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GLOBAL AFFAIRS
AND PUBLIC POLICY

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GAPP Discussion Paper Series

Issue 1, 2020

GAPP 10th Excellence

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ISSN 2682-3691

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PUBLIC MALADMINISTRATION: THE UBIQUITOUS MENACE TO GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

This essay, based on a lifetime's research together around the world, focuses on the dark side of government: the wrongdoing of public officials that frustrate the efforts of humanity to better itself and to strive for perfection. It dwells on what goes needlessly wrong in public affairs - its failures and harmful actions, not its successes and achievements. All over the world people are increasingly upset with the performance of public authorities when misdeeds are hidden by confined blameworthy inner circles sworn to a secrecy enforced by public instruments, until they are eventually exposed to the public eye too late to correct. Even the most enlightened may be misled by rumors, false information, and propaganda that blur the whole picture and by premature revelations that confuses reality and understanding. Sleuths are discouraged and may have to take risks to life and limb to get to the truth. Upon close scrutiny, nowhere is immune to such public maladministration, described as "rotten eggs in a haven of corruption" (*New York Times*, 2019). Those who attempt serious investigation are unlikely to be popular with threatened elites and their cronies and sycophants who do not stop at murder in self defense. This paper is not intended to finger miscreants but to encourage further exploration of this dark side of government, exposing and analyzing many of the issues involved, and to contribute to the expectation that eventually effective ways will be found and deployed to diminish maladministration and improve the conduct of public affairs.

Preface

We human creatures calculate that our civilization is some ten millennia old, a mere speck in the evolution of our planet, one of billions of stars in the solar system which is only one galaxy that compose the universe. As far as we know, we remain unique by being able to think, discover, create, invent, and dream. We cannot guess whether we are on the path to our visions of utopia or heading for self-destruction, doomsday, ruining our planet and taking other creatures to extinction. Are we being too clever by half or just unable to discipline ourselves to overcome our evil inclinations? On the one hand, we have performed miracles and achieved wonders. On the other, we have become masters of warfare, violence, and weapons of mass destruction, rival religions, divisive political enemies, ideological disputes, and fearsome institutions.

Here, we confine ourselves to just one of these confusing and misunderstood creatures of mixed blessings, that of collective management in general and public administration in particular, specifically public maladministration, that is its bad side of which we are all victims. Although we are all conscious of it, we tend to play it down, excuse its waywardness, and even justify its wrongdoing as being inevitable. We learn to accommodate ourselves to it, because we have progressed so far in advance of other creatures and enjoy a standard of living way beyond our ancestors. That we have paid a dreadful price in terms of loss of life and property, maldistribution of collective wealth on a global scale, and engaged in genocide, slavery, and other horrors of humankind, we gloss over and try to put out of our minds as best we can. Maybe tomorrow will bring a better day when we can look one another as in a mirror. We live in hope that public affairs will be better run in the near future.

Introduction

The discipline of political science, dating from the early Nineteenth Century if not decades before that, has always specialized in politics, political institutions, and public sector activities. Its scope included government operations and performance until that aspect together with many others was virtually hived off its major core and sowed many competing paradigms (Haas 2017 Kuhn 2012, Reich 2019). Among these offshoots is contemporary public administration that has accompanied the evolution of the administrative state, the conversion of government into governance within the global society, the predicaments of the emergent policy state (Orren and Skowronek 2017), and the unequal representation of interests (Lapira and Thomas 2017) that has pledged itself to improving its professional practice as opposed to its amateur opportunistic practice. Despite expert efforts, the persistence of maladministration has led to growing popular discontent with the diminishing ability of governments to meet rising public expectations, and specifically to widespread aggravation with arrogant and insensitive public agencies (Davis 2017). Public maladministration, once hidden in the past by insiders, is now widely exposed in mass media that convey the impression that maladministration now seems to be getting out of control. This essay examines several of the controversial issues involved in this dark side of government emanating from three major interrelated causes, namely, (1) unfit occupants of public office, (2) organizational dysfunctions arising from human errors writ large, and (3) wrongdoing deemed corruption, now becoming far too widespread not to become a menace to government performance and stir popular unrest (Rose 2016, Lindberg, and Orjuela, 2016, Schluster 2017, Rose, and Peiffer, 2019).

Maladministration covers everything that goes wrong in the public arena that might have been avoided, from structural defects to undetected errors, from disasters to unmistakable kleptocracy (Cooley and Heathershaw 2017, Cooley, Heathershaw, and Sharman 2018). There is no lack of evidence. No government anywhere at any time can be perfect and spotless or without ongoing problems. Examples can be drawn from earliest recorded times to the present (Brioschi 2017) and around the globe, from notorious failed states to decent democratic regimes which work reasonably well most of the time. The aim of the paper is not to point a finger at any one country or government, but to draw on the experience of public administration world-wide. To convey a sense of the current (even urgency), the paper has also relied on relatively recent sources for discussion (although there is no lack of tempting historical examples). But in these fast-moving times, with new technological wonders and rapid political developments, it is often difficult to differentiate between what is significant now, and what may soon become irrelevant as scandal overtakes scandal daily. Innovative research forges ahead, some things don't seem to change all that much (Trepanier, and Callahan, 2018), and large populations still get left behind others by avoidable maladministration through unintended consequences, wasted resources, poor decision-making, mismanagement, and lack of foresight. The aim of this paper is to look at public administration squarely as it is, warts and all, not just as we would like it to be or imagine it might become if only things were different from reality.

Contemporary public administration has run into trouble. It is no longer as popular as it used to be. Its performance falls behind public expectations, public service is losing its competitiveness, and the credibility of public agencies is declining. On top of all this, the global society is engrossed in a divisive ideological conflict over the performance of public institutions in general and government/governance in particular. In this clash, public administration, one of the keys to "who gets what, how, why, when, and where" (Lasswell 1956), is central as to what people believe government should do, how it should be organized from top (international) to bottom (local community), what special powers it should possess within its jurisdiction, how and by whom its outcomes should be judged, and who is best qualified to fill responsible and accountable public offices. Schools of thought differ about whether the

aspirations, ideals, values and expectations of mortals can ever be met given that humans and their institutions are imperfect, flawed, unreliable, and contradictory. Inevitably, human arrangements are going to disappoint, though people may comfort themselves seeing how much civilization has been advancing in so many ways that progress seems inevitable. However, none can predict the future or the speed with which human ingenuity may overcome persistent human ills. Humans could destroy themselves together with a sustainable planet, or fulfill their scientific fiction dreams of a universal utopia (McKibben 2018).

Given this context, it should be no surprise that mainstream public administration, “the bureaucratic kings” (Moreno 2017) of the enthroned managerial class in the organizational society, struggles to cope with the increasing complexity of public affairs. It has to satisfy all the multiple stake holders in governance, the blurring of boundaries between public and private concerns, and daily contacts between the rulers and the ruled. It is overwhelmed with putting out fires without sufficient time to ponder why so many occur and what might be done to minimize them. So many activities are undertaken by the public sector and mainstream public administration that its study has fragmented into specialized professionalized sub-disciplines trying to improve the state of their art (Mees 2017). Each of these defensively downplays mishaps so as not to provide ammunition to its critics, collectively weakening concerted joint efforts to delve deeper into the dark side of government. Instead efforts are often made to show that administrators are blameless, that fault is elsewhere, that reoccurrence is unavoidable, and that things like war, starvation, epidemics, and cruelty can be changed permanently for the better, and not repeat over and over again.

The Controversy over Definition

In the social sciences, few agree on the definition of key terms. There is little consensus, not even among acknowledged experts (Torsello 2016). Presumably, good administration any and everywhere goes smoothly and produces such satisfactory results that few people need to give it a second thought; it is taken for granted; most can leave it in the care of trusted experts to keep it that way. In contrast, when it comes to poor, faulty administration i.e. maladministration, affected people rightly complain, drawing on individual soul searching, personal experience, and their own personal judgment. Meanwhile, so much diversion is spent quarrelling about what is meant that the experts often end up talking past one another, disputing what should be covered and what should have priority. In the case of terrorism, for instance, that topic has attracted “shady memoirists, superficial journalists and abstruse political scientists ... lacking the historical perspective necessary to understand events and trends that were neither as new nor unique as the more gullible or parochial believed them to be” (Laqueur 2016: ix). As will be demonstrated, maladministration and its sub components convey different substance to rival schools of thought to support their contrasting paradigms

Clearly administration is a human activity that is subject to human frailty. Even though whatever has been done remains in the past, it has consequences that may come to light only much later, some grave, others minor and forgettable. In any event, maladministration may include failing to anticipate and tackle natural misfortunes, such as earthquakes, tempests, floods, drought, forest fires, snow storms, mud slides, and climate change beyond human control. These require hunt for missing persons, search and rescue operations, aid and relief for the victims, restitution and restoration, and measures to prevent recurrence, all of which should have been expected and prepared for in advance by environmentalists and their administrators. People also expect the minimizing of murder, suicide, crimes, preventable accidents and so many other social ills beyond human control that require public action in dealing with their possible causes and consequences that might reduce human harm, save life,

and conserve unsustainable resources. Another category that could be blamed on administrators includes outbreaks of epidemics of age old diseases and new infections. But administrators are not prophets; they gamble on the future and generally assume the future will stay much the same as the present, although it possibly changes overnight. Maybe in the past, that held. Today's assumption is future shock that requires looking ahead without being able to predict.

The difficulty is that most shortcomings have multiple causes simply because everything is inter-related and connected in unfathomable ways. Seemingly hidden for too long, scandals come to light only when things get out of hand to breach popular toleration. Powerless people accept that violence, bribery and gouging are their daily facts of life. Many people find themselves caught in large scale life-threatening hostilities in warfare, in the clutches of autocratic kleptocracies, such as Hungary (Magyar and Vasarhelyi 2018), and impersonal global corporations, and class and religious conflicts that cross local boundaries, thereby destroying collective achievements and investments. Much maladministration is institutionalized because people and their governments ignore proposals spelled out in all the great literature (Adler 1961) and by metaphysicians (Conee and Sider 2014). The public interest is subverted by insiders, abetted by outsiders who capture the political system and rely on dysfunctional bureaucracies, profiting at the expense of everyone else. These privileged groups live in comparative comfort while the under classes live in misery (Zupan 2017, Acemoglu and Robinson 2012, Mayer 2016) and have always done so. Maladministration is to the advantage of those who can rig administrative arrangements (Gilens 2012), and devise a lasting organizational culture that defies reformers (Stroup and Wong 2017).

In this essay, many of the major forms of public maladministration are grouped into three categories of wrongdoing. First, *sheer incompetence* includes unfit individuals occupying public offices who lack adequate character, knowledge, skills, qualifications, and experience of what is required. They outwit more worthy rivals who are put off public service and refuse to oblige public clamor. The damage unfit office holders cause can last for generations. When such unfit office holders take command of forms of global authoritarianism down to local branches of the Mafia's Ndrangheta (Perry 2018), nobody can feel safe, secure and comfortable

Second, *organization dysfunction*, the opposite to organizational innocence (Green 2017), includes all that goes systemically wrong in all large scale organizations (once known by the term bureaupathology or the sicknesses of bureaucracy (Parker and Parker 2018, 35), now out of favor, and by demisclerosis which never caught on) often reflecting the personal faults of office holders. The number of these maladies has been increasing beyond 200 (see Table 1) where once it was well under that figure (Caiden 1991). Max Weber's ideal model of bureaucracy has come under increasing attack linking bureaucratic efficiency to the horrors and moral aloofness of authoritarian terror (Ophir, Givoni, and Hanafi 2009, 340-9). Without denying the indispensability of professional management and that bureaucracy is possibly the best form of large-scale public management so far invented (Verkuil 2017), these shortcomings calcify government with self-interested vested groups which preserve failed or unnecessary programs and legalize every mistake made (Callahan 2017: 30). The latest is that of kludges, when poor drafting of public documents produces endless edification, clarification, interpretation, and lobbying for amendments.

Third, *corruption* covers every other conceivable act of wrongdoing committed by public sector agencies beyond the common misuse of public power for private gain. These range from petty localized lying, cheating, and conflicts of interest to alleged major crimes against humanity and genocide, thus making this category by far the largest and most known. All three have plagued government and the public

sector since civilization was established. All have defied attempts at change. Despite previous progress, all seem likely to worsen before good governance spreads. Each category presents challenges that just about a score of countries today have managed to overcome with any degree of satisfaction through persistent vigilance, sufficient political will, and exceptional cultural circumstances (Quah 2015) to guarantee unobjectionable government until impatience once again mounts.

Studies of growing incapacity to govern gives rise to anarchy or tyranny on the ground and provides evidence of public administration systems going off course and astray (Dror 2001). They also give clues to what might be tried to restore their effectiveness. Sometimes, that requires just a dash of common sense and decency. Other times, it requires prolonged administrative reform of large scale delivery systems under dedicated leadership, with adequate resources, integrity, imaginative talent, patience, persistence over the long haul, and popular support. Unfortunately, such measures are beyond the capacity of most contemporary governments (Dror 2001), the worst barely hanging onto office, while the best temporarily extract themselves out of serious trouble until faced by the next crisis of misrule.

Passionate Objectors Versus Compassionate Pragmatists

Maladministration stirs the emotions because it conjures images of human inequality, unsavory characters, deliberate manipulation and exploitation, planned deception, lawlessness, ruthlessness, simple and narrow mindedness and various other revolting features of human indecency. The passionate objectors link it to “Something that human beings instinctively loathe...invoking notions of depravity and evil, human frailty and temptation... as an external force which attacks and undermines better human impulses. It is self-involvement, self indulgence, and the loosening and discarding of human bonds.” (Underkuffler 2013: 1,3-4). It gives government a bad name and tarnishes anyone who takes too much interest in its dark side just because it allocates and imposes values (Tawney 1926, 1998). Inwardly, it is resented because it exposes regretted wrongdoing that shame reputations of ethical professional practitioners who are its passionate objectors (Svara 2007, Lawton, Van der Wal, and Huberts 2016), and who align themselves with its innocent victims against those who harvest from their opportunities to profit.

Against this approach are researchers and investigators who try to remain more objective and dispassionate by pointing out that maladministration has always been ubiquitous and an inevitable part of every culture, which makes it acceptable and even invisible to outsiders as a taboo item in polite society.

Societies develop “cultures of corruption” because they are trapped in a vicious circle of high inequality, low out-group trust, and higher corruption... In these “cultures of corruption”, people make payments because there is no way out. They are caught in this inequality and they are hardly happy about it. Where high-level corruption is rampant, the very people who are supposed to be “tolerant” of malfeasance resent the illicit tactics that the powerful use to enrich themselves. (Uslaner 2008: 6)

This theme has long been prevalent in development administration and international relations where it is easier to refer to societies other than one’s own. One can be more objective and generalize, as the United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan did in his message to the first conference following the 2003 passage of the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). There, he stated that corruption by

itself (unconnected with the broader malaise of maladministration) impeded social and economic development, eroded the public's trust in public institutions, hurt investment, and undermined democracy and the rule of law. It facilitated terrorism, conflict and organized crime (Bracking 2007). Annan did not mention unfit officer holders and organizational dysfunctions nor did he refer to the possible endangerment to freedom and democratic cultural aspirations by those who dominate public policy and the public arena i.e. the power holders who shut out all other stakeholders. Lastly, he never referred to the lack of trust in public institutions (Uslaner 2018).

Just in the last two decades it has become more obvious that much needless misery and suffering have been rooted in public policy and maladministration with the evolution of transnational organized criminal and terrorist pipelines. These global cartels and local gangs make evil blood profits through illegal trade that exploit the failures and weaknesses of societal institutions and undermine good governance (Neumann 2017). They pose as righteous protectors of humanity while only too keen to encroach on any public space left by government and legal business to enlarge their harmful nefarious activities wrecking global peace, security, stability, basic human rights, welfare, community, decency, and goodness. In short, they are destroying civilization and spoiling progress by their return to barbarism with their violent extremism, diversion of resources, disregard of morals and laws, dishonesty, greed, money laundering, counterfeiting, illicit financial flows, underworlds, malfeasance, subversion of law and order, intimidation, and freedom from restrictions, accountability, and responsibility. These nonstate actors "rival the state for control of territory, people, and resources" (Neumann, 2017, 249).

A governmental institution that functions properly will lead to a community and a "state" that will cohere and peacefully reinforce the political and legal structure that unites its citizens, who will participate politically and seek to reform it if necessary, rather than to revolt, secede, and found a new nation-state or an alternate (perhaps criminal) system of governance. People who have had to cohabitate and share a territory and an extended history will naturally form bonds that unite them (Neumann 2017, 273).

Maladministration, however defined and perceived, requires a strong defense (Mendilow and Peleg 2014) to be justified. This it receives from all those who benefit from it, such as (a) the unscrupulous lacking integrity, the banal bureaucrats, the enthusiastic ambitious, and greedy participants (Burke, Tomlinson and Cooper 2011, Petrus et al 2014), (b) the treacherous schemers (Arnone and Borlini 2012), (c) the unregulated market institutional economists (Mishra 2006) and their accomplices (Mayer 2016, Callahan 2017)), including libertarians who want no interference with their private business, and (d) the scandalous (Demirhan and Cakir-Demirhan 2017). None of these want to be exposed for acting in their self-interest at the expense of the community (Svara 2007). In recent years, there has emerged a new entrepreneurial administrative caste (Wedel 2009) of insidious insiders and fixers who profess to improve government performance and organizational efficiency through their ability to manipulate political and administrative systems as public benefactors while serving themselves as their just compensation for their hard work, dedication, and connections. They have the ability to get unfavorable decisions reversed, skip around bureaucratic obstacles, reduce work procedures, save time and expense, and open paths to obtaining scarce items (Yochelson 2016, Lupan 2017). They want no public association with the bigger villains in political skullduggery, organized crime, black markets, money laundering, and underground economies both within and outside the government swamp, a squalid

area too taboo for them to investigate, measure, and expose. When that is done, their effrontery can be startling (Williams 2016).

This recent new inside caste argues as it did in the past, that all machinery needs greasing, so these fixers have become indispensable in contemporary government. Although they profit in the process, they claim they perform a valuable public service. Where administrative systems stall, they prevent breakdowns, alienation, and stonewalling. They reinvent delivery systems, introduce new technology, provide competition to public monopolies, reduce unnecessary government interference and regulation of private initiatives, and boast of other benefits. They challenge outdated old style public administration that aggrandized Big Bureaucracy and distanced the ruled from the rulers. In contrast, this new caste is composed of pragmatic performers who take the world as it is and devise ways of overhauling obsolete administrative systems and cutting through red tape. From a public perspective, there might be much better value in investing the equivalent in finding out more about why maladministration occurs in the first place and what works to curb it instead of blindly adopting untested remedies. People the world over do care how they are governed (Bakija et al 2016) and do support leaders who are committed to doing better even when they fail to live up to their promises. Unfortunately, the rot often starts at the top, together with unscrupulous highly expensive self touting consultants operating within who although unversed in traditional public administration (Callahan 2017, Verkuil 2017) are at home with the policy state (Orren and Sukhanyer 2017).

Deterrents to Research

When the 2008 Great Recession struck the global economy and its richest countries, the whole subject of misgovernment, misrule, mismanagement, and popular discontent with public leadership drew center stage in mass media. With them came increasing attention to public maladministration and the upsetting aspects of the enlarging administrative state. Much suffering could have been avoided had governments of the world's leading countries not been so complacent about the way they were conducting public affairs (Rothstein 2011, Rothstein 2015). They had not responded sufficiently to complaints. They had failed to follow through with reforms and intentions. Instead, they had gloried in their supposed successes despite warnings that things were not going so well. They preferred to be exonerated than shamed. Good public relations had hidden mounting public discontent. More investigation and research was called for. But the whole topic had long grown beyond one person's lifetime, even the lifetime of groups working together in specialized research centers. Investigation and research had to be done on a scattered piecemeal basis, even when resources were insufficient to make an immediate impact on policy and practice. But there were other obstacles that had to be overcome.

Lack of International Agreement. Cultures disagree widely over what comprises maladministration other than for a few key items. For the rest, there are vague notions lacking precision (Graycar and Prezier 2013) even when speaking in different local dialects of the same language. Puzzled interpreters talk past one another. Speakers at international conferences disagree where maladministration begins and ends, where the borders between public and private administration should be drawn, what differences can be discerned among governmental, non-governmental, hybrid and mixed organizations at different levels of government, and distinguishing one form of maladministration from another. Researchers do not know what to expect before they begin and have few reliable guidelines once they do. The only aspect that researchers seem to agree on is that when they discover maladministration enshrined in law and practice, they find it disgraceful and distasteful (Anechiarico 2017).

Disavowal. Few public institutions and officials admit to persistent maladministration. They avoid disclosure. They deny allegations. They destroy incriminating evidence. They intimidate potential

whistle-blowers blaming their accusers of wrongdoing. They lobby against and out-trick third party investigations. They plead ignorance, innocence and spotless purity. When necessary, they stoop to eliminating co-conspirators, fellow partners, witnesses and anybody else who gets in their way or might sully their reputations. In brief, their vengeance is to be feared. People who get too near the truth mysteriously disappear or are found dead (Perry 2018). Research angels wisely fear to tread in such circumstances.

Seduction. Maladministration presents many opportunities to do extremely well for oneself by making money from other people's money, official perquisites, honors, privileges, coercive power, stifling dissent, rent-seeking, access to knowledge and secrets, revolving doors, insider trading, elite status, ego satisfaction, and presumptive exemption from prevailing norms and laws. At the top, one can remake history and become a household name. Despite the best of intentions, maladministration is seductive, even to researchers who mix with insiders so as to share in the spoils by keeping to themselves anything that might become publicly incriminating and possibly self destructive. The tables can be reversed when doubts arise and accusers cannot produce clear positive proof beyond circumstantial evidence.

Substantiation. Revealing evidence is limited by secrecy laws, social conventions, personal understandings, and common courtesies. Researchers (and their sponsors) into the dark side of government face heavy pressures to toe the official line or face the consequences of their disobedience. They can be completely ignored, denied access, intimidated, bullied, spied upon, prosecuted, punished, bribed, and handsomely seduced, or finally turned around into propagandists for the official line, thereby reversing themselves and undermining their credibility (and destroying their self confidence in the process of being forced to swear to untruths). The subjects are frightened, timid, fallible, and aware of the consequences of defying the powerful. Governments openly do terrible things to innocent inhabitants, employing public instruments of suppression (Ellsberg 2017, Zoloznaya 2017). Behind closed doors in the name of national security, survival, and public safety, public authorities conduct research and development (R & D) and questionable experiments. By its very nature, maladministration cannot be assessed qualitatively or quantitatively. Not that much can be counted and not all that can, counts. Data collection is a worthy endeavor but has its limitations when it comes to the circumstances and substance of maladministration where crucial pieces of the puzzle may be altogether missing.

Jealous tribes. Government work is not so simple and easy that anyone can perform it without being literate, trained and supervised; most positions above entry level require specialization, expertise, and professionalization. As government takes on more activities, so increasing numbers of distinct tribes hive off into separate careers, each one to advance the state of its art, jealous of its credibility and reputation, and anxious to prove its worth. Each has its own way of operating under professional and sub-professional norms. This proliferation has given rise to such rivalry and overlapping so that no one alone has a monopoly and can rule the roost by itself. Yet, all confront maladministration and get tarred whenever government falls into disrepute. They do not get together enough to share common ground to overcome unfair criticism and devise tools to curb aspects of maladministration dealing with similar problems, such as pilfering of supplies and soldiering/sleeping on the job. Nobody wants to be considered a betrayer of associates.

Inaction. Researchers find that there is much talk about the need for action and intentions to act, but little action in progress behind the talk, resolutions, reports, publications and promises that shield or justify inaction and delay. Some public officials shine at pulling the wool over people's eyes, not stopping short at deceit, lying, and falsifying. Once public officials enjoy the fruits of office, their will to forego them tends to fade. They stick with the status quo, just sitting on their hands by default. When irritated by critics they can threaten personal vengeance and retaliation. When blocked, lukewarm researchers

lose heart before the stuffing gets knocked out of them. They move on to pursue something more promising and profitable. Unfortunately, disillusioned researchers of maladministration rarely return unless dedicated and relentless to their task regardless of their fate.

Yet the need for research into maladministration grows stronger as governments flounder and dig deeper holes for themselves. Grasping at simple solutions is no panacea. The time has long gone when public administration was seen as a mere convenient instrument of small government whose inner workings were its own concern. It has been transformed into a key societal institution and the living constitution of many countries and crucial in the functioning of the global society. The fate of most people is largely in the hands of public officials and their cronies. The ethical and empirical push to curb public maladministration has to convert pious platitudes into prompt and apt actions. Administration will not get better by itself on its own accord. No magic wand exists to overcome years of delay and neglect. Looking ahead, all that can be expected is that humanity will cope as best it can in changing circumstances while still pursuing its dreams. Meantime, government and public administration will remain key players and try to find solutions to cleaning up their own messes as they proceed.

Coming Down to Earth: Institutionalized Maladministration

Mainstream public administration has tended to brush maladministration out of its depiction of the discipline except for its coverage of public ethics and related matters. Many countries believed it was unpatriotic to focus on the dark side of government, almost taboo to mention it in polite society. The public administration establishment preferred to keep out of partisan politics, remain loyal and devoted public servants, and get on with the work at hand out of the limelight without providing evidence of any self-serving and selling out to the superrich (Denzil 2017). Yet, the most trusted public offices have been guilty of institutionalized maladministration at one time or another. The following example based on public evidence is drawn from the United States federal administration. It is missing from among its major ongoing scandals listed by one of America's foremost current scholars (Kettl 2016), and kept quiet, despite questioning of the worth and effectiveness of the subject for several years although it has supposedly been under close supervision to prevent systemic wasteful self-perpetuating mismanagement. It is drawn from within the huge military/security galaxy, specifically concerning American aid to Afghanistan ever since 2003, annually mounting to hundreds of billions of dollars scattered over multiple agencies and budgets.

The Watchdog Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction had been routinely releasing reports about waste, fraud, and abuse in government-sponsored programs, among which had been inoperable aircraft, unverifiable troop rosters, a rarely used \$335 million tax-payer supported electrical plant and an unfinished dam costing not much less, and other smaller failed projects that were never completed or fell into disrepair. In 2008, Congress had created a cross-agency office to find out exactly what had been bought chaotically with more than \$100 billion spent on reconstruction by private contractors and local agencies. Records had disappeared, agencies had inaccurately measured progress reports, and corruption had drained funds, especially in war zones.

Since 1992, nearly a decade before the U.S.A had ventured into Afghanistan, the General Accounting, now Accountability, Office (GAO) has publicly faulted the Department of Defense's (DoD) oversight of contractors as being highly vulnerable to fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement not unique to Afghanistan (Silverstein 2016). Nevertheless, the country remains one of the world's poorest and least developed. Corruption is rampant, access to justice is widely uneven, and the country is still at the time of writing the world's leading opium grower, abetted by weak central departments with a minimal rural presence. The watchdog has named individuals, something rarely done. Its audits have revealed case

after case of blatant waste not acted upon because the DoD cannot see through the bureaucratic fog to act. Some lower level staff guilty of theft have been imprisoned but (as yet) no higher level officers have been publicly investigated for their possible participation or knowledge of the scams.

While the war has gone from dismal to catastrophic until nowhere is safe from Taliban attacks that kill and injure every day (Mashal and Sukhanyar 2018), reconstruction money has enriched the elite, warlords, and even impostors, defeating attempts to stem graft (Nordland and Sukhanyar 2016). Other inside watchdogs, such as the High Office of Oversight charged with examining the assets of top officials, and external accountability agencies, have fared no better in turning things around in an administrative environment that hinders investigation, colludes with impunity, and discourages prosecution. The departments involved plead that they have made changes to clean up the situation to avoid its perpetuation. Their investigations have resulted in just a few line staff (who undoubtedly shared in the spoils) being prosecuted and punished back in the United States.

How could any responsible administrator overlook:

Inflated rolls, with local commanders pocketing American-supplied money to pay for... 'ghost soldiers'...\$70 billion in rebuilding Afghan security forces, only 63 percent...under government control. Why on those increasingly infrequent occasions when Afghanistan attracts notice do half-truths and pettifoggery prevail, rather than hard-nosed assessments? ... In Washington, war has become tolerable, an enterprise to be managed...Like other large-scale government projects, war now serves as a medium through which favors are bestowed, largesse distributed and ambitions satisfied (Bacevich 2017)?

This brief surmise of the reconstruction program in Afghanistan captures the essence of institutionalized maladministration. The ends justify the means, however foul. As in love and war, success is everything. Few seem to care enough to bother to change things. The administrative system is perpetuated even though outputs and results fall far short of expectations. This is not just trivial, sloppy, accidental, or blameless. Inaction seems likely and may even be premeditated in a customary slap-dash manner. Money disappears into thin air. Purchasers get swindled. Handlers steal or siphon off what they can. Conspirators cover up one another's tracks. Very few are faulted. Lenience is shown, not always but often enough. The risks of being caught are low and the likelihood of personal advantage high.

This specific case of American aid to Afghanistan highlights some other ubiquitous attributes of institutionalized maladministration:

1. *The irresponsibility of individuals.* Maladministration does not just happen. It is not a natural phenomenon. It does not occur all by itself and it will not cure itself without an appropriate remedial action at the ready. According to the basic underlying philosophy of the discipline and its professional practitioners, public administrators are obliged to improve the state of their art and seek whatever available assistance is available, something they cannot and should not be allowed to dodge. Their job is not just to maintain the status quo or just to respond to public critics and complainants: it is to improve operations that will prevent criticism and complaints from arising in the first place if they can. That should be a personal commitment, never self-enrichment or evil-doing or merely handing out public money (United Nations Development Program 1998) even if official public policy is undertaken with enthusiastic good intentions but expressed in imprecise language (that can always be corrected by better drafting and later by kludging).

2. *Blaming the Messenger for the Message.* Reliable bearers of bad news are only communicators merely drawing immediate attention to facts that need urgent attention. Being upset at the message and the messenger does not help any. The recipients should probably realize that the mess is of their own making, or that an unexpected situation has arisen that requires urgent response not drawn out investigations one after another that delay possible appropriate remedial action, unless already too late. The facts are not going to disappear and have to be faced. Transferring the blame may make matters worse, as do denial, recrimination, preoccupation, panic, hibernation, and unsustainable fixes.

3. *Ignoring the Evidence.* It is too frequently assumed that little can be learned from either history or experience relevant to the present because the past no longer applies. Instead, information is disbelieved because it is too far ahead of its time, sounds wrong, belies preconceptions, is held false, and lacks conviction. It can also be misunderstood, beyond comprehension, distorted, exaggerated, ridiculed, and scorned. Maladministration is not just in the mind; warnings about threatening trouble spots can be found in complaints, disagreements, independent reviews, audits, venerable memories, friendly advice, and chance encounters, and by just staying alert and connected on the job. Not being adequately informed can be excusable, although it negates the obligation to be kept informed of all judged serious, important matters.

4. *Sleeping Watchdogs.* The task of watchdogs is demanding, tiring, thankless, and unappreciated. They sometimes fail to bark and when they do, it falls on deaf ears. They fear the consequences of revealing all they know should they talk out of turn, contradict authority figures, become too popular for comfort, or provide fuel for rumors, conspiracies, scandals, and scuttlebutt. Without independent status, tenure, authority, and resources, they face the prospect of being denied access, testimony, records, and attention. They frequently find themselves ignored and may eventually be removed for intervening in matters that should not concern them, ranging from allegations of exceeding their jurisdiction to revealing major boondoggles and useless projects (Lichtblau 2015). Watchdogs have to discover their own independent supporters willing and capable of protecting them against all-comers, without which they are all too vulnerable to replacement, or being ignored and over-ruled.

5. *Culture of Impunity.* The players change but the game continues undeterred. It is business as usual. Nothing much changes where maladministration is more the traditional *way* of life than a *fact* of life i.e. an exceptional occurrence out of the ordinary. In the former where inertia reigns, reformers despair at achieving anything, while nobody dares touch any really big fish. Meantime, a disastrous situation worsens and an ineffectual government visibly rots from within. Nothing really substantial alters. Little seems to help as the same administrators and administrative systems stay in place. Wherever villains escape scot-free, they may often be replaced by even worse successors who promise to be different but behave in much the same or worse ways, risking whatever they can get away with for the time being.

6. *Fish Rot from the Head.* At the supervised lower work levels, the opportunities for maladministration are relatively confined and the pickings are likely to be relatively small (but crucial) to supplement poor compensation. Individuals, alone or in cahoots, can disrupt everything, short of sabotage, simply by halting work, pilfering from the job, working to rule, disobeying instructions, acting up, cheating, and spoiling the work itself, just short of jeopardizing retention. Systemic maladministration is more likely to stem much more from the top. Despite exhibiting unpleasant personal traits, one has to reach a high enough level to affect the operation of a sophisticated administrative system. Generally speaking, “where elites behave in a self-serving manner, there is no reason to believe that the rest of the population will be any better” (Dahlstrom and Wangnerud 2015: 3). Each work level listens, watches, and heeds the others just as individuals examine their peers to conform and copy and change where necessary. Anything unusual gets noted and passed on to the grapevine for gossip.

7. *Unattainable Perfection.* Nothing can be done all at once. Priorities have to be chosen depending on the specific circumstances. Afghanistan has been a hopeless basket case for decades; so far, it has defied virtually every attempt to turn it around. In the race to the bottom, it has several rivals around the globe. It is not the only black hole in the administrative firmament. There are no ideal solutions. There is no one best way that fits all. There are no quick fixes to unsolvable problems. Miracles cannot be expected where disillusion prevails. New brooms may temporarily sweep clean but not for long as the dirt soon reappears. The need for administrative reform is endless. Bad habits persist. Time and patience are required to see whether proposed changes take hold to be firm enough to provide a base for the next steps.

8. *Perpetual Toil.* Just as with beauty and ugliness, what constitutes good or bad administration is in the mind of the beholder. Not all that is ugly can be eradicated by nostrums although it can be made less noticeable. Con artists, magicians and hidden persuaders can even convince the gullible that the ugly is actually pretty. Some governments are smart in dressing up maladministration as if it were beneficial and not grim reality. People are harmed, as when innocent victims are punished for crimes they did not commit (Reamer 2016) or when fraud, waste, and abuse become institutionalized policy or when the powerless are stripped of their remaining protection (Rose-Ackerman and Soreide 2011). Public administrators as professional practitioners cannot be blamed for everything that goes wrong, but they can be faulted for letting too much pass unquestioned for the sake of a quiet life, avoiding blame, and looking good. Righting wrong, and searching for corrective measures beyond traditional procedures, standard dogma, rigid rules, and the latest momentary fads and fashions, involves a long slog, requiring unflagging concentration, putting safety measures in place, and unimpeachable character.

9. *Character Counts.* Successful administrators require familiarity with the context and circumstances, solid judgment, ability to quickly size up a situation and decide, with a touch of charisma to assure confidence, and a persuasive personality for a solid following. While the discipline may seek to become a universalistic technical science, it is still an art that takes into account values, ideas, and the human factor. To obtain cooperation, it has to be trustworthy, not working in an atmosphere that breeds suppression, suspicion, fear, malice, and discontent. Virtue in public office provides a treasured model to be emulated, a source for communal pride, and nobility personified. Such an administrative culture is rare and fragile, taking generations to build but only hours to destroy (Mannheim 1936).

No large scale organization is totally immune from maladministration lurking somewhere within, attributable to unfit incumbents, faceless bureaucrats, and hidden corrupt activity. When maladministration becomes known, people do not always rush to judgment, automatically condemning the occurrence. They are more likely to be compassionate, understanding that such incidents can occur any time and location to anyone who gets momentarily distracted. Unless the situation is exacerbated, they are more likely to be more tolerant. But such tolerance may be misplaced, as minor incidents of maladministration may too easily get out of hand, institutionalized, systematic, accepted, and accustomed. Fortunate indeed are those administrative states which have avoided the dire mess of the failed states and rotten governments of this world (Gong and Ma 2009, Quah 2011).

All the above was first drafted in 2016 and updated before the successful campaign of President Trump. Since then, the situation seems to have far worsened both in Afghanistan and within the U.S. federal administration according to those (Cockburn 2019 and New York Times 2019).

With better access than we have had. The billions of dollars have become tens of billions more than all other countries put together if accurate figures were known spent on military and intelligence activities

which is by far the largest public expenditures dwarfing ever thing else, needless to say including bloated budgets, gross waste, and systemic theft.

Abundant Evidence

Once when knowledge of government was limited to a few privileged insiders, outsiders without access were almost unable to conduct research into maladministration. But even then, its victims could not be totally silenced. Intellectuals took note of whatever could be found out and preserved in personal collections and libraries where hand copies could be made and translated for wider circulation (Brioschi 2017). Then came printing and widespread schooling, followed by newspapers and magazines, followed in turn by mass media, freedom of information, and computerization that has brought information to people's fingertips, creating a wonderland for the literate. Those living in open societies can eventually discover whatever they want except for information deliberately still hidden from outsiders for acceptable worthy reasons (Frost 2017). This is not the case in closed societies where the risks for revealing secrets are greater and the consequences can be grave. Nor is it the case in private government (Anderson 2017) and where taboos prevail (Billias and Veruri 2017). Everybody learns to conform to prevailing norms what is permissible and how far they can go.

To keep out of trouble, it is or should be fairly straightforward how to behave to avoid being accused of the three major categories of maladministration.

(a) Incompetence. Meet the legal requirements to enter a career in the public service and employment in a specific opening, acquire the demonstrable skills expected, obtain the formal qualifications demanded, and enjoy the work while avoiding mistakes and acting inappropriately, thereby drawing no criticism. Discover what draws attention to one's above average performance, so to get noticed by seniors and patronized. Keeping clean is all very well until one disagrees with one's orders.

(b) Dysfunctional organization. Diagnose the symptoms of black spots handicapping the organization, search for comparable situations reported elsewhere, and propose possible feasible remedies that seem applicable, after consulting the computer with apposite words for leads. Do the thinking that needs to be done to apply to the specific situation in detail and work out arguments to win over opponents. Design a convincing presentation and try it out beforehand. Undertake all the slog work from drafting to persuasive argumentation that needs to be done to ensure adoption. This is all very well until one oversteps the mark and behind one's back one is being regarded as too smart and uppity, too much of a threat to the status quo.

(c) Corruption. Assemble the factual evidence, obtain testimony from unimpeachable authority, take into account extenuating circumstances, be firm but be prepared to exercise mercy when contrition is shown. Try to offer fair compensation to the victims. Justice has to be done and seen to be done, more like a parole board than a strict court of law (Reamer 2016) so that all parties are satisfied enough not to hold a lasting grudge. Again, this is all very well until one encounters lack of support and cooperation.

The aim is to be positive and avoid accusations of being a trouble maker or a perpetually discontented employee lucky to have been tolerated for so long, a tell-tale whistle-blower without cause who should be disregarded as having nothing worthwhile to contribute.

These days, no one needs to rely any more on knowledgeable whistle-blowers except from impenetrable secret organizations. There is abundant evidence readily available to serious inquirers beyond the usual sources in national archives, public records, university libraries, mass media holdings, and social science field research. So much is available through information technology that keeping up is

difficult. Daily mass media alone can suffice to reveal instantly the latest gossip and rumors, the on-going scandals around the world, misbehavior of celebrities, and disappointment with public guardians (Ivkovic 2005), indeed anything newsworthy without moving from one's computer. Maladministration is not only news, it has become entertainment. The United States is an open book. In the past year alone, stories stranger than fiction of unimaginable doings in high places have emerged in countries as far apart and different as from Australia to Zimbabwe, from the largest states around the globe in size and population as Russia, China, India, Indonesia, and Brazil to the smallest and as Malta and city states within states. Truth can be stranger than fiction, indeed beyond imagination, without mentioning the high seas, elections, refugees, and ecological destruction. New serious scholarly research joins classics and raises queries about long held myths, even about common bribery (Nichols and Robertson 2017) and legal graft (Feuer 2018).

The territory is vast. There are four levels of government to be covered – international, country, local, and communal – all hopelessly mixed up and confusing to their residents. Each level knows where its jurisdiction reaches but many overlap and share activities so that their administrative systems blend one into another and also with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) where they work together. With globalization, the international level has to expand its reach and responsibilities over some 200 sovereign states whose number fluctuates as countries expand and split. The countries vary from huge empires to city states with mixed populations. These delegate activities to smaller entities which in turn are composed of contrasting neighborhoods all of which need administering differently according to local circumstances. But there are other complications that cloud the picture of maladministration.

Flawed Mortals. Religions and cults emphasize that humans are mixtures of good and bad traits. The good are praiseworthy; the bad are to be condemned. All preach their different versions of morality which they ritualize into norms and laws as righteousness. All condemn sinful conduct committed by imperfect individuals that deserve punishment in this life, the after-life, and re-incarnation. While universal love and tolerance are advocated, where the sectarian spirit prevails over the secular, it creates havoc in public policy and confuses strategies in tackling public maladministration. Flaws can be forgiven or overlooked according to individual discretion. How things will eventually turn out is anyone's guess.

Contrasting Societies. Communities inherit different beliefs and customs not just from religion and superstition but also from experience and philosophy that make up tradition and culture. Just as individuals differ from one another, so does every distinct society have its unique features. Each is proud of its distinctiveness which it wants to preserve. Attitudes toward what constitutes and how to deal with public maladministration can vary widely among communities according to prejudice based on sex, age, color, appearance, smell, and every other real or imagined difference related to human variety, sufficient to make people want to live apart (Shelly 2014) and decide their own fate for themselves.

Organizational Imperatives. All human arrangements are subject to dispute from cohabitation to international collaborations. On any scale, people have to be managed. The form that dominates is bureaucracy, more particularly Weberian ideal-type bureaucracy (Gerth and Mills 1957, Bendix 1977), possibly derived from the military as the most effective form for effective action in getting things done, certainly superior to volunteerism or informal collectivism, neither of which rely on compulsion. However, the urge to be free of the unnecessary restrictions of organizational imperatives imposed by authority remains strong among individuals who want to be their own boss to decide for themselves or at least taken into consideration at life changing moments.

Innocent Victims. When it comes to feeling harmed and annoyed, the voiceless victims find someone or something to blame (even when they cannot articulate their grievances), not that anybody else really notices or cares when they do. They take for granted that faceless bureaucrats and merciless executives ignore them. As for heartless despots whose veins seem to run with icy water, the sheer arrogance of office and personal vindictiveness say everything about their shameless rule bordering on sadism. Sweet words belie contempt for inferiors unfit to rule. Contemptuous leaders provide an excuse to everybody else to copy them. So the rot worsens. As it does, so it becomes more obvious. People are intelligent enough to see this and call for a halt. When unheeded, they look for new blood and fresh ideas that raise them up not keep them down. They resent being blamed and look for opportunities to turn things around and be aroused out of their despondency into renewed confidence.

Once the taboo on maladministration was broken, the flood gates to expound were opened (Vogl 2012). No longer could the widening gap between rich and poor countries be disguised and the failure of development aid to make any appreciable impact. Maladministration was so widespread in the under-developed states with large deposits of natural resources and under-employed graduates boosting brain drain. In the mid 1990s, the major international organizations breached the silence surrounding maladministration. This soon led to international initiatives and resolutions to reduce maladministration in the forthcoming Twenty-First Century (Carr 2007) which in turn encouraged research and public campaigns for action by outspoken individuals, pushed by an inner conscience (Sorabji 2014), willing to stand up against institutionalized wrongdoing and risk their lives in support of good causes.

Room for Optimism

Since the turn of the century, international resolutions condemning corruption and international intentions to improve governance and tackle maladministration have prompted global action to finance research and publications, encourage investigatory bodies, and arrange conferences exchanging ideas and information. The taboo on the subject may be fast disappearing, but governments have been somewhat lax in dealing with prevailing maladministration, and have been tightening leaks of official information, whose classified coverage has also been broadened. Nonetheless, there is some room for optimism as attested by international resolves to make governance, government, and public administration work much better. Unfortunately, there has been far too much fake news, false boasting, and suppression of notable public protest campaigns, such as in India, Iran, Italy (Porta and Vannucci, A. 2012) and Russia (Jenkins 2018), which have been much reported in mass media, exaggerating temporary successes that have been quickly reversed once the publicity has faded. Meantime, the situation has worsened since the 2008 global recession. Government seems to have declined rather than improved, depending on one's perspective, as the gap between the haves and have-nots has widened.

People probably get the governments and public officials they deserve. If the good people do not lead the way, then they leave the field to the rascals who will hang on for dear life. Public administration has been blessed with its share of leaders upon high and its reformers from below, including its womenfolk like legendary Florence Nightingale (improving public health), Edith Barton (providing humanitarian assistance), Jane Addams (extending social welfare), and Frances Perkins (deepening social security). Their original ideas drove them on despite contempt from traditionalists, resentment from conservatives, and hostility from entrenched powers unaccustomed to being challenged. Gaining supporters is rarely self-evident; that skill requires convincing others out of their doubts and inspiring them into enthusiastic followers. All had to win popular approval to overwhelm stubborn opposition. A touch of charisma helped. What counted more was the knowledge that they had popular backing for their detailed sensible practical proposals.

Besides political will and popular support, their achievements provide other pointers to success.

1. Good Government. When incompetent and venal government makes residents angry or frustrated, it may not last long. There is no substitute for competence and integrity (Huberts and Hoekstra 2016). People crave for government that makes them worry-free (Bakija et al 2016). They want results not promises, at least sufficient for them to be content enough not to rebel. How that can be done is spelt out by the good government movement (Mungiu-Pippidi 2015, Rothstein 2011) and political reformers (Lindvall 2017).

2. Successful Combatants. Only about a quarter of the states which report to international bodies can be given a grade of satisfaction according to the indices used in assessing good government. Only half of these are relatively free of systemic maladministration where their residents can go about their business unaware of it except occasionally; in most of them, public administration runs smoothly. These 25 or so states, predominantly in Western Europe, North America, and the Commonwealth, claim few secrets without justification. On the contrary, they like to be studied, welcome visitors, and are proud to be written about. Each has its own story to tell about its arduous journey to achieve and maintain its success (Quah 2013, Rotberg et al 2018).

3. Reversing Course. Since the 1970s, even the successful states have run into difficulties. Blaming much maladministration on the Big Bureaucracy of the ever aggrandizing administrative state has oversimplified the challenges that have arisen since from increasing globalization, accelerating technology, changing ideology, and fluctuating economic prospects, all of which would have necessitated a rethinking of main stream public administration traditionalism. Shrinking the administrative state (attributed to economist James Buchanan but going back much further to the American Enterprise Institute founded in 1938 to roll back the New Deal and long before that to Frank Knight at the University of Chicago, and before him to the laissez faire economists of the previous century) seemed to be the obvious solution by way of privatization, slashing public budgets and expenditures, cutback management of public employees, and outsourcing. All these gambits only complicated matters by demoralizing public sector careerists, making the tracking of public money from source to final product more difficult, and reducing accountability, responsibility, loyalty, and discipline. It further distanced the experts from political control, public participation, and lesser stakeholders. The theme “More for less” proved too optimistic for non-marketable goods and services, brought layoffs of hard to replace skilled professionals, and diminished the appeal of public service, none of which were exactly unexpected consequences but had been deliberately sought by anti-government cliques (Gilens 2012, Mayer 2016, Callahan 2017).

Public administration needs to lead another countervailing course reversion before it loses its distinctiveness. Hapless government mired by inert bureaucracy can only wither further before unrelenting scrutiny that has caused disillusion among the public, and loss of faith in the capacity of government and the administrative state to deliver. Diminishing government is unlikely anyway and will only erode its capacity to do the hard things, retain its footprints, make delivery more difficult, and undermine performance. Doing so would be “bad policy, bad politics, and bad democracy” (Kettl 2016: 15-17). The whole landscape of public administration needs overhauling (Argyriades and Timsit 2013, Kim and Argyriades 2015), as exemplified by the episode when the United States Treasury Secretary thought that it would be obvious to use private companies to collect money owed to the federal government: that resulted in the Internal Revenue Service paying \$20 million to collect \$6.7 million (Cohen 2018). There are many other stories that horrify taxpayers that outsourcing may not pay.

4. Implementation. If delivery is the major cause of maladministration, then one looks almost in vain for research on implementation, not just ruminations on lack of productivity and efficiency or measurements thereof. Governments have not ignored what has gone wrong with delivery. In the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Blair established a Delivery Unit in his second government (2001-5) under Michael Barber until Barber departed in 2005 to become the guru of the science of delivery, attracting attention around the globe, including leading public administration figures in the United States like Paul Light, Paul Volcker, and Jim Yong Kim. Barber's book (Barber 2015) covers his experience and musings replete with war stories and 57 rules covering priorities, organization, strategy, planning, routines, problem-solving, irreversibility, and (other people's) money. He admits that his approach (a top-down process that favors elites and inequality) would likely be hindered by cautious bureaucrats urging incrementalism, thereby delaying action, defeating irreversibility, and undermining the credibility of prompt changes, the whole purpose of the exercise. Barber's way may not be the way to go, but it does draw attention to the need for such a science.

5. Whistle-blowers. Barber was a top insider who was prepared prudently to reveal much of what he knew and his reflections, something uncommon. Not once did he refer to disillusioned whistle-blowers who risk speaking out of turn, often seen as deluded trouble makers or traitors to their vow of silence who should not be believed. Some probably are unreliable. After investigation, most turn out to be faithful to their conscience and feel impelled to impart the truth about reality that would otherwise never come to light. Wicked acts do occur within government agencies and are committed by public officials and their associates on helpless victims. When fake news covers up maladministration (Van Buren 2017), this is the seamy side of public administration that disgraces it. A grateful public owes thanks to brave whistle-blowers bold enough to expose such wrongdoing without fear of retaliation and intimidation. Protection and encouragement are slowly catching on, while a share of any public money recovered seems an incentive to hunt for and testify against thieves. Integrity remains a key but is insufficient to protect whistle-blowers from coming to a bad end, knowledge of which silences others from exposing themselves (Kolhatkar 2019, Knight 2019).

6. Democratization. To overcome the loss of connection between the public and government, the plea is to bring the public back into public administration. For too long the public has felt left out (Beyerle 2014). Concerned members of the community would like more opportunities to participate and make contributions as stakeholders whose views should be more directly heard. Politicians claim that this is what they do; that should be sufficient without the extra costs and time delays involved in adding to the complicated process of decision-making. Experts and professionals doubt whether members of the public know enough to make any significant worthwhile contribution that has not already been considered; they have to sit too long over discussing irrelevant drivel. Organizers complain that attendance tends to be scarce except when a lively issue is under consideration, inviting bedlam not fruitful intercourse. Democratizers believe that all points of view should be heard to forestall possible unanticipated problems, that nobody has a monopoly of knowledge, wisdom, creativity, and compromise, and that enthusiastic activists can rouse support for a contemplated action. Outcomes are more important than process. Trust between rulers and the ruled should be reciprocal. The town meeting ideal suited small localized government but it is impractical for the contemporary administrative state. Getting more public directly involved in public administration remains a challenge for creative thinkers.

7. Accountability. Democratizers emphasize transparency and right of taxpayers to know what happens to their money (Girling 1997). The World Bank (Shah 2007) and the International Monetary Fund have taken an increasing role in improving public accountability, public finance, and the integrity of officials who handle public money. They are far from alone in the international community in tracing the money

and sponsoring education and training of public officials around the world as the message of fiscal transparency and financial responsibility spreads as a counter to public outrage. An example was set by the Central European University sponsored by Open Society Institute and the Local Government Initiative in Budapest. Together, they stressed the inter-relationship of good governance, integrity, taxation, transparency, and anti-corruption in minimizing the loss of public money to corruption and incompetence (Peteri 2008). Greater accountability is a universal plea to reduce maladministration alongside more transparency, administrative reform, codes of ethics, minimizing conflicts of interest, checks and balances, accurate drafting, sustainability, continuity and consistency, simplification, and other standard remedies (Mintz and Cohen 1976)

8. Anti-Corruption. Since the 1990s, anti-corruption has been one of the fastest growing concerns in public administration and related studies with the explosion of soft corruption (Schluter 2017). After decades of backroom toil, combating corruption has been rediscovered as research funding has materialized and government at all levels has taken a serious interest in pragmatic strategies to seize control of such nefarious activities. Researchers have been confronted with seeming timeless issues such as preventing nepotism and patronage, avoiding systemic organizational dysfunctions, and eliminating countless varieties of misconduct. Answers *are* available (Rose-Ackerman and Carrington 2013). More governments are listening, experimenting, and willing to try their hand at reducing the menace of public maladministration that could suddenly topple them (Bracking 2007, Zhang and Lavena 2015). However, a veteran researcher warns not to be too optimistic as “corruption will continue - indeed, may well be the norm - until those with a stake in ending it are able to oppose it in ways that cannot be ignored” (Johnston 2014: 1). Transparency is a key but always faces the ability of officialdom to block public knowledge of wrongdoing (Davis 2017).

9. Shame and Disgrace. The victims of wrongdoing, after being abused by societal leaders, bosses, and public celebrities for many decades in all walks of life, have had enough of being intimidated and bribed to keep their silence. They have begun to organize themselves and take action. Academic freedom has discovered them as fellow subjects for research, since they are being denied individual human rights and suffering repression for their non-conformity, illicit relationships, and odd shameless behavior which makes them feel humiliated, inferior and persecuted, if not humbled, contemptible and stigmatized. Quite suddenly, they have gained success by having widespread support for their exposure of their harassers, changes in law, and resignations from office. Self-guilt has rid public office of routine offenders. How far this will go is anyone’s guess and remains to be seen. Like all the other remedies, this too may be just a flash in the pan. While it lasts, it looks promising.

10. Substantiation and Measurement.

This essay began with moral philosophy but it now needs substantiation and measurement to which our research has contributed. There is abundance today that no longer requires a lifetime of original research to persuade scholars and practitioners that public maladministration is ubiquitous and unavoidable even if one has not been personally affected by it. One need not venture further than global governance indicators (Malito, Umbach, and Bhuta 2018, Rottenberg et al. 2015) that try to quantify states in the global society. They audit and evaluate conduct, policy making, laws, delivery, performance, sustainability, reforms, benchmarks, and many other aspects of countries and leaders. Indeed, they become judges, regulators, and advocates. Nowadays, it seems that if statistics and tables are missing, then the research must be suspect being unscientific, subjective, partisan, and untrustworthy, too amateur and simplistic, and altogether unprofessional (Merry 2016, Merry, Davis, and Kingsbury 2015). Nevertheless, The sheer output of quantification has opened up pioneer research, novel conceptualizing, and comparative ranking as regards performance, effectiveness, and client

satisfaction focused on public instruments. Ingenuity evades obstacles to knowledge, invention, and discovery, which raises the profound philosophical disputes first raised by the rationality of the ancient Greeks and unresolved since Spinoza (Melamed and Sharp (2018). Eventually, we hope even official secrets may fail to hide public maladministration.

11. There are expert treatises that path the way to overcoming specific aspects of maladministration such as bribery (Montero 2018) and money laundering (Broek 2015) of which we are aware and no doubt that there are many others of which we are unaware and many about to appear. We are unable to keep abreast of everything. This essay is already too long and for this reason we refrain from mentioning our own contribution and the endless ongoing debate over what appears daily in mass media that goes way beyond our imagination.

12. The Recognition, Definition, Presence and Persistence of Evil Administration. This essay has pointed out that humanity's reluctance to tackle the occurrence of public maladministration on any significant scale culminates in the globalization of administrative evil whereby local leaders with evil ideas and designs use evil institutions and followers to execute evil intentions to trap the innocent powerless into wicked schemes that betray civilized conduct, universal values, and utopian dreams. This combination in every generation challenges courageous outraged individuals to protest against brazen wickedness and become heroes in standing up against group pressure to go along and conform and ignore misdeeds backed by popular groundswell. When isolated, too often such outstanding opponents of evil are crushed. Yet victory is possible although it rarely lasts for long unless in turn it is supported by ceaseless vigilance that succeeds in following up on changing people's attitudes and routine behavior that benefit wrongdoing. There is always a choice between tradition and change, and a variety of options and alternatives in finding a practical compromise with which people can live in comfort to prevent worse outcomes in unending strife, calamities, and distress.

Throughout history, moralists have stood out when confronting wrongdoing. They knew that hatred had to be learned, that public agencies could do both good and bad at the same time, that evil had to be organized, planned, and directed by public leaders, and that official orders had sufficient followers both in and out of government that they could prevail. Their concern was with the circumstances in which they found themselves, how far they could go, and what risks they were taking by their unwillingness to conform. Once maladministration became too obvious, they enlarged its scope until they became uncomfortable with the prevailing extent of cruelty, killings, terror, instability, and protest as steps back to barbarity. The 20th Century was the bloodiest with world wars, weapons of mass destruction, extremism, epidemics, starvation, imperialism, colonialism, terrorism, inequality, kleptocracy and totalitarianism, all of which gave rise to protest, dissent, insecurity, and danger. This century has continued resolve in high places to tackle evil administration backed by groundswell support in low places, fearless opposition, and courageous leaders, all of which bodes well for the future, especially for people who seek universal human right, rule of law, and the removal of leaders who abuse their power.

Together, if the momentum behind these and other forces gathers pace, as they surely will, there is reason to believe that maladministration may diminish, and faith in government initiatives and public service will be revived. However, progress will remain slow and things may get much worse before they get better. Ambition and greed are difficult to resist whereas selflessness under pressure is hard to find. Public maladministration in the wrong hands is a growing menace to the progress of the global society.

During our lifetime, though our proposals for rational, feasible, and constructive incremental administrative reforms have often been completely ignored or overruled, we have not ceased our objectives. Along with fellow reformers, we have been buoyed by the breakthroughs to which we have

contributed. We have recognized how much entrenched maladministration exists. We do not expect overnight miracles. We try to keep alive the torch of hope. We still dream about what could and should be, and try to adjust to maladministration as best we can while, as realists, defying the odds when confronted with inexcusable corruption which gives us no option. We believe that wrongdoing can be reversed and its innocent victims can be justly compensated. However, we do not expect the philosophical issues as to what is truth, the ideal society, the proper limits to governance, administrative perfection, the curability of human malignancies, and propensity for evil, and such like will be resolved in the foreseeable future.

Table 1. Major Disruptive Causes of Maladministration

Not all maladministration is disruptive, but the possible origin of something dysfunctional may be traced back to some minor incident of passing interest that gets taken for granted until it starts a chain of events that blossoms into a cause célèbre that in turn shakes the administrative world. This table commences with the individual acting alone or within a small group and enlarges its scope to global concerns that assumes all previous categories have been considered. Where any one item is placed is a matter for the reader's choice. English is so rich in synonyms that different words may refer to much the same phenomenon.

Personal Behavior

Abuse and misuse of advantage/authority/position/power/status	Ignorance	Plunder
Aggressive discipline	Ill mannered	Relentlessness
Aloofness	Imposing	Reluctance
Arrogance	Inability to learn	Remote
Betrayal	Inaccessibility	Retaliation
Cheating	Inaction	Rudeness
Calumny	Incivility	Sadism
Controversy	Incompetence	Scandalous
Decadence	Indecision	Self-serving
Defamation	Influence peddling	Sexism
Discourtesy	Ingratitude	Shameless
Dishonesty	Insensitivity	Spendthrift
Disobliging	Insincerity	Sycophancy
Embezzlement	Insolence	Tactlessness
Excessive ambition	Lack of commitment	Tunnel vision
Extravagance	Lack of vision	Uncooperative
Falsity	Malice	Undignified
Flattery	Mindless performance	Unhelpful
Force of habit	Mistreatment	Unprofessional
Framing	Negativism	Unrealistic
Graft	Neglect	Unreasonable
Greed	Neuroticism	Unscrupulousness
Hacking	Obnoxious	Unsportative conduct
	Overbearing	
	Paranoia	

Organizational Maladies

Account padding	Dogmatism	Inadequate rewards and incentives
Alienation	Double-dealing	Inadequate working conditions
Anorexia	Dramaturgy	Inappropriateness
Arbitrariness	Duplicity of exclusion	Incompatibility
Bias	Elitism	Inconsistency
Blurring issues	Empire building	Inconvenience
Boredom	Excessive complexity	Indifference
Bribery	Excessive social costs	Indulgences
Bureaucratise (unintelligibility)	Extortion	Indiscipline
Busywork	Extravagance	Ineffectiveness
Carelessness	Failure to acknowledge/act/answer/respond	Ineptitude
Cheating	Favoritism	Inertia
Chiseling	Fear of change/innovation/risk	Inferior quality
Coercion	Foot dragging	Inequity
Concealment	Framing	Inflated prices
Conflicts of interest	Fraud	Ingratitude
Conflicts of objectives	Fudging issues	Inharmonious
Confusion	Gamesmanship	Inhumanity
Conspiracy	Gattopardismo (superficiality)	Injudicious
Counter-productiveness	Ghost employees	Insensitivity
Cowardice	Gobbledygook/jargon	Insincerity
Criminality	Hampering	Insolence
Cruelty	Harming	Intimidation
Cutting corners	Highhandedness	Irregularity
Deception	Hindering	Irrelevance
Defective goods	Illegality	Irresolution
Delay	Imperious	Irresponsibility
Deterioration	Impervious to criticism/suggestion	Kleptocracy
Diminishing employment	Improper motivation	Kludges
Deterioration	Inaccessibility	Lack of commitment
Discounts	Inaction	Lack of coordination
Diseconomies of size		Lack of creativity/experimentation
Displacement of goals/objectives		
Lack of credibility	Overstaffing	Sops
Lack of imagination	Over-supervision	Spoils
Lack of initiative	Paperasserie	Stagnation
Lack of performance	Paranoia	Stalling
Lack of vision	Patronage	Stonewalling
Laundering	Payoffs and kickbacks	Sub-optimization
Lawlessness	Perversity	Sycophancy

Laxity
Leadership vacuums
Malfeasance
Malice
Malignity
Meaningless make work
Mediocrity
Mindless job performance
Miscommunication
Misfeasance
Misinformation
Negligence
Nepotism
Non-accountability
Non-communication
Nonfeasance
Obsolescence
Obstruction
Offending
Officiousness
Oppression
Overkill
Overspread

Phony contacts
Pointless activity
Prejudice
Procrastination
Profiteering
Public imbroglio
Punitive supervision
Red-tape
Relentlessness
Reluctance to delegate
Reluctance to take decisions
Reluctance to take
Repetitious monotonous routine
Rigidity
Ritualism
Sabotage
Scams
Secrecy/secret commissions
Self-perpetuation
Silence
Slick book-keeping
Slipshod work
Social astigmatism
(failure to see problems)
Soul-destroying work

Tail-chasing
Tampering
Territorial imperative
Theft
Tokenism
Tunnel vision
Unclear objectives
Undiplomatic
Unfair/unjust
Unnecessary
Unsafe
Unsuitable premises
and equipment
Usurpatory
Unworkable
Valueless
Vanity
Vested interest
Vile
Vindictiveness
Violence
Waste
Widening hierarchy
Xenophobia

Institutional Failings

Ambiguity
Authoritarianism
Bestiality
Bondage
Border disputes
Capital and

Fundamentalism
Gangsterism
Gulags
Hijacking
Imperialism
Inhumanity

Primitivism
Refugee neglect
Rule by families
Savagery
Serfdom
Spying

Corporal punishment
Caste
Colonialism
Complacency
Concentration camps
Dedication to status quo
Dictatorships
Displaced persons
Exploitation
Failed states

International human rights
International justice
Land ownership
Mafia states
Money laundering
Occupation of territory
Particularism
Piracy
Political ideologies and
religious indoctrination

Stateless persons
Stealth
Taboos
Tax avoidance and
evasion, havens
Terrorism
Totalitarianism
Tradition
Tyranny
Unregulated capitalism
War booty
Welfare states

Environmental Issues

Air pollution

Arson

Climate change

Dangerous products

Decimation of non-human species

Deforestation

Destruction of nature and wilderness

Encouragement of harmful R & D

Harm to animals

Illegal trade

Litter

Mining debris

Noise pollution

Population growth

Sea and coastal pollution

Space garbage

Smuggling

Suppression of preservation activities

Unsustainability

Urbanization

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