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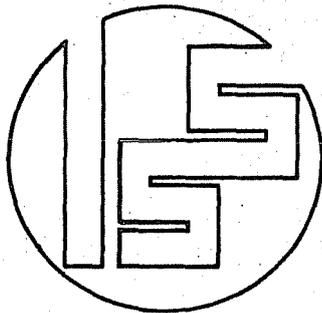
Public Administration; Comparative Administration,

Development Administration:

Concepts and Theory in their Struggle for Relevance

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C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze

#### The relativity of theory

The discipline of public administration is not quite the same in Europe as it is in North-America. The reasons are obvious and generally known. There, its roots are in administrative law; here, they are in political science. It could hardly be otherwise. It follows from the accepted base of public office, as relating to the state. In Europe, the state used to be conceived primarily as a legal system. On this side of the Atlantic, especially in the United States, it is conceived primarily as (political) power system.

The notable fact is that evidently both conceptions of public administration are time-and-place-conditioned. From this it follows that neither conception is necessarily relevant to other times and/or places. The consequence is easy to draw, but it is not always noted.

A fundamental question emerges. It refers to the demonstrable generality of insight regarding public administration. Is it general; if so, how general? The question is doubtlessly awkward; it takes things back to zero point. Nobody in his right mind would be keen to raise it. Nor is there, normally, much occasion to consider raising it. In American writings, the chance of its emerging is reduced by the lack of attention given to the non-American appearance of public administration. Nowadays the chance is diminished further due to a gradual shift in the European approach, under the impact of American writings (perhaps those on management rather than those on public administration stricto sensu). On the other hand, the growing concern with comparative administration and with development administration - the two going hand in hand - appears to be bound to raise the question and before long to make it appear as a crucial one. It may therefore be appropriate to raise it here and now, in a conference devoted to public administration, comparative administration and development administration all at once.

#### The ambiguity of the term public administration

It is generally known and recognized that the term "public administration" is ambiguous. It refers to a complex of human activities, properly defined. It also refers to a body of scholarly insight, in other words theory, concerning this complex. The assumption is that since the ambiguity is known, everybody is sufficiently alerted to it so that no harm can be done.

It would be easier to be at peace with this assumption were it not for one additional source of ambiguity. The complex of administrative activities in question has a referent that is indicated, somewhat obliquely and ineptly, by the adjective "public". The intent is, clearly, that public administration is the administration (French: gestion) of public affairs. But then, what exactly is public affairs? We are back at square one.

At this point, however, it pays to specify the root question in a manner different than the law/power dichotomy just mentioned. Let us say,

as is done oftentimes in the literature, that it refers to politics. Etymologically, this is correct. Public affairs is a correct translation into English of the Greek word that we render as "politics". However, there is more to this than meets the eye. The question remains to be asked in which sense politics, or public affairs, will be taken.

There are two senses in which it can be taken. These are seldom distinguished: a circumstance that is the source of many difficulties, not merely in public administration but also in political science and the social sciences in general. When the Greeks talked politics they talked public affairs, and in so doing they covered the full gamut of sociocultural life. In other words, politics was a short-hand term denoting reality at large. A pars pro toto indication, perhaps.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, when contemporary Westerners talk politics they refer to one distinct aspect or segment of the totality of sociocultural life. Whatever this aspect or segment is, it is not the aspect or segment of religion, or that of economics, or that of culture - to mention only these. I submit that references to politics made in writings on public administration usually fail to clarify to which of the two different conceptions of politics they refer, for lack of awareness of or readiness to account for the difference.

This would not be serious, except that often references to politics mark the beginning of a series of further references, ever backward to "backdrop" phenomena, each time of a different, more general or at least less tangible, kind. These series have all the characteristics of a regression. As a backdrop (or frame of reference) behind (or underlying) public administration, politics appears. In the same way a further backdrop, beyond politics, will be variably identified as goals, values or yet something else. Nor is this necessarily the end of the line. In principle this is a case of regression ad infinitum; but as a rule it will get bogged down after two or three steps, in a reference that nobody cares to identify or spell out any further, be it culture, philosophy, ideology or yet something else.

Note now what the difference in the perception of politics does to a regressional sequence in which politics is the second instance. If it appears in the pars pro toto sense, the regression is false: in presenting politics as a backdrop to public affairs (as managed by means of public administration) it implicitly distinguishes between the two notwithstanding the fact that they are one and the same. (Sometimes, this kind of conceptual reduplication, with ensuing differentiation between the two concepts employed, can be put to good analytic use; but in this case there is no trace of an attempt to this effect.) On the other hand, if the reference is to politics in the segmentary sense, the regression appears valid at a first blush but proves abortive in the last resort. The reason is that the regression is bound to be ad infinitum. It is this that turns this latter case into a roundabout variant of the former one, the false regression.

Note furthermore that things are difficult in a Western context because the distinction between politics in pars pro toto and politics in a segmentary sense is not customarily made. They are bound to be greatly more difficult in the context of many so-called developing countries, where the overall politicization that tends to go hand in hand with the development urge tends to blur the distinction to the point of eliminating it.

The provisional conclusion, none too encouraging, seems to be that in addition to being somewhat ambiguous, public administration is also somewhat elusive for purposes of proper definition. It is anchored on shifting ground.

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1. This added explanation is correct in retrospect only, from our viewpoint.

### The quest for generality and how it is hampered

In an attempt to obtain a firmer grip, it is now proposed to take a closer look at that which, in the regressional sequences just referred to, usually occupies the place of an Ultima Thule. As often as not, the ultimate link in the chain, almost indistinguishable due to its remoteness, is culture or something to that effect. The very adoption of regressional sequences could make no sense if it did not mean that by simple reversion of the sequence one should be able to argue that culture, standing at the far end of the regressional line, stands at the root, as a primary datum. The earlier reference to European vis-à-vis American conceptions of public administration points in much the same direction: culture as a prime determinant of specificity and, through specificity, of variety. Culture as a main conditioning factor, both for action and for scholarship.

Using this approach, let us once again cover the ground that we have provisionally covered in the preceding. We shall look once more at administration and at public affairs. Then, we shall consider some other implications of culture as a frame of reference, a primary determinant of specificity.

I suggest that management, gestion, as one instance of objective (i.e., object-directed) action, is fundamentally culture-conditioned. In other words, my contention is that it is impossible to spell out what management, once initially and tentatively defined, really means and entails, without explicit reference to the specific culture context in which it happens to be observed. Rephrasing this again more realistically, in attempting to establish something like a "general", basic meaning of the concept, we are obliged to go out of our way, by "controlling for" the culture context (no doubt our own) in which we have just found it and tried to identify it. In other words once again, the quest for generality will inevitably and necessarily involve a protracted and difficult exercise, for the simple yet seldom adequately recognized reason that what is with us from the outset is not generality but specificity.

I will illustrate this by suggesting one possible approximation to the kind of exercise needed: the exercise of envisaging, and accounting for, cultural specificities (very much in the plural). It is possible to make a distinction, in the general realm of cultures, according to basic orientation in one specific regard, the importance of which was brought home to me in my studies of Indonesia, the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East, and that may well be significant elsewhere. There exist two perceptions of human action that are virtually one another's opposite number. According to one, action is geared to systematic maximization of returns upon assiduous effort of man in regard to everything (both human and non-human) around him. In this perspective, this context features necessarily as the object undergoing action on the part of man as the subject: action as control and domination. According to the other, action is one aspect or instance of interaction between man and context, geared to man's self-maintenance vis-à-vis context. Action is culture in the true etymological sense of the word: cultivation rather than domination with no holds barred. It is the exploitation of opportunity when and where it is experienced. For brief reference to the former, a ready-made label is available. This is the Promethean outlook and attitude. The latter has no customary name. The term "subsistence" will describe it eloquently, if its meaning is appropriately widened and deepened for the purpose: subsistence as a state of mind.

It does not appear too far-fetched to suggest that in the contemporary Western setting, public administration will tend to reflect fairly closely the Promethean orientation. In the traditional setting of any medium- or

or small-size sociocultural unit outside of the Western orbit, it will verge towards the subsistence orientation. But it will appear as a - more or less uneasy - mix between the two opposite orientations in at least two other kinds of situations. One is the traditional realm or empire, whether early Western or non-Western. The other is the Western colony in a non-Western setting and its historical sequel, the non-Western developing country. This is not the occasion to spell out the operational implications of the typological distinctions introduced, beyond pointing out that on the basis of two opposite types a full range of typological variants can be built: not just three. The resulting analytic device is of considerable value, as will be argued below.

As stated, this example represents no more than one possible first move into the demanding exercise that seems to be in store for us. Its main use, in the present connection, is to suggest the fundamental nature of the differences to which we can expect to be alerted, and for which we shall be able to account, once we make up our minds to take seriously the differences between cultures as basic frames of reference for the category of phenomena with which we wish to be concerned. No doubt, we stand to be detracted, initially, from that which interests us; the pay-off is that we shall work under much less of a handicap once we come to grips with it.

Turning once again to public affairs, there is more to be noted than the already mentioned difference between the pars pro toto and the segmentary perceptions, and the implications of this difference for our conception, and our understanding as resulting therefrom, of the nature of the polity.

An equally important distinction is usually left implicit and is thus hardly ever considered for its implications. It runs between public and private affairs.

Along with its basic segmentation, already referred to, Western civilization distinguishes between a private and a public sphere. This is done mainly by maintaining an optimally protected and indeed entrenched position, role and function for the nuclear family vis-à-vis society in all its other institutionalizations. No doubt the line is occasionally blurred. Some elements of law (for example, penal and inheritance provisions, provisions regarding marriage and divorce) extend the impact of the public domain into the family dwelling; in return some family prerogatives expand well beyond its walls (for example, schools). In matters like loyalty and authority, the distinction is nonetheless quite effective. The resulting complex provides a highly significant part of the parameter for Western public administration; so much so that the definition of, for example, corruption follows immediately from available data, as a virtually self-evident matter.

The distinction between a public and a private sphere is not the same everywhere, nor is it equally hard-and-fast everywhere. For an almost diametrically opposed state of affairs, we may refer to the kinship society of traditional Middle Eastern nomadism. There, the family - extended rather than nuclear - is merely the smallest, and thus the most tightly-knit, of a considerable range of kinship units of subsequent orders of magnitude, these being virtually the only units recognized. The difference between the private and the public spheres appears, in consequence, not as a clear break but rather as a gradual shift in accent. As a parameter for something like public administration, this is an entirely different proposition than that just described for the modern West; so much so that the relevance of the very notion of public administration could appear questionable. To Ibn Sa'ud, whose death occurred as recently as 1953, there was no difference between private and public funds and his administration, highly successful, was a family affair.

This example should suffice to suggest that we must account for a wide range of positions in distinguishing between the private and the public sphere, and consequently for a wide range of settings in which public administration may, or for that matter may not, occur. Again it requires us to consider all that this entails for the nature and modalities of each variant of public administration that could thus be distinguished.

These, then, are two instances of how culture context features as a primary determinant for the complex of phenomena with which we are concerned. They show that we cannot hope to secure a firm grip on this subject matter unless we account for the cultural mould in which they occur. Of course, the validity of this realization is not restricted to these two instances. It relates to the entire field. In order to substantiate the argument, two more instances may be quoted, however briefly. One is the spatiotemporal framework, the other is authority.

Consider the spatiotemporal framework, not merely of public administration but indeed of life. Ever since public administration experts and scholars have developed an interest in ecology, this matter has attracted attention. (Note in passing that the ecological vogue represents, to an extent, the kind of approach - starting from culturally conditioned specificity - that is here being advocated; but note also that due to the strange shift in meaning that the word ecology has undergone in being adopted for this metaphorical usage, its full implications remain, by and large, to be envisaged.)

Once again, the possible differences in appreciation of the spatiotemporal universe, according to culture, are legion as a matter of principle. Once again, a possible way to account for them more or less categorically (which is still a far cry from accounting for each specifically) is to envisage a typological range that could encompass all of them, considered from one selected viewpoint (leaving the possibility of other viewpoints). This range, in its turn, can be conveniently conceived as two extreme positions plus everything in between.

Let me illustrate this with exclusive reference to time, whilst tacitly assuming that the same, mutatis mutandis, is possible in respect of space. The human perception of time has two components, one apparently the logical opposite of the other. There is, on the one hand, a perception in terms of time flow and on the other hand, a perception in terms of moment of time, event. The two are equally valid, but logically speaking they cannot be matched. Still they can feature as the two extreme positions of a typological range. This range in its turn will comprise an infinite number of mixes of the two perceptions. The mixes will accord more preponderance to the one and relatively less to the other, and vice versa. Any such mix can subsequently be rendered in more specific, time-and-place-conditioned, terms. Indeed there will be room, within this framework, for subsidiary typologies, introducing additional distinctive criteria. At the same time, it should prove useful for the purpose of eliminating typologies that, for one reason or another, are spurious or misconstrued.

Doubtlessly, development administration will be one thing if the underlying perception of time is near one extreme of this range, and something else if it approaches the other. For example, according to the modern Western perception (which is about to be modified significantly due to the upsurge of instant mediated communication), the conception of time in terms of discrete events is fully subordinate to that in terms of time flow. As a result, the act, that is the moment, of planning will fit - in a properly subservient, yet nonetheless determining, role - in a clearly perceived and effectively calculated time flow, present as well as future. On the other hand, in the classicistic setting of the traditional Middle East, based as it is on

temporal atomism, the model for the future is given as a fact of the past. The result is that there, the present moment is basically no more than a momentary - if perhaps for all practical purposes ongoing - act of re-creation: an act of moulding a (near) future that is fundamentally known for what it should be.

The other instance refers to authority and its exertion. Again, differences flowing from different cultural parameters need to be accounted for at the outset. Again, typological ranges may serve as a first categorical approximation to the exercise needed. Again, these ranges can be construed setting out from two extreme positions that will have been distinguished, initially, in the manner of privative opposition or binarity. In this case, we shall complicate matters somewhat by suggesting that not merely one typological range is needed, but at least two. This suggestion will help to realize the pluridimensionality of phenomena such as the ones we are concerned with.

Considered from one viewpoint, instances of authority can be rendered intelligible by distributing them across a typological range that runs from "directing" (i.e., issuing directives and having them implemented) all the way through "umpiring" (or, with a fashionable term, "brokerage", i.e., promoting the emergence of a direction, a course to steer, out of a currently available assortment of tendencies, expectations and the like). Considered from a quite different yet equally relevant viewpoint, instances of authority can be rendered intelligible by distributing them across a typological range running all the way from presupposed homogeneity to presupposed complexity of the sociocultural entity, or polity, in which it operates. Here and there, the two ranges will intersect, i.e., prove mutually relevant; but that is a matter of coincidence. Of more immediate importance for present purposes is the realization that it will make a great deal of difference for the type of authority that can be exerted, and the way in which it will be exerted, whether the U.S.A., or for that matter Israel or Nigeria, will be conceived as a pluri-ethnic or as an ethnically homogenous society or polity.

At this point, the necessity of accounting for culturally conditioned specificity and diversity in phenomena like public administration has been sufficiently argued. It has also been made abundantly clear that in order to do so we shall have to get ready for exercises of considerable proportions. What should be added, in an attempt to afford some relief, is that the same exercise should help to avoid some of the spurious problems that currently beset the discipline.

Again, one example will have to do. In public administration as in most other social sciences, there always is a good deal of discussion, indeed of confusion, about values. Values will be introduced as more or less ultimate determinants, in sequences of regression of the kind already mentioned. It should be clear that, had cultural specificity been accounted for at the outset, the need to refer to values could not occur. Thus a big burden would be taken off our shoulders.

What should prove necessary, as well as feasible, instead, in a framework of development administration, would be to identify specific development goals, as emerging in a specific development situation. This is an exercise in its own right; we cannot undertake it here.<sup>2</sup>

The gist of the argument thus far can be stated as follows. It is incorrect to consider comparative public administration as an ultimate, perhaps not

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2. Comp. "On the Identification of Development Goals", Development and Change I/1, The Hague 1969, pp. 3-20.

quite foreseen, outgrowth of the involvement of public administration experts in increasingly more and ever different situations, amongst them situations of needed development. The proper way to consider it is as an attempt to meet some of the basic requirements of responsible scholarship in today's One World, and thus as a conditio sine qua non for valid theorizing in the discipline.

Of course this is not how comparative administration came into existence. It emerged as an afterthought and as an attempted remedy. There was, and is, trouble. Theory, of an assumedly general nature, was being applied to ever more and always different situations, in which the need for effective administration was felt. But the application ran into difficulties, some of them unforeseen and many of them not easily identifiable by means of the existing body of theory. In the quest for "ecology", what is really raised is the issue of the relevance of existing theory to actual conditions; but the manner in which it is done appears like putting the cart before the horse. It leaves theory intact, in the pious assumption that its generality is indisputable. What it might do instead is raise the question about theory's relevance, and thereby probe into the specificity of theory and its ensuing limitations. Comparative public administration does roughly the same for theory as the ecological concern does. What should occupy us is whether, together, they will do enough.

#### Hurdles that need to be taken

It is not at all certain that they will. The present state of the discipline - and not merely of this discipline in the social sciences - causes concern. It cannot be taken for granted that such new developments as the ecological concern and comparative administration will constitute a sufficient response to the challenge of the moment. There are in particular two major drawbacks, unresolved for all I can see, that urge caution. One is our inherited mode of conceptualization that public administration shares in common with sociology, political science, and one or two more. The other is the matter of nature and degree of self-entrenchment - a term that needs explanation.

First, on the inherited mode of conceptualization. This is a matter well beyond the present scope. Rather than omitting it, however, we must resort to oversimplification.

The concepts used in social sciences like sociology, political science, and public administration are less than optimally useful for such contemporary purposes as the increasing concern with development problems. They are situé et daté; they belong intrinsically to a place and a time with different preoccupations and different needs than ours, and with a different perception of sociocultural reality. Seen against the backdrop of our period of world history and its needs and urges, many of them are primitive.

Most of the concepts currently in use are inappropriate for contemporary purposes, on two counts. First, they are general in a peculiar way. They are categorical, and they are timeless and placeless labels, applied not so much to phenomena or entities as to essences of a virtually Platonic purity and non-reality. They refer to absolute qualities.

Secondly, whilst being all that they were just said to be, these concepts are nonetheless derivatives from fullblooded, time-and-place-conditioned, real specificity. Such pure generality as they are claimed to possess has been arrived at through a distillation process, the two main ingredients of which are abstraction and generalization perforce. The most astonishing thing about them is, perhaps, that the claim has been upheld hitherto. How has

that been done? By means of a device that blinds the eye to the inherent, basic deficiencies; a device naturally and unconsciously applied by all those - that is, all of us - who have been taken in. The matter is really very simple. The place-and-time that conditions these notions is our own place and our own time (or at least that of the founding fathers of our disciplines, with whom we do, as a rule, identify). Thus we are in a position to generalize at no extra cost, simply by failing, as we readily would, to realize that our place and our time are not all places and all times. By omitting to state explicitly the referents of our concepts - a tedious thing to repeat every time anyway - we arrive at concepts that will not sound any warnings when we call them general. What is more, by thus appearing as beyond the pale of spatiotemporal specificity, they are at the same time beyond temporal identifiability. Not only are they not dynamic: they are not static either. That, however, will not absolve them from being tinged in common usage. Since they are oftentimes applied vis-à-vis a reality that is alarming precisely because it is unstable, these eternal, categorical concepts will easily, if unjustifiably, appear static. The end result is that we are dealing with change and development in basically static terms.

This can be summed up in one instance; and I shall apologize in advance for sounding sacrilegious, which it is not my intention to be. As much of the current literature in public administration, sociology and political science, indicates, Max Weber is still regarded as a - not to say, the - founding father, to whose inexhaustible genius all of us must refer time and again for inspiration. Yet it is not difficult to argue that his ideal type concepts are half-way houses between historical-descriptive and analytical categories, and that his efforts to expand from European into alien cultures were well-intended but largely abortive for lack of accurate information and again for lack of readiness to assess the significance of such expansiveness *per se*. Having become the object of a cult, Weber, like Marx, is suffering an increasingly grave injustice; so far as I can judge Weber, unlike Marx, did not ask for canonization. It is only proper to recognize that the founding fathers are now museum pieces. In that capacity, they can continue to be useful. Their relevance to the here-and-now is by no means lost, but it is limited and the limitations need to be assessed carefully.

We have come a long way since the founding fathers. Our need is for a conceptualization of reality, and for a set of basic concepts resulting therefrom, that will suffer neither from make-believe generality nor from a purity that is utterly lacking in realism. Ours is One World, whether we like it or not. Our society and culture interact, increasingly and at times disquietingly, with other societies and cultures; this interaction is here to stay and, perhaps, to increase. We live not so much in the present as towards the future, in haste. We experience today's events primarily inasmuch as they mould the "livability" of tomorrow. It is time for us to recognize that generality of concepts is perhaps more remote from us than we were brought up to believe - and accordingly more elusive. It is also time for us to design and use more complex conceptual propositions, in which generality and specificity are both, and equally, crucial - notwithstanding the fact that, by our traditional perception, they are mutually exclusive. Again, it is time for us to recognize time for what it is, whether as time flow or as sequence of moments or - second oppositional combination - both. We can no longer afford to be kept from the task before us by an overdose of piety for the founding fathers.

The second drawback, closely interwoven with the first, is self-entrenchment. I submit that any scholar is subject to the cumulative effect of two variants of self-entrenchment, the one societal, the other disciplinary.

By self-entrenchment I mean one aspect of the manifestation of a distinct sociocultural entity (of whatever description). It is a product of the inner secretion of identity. It is an intrinsic ingredient of the complex of factors that sets me apart from you, us from them, blacks from whites, those underdeveloped from those developed.

Societal self-entrenchment is quite well known, but it goes under a different name, which refers specifically to some of its implications. The name is ethnocentrism. The matter was referred to earlier in discussing generalization on the basis of the here-and-now. The most often noted illustration is the word that the ancient Greeks used in referring to others - "barbarians", stammerers. The others did not speak properly, they were not properly civilized; by consequence they were barely human. Basically, they do not exist: they are beyond the pale of the universe, "our" universe of civilized mankind. If "we" do not know them, that is because we are a priori absolved from having, or trying, to know them, there being nothing there that could be worth knowing.

Of course, what applies basically may yet fail to apply factually. Under certain conditions, "we" cannot help rubbing shoulders with "them" more or less frequently or even regularly. Such conditions, however, will be interpreted by "us" as constituting a necessity for "them" to conform to the true pattern of life which, no doubt, is ours. It is typical of Western civilization that it should have carried this tendency even further. For centuries, part of the Western self-assertion and self-vindication has been effectuated in a confrontation with aliens whom Westerners have gone out of their way to seek. The result is a curious ambiguity. We Westerners seek to know the alien, to the point where we can challenge him by positing ourselves as a mirror and a yardstick for him to consider. There is a tacit underlying assumption involved in this that deserves to be exposed. Confronting the alien in this manner means going out into unmapped territory, and taking care of the mapping in the process. The alien becomes known to us by virtue of our mapping, - that is, appearing within a set of co-ordinates imposed by us. We are unable to envisage him but through ourselves. Ethnocentrism enwraps us as a vicious circle.

To confound the matter further, some Westerners engage upon the mapping without considering whether other Westerners have preceded them. In public administration, as in social sciences in general, it is disconcerting to see authors enter what they assume to be terra incognita, unconcerned about the wealth of information that may be readily available thanks to earlier efforts of scholars of other disciplines. For example, the mutual aloofness between orientalists and social scientists during the 'fifties and 'sixties is little short of scandalous. The sad result is that without real need an emerging field like development administration will show a tendency to feed upon itself, opinions of authors having to substitute for established but ignored facts, and alien informants being approached with questions which it is only hoped will make sense to them.

This ominous state of affairs is the outcome of disciplinary entrenchment enforced by societal entrenchment. We mentioned social sciences versus oriental studies and related historical-philological disciplines. We could also mention the difficulties of communication between one social science and other social sciences. Take development. For reasons that do not matter here, economics is leading. It has defined what development is about, what are its goals, how they can be achieved. On the whole, it has been successful; but not to the extent that economists would not want to do still better. To this purpose, they will challenge professionals of other social sciences to join. As a rule, attempts to respond to the challenge end in mutual disappointment. Those of the other fields cannot join without taking the entire

matter of development back to square one; which is not what they were invited for.

Public administration, notably development administration, is caught in the middle of all this. It has its full share of disciplinary self-entrenchment and its professionals carry their inevitable burden of societal self-entrenchment. Besides, in the matter of development it is bound to hurt itself against the self-entrenchment of some other disciplines. In a somewhat rash response to the latter, public administration experts have at times been tempted to consider development administration not as a segmentary but rather as a pars pro toto device to deal with development. - with little real result. For them and for all their colleagues, the matter seems by and large unresolved. But as concern about it will mount, the effort towards a solution is bound to increase.

### The challenge of development

The preceding paragraph introduced the last point of this paper, - development and the place and role of public administration in its regard.

This is not the occasion for a discussion of the basic issue, namely what really is development. Enough has been said, however, to warn against any assumption that Westerners, and amongst these the scholars of particular disciplines, have the secret.

Like administration, development is a term that disguises the fundamental differences between action and process, between inputs by distinct individuals or groups and goings-on in the framework of a human aggregate. Again, it blurs the distinction between a given aspect or segment of reality and the theory or insight relating to it.

This state of affairs leads to confusion in all the social sciences, but public administration is liable to suffer more from it than the others. This is for two reasons.

First, the degree of politicization typical of most of the third world. This will inevitably turn the notion politics into a pars pro toto indication of public affairs, not to say of sociocultural reality. In consequence, administration may appear as the decisive procedure for initiating and steering development. A glorious prospect to some, it is bound to appear as a Big Brother nightmare to others. In neither manifestation does it seem very realistic.

Second, the circumstance that a good deal of public administration - and a fortiori of development administration - theory hinges on the notion of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is one of those time-and-place-conditioned phenomena which, thanks to (undue and unwarranted) abstraction and generalization have come to occupy centre stage and, in so doing, exert a distorting impact. At root, the bureaucracy could not be more than one peculiar kind of institutional incumbent of (a number of elements of) the administrative role and function. In a development perspective, it is only too natural for the change agent - whatever that may be - to appear virtually or fully synonymous with the bureaucracy. The result is that the bureaucracy comes close to featuring as the monopolist of development. Add to this the virtual identity, in numerous contemporary situations, between state and bureaucracy, plus the effects of the overall politicization just referred to, and a fiendishly rigid state of affairs will result that, in addition to other evil things, is almost bound to be quite anti-developmental in its orientation and operation. The main cause for such an unfortunate outcome - it must be repeated - is the impossibility, under the given circumstances, to distinguish effectively between development as process and development as action.

Still, nothing really indicates that public administration is doomed by difficulties like these. On the contrary, its chances to overcome them may well be better than those of some of the other social sciences. Like development, it is necessarily processual and operational. Its need to be so is more obvious than that of, for example, political science or sociology. Relevance, to public administration, is a matter of to be or not to be. In a way, its position is quite different from that of economics, where the typical 19th century format - pure theory complemented by the application of theory - is still preponderant in many ways. What matters, it would seem, is to realize the difference and to draw the consequences in a forward-looking manner.

### Postscript

The repeated references to development as process, as distinct from development as action, represent a thread running through, or rather underneath, the argument developed thus far.

It is more or less customary to distinguish between developed and underdeveloped countries or situations. It is equally customary to envisage the desirable history of a given sociocultural entity as a progression from less developed to more developed. The two visions are closely related and in fact reinforce one another. They are also dated: they originate in 18th and 19th century Europe, they belong to the modern (as distinct from the contemporary) Western world at large. In spreading - not without significant modification - to other parts of the world they seem to have passed their zenith, and to raise more questions than they answer.

At this point, the reference is to the "developed-underdeveloped" dichotomy as a summary presentation of a highly complex subject matter. We have here a binary pair of concepts, thrown together in such a manner as to constitute one device, the purpose of which is to serve, on the one hand, as an explanatory framework, a tool for human understanding, and on the other hand, as the starting point for purposive human interference in the goings-on of human polities. The concepts, moreover, are timeless and placeless, as exposed in the preceding. Enough has been said above on the need for concepts having basic characteristics other than timelessness and placelessness, and on alternative characteristics more suitable for present needs. But what has been said regarding binary pairs of concepts and their uses remains to be pulled together.

A considerable amount of thinking, on development and on other complex subjects takes shape in basically simplistic constructs where (1) two entities or types, categorically indicated, feature as opposite poles, in such a manner that (2) they will serve as pegs between which is then (3) suspended a time sequence which, in its turn, will (4) double up as a sequence of qualitative progression across (5) an undefined number of stages of qualitative change (perhaps betterment). The subsequent steps are, in most cases, tacitly assumed to occur in consequence of (6) a sequence of relevant impulses exerted by humans. For the scholar who has gone this far, the problem remains to identify the impulses. This is difficult, if not impossible. But the real difficulty lies elsewhere. As mentioned, this kind of construct, in addition to forcing us to deal with change in terms that are meant to have nothing to do with change, sets out from a postulated mutual exclusivity or polarity between concepts for no other purpose than subsequently to establish an operational relationship between them. This is a self-defeating exercise on both counts. Earlier I submitted that our inherited mode of conceptualizing has become subject to the law of diminishing returns. At this point, the reason why should be clear. The dichotomic per-

ception of reality, which undoubtedly served its purposes at one time, cannot serve our present purposes satisfactorily.

Does this mean that we shall henceforth be obliged to refrain from the use, for conceptualization purposes, of pairs of concepts arranged on the basis of privative opposition? To put the matter like this is to phrase the question wrongly, indeed to jump at conclusions. Leaving aside now the matter of timelessness and placelessness and the way in which this is to be taken care of, it is necessary to stipulate that the challenge that emerges from the preceding does not refer to binary pairs of concepts as such, but to the dichotomic presentation and usage of such pairs. At root, the binary pair of concepts is an exercise in conceptual reduplication. Man, in his necessary effort at intellection or understanding, envisages reality. Knowingly or unknowingly, he does this under certain specific conditions, from a certain angle. One of the results is a concept that he will henceforth use in referring to that instance of reality. Envisaged under different circumstances or from a different angle, the same instance of reality will be referred to by a different concept. So far as their referent is concerned, the two concepts should be synonymous; and so they are, but not to the full extent. An element of privative opposition intervenes. The question is what significance to attribute to this element. We have been brought up to say "dichotomy", and to take it from there.

We have now reached the point where we are ready to question the validity - or, more precisely, the necessity - of this answer. The necessity should be hard to prove. In fact, it is not too difficult to prove that it is not necessarily the only answer. In their capacity as tools for intellection, concepts are analytic devices. An instance of reality that is referred to first by one concept and then by another, is for all practical purposes analyzed into one and another of its manifestations, aspects, elements or whatever. In order to appreciate its fullness, what would have to be done is to reconstitute it out of the several aspects into which it has been taken apart through the act(s) of conceptualization. In other words, the relevant concepts have to be brought into some sort of relationship where they can feature as mutually cumulative. Whatever purposes dichotomy can serve, it cannot serve this one.

It follows that the search is on for an alternative to dichotomy. Given binarity, one possibility for this alternative to shape up is in the form of complementarity. Two concepts, logically one another's opposites, are jointly needed to provide a grasp on that with which we are concerned.

To understand light, we must envisage it as waves; but we must also understand it as particles, - regardless of the fact that what is wave cannot be particle and vice versa. It is this model that has been tacitly introduced in the preceding argument, and then elaborated in proposing, repeatedly, analytic devices for the study of phenomena of an operational nature: the model of two extremes (really ek-types that can be approximated asymptotically and no more) with, in between, a range of variable mixes of the two.