture, uniform brick size, uniform and accurate weights and measures. Building of roads and the drainage system underneath them, the collection of city refuse outside the town-systems, etc., reflects a close control of a governmental and administrative system both able and alert which laid down law and imposed its stringent implementation.” (p. 865)

Before moving on, Table 1, on the next page, presents a range of indicators regarding the practice of public administration in the countries discussed in this paper. The final two columns also present mean scores for the rich world OECD peers of Australia and Canada, and the developing world, non-OECD peers of Brazil, India and the Philippines.

**Table 1**  
**Some indicators regarding the practice of public administration**

Averages	Brazil	India	Philippines	Australia	Canada	Non-OECD	OECD
Human dev't	.800	.619	.771	.962	.961	.685	.937
Govt size	6.4	6.8	8.0	6.8	6.5	6.6	5.8
Govt regulation	5.0	6.3	6.7	8.2	8.3	6.7	7.4
Govt effectiveness	7.9	8.2	5.4	8.9	9.6	4.3	8.3
Public services	5.8	7.2	6.1	1.8	1.9	6.3	2.3
Corruption percep.	3.5	3.5	2.5	8.6	8.7	3.3	7.4
Legal system	5.3	5.9	4.6	8.3	8.3	5.1	7.6

Variable explanations:

HDI: Human Development Index, *Human Development Report 2007/8*

Government size: 1-10 (10 = small, or more economic freedom), *Economic Freedom of the World Report 2008*.

Government regulation: 1-10 (10 = less, or more economic freedom), *Economic Freedom of the World Report 2008*.

Government effectiveness: 1-10 (10 = more effective government), *EIU Index of Democracy 2008*.

Public services: 0-10 (10 = poorer government services), *Failed State Index 2011*.

Corruption perceptions: 0-10 (10 = less corrupt), *Transparency International, 2007*.

Legal system and property rights: 0-10 (10 = better protection), *Economic Freedom of the World Report 2008*.

As can be seen, with the exception of India each of the five countries outperforms its peer group in terms of human development. The Philippines, Australia and Canada also have relatively small government, while Brazil and India are at about the non-OECD mean. Australia and Canada are also relatively deregulated, while Brazil, especially, is more heavily regulated than the non-OECD mean. With the exception of India, each outperforms its peers in terms of the provision of public services. The Philippines has corruption and legal system problems, while Australia and Canada are better than the rich world norm in these categories. Still, however well Brazil, India and the Philippines perform relative to their peers, the progress required to reach global best practice is evident in comparison with Australia and Canada.

### The influence of ideology

The differences noticed earlier between the countries discussed in this paper are no doubt caused by a complex interaction of culture and ideology. While culture and ideology are hard to separate, this section of the paper will focus on specific references to ideological (and to a lesser extent cultural) explanations for divergences in the administrative literatures studied. For example, in a comparative analysis of paradigmatic diffusion in public administration, the Canadian and Australian literatures were notable for their refusal to take notice of post-modern and especially Marxist approaches (Candler 2008), a characteristic shared with the US (see Ventriess 1998). On the other hand, New Public Management reforms were more evident in the *Australian Journal of Public Administration* than was the case in *Canadian Public Administration*, with this no doubt related to the vigorous reform agenda of the Hawke/Keating governments in Australia (see, for instance, Hawke 1989), relative to Canadian efforts which “appeared to fall short of the mark” (Aucoin 1995:13; see also Candler 2008, p. 299). On the topic of ideology, it is also worth noting that in Australia, as well as neighbouring New Zealand,

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pro-market reforms were introduced by Labo(u)r<sup>3</sup> parties, confounding ideological expectations. The situation is not unlike that of the market-friendly reforms of the social democratic Cardoso government in Brazil, largely continued by the current *Partido Trabalhista*.

In a classic approach to the differences especially between the three settler societies being discussed in this paper, Louis Hartz (1964) argued that the colonial inheritance, both in terms of time and place, had a large impact on the subsequent political culture of these countries. So Brazil, settled in the 16<sup>th</sup> century by a Portugal in the throes of the Inquisition, and still ruled by an absolute monarch, inherited a different political culture than the United States. The Americans, settled in the 17<sup>th</sup> century largely by private individuals, often seeking to escape religious persecution in a still monarchical Britain, developed an individualist political culture considerably different from that of the 18<sup>th</sup> century British who settled Canada (initially largely from the United States). Australia, on the other hand, was settled largely by a 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain in which the welfare state was beginning to develop, and so inherited this culture.

India is certainly much different. Misra argues that post-independence India suffered “under an ideological obsession of a welfare concept [that] was another important feature of the post-independence era... Often the result was inefficiency, corruption and waste” (1983, p. 444). Sharma refers to “the bogey of socialist ideology, greatly influenced by the Soviet set-up” (2008, p. 98). Dass especially criticized Marxism as adopted in India for its Euro-centric perspective, which led to ignoring racial and national differences (pp. 99-101). Instead, his ‘critical assimilation’ of this part of the European cultural patrimony would have rejected Marxist-Leninism and opted for Maoism, with its “primacy of the peasantry of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the making of the world revolution” (p. 98).

Turning to cultural impacts on Indian administrative theory, I.J. Sharma notes that a particular challenge faced by management in India has been caste. Given the tendency for caste to be linked to occupation, the (especially business) managerial class

... can be branded as a social class [and]...has been restricted to a few communities with their own value system. These communities were socially isolated from the rest, especially the ruling elites, *viz.*, the Brahmins and Kshatrias. In social ranking, business class ranked among the four major caste groups. Money making being considered by the upper castes an evil to be looked down upon the business community was alienated from the national mainstream. (1982, p. 153).

Raj and Singh raise this issue as well, more directly regarding the Brahmins and Kshatrias who dominate in the public sector. Given the likelihood that these elite caste cadres share “restricted social views...bureaucratic responsiveness can no longer be considered in isolation from bureaucratic representativeness” (1973, p. 1). A solution is what elsewhere would be called affirmative action quotas, regardless of traditional merit considerations. The authors conclude: “really, it may not always be possible to bring together, without conflict, the ideas of efficiency, humanity, and democracy. But they do not regard surrender to efficiency as the highest social value” (p. 14).

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<sup>3</sup> The Australian Labor Party inexplicably spells ‘labor’ without the superfluous British ‘u’, while the New Zealand Labour Party uses the traditional spelling.

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Outside of India, popular stereotypes of Indian culture tend to focus on alleged characteristics like reincarnation, fatalism, and deference to authority (Sharma 1982, p. 154-5). Subramanian, though, was an early critic of these cultural explanations for Indian backwardness. He assesses various ancient texts, Western interpretations of these, contemporary Indian interpretations, and actual administrative practice, and essentially finds it all a muddle, but rejects simplistic cultural explanations for Indian administrative pathologies. Instead, “We need a lot of carefully structured empirical investigation on individual and social psychology before we can say anything about the compatibility of the Hindu personality and efficient administrative behavior (1967b, p. 701). Whatever their origins, Hota makes a strong case for the ‘market-unfriendly’ nature of much of Indian public administration:

“It is indeed unfortunate that after 60 years of Independence, we have not been able to produce a viable administrative culture which is pro-active and pro-people... The net result is that as a class, the civil servants are looked down upon as a predatory group of power brokers.” (p. 359)

If the impact of Hindu beliefs such as reincarnation are the most common popular stereotype applied to India; convict origins probably hold similar place in Australia. Gerald Caiden’s discussion of Australian bureaucratic culture spends some time on these convict origins of Australia’s British settlement. Without over-emphasizing this<sup>4</sup>, it does point to the uniqueness of Australia relative to its Anglophone siblings (1990, pp. 31-2).

Though Canada has been most heavily influenced by proximity to the United States (Halligan 2009, pp. 292-5; see also Candler, Azevêdo and Albernaz 2010, p. 842-3), as indicated earlier the five major Anglophone countries, with the United States included, constitute a reasonably coherent intellectual world, with indiscriminate interaction between the five.

## **Attitudes toward multi-paradigmatic approaches**

Beyond the market/government dichotomy, played out in paradigmatic terms today in the battle between the New Public Management and Bureaucratic Public Administration, in the countries addressed in this study paradigmatic approaches outside of this market/government dichotomy were least developed of the four issues looked at in this paper. Two exceptions are Canadian scholarship on the social economy<sup>5</sup>, and the now defunct Australian literature on tri-partite (government, business and labour) corporatism (see, for instance, Quarter 1992, Dow 1999). It should also be noted that Québec, as opposed to Anglo-Canadian scholarship, has also featured an interest in corporatism, characterized by a state-centric nationalism (Archibald 1983, p. 16-17). Faced with an economy controlled by English business interests, Québécois corporatism became a means for reasserting French control over the province, or, in the well-used phrase: to become “*maîtres chez nous*” (p. 88-92). For Québec nationalists, corporatism became

...une correction de la société de l’époque qui est victime du chaos et de *l’absolutisme corrosif du libéralisme économique*. Les Canadiens français sont les sujets d’un capitalisme mal dirigé, ou encore contrôlé de l’extérieur. Leur condition misérable est

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<sup>4</sup> Richard White’s seminal *Inventing Australia* also notes that massive immigration between 1830 and 1850 left convicts comprising under 2% of the population, with another 14% emancipated former convicts (White 1981, p. 29).

<sup>5</sup> A topic well appreciate at this colloquium, see Serva and Andion 2006.

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donc due à deux choses: ce peu d'ordre dans le monde économique et le peu de contrôle qu'ils ont sur les institutions économiques en place" (pp. 88-9).

However just as Alberto Guerreiro Ramos's theoretically robust, full-throated assertion of the importance of 'critical assimilation' of the foreign intellectual patrimony had no equivalent in public administration in Australia, Canada, the Philippines and India; an equivalent of Guerreiro Ramos's social systems delimitation (1964) is also lacking in these countries.

Multi-paradigmatic approaches are probably most lacking in the Philippines. Tapales dates the institutionalization of public participation in Philippine public administration practice only from the administration of Corazon Aquino, the charismatic widow of a slain opposition figure, who provided a rallying point for the 'People's Power' revolution that toppled the long-standing kleptocrat, Ferdinand Marcos (2003, p. 345). Public participation has since been institutionalized in the Constitution of 1987, and the Local Government Code of 1991. To this 'Brazilianist', the story reads much like that of Brazil, with the incorporation of civic groups in to public policy as the result of a popular uprising, coordinated through formal nonprofit groups (as diverse as grassroots groups, and elite professional and religious groups). In the Philippines, both the newly active civic groups and government are adjusting to the new reality (Tapales 1993, p. 352). An approach that holds some promise is 'Gawad Kalinga', offered by Brillantes and Fernandez as an indigenous Filipino model of public administration (2008)<sup>6</sup>. However, as will be argued below, at best Gawad Kalinga requires more development.

India similarly has seen little in the way of theoretically sophisticated discussion of 'multi-paradigmatic' approaches to governance. This may reflect the relatively under-developed state of theoretical development of multi-paradigmatic approaches to public administration, as the responsiveness of government to public demands remains weak. Jagannadham discusses the limitations of the citizen-government relationship in India. Problems include 'red tape', corruption, inefficiency, opacity, and "attitudes and behavior of the public servants are not always congenial to make citizen-administrative relationships mutually responsive" (1978, p. 359-62). It should be noted that both countries feature a great deal of scholarship on civic participation, the role of NGOs, grass roots democracy, and similar topics. Rather, the claim being made here is that a robust multi-paradigmatic theoretical framework is lacking.

## **The complex tension between global theory and local practice**

Given the international focus of this discussion, the tension between global theory and local practice is of critical importance. The Brazilian experience is clearly the best known to participants at this conference. As indicated earlier in this paper, Alberto Guerreiro Ramos and a number of other Brazilian scholars (see Bariani 2011, p. 64-5) rejected the uncritical adoption of social and economic lessons of the rest of the world.

India is clearly the most interesting case among the handful of literatures assessed in this analysis. Unlike Australia, Brazil and Canada, as discussed earlier contemporary Indian culture is not a 'settler society' but instead has roots going back millennia. An interesting debate within

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<sup>6</sup> The approach is very similar to Ecuadorian Francisco Salgado's (2010) Sumaq Kawsay, in looking for principles of administration from pre-contact cultural traditions.



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this literature concerns the relative influence of the pre-colonial Indian experience, versus the more recent British colonial legacy. As indicated, the Indians have an administrative history extending back millennia. This especially relates to *Arthashastra*, an ancient text attributed to Kautilya (2010; see also Subramanian 1967, p. 217). Despite the occasional pithy saying that wears well through the ages<sup>7</sup>, Subramanian, especially, finds it of little value today, and assesses it as of relatively minor impact on contemporary Indian governance (1967, p. 226).

For Subramanian, Indian public administration was essentially a creation of the British colonial experience (1968, p. 266). Singh went further, declaring that “at the time of declaration of the country as the ‘Sovereign Democratic Republic’ on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1950, we had administrative traditions of high order and one of the best civil services in the world” (1973, p. 600). On the other hand, Misra saw the British inheritance as unsuited to India’s level of social development. In a patrimonial society featuring strong caste and religious cleavages, and lacking a strong, urban middle class with a vested interest in good government, the robust administrative capacity of the ‘British Raj’ came to be used for patrimonialist rent-seeking as much as national development (1983, pp. 437-43).

Karve agreed with Subramanian that contemporary Indian governance was inherited from the British colonial experience, but “has no inherent merit or stability about it” (1966, p. 335). In this statement Karve was not necessarily rejecting this inheritance, but rather simply stating that it was only as good as it was useful. As Guerreiro Ramos put it, this inheritance should be ‘critically assimilated’, with the useful elements kept, others discarded. Still, despite this British inheritance on top of no doubt still significant cultural vestiges of previous Indian experience, Sharma notes that Indian public administration “has been very fond of following what [the] American system is up to” (pp. 91-2). It should be noted in passing that both *IJPA* and *PJPA* have long featured articles about administration in a range of especially southern countries, so there has been no drone-like mimicry of the Core.

As indicated earlier, while Australia and Canada are hardly Anglophone clones, they do share a number of characteristics. For the purpose of this section, it is worth noting the broader contrast with the Philippine and Indian experience. Even more so than Brazil; the Philippines and India actively sought independence from their colonial masters. Filipinos, especially, revolted against the Spanish in the latter days of that empire, and continued this rebellion when the new American colonial power refused to grant independence in 1898. Independence was gained after the defeat of the Japanese occupiers during World War II. India, similarly, featured a long

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<sup>7</sup> For instance, the text opens with the assertion that “The school of Usanas declare that there is only one science, and that the science of government; for, they say, it is in that science that all other sciences have their origin and end” (Kautilya 2010, p. 10). This then goes on to report “But Kautilya holds that four and only four are the sciences” (ibid) with government one of these.

Two short (1-2 page) chapters later, *Arthashastra* urges the manager to be a disciplinarian, but fair, as “whoever imposes punishment as deserved becomes respectable” (p. 13). The chapter on “the duties of a King” urges leading by example, as well as a strong sense of accountability to petitioners from among the people (p. 43-4). Most important, “In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good” (p. 44).

Beyond this, the text does not read well through the ages. For example the next chapter deals with “duty toward the harem.” Secrecy is valued in meetings with ministers, and spies used extensively.

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independence movement that saw independence finally granted in 1947. Unusually, India rejected the British Crown and became a Republic three years later, in 1950.

Australia and Canada, on the other hand, have maintained links to the British Crown, so much so that the head of state of both of these countries is a British woman who resides in London, across an ocean from Canada, and on the other side of the world from Australia; and is descended from a long line of German despots. This symbolic retention of the British Crown is also reflected in the cultural histories of these two countries. Some decades after independence in Australia, Holmes reports that Francis Bland, a prominent practitioner/academic on the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, argued for study of “the peculiar characteristics of public administration in Australia” (1989, p. 329). Hodgetts and Corbett’s (1960) seminal edited volume *Canadian Public Administration* was motivated by a similar goal (p. vii). Yet there has been no call for rupture from the British administrative legacy, but rather some mild ‘critical assimilation’ of the cultural world they have inherited. The one exception is that with the growth of the United States, and its eventual eclipsing the United Kingdom as global (or certainly Anglo-phone) intellectual power, both Canada and Australia draw on both the UK and US for lessons to ‘critically assimilate’ for consideration for adoption at home, and maintain complex psychological relationships with their two Anglophone ‘big brothers’ that would take a psychoanalyst a lifetime to make sense of<sup>8</sup>.

The question of the complex tension between global theory and local practice, though, may be less important than the absence of this tension. By this I mean that the tension is a healthy one. Much worse is administrative theory that slavishly follows that of another country, or rejects this in a fit of nationalistic pique. Albernaz, Azevêdo and I raise these two orientations – which we termed epistemic colonization and epistemic nationalism -- in our 2010 article in the British journal *Public Administration*. For us, a tension between global theory and local practice was the optimal position. In our ten nation study<sup>9</sup>, the Philippines showed the greatest signs of epistemic colonization, as barely a quarter of sources cited in articles published in the *Philippine Journal of Public Administration* were themselves from the Philippines. By way of context, Portugal was the second lowest at 37%. Nearly as many sources cited by Filipino authors in *PJPA* were American as were from the Philippines (while only 16% of articles cited by Portuguese authors were American, again the second largest source of references). This threat of epistemic colonization might be seen as a global threat: Al-Araji raises similar fears in administrative science in the Arab world (1981, pp. 146-7).

More worrying, the American literature was far and away the most parochial of the ten countries studied. This is especially alarming given that the American literature was the largest source of foreign references for authors in all countries other than France, where British sources were second to domestic references. During the period in question, 84% of sources cited by American authors in five major public administration and policy journals were from the United States. Only Anglophone Canada (71% of sources English Canadian) was close (Candler, Azevêdo and

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<sup>8</sup> Outside of the administrative sciences, myriad discussions of this relationship exist in both countries. Richard White’s *Inventing Australia*, again, is a seminal analysis of Australia’s existential angst. In Canada, John Ralston Saul’s (1997) *Reflections of a Siamese Twin* is an excellent example of Canadian unease relative to its large southern neighbor, while *Why I Hate Canadians*, by comedian Will Ferguson (1997), is an irreverent response to epistemic nationalists like Saul.

<sup>9</sup> Australia, Brazil, Canada (English) and Canada (French), France, India, Philippines, Portugal, UK and US.



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Albernaz 2010, p. 842). The reason for this is no doubt monolingualism. 98% of articles cited in American journals were in English, over 95% of citations in English language Canadian articles were of English sources, and a whopping 99% of sources cited in Australian journals were in English. Among the Anglo-phones, only the British journal *Public Administration* avoided this extreme monolingual myopia, with around 90% of sources cited in English. Even the French, famous for their linguistic nationalism, cited a third language (other than French or English) far more than Americans cited articles in all languages other than English (Candler, 2006b, p. 551). Christopher Hood, in a 1989 article reminiscing on the previous half century of the study of public administration in Australia, indicated why this is important:

The academic study of public administration also seems to have become more internationalized in terms of the body of basic ideas, conceptual frameworks, explanatory devices, which are in common currency among scholars at least throughout the developed countries. Even in 1948 there were still fairly distinct national academic traditions of public administration that touched only quite tangentially – a Continental European tradition focusing on the legal analysis of the use of the public power, a British tradition of pragmatic analysis based on history and philosophy, and an American tradition with more ambitions to “science”. Today (Americans perhaps excepted), public administration scholars live in what is much more of a “global village” conceptually, in that it would be hard to write an acceptable research degree thesis in the subject today which did not draw on an international literature for its conceptual framework. It is hard to see this trend going into reverse. (1989, p. 348)

Beyond this epistemic parochialism, a number of countries reflect some degree of epistemic nationalism. I have made the case for this in the Brazilian context, pointing out that many Brazilians expressing fears of American epistemic colonization paradoxically seek administrative reforms consistent with the values emphasized in the American literature (2002). The Filipino literature provides another example of this contradiction. Varela’s discussion of the relevance of culture theory to Philippine public administration identifies as Weberian values rationality, efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, equity and participation (Varela 2003, p. 438). These are then shown to be incompatible with Filipino cultural traits of personalism, familism and particularism; yet in a public administration setting these Filipino traits result in debilitating patronage, bureaucratic mediocrity, bureaucratic ambiguity, inequality, graft and corruption (pp. 453-66). Again, it is precisely the negative influence of these ‘non-Western’ values that administrative reform seeks to lessen (see also De Guzman 1993; Brillantes and Fernandez, 2008, 265-83; Ricote 2003, p. 173). Similarly, Brillantes and Fernandez offer Gawad Kalinga as a model of Philippine public administration, a “distinctly Filipino invention” (2008, p. 283), yet describe this as embodying “three key concepts of New Public Administration, Reinventing Government, and Governance” (ibid). The point here is not that Gawad Kalinga reflects epistemic colonization, but rather that its universal nature reflects some epistemic nationalism on the part of its advocates when they assert its uniquely Filipino nature.

Balaram demonstrates a similar contradiction in an assessment of the relevance of Weberian values for ‘development administration’ in India. Table 2 on the next page sums up Balaram’s contrasts. These Weberian values, then, are declared to be (to quote the article title) ‘misfit’

given ‘Third World’<sup>10</sup> realities. Yet what this overlooks is that it is precisely these debilitating administrative pathologies that the Weberian model sought to combat. So to offer the problem as a reason why the solution should not be attempted seems to miss the point.

**Table 2**  
**Weberian ideal versus reality in developing countries**

<i>Weberian Ideal</i>	<i>Reality in Developing Countries</i>
1. Rationality and political neutrality	Intensive political infiltration into administration
2. “Rule bound, impersonal, uniform and just”	Formalism
3. “Distinct segregation between official activity and private life.”	“Rent-seeking is the norm rather than the exception.”
4. “Thorough specialization and training.”	Uncritical assimilation of foreign techniques.
5. “Discharge of administrative role as sole occupation.”	Abuse of official role for private interest, as well as “rampant non-punctuality and absenteeism.”
6. “Life time employment ensures objective functioning.”	“It breeds mediocrity, inertia, and apathy to people, Incompetence is not weeded out.”

Source: Modified from Balaram 2000, pp. 154-5.

### The universalism of pragmatic institutionalism

Another perspective on the development of the science of administration comes from looking at some recent grand histories of the development of human society. In an analysis that begins with tribal societies 100,000s of years ago (though begins in earnest with the first complex states, 6-7000 years ago), Francis Fukuyama’s *The Origins of Political Order*, identifies three basic political institutions that make modern society possible: the state, the rule of law, and accountable government. These institutions feature characteristics with strong Weberian echoes: a centralized, hierarchical source of authority, formal rules that not just bureaucrats but even political leaders had to submit to, and the requirement that the state had to account to “parliaments, assemblies, and other bodies representing a broader proportion of the population” (2011, p. 15). Ian Morris’ 3000+ year analysis of global history similarly notes the importance of central organization in the development of complex societies (2010, pp. 181-91). Turning back to the literatures studied in this paper, Abdun Noor, in an Indian study of Islamic perspectives on public administration, reinforces this universalism: “In order to realize its will, every country has got a hierarchically organized body of public officials with defined assignments and a set of rules and work procedures, collectively known as Public Administration” (1998, p. 125). Noor identified core principles of public administration (planning, organizing, leading and evaluating) in Islam, and special relevance of the ‘New Public Administration’ movement, with its emphasis on ethics and social justice (p. 126-9).

Iain Gow (2009) has termed this ‘pragmatic institutionalism’, a term that nicely combines the emphasis on structure (institutionalism) and technique (pragmatism), and identifies this as “the default position in [public administration] in Canada” (p. 15). Gow loosely describes this

<sup>10</sup> It might also be noted that the use of ‘Third World’ reflects a breath-taking combination of thousands of cultures and 150+ countries that would make an Orientalist proud.



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pragmatic institutionalism as atheoretical, and instead “combines a conviction that institutions are important with a strong desire to keep up with the evolving scene and to ‘get it right’” (p. 16). This pragmatic institutionalism is hardly a Canadian peculiarity. South of the Canadian border, in addition to Woodrow Wilson’s description of public administration as “eminently practical” (1887, p. 197), Leonard White noted that “in every direction good administration seeks the elimination of waste, the conservation of material and energy, and the most rapid and complete achievement of public purposes consistent with economy and the welfare of workers” (1926, p. 3). Across the Atlantic Gibbon similarly noted that “the growing complexity of modern conditions and the increasing difficulty of modern problems make it imperative to attain still higher reaches of administrative ability” (1926, p. 434). In France, Michel Crozier defined bureaucratization as “the rationalization of collective activities” (1964, p. 3), and Jacques Chevallier links the development of administrative science to the need for the absolute state of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (2002, p. 10-11), the liberal state from the 19<sup>th</sup> century (p. 13-15), and the welfare state of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (p. 15-19), to fulfill their respective visions of the “bien-être collectif” (p. 11).

In Brazil, pragmatism has been evident in scholarship at least since a 1943 article on ‘Taylorism and unity of command’ (Rodrigues 1943), with this then reinforced by Alberto Guerreiro Ramos’ characterization of Max Weber’s work as a “tool and instrument that can be used in the organization of society” (1946, p. 129), and especially his emphasis on sociology ‘em mangas de camisa’ which “pode viver, hoje, no Brasil, dos proventos de sua efetiva utilidade para o esforço de construção nacional” (p. 135, see also pp. 131-6, and Guerreiro Ramos 1946 and 1966). Filipino Danilo Reyes put it equally bluntly, as “...the Philippines, at this stage, cannot afford to indulge in a frittering race for developing a definitional and normative theory for Public Administration in the face of overriding imperatives such as the need to study development processes and goals in the country” (1993, p. 301). Iain Gow, again, perhaps best summed up the result of these metaphysical musings of public administrationists by declaring “La science administrative est une science empirique par excellence” (1993, p. 87). He characterizes this ‘pragmatic institutionalism’ as combining “a conviction that institutions are important with a strong desire to keep up with the evolving scene and to ‘get it right’” (2009, p. 11).

## **Good government versus epistemic nihilism**

Unfortunately, this pragmatic institutional, ‘bureaucratic public administration’ has typically been treated as a caricature and held up for abuse, in what I’ll term here an epistemic nihilism. This has especially been so from conservative politicians. Margaret Thatcher, on the eve of the Conservative Party’s 1979 general election victory, warned of “the slither and slide to the socialist state” (Thatcher 1979), while former US President Ronald Reagan argued in his 1981 inaugural address: “In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem” (Reagan 1981). This broader anti-government perspective is not restricted to the political right. Long-time leftist political activist Ralph Nader echoed Reagan’s anti-government dirge in a 2004 interview shortly after announcing his candidacy for President of the United States:



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Washington is now a corporate-occupied territory. There's a "For Sale" sign on almost every door of agencies and departments where these corporations dominate and they put their appointments in high office. (Nader 2004)<sup>11</sup>

This bureaucracy bashing has been noted by many, with Goodsell (1983), Pizza, Jr. (1984), Lynn (2001), and Olsen (2005) especially noteworthy for having challenged this perspective. Yet despite these criticisms, what Keinert refers to as the Traditional Bureaucratic approach (2007, pp. 96-7) was (and remains!) a reformist, even *radical* reformist movement. This dismissive attitude<sup>12</sup> is unfortunate, as especially contemporary American scholars have little experience of administration in the absence of modern bureaucracy.

Developing theory of the science of administration appropriate for its various contexts remains a challenge, though, and one which scholars in the countries studied in this paper engage differently. Subramanian, for instance, offers a short history of 'a sort of dialectic' between American and European public administration, with varying degrees of borrowing and ignoring on each side. However rather than "a derivative Western society like Australia...trying to replicate that dialectic now... Australian academe may just want to contribute quietly to the mainstream, as much as to draw from it" (1981, p. 381). Corbett agrees with this comfortable situation within the Anglophone intellectual world. Despite increased engagement with Asia (and recognition that Australia is an Asian nation), "Australia will continue to reflect and project its Anglo-Celtic and European cultural heritage. It is there for all the world to see, in Australia's institutions, legal system, culture and behavior" (Corbett 1996, p. 237).

On the other hand, there is the continued struggle to 'critically assimilate' this Anglo-phone literature. Concluding his 2008 assessment of Philippine public administration, Ricote acknowledged that 'major challenges remain'. Some "questions relative to quality and competencies in the areas of curriculum and instruction, faculty, research, student quality and institutional linkages" (p. 183) are hardly unique to the Philippines, and are certainly shared by many academic programs in public administration in the United States. Still, he asserts that "there is a Philippine public administration and it has gone a long way beyond being an imported field of inquiry into a highly evolved field of study" (2008, p. 182).

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<sup>11</sup> Nader repeated his 2004 claims in his equally quixotic 2008 tilt at the presidency.

<sup>12</sup> Lounsbury and Carberry (2005) similarly lament a tendency among organization theorists to denigrate the work of Max Weber.



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