Bridging Levels of Public Administration: How Macro Shapes Meso and Micro

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ABSTRACT. Scholars in public administration now recognize three levels of analysis: macro, meso and micro. But there is uncertainty about the relationship between levels and concern that attention to one level means neglect of another. In fact, the levels are closely linked. At the macro-level, leaders develop overall strategies for pursuing national priorities. Specific institutions must be built, renovated or managed to give effect to these strategies: this is the meso-level of public administration. Overall strategies also shape the micro-level relationship between people who rule and people who are ruled. This is done by labeling people -- as subjects or citizens, for example -- and by redefining labels themselves. Macro-level governance strategies change over time, with important consequences for the agenda at the meso- and micro-levels of public administration. This is demonstrated by comparison of three eras in twentieth-century American history.

A GREAT SCHISM AHEAD?

Many scholarly fields recognize that research should be undertaken at different levels of analysis. For example, economists distinguish between research on bigger questions about the dynamics of the national economy (macroeconomics) and smaller questions about the behavior of individuals, households and firms (microeconomics) (Stock 2013, 4-5). And in political science, scholars distinguih between high-level research on political regimes and low-level research on the political behavior of individuals (Landman and Carvalho 2016, 24-25). Individual researchers may focus exclusively on one level or another, but a healthy field is one in which all are given attention.

American public administration has not paid adequate attention to the need for such "level diversity." Since the late 1970s, the field has been preoccupied with the middle level of government: that is, with the problems of managers in public agencies who are responsible for executing policies authorized by political overseers.[1] Early advocates of this "public management approach" dismissed earlier work that examined the overall architecture of the American state (Waldo 1948; White 1955, vii-x). They also declined to focus more narrowly, neglecting research about the psychology of interactions at the individual level between officials and ordinary people (Olsen 2015; Grimmelikhuijsen, Jilke et al. 2017, 47).

Recently, scholars have called for recognition of multiple levels of analysis within public administration. Some have proposed an approach known as behavioral public administration (BPA), which has a "micro-level focus" on the behavior and attitudes of citizens, employees and managers within the public sector (Tummers, Olsen et al. 2016, 1; Grimmelikhuijsen, Jilke et al. 2017, 46). Others have called for a "macro-level" approach to public administration, focused on "big questions" about how the state evolves in response to changing circumstances (Roberts 2009; Durant and Rosenbloom 2016; Milward, Jensen et al. 2016; Peters and Pierre 2016b, 11; Pollitt 2016; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2017, 223-225; Roberts 2019).

Recognition of multiple levels of analysis opens exciting opportunities for research. But it also raises an important question: How are levels connected with one another, if at all? One fear is that there might be a "great schism" in public administration, in which researchers working at different levels go their own way – working in isolation with incompatible frameworks and methodologies. If a schism is to be avoided, Donald Moynihan has warned, "bridging" work will be needed, to show how levels of analysis relate to one another (Moynihan 2018).

This paper engages in bridging work. The proposition is that the meso- and micro-levels of public administration are nested within the macro-level. At the macro-level, national leaders craft "strategies for governing" that define national priorities in response

to their perception of circumstances. These broad strategic choices determine how specific institutions within the public sector will be built, reformed and administered: this is the domain of the meso-level. Overall strategy also shapes understandings about the relationship between public officials and the people they govern: this is the domain of the micro-level.

The way in which strategic choices at the macro-level shape meso- and micro-level concerns can be illustrated by looking at a century of American administrative history. During three periods – the Progressive era (1895-1920), the post-war era (1945-1970), and the neoliberal era (1975-2000) – national leaders pursued distinct strategies for governing the United States. As a result, the meso-level project of institutional reform and administration also shifted, as did micro-level understandings about the relationship between officials and ordinary people.

DEFINING LEVELS OF ANALYSIS

Before we can understand how levels of analysis are connected with one another, we must define what the levels are. This is particularly difficult at the macro-level because so little work has been done at this level in public administration in recent years. One approach to macro-level analysis focuses on "strategies for governing" – that is, the overall

strategies crafted by national leaders that identify priorities and the main policies that will be employed to achieve these policies (Roberts 2019).[2]

This approach treats the state as the "basic building block" of political order in the modern world (Painter and Jeffrey 2009, 20). There are roughly 193 states in the world today. Each is comprised of a set of institutions -- alternately known as an institutional complex, apparatus or ensemble -- that performs essential functions (Skocpol 1979, 29; Mann 1988; Finer 1997, I:2; Jessop 2016, 49). At the apex of this institutional complex are a set of leaders who have particular influence over the exercise of state authority (Laski 1919, 27; Skocpol 1979, 29; Mills 1999, 4; Allen 2018, Chapter 1). In a western democracy, this ruling group may include political executives, top-level bureaucrats, key legislators, and perhaps even senior judges.

These leaders typically have well-developed ideas about how to govern their state.[3] They are concerned with a bounded set of goals (White 1939, 7; Merriam 1944). At minimum they must maintain effective control over territory and resist attacks from other states (Crawford 2006, 58). Leaders also want to establish legitimacy – that is, acknowledgment of their right to rule -- in the eyes of the governed population and the leaders of other states (Gilley 2009). They will also be concerned with economic growth and perhaps also with the advancement of human rights. They worry too about their own survival in office (Bueno de Mesquita 2003).

Of course, every leader has an opinion about the relative importance of these goals, shaped by their perception of circumstances at a particular moment in history. A range of "environmental factors" – demography, geography, climate, economic structure, the state of technology, the structure of geopolitics –influence judgments about national priorities (Gaus 1947, Chapter 1; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2017, Chapter 8). Leaders also have opinions about policies that are most likely to accomplish their priorities, which are influenced by their assessment of what state institutions are capable of doing. This bundle of priorities and policies can be called a "strategy for governing" (Roberts 2019). Many of the labels that we use to describe the political agendas of specific leaders – Trumpism, Putinism, Xi Jinping Thought, Reaganism, New Dealism, and so on –refer to strategies for governing.

Such strategies are diverse and fragile. Leaders in different countries have different values, face different circumstances, and hold different beliefs about the best way of achieving priorities under uncertain conditions. Within one country, strategies vary over time – either because of turnover within a leadership group or because circumstances are constantly changing.

Leaders put strategies into effect by renovating the institutional complex that constitutes the state. They inherit a set of institutions and then make adjustments that seem likely to advance their own priorities. For example, national security may require a

build-up of armed forces, economic growth might require the development of a legal system that protects property rights, and internal legitimacy might require the establishment of electoral systems or the expansion of social security programs. Because strategies are fragile, this project of institutional renovation is never completed; every state is subject to "continuing processes of transformation" (Schon 1973, 30).

The meso-level of public administration is concerned with the project of institutional stewardship – that is, the work of building, renovating, and administering specific institutions so that they give expression to overall strategy. At any moment in history, the focus at the meso-level will be on those parts of the state apparatus where the misalignment with overall strategy appears to be most severe. A shift in priorities may require the construction of new institutions – like the Department of Homeland Security, built after the terror attacks of 2001 – and the dismantlement of old institutions – like the Civil Aeronautics Board, dissolved in 1985. Or it may require that institutions be administered in new ways. As we shall see later, the "public management approach" itself is a good example of how the meso-level agenda is connected to macro-level considerations of strategy. In the 1970s, leaders in western countries worried about declining legitimacy and economic competitiveness; their strategy for restoring trust and growth included an emphasis on smaller and less costly government. This was fertile ground for the emergence of the public management approach, with its emphasis on

efficiency, innovation and service quality (Hughes 2003, 51; Lynn Jr. 2006, 104; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2017, 6).

Macro-level strategy also influences micro-level relationships between officials within the state apparatus (the rulers) and people outside of it (the ruled). To see how this is so, consider how the scope of micro-level research is presently defined. One definition sees behavioral public administration (BPA) as the study of the "behavior and attitudes" of "individuals and groups of citizens, employees and managers within the public sector . . . [drawing on] insights from psychology and the behavioral sciences" (Olsen, Tummers et al. 2018, 1121). The labels that are employed in this definition–citizens, employees, managers–may seem self-evident, but they are not. They are socially constructed roles: that is, ideas that prevail within a polity about the way that people should behave and relate to one another (Frederickson, Smith et al. 2012, 9-10; Dahlvik 2018, 14-17; Giddens 2018, 6-7). These roles vary substantially over place and time.

Consider, for example, the variety of labels that have been used to describe people who are ruled. In the past, millions of people living on American territory were counted as subjects rather than citizens: they were required to obey American law but had limited rights against the government. And millions more were not counted as people at all: they were "treated as an ordinary article of merchandise" (*Dred Scott v. Sanford*, 1857). Moreover, the meaning of citizenship itself has varied dramatically over time (Cooper

2018, 25). Citizenship in the United States in 1919 meant less than it did in 2019, because citizens could make fewer claims against the state.

Even today, people can be classified in more ways than are recognized by advocates of BPA. Millions of people living in the United States are not citizens at all.[4] This includes lawful permanent residents, tourists, temporary workers, refugees, and foreigners living in the United States without authorization. Moreover, not all citizens are the same. Children and felons have restricted rights, even though they are citizens. Citizens in Massachusetts have different rights and obligations than citizens in Alabama. And citizenship is different for poor African-Americans than it is for wealthy white Americans.[5]

We can make similar observations about the labels that we use to describe people who wield authority within the state apparatus. The people we call "managers" today have been called by many other names in the past. Fifty years ago, senior officials were more likely to be called administrators. A century ago, they were likely to be called clerks, even when they held top-level positions. Administrators and clerks had different notions about their duties than do managers today.

This variation in labels has important methodological implications for scholars in BPA. How "managers" and "citizens" react to one another in a specific circumstance hinges largely on their understanding of how "managers" and "citizens" are supposed or allowed to act. Even if we generate robust knowledge about the "manager-citizen"

relationship at the present moment, it may cease to be reliable when the labels are altered in meaning. And it may not hold someplace else, where roles have the same labels but are defined differently.[6]

This raises the question of how particular labels come to be dominant at a moment of time. This question cannot be answered without considering the priorities and policies of national leaders. Macro-level strategy determines how people are labeled. By acquiring territory, leaders convert people from aliens to subjects – as happened after the Louisiana Purchase, the Mexican-American War, and the Spanish-American War. By conferring rights, perhaps in a bid to bolster legitimacy, leaders convert subjects to citizens – as happened after the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868. For the same reason, leaders have made citizenship "thicker" by granting voting rights – for women in 1918, African Americans in 1965, and young adults in 1971 (Cooper 2018, 25).

There can be reversals in status as well. In the 1990s, as part of a drive to restore "law and order," leaders adopted felon disenfranchisement laws that made citizenship thinner for many people (Manza and Uggen 2006). Citizens may also be transformed into aliens, as radical immigrants were after World War I, in an effort to preserve internal security (Weil 2013, 55-82). Security concerns have also prodded leaders to remove basic protections for non-citizens, including the "enemy combatants" held at Guantanamo after

2001 and unauthorized immigrants after the election of President Trump (Sands 2005, Chapter 7; Pierce and Selee 2017, 5-6).

The relationship between the three levels of public administration might be understood more quickly by looking at historical examples. The following sections of the paper look briefly at three moments in American history: the progressive era (1890 to 1910), the post-war era (1945 to 1975), and the neoliberal era (1980 to 2008). Leaders in each era followed a distinctive strategy for governing. The meso-level priorities of public administration also shifted from one era to the next, following shifts in strategy. Strategic adjustment led to the recategorization of people as well, with critical consequences for the micro-level interactions of rulers and the ruled.

THE PROGRESSIVE ERA

We can begin our assessment of each of these three periods by looking at the conditions prevailing at the country at the time; then at the strategy that was shaped by national leaders in response to those conditions; and finally at the effect of strategic choices on the meso-level agenda of institutional stewardship and as micro-level relationships between rulers and ruled. These assessments are also summarized in Table 2.

Conditions. In the Progressive era, which spanned the years from 1895 to 1920, the United States was convulsed by economic and social change. The country experienced

an intense phase of laissez-faire capitalist industrialization. The economy was prone to cycles of boom and bust, violent labor-management conflicts, and exploitation by monopolies in key sectors such as railroads and steel. Meanwhile cities were growing rapidly, exceeding their capacity to provide basic services. Immigration from central and eastern Europe boomed. Many Americans felt that life within the United States was spiraling out of control. They worried about the collapse of old ways of life, rising inequality, the capture of legislatures by corporate interests, and the threat to "American ideals" from immigration (Wiebe 1980).

Conditions in the realm of foreign affairs were simpler. There was no direct threat to the United States from abroad. However, this was a period of intensified competition among European colonial powers. American leaders felt the need to resist European incursions into the Western hemisphere, which had long been regarded as a sphere in which the United States should have dominant influence. Many Americans also wanted to join in the imperial competition by acquiring their own colonies.

Strategy. The progressive era was marked by intense debates about how to respond to these conditions. Still, it is possible to describe the main features of the governance strategy that had emerged by the 1910s. The top priority was the restoration of order and recovery of popular control over domestic affairs (Wiebe 1980). Order would be

restored by an extension of state administrative capabilities, while popular control would be restored by reform of legislatures and electoral processes.

In the field of foreign affairs, meanwhile, the critical event of the progressive era was an experiment with imperialism. After the Spanish-American war of 1898, the United States acquired the territories of Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. It also annexed Hawaii and staged military interventions in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama.

The meso-level agenda. It was universally understood that this new governance strategy involved an overhaul of institutions that had been designed for a simpler time (Croly 1914, 24). In fact, the first steps toward the invention of the field of public administration were taken as part of this drive to adopt "new measures . . . [for] new conditions" (Goodnow 1900, 261). Much of this reform took place within local government, where changes such as urbanization and immigration were felt most directly. Local governments were ill-equipped to deal with these changes: corruption was rampant, and there was little capacity for planning and implementation of policy. Across the United States, reformers developed plans to concentrate authority in the hands of professional city-managers and build the capacity to provide basic services (Teaford 2016, 41). Independent civil service commissions were created to stop patronage, expose corruption,

and improve efficiency (Tolbert and Zucker 1983). Election administration was also professionalized, to break the power of political machines (Ruppenthal 1906).

There was federal reform as well, much of it concerned with controlling corporate power. Congress established a new independent body, the Interstate Commerce Commission, to control pricing abuses by railroads. It became one of the most powerful bodies in Washington. Another independent agency, the Federal Trade Commission, was set up to control private monopolies like the Standard Oil Trust, while a third -- the Federal Reserve – was intended to "break the despotism of the great banks" (Springfield (MA) Daily News 1913). The federal government also strengthened its Civil Service Commission so that more positions were governed by the merit principle (Stahl and Mosher 1956, 25-26).

There was institution-building in the field of foreign affairs as well. Problems of maladministration during the Spanish-American War led to restructuring of the military departments of government. A general staff was created to improve planning and coordination within the War Department. The War Department also gained new powers over state militias (Skowronek 1982, 212-247; Cooper 1997, 153-172).

The United States also became an imperial power as a result of the war.[7] It claimed sovereignty over the Philippines, an archipelago whose population of ten million exceeded that of any U.S. state. More than one hundred thousand American soldiers were sent to

fight Filipino rebels between 1899 and 1901 (Arnold 2011). The Bureau of Insular Affairs was established within the War Department to oversee civilian administration of the territory. William Howard Taft became the Philippines' first American governor, and launched a broad restructuring of Philippine society (Dolan 1993, 28-29). Leading American universities began programs for the "scientific study of colonial administration" (Ireland 1906).

Micro-level relationships. Macro-level decisions about strategy also led to an overhaul of understandings about micro-level relationships between rulers and the ruled. This was not a straightforward transformation. Understandings about roles varied substantially between contexts. Often, though, the emphasis was on hierarchy: that is, a clear understanding about the power of rulers over the ruled.

Reformers at this time understood that they were reconstructing micro-level relationships. Advocates of new civil service laws sought to adjust "the allegiance of the public servant" by breaking old loyalties to party machines (Stahl and Mosher 1956, 6). But the new obligations of public servants were not toward citizens: rather, they were obligations toward the state (Stahl and Mosher 1956, 6 and 275). The duty of the civil servant was to "execute the will of the state" as expressed through law (Freund 1894, 409; Ford 1900, 183; Goodnow 1900, 9,16,95). This implied that officials should maintain a certain distance from the public. Their job was to make expert judgments about how the

law ought to be interpreted, and act impartially while applying the law to cases (Bowman 1906, 612,620,623; Sharfman 1937, 949).

Municipal reformers also kept their distance from the public. Some were paternalists, seeking to improve immigrants by transmitting middle-class values and making them "real Americans" (Davis and Schwartz 1920, 721; Teaford 2016, 32-33). There was no pretense of social or political equality. The experts in "scientific management" who took charge of efficiency drives within urban government kept their distance too. Their claim to authority rested on the premise that they had special knowledge about public administration. In their view, the "brain work" of government should be reserved to "a few men especially fitted for their task" (Gilbreth 1912, 41).

Elsewhere, the division between rulers and ruled was even more rigid. One out of nine people who were ruled by American officials were not counted as citizens at all. Filipinos were merely subjects with limited rights against the state (Edmunds 1901). Many officials believed that it was their duty to "raise up" the Filipino people. A few Filipinos were allowed to elect representatives for civilian government, but final authority over lawmaking always remained with American appointees, while some territory stayed under direct military control (Blount 1913; Arnold 2011).

The same paternalism was evident within the continental United States. Citizenship meant different things for different people. White women were counted as

citizens but denied the right to vote. African Americans were treated worse: their political

and civil rights were sacrificed to appease Southern politicians in Washington. Meanwhile

the Supreme Court affirmed the legality of racial segregation (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896).

Practically, most African Americans were merely subjects, just like Filipinos; many did

not even enjoy the basic guarantee of personal safety.

THE POST-WAR ERA, 1945-1970

Conditions in the quarter-century following World War II were markedly different

than in the Progressive era. Worries about national security dominated the post-war era.

The security that Americans felt because of their geographic separation from Europe was

shattered after the Soviet Union acquired nuclear weapons and long-range bombers. The

post-war era was dominated by a geopolitical struggle as each "superpower" attempted to

check the expansion of its rival (Gaddis 2007, Chapter 1).

Meanwhile, fears about economic instability and inequality receded. By the late

1940s, American policymakers had developed a system that made it possible to measure

and regulate the performance of the overall economy. It was believed that careful

macroeconomic management could eliminate the traditional cycle of boom and bust

(Heller 1966). In fact, the United States experienced a long period of economic growth

after World War II that caused a substantial decline in inequality (Piketty 2014, Fig. 9.2).

Still, concern about social order and legitimacy increased throughout this era. The movement against segregation and the disenfranchisement of African Americans gained momentum (Branch 1988). By the early 1960s, racial tensions contributed to rioting in major cities (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968, 203-206). The post-war baby boom also led to the expansion of the college campuses by the late 1960s, which became seedbeds for social protest (Owram 1996, 185-237). A more affluent and better educated population demanded the recognition of new rights, more government services, and new forms of social and environmental regulation (Huntington 1975).

Strategy. The main priority of American leaders in the post-war era was national security – specifically, defense against threats from the Soviet Union and its satellites. The main lines of national security policy were deterrence, through the build-up of nuclear and conventional forces; the development of anti-Soviet alliances; and resistance against the expansion of Soviet influence through covert, diplomatic and military action.

At home, American leaders aimed for stable growth by promoting a system of managed capitalism. International trade and investment were carefully controlled, while key industries were tightly regulated. Policymakers viewed spending, taxing and interest rates as instruments for influencing the overall economy, and actively used these instruments to prevent the economy from running too hot or too cold (Yergin and Stanislaw 1998, Chapter 2). At the same time, national leaders sought to maintain

internal order and legitimacy, largely by expanding government services and entitlements, and creating an American version of the welfare state.

Meso-level reforms. The post-war shift in overall strategy lead to a massive project of institutional renovation. One result was the apparatus that came to be known as the national security state or the military-industrial complex (Hooks 1991; Hogan 1998). The Department of Defense was created, along with the Department of the Air Force, the National Security Council, and the Central Intelligence Agency. Between 1948 and 1970, defense spending accounted for most of the federal budget; millions were employed in the armed services as well as civilian agencies and contractors that supported the military. The office of President gained influence because of the growing importance of foreign affairs, giving critics cause to complain about an "imperial presidency" (Schlesinger 1973).

The federal government also created new institutions to protect civil and political rights – such as the Civil Rights Division within the Justice Department and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (University of Chicago Law Review 1965; Lichtman 1969). The new welfare state included an expanded Social Security system, as well as new health insurance programs for aged and poor, new income support programs, and initiatives to support education, public housing, and urban redevelopment (Trattner 1999, Chapter 14; Zelizer 2015, 319-323). After the early 1970s, spending on these domestic programs exceeded spending on national defense. Together, they constituted a

"massive federal intervention" in state and local affairs, accomplished through an elaborate apparatus for intergovernmental cooperation (Sundquist and Davis 1970, 625).

Micro-level relationships. Post-war shifts in overall strategy also had critical effects on the relationship between rulers and the ruled within the United States. Once again, these micro-level shifts were complex and sometimes contradictory.

The United States experienced a "rights revolution" in this era (Dodd 2018, 2). For example, many African-Americans were raised from subjecthood to citizenship. They gained the right to vote and equal access to public services. The concept of differentiated citizenship for other groups was challenged as well. Women received legal protection against discrimination in employment, education and housing, the right of access to contraceptives and abortions, and more equal standing in family law (Rosen 2000). The voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 in an effort to staunch youth radicalism (Blumenthal 2018, 68).

Shifts in constitutional law also strengthened citizens' claims on the state. Until the 1960s, most benefits conferred by government – jobs, pensions, licenses, and so on – were considered to be privileges, that could be conferred or removed at the discretion of government. After the 1960s, these benefits were defined as forms of property that could not be withdrawn without due process (Reich 1964). At the same time, courts recognized

a constitutional right to privacy and reformed administrative law to assure a larger public role in policymaking (Stewart 1975).

However, the post-war era was not entirely concerned with expansion of rights. There were trends in the other direction too. A powerful strain of technocratism – the principle that citizens should defer to experts – still influenced many aspects of foreign and domestic policymaking (Straussman 1978). The expansion of the national security state also led to an increase of citizens' obligations toward government. In 1940, only a small proportion of adult Americans paid federal income taxes; by 1970, most people could identify themselves as federal taxpayers.[8] Some Americans bore heavier burdens. More than five million men were conscripted for military services between 1950 and 1970.[9] Millions more were subjected to intrusive "loyalty investigations" -- probing political beliefs and sexual orientation – as a condition of employment (Garrison 1955; Johnson 2004).

THE NEOLIBERAL ERA, 1975-2000

Conditions facing American policymakers changed again between 1975-2000. Threats to national security faded. Superpower competition came to a head in the early 1980s but ended in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Gaddis 2007, Chapters 6 and 7). However, worries about economic performance increased substantially. The long post-war boom ended: the 1970s were marked by slow growth, high inflation, and

persistent budget deficits at the federal level. People were increasingly conscious of the rising economic power of Japan in the 1970s and 1980s, and then China after the 1990s (Borstelmann 2012, Chapter 1).

American government also faced a serious erosion of legitimacy after 1970. This had two aspects. Trust in the military slumped because of apparent failure during the Vietnam War, revelations about misconduct during that war, and public resistance to conscription (King and Karabell 2003, Chapter 1). There was a decline in overall trust in government. Many people believed that policymakers had lost control over the economy and society, and even government itself. Federal spending exceeded one-fifth of GDP for the first time in peacetime in 1975. Talk of a "taxpayer revolt" became commonplace (Morgan 1998).

Another distinctive feature of the neoliberal era was the rapid advance of information technologies after the introduction of mass-produced microprocessors in 1971. This led to radical transformations in the structure of the economy. It also allowed new forms of social mobilization and increased the pace and instability of democratic politics.

Strategy. National priorities changed substantially during this era. Security concerned abated. American leaders became more cautious about the use of military force after Vietnam, and the Cold War mindset dissipated after the collapse of the Soviet Union. By the end of the 1990s, American leaders were downsizing some parts of the national

security state and preparing for a "unipolar world order" (Hansen 2000; U.S. Department of State 2000, 2).

The main priorities in the neoliberal era were improving economic performance and rebuilding public trust in government. By the 1990s, there was a bipartisan consensus on how this should be done. The overall aims of policy were to liberate market forces by reducing government restrictions on the economy, including controls on international trade and finance. Public trust would be restored by boosting economic growth and reducing the size and cost of government (Troy 2009). This formula was sometimes known as neoliberalism (Harvey 2005). New information technologies would be deployed as part of this trust-building exercise: they were expected to make government less bureaucratic and more responsive to citizens (Gore 1997, Chapter 6).

Meso-level reforms. Institutions were again restructured to give expression to this new strategy. As part of the effort to restore trust in the military, conscription was abandoned in 1973. The armed services also shifted to high-tech weaponry, which reduced the need for soldiers (Adas 2006, 339-382). The end of the Cold War allowed further reductions in personnel. By 2000, the active duty military was one-third smaller than it had been in 1975. These changes, along with a promise to be more cautious in using forces overseas, resulted in a remarkable rebound in trust in the military (King and Karabell 2003).[10]

The project of restructuring government's role in the economy also involved major institutional changes. To combat inflation, the Federal Reserve acquired more autonomy and power (Greider 1989). Federal authorities experimented with balanced-budget laws and other reforms to control deficit spending (Hager and Pianin 1998). Federal agencies cut back regulations, and some agencies – like the Interstate Commerce Commission – were dissolved (Horwitz 1986; Kahn 1988, xv-xvii). Rulemaking procedures were streamlined so that agencies had more freedom to reduce regulations (Starr 1986). There was a drive to reduce spending on welfare programs that were seen to discourage labor force participation (Trattner 1999, Chapter 14; Weaver 2000, 223).

A host of public management reforms were introduced with the aim of improving the efficiency and responsiveness of government. As noted earlier, the flourishing of the "public management movement" was largely due to this shift in macro-level strategy. The "new paradigm" for public management involved breaking up public monopolies and applying the "market model" in the provision of public services; privatizing functions and out-sourcing work; decentralizing responsibilities to state and local governments; adopting new technologies to streamline work processes; replacing process controls with performance-based controls; and encouraging managers to treat citizens as customers (Hood 1991; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Gore 1993).

Sometimes the neoliberal agenda led to more government, not less. In an attempt to bolster "law and order," Congress increased the number of criminal offenses, sentences for existing offences, and financial support for state and local police (Baker 2008). One result was a seven-fold increase in the U.S. prison population between 1972 and 2012 (Travis, Western et al. 2014, 34-36). This led to a large program of prison-building, often by private contractors. Critics described the emergence of a vast "correctional-industrial complex" in the 1980s and 1990s (Austin 1990).

Micro-level relationships. The relationship between rulers and ruled was reshaped during the neoliberal era, sometimes by reversing developments of the previous quarter-century. In some ways, citizens were relieved of burdens. Americans were promised that taxes would be strictly controlled. And young men were freed from the draft – another "a form of taxation," according to the commission that recommended its elimination (President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force 1970, 122).

At the same time, though, aspects of the "rights revolution" were undone. Federal agencies launched a "counter-revolution" in administrative law, so that people had fewer opportunities to speak during agency rulemaking and adjudications (Pierce 1996). Privatization also had the effect of limiting public influence over governmental activity (Feiser 2000). Attempts by the public to influence policy were often dismissed as "rent-

seeking" (Congleton, Hillman et al. 2008, 2). The poor especially where told that they must take "personal responsibility" for their condition.[11]

The adoption of market language within the public sector also shaped micro-level behavior. The relationship between rulers and ruled "was increasingly expressed in commercial terms" (van Doorene and Steur 2018, 16). From one point of view, this seemed to empower ordinary people, since they were transformed into "sovereign consumers" (Olsen 2018, 2). But people were also burdened by this reframing. Customers are expected to take personal responsibility for making sound choices, and commentators questioned whether less advantaged Americans could manage this responsibility (Fountain 2001; Jos and Tompkins 2009). The language of consumerism may also have corroded social capital by encouraging selfish and competitive behavior (Bauer, Wilkie et al. 2012). Other critics worried that managers, seeing themselves as efficiency-minded "entrepreneurs," would neglect their obligation to treat citizens fairly (Bellone and Goerl 1992; Terry 1993).

There was also evidence that the United States was returning to an era of differentiated citizenship. The campaign for law and order had a disproportionate effect on African American males. They were more likely to be imprisoned and often lost voting rights because of new felon disenfranchisement laws. Some states adopted other measures designed to discourage African-American voting, while safeguards against such practices

were weakened (Berman 2015). Critics suggested that the United States was constructing a "new racial caste system" (Alexander 2010, 55). Gays and lesbians also protested against "second-class citizenship" throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Faderman 2015, 415-512).

THREE LEVELS, TIGHTLY CONNECTED

We can see that concerns about the emergence of a "great schism" within public administration are overwrought. The three levels of analysis are tightly connected. For example, we cannot understand developments at the meso-level of public administration – where the work of building, demolishing, renovating and administering specific institutions is done – without examining developments at the macro-level, where leaders adjust overall strategies in response to changing conditions.

Similarly, it is impossible to conduct micro-level research without awareness of the macro-level. As we have seen, the "units of analysis" that we take for granted in micro-level research – "citizens, employees, and managers" – are not stable at all (Tummers, Olsen et al. 2016, 1). The labels that we attach to rulers and ruled change constantly, and so does the meaning that we attach to labels. These changes are driven by strategic choices at the macro-level. People are given new labels because national leaders consider it necessary in the pursuit of broader objectives, such as order and legitimacy, national security, and economic growth.

As we have seen, there have been many moments in American history when changing circumstances forced a substantial change in the overall strategy for governing. We are going through another of these moments now. Over the last ten years, faith in the neoliberal formula has been shaken. People are worried about economic inequality and insecurity. At the same time, leaders are conscious of new threats to national security, from rising powers such as China as well as non-state actors such as ISIS. Climatic and technological change is also forcing a recalibration of priorities. There is growing awareness of the need to pay attention to these shifts in macro-level priorities. In 2018, the National Academy of Public Administration launched a study of "grand challenges" likely to face American government over the next decade (National Academy of Public Administration 2018). The Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration has also emphasized the need to study ways of "reconstruct[ing] governance . . . in times of disruption and crisis" (NASPAA 2019).

It is too early to say how the overall strategy for governing within the United States is likely to change over the next decade. But we should expect that macro-level strategic choices will have important effects at the meso- and micro-levels of public administration. At the meso-level, new institutions may have to be built to protect borders, defend against cyber-threats, improve access to healthcare, and promote steady and inclusive economic growth. And at the micro-level, relationships between rulers and

ruled will be adjusted once again. Americans are already arguing about the distinctions that ought be made between citizens based on race, gender, and birthplace, and between authorized and unauthorized immigrants; and there is controversy too about what Americans owe to citizens of other countries. On one hand, these arguments are part of the high-level debate about national priorities and policies. On the other, they shape everyday interactions between people inside and outside of government. In fact, there is no schism between macro and micro. They are really two sides of the same coin.

NOTES

[1] Compatible definitions of public management are provided by: (Frederickson, Smith et al. 2012, 100; Hill and Lynn 2016, 5) (Meier and O'Toole 2013, 29-430). One observer of the public management approach in its early years noted its "pragmatic focus on mid-level managers in lieu of the perspective of political or policy elites" (Overman 1984, 278).

[2] Another macro-level approach, also "state-centered" and concerned with decision-making by high-level state actors, is proposed by: (Peters and Pierre 2016a)

[3] This has been called the "official mind": the composite of beliefs "about the duties of government . . . [and] the ordering of society and international relations" that are shared by leaders: (Robinson and Gallagher 1961, 20).

[4] Although they are often counted as citizens by BPA researchers. Findings on "citizen attitudes" or "citizen behavior" are reported even though surveys or experiments are not restricted to citizens of the relevant jurisdiction.

[5] There are also some beings present in the United States (early stage fetuses) that some people regard as citizens and others deny are persons at all.

[6] We can take this point further. Managers and citizens are not just acting out well-established roles. To some degree, every interaction between rulers and the ruled consists of a negotiation. Each side use every exchange to press their conception of what the relationship ought to be. This means these roles may not be stable even in the short run. Furthermore, experiments that seek to understand the character of the

manager-citizen relationship could serve unwittingly as fora for this ongoing negotiation between rulers and ruled. Experimenters might think that they are neutral, but their subjects still might perceive the experiment as part of a larger argument about mutual obligations.

[7] "The American Union is daily recognizing itself as an Imperial State performing Imperial obligations and exercising Imperial power": (Snow 1902, 577)

[8] *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Table Ea740-747.

[9] *Historical Statistics of the United States*, Table Ed120-129.

[10] The policy shift was expressed in the Weinberger and Powell doctrines.

[11] The 1996 welfare reform law was titled the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act.*

TABLE ONE: LEVELS OF ANALYSIS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Macro-level: Study of the governance strategies that are devised by leaders to advance critical national interests, and the ways in which these strategies influence the overall architecture of the state.

Meso-level: Study of the design, consolidation, administration and reform of specific institutions – that is, laws, organizations, programs and practices -- within the state.

Micro-level: Study of the attitudes and behavior of officials within the state apparatus and people who are subject to their authority.

TABLE TWO

Period	Progressive era	Post-war era	Neoliberal era
Years	1895-1920	1945-1970	1975-2000
Conditions	Industrialization Urbanization Immigration Populism, radicalism Racial oppression Imperial competition	Superpower competition Economic boom Baby boom Civil rights activism Youth protest	Economic "stagflation" Tax revolts IT revolution End of Cold War Globalization
National priorities	Internal order and legitimacy Economic stabilization Imperial expansion	National defense Internal legitimacy "Fine-tuning" economic growth	Recovery from stagflation Recovery of trust Restructuring national security capabilities
Key policies	Urban reform Planning and policing Economic regulation Selective enfranchisement Sectional accommodation Imperial expansion	Soviet containment Managed capitalism Expansion of social services, regulation Protection of civil rights	Retrenchment Deregulation "New federalism" Trade liberalization Efficiency in public services
State labels	Nation state Positive state Imperial state	Administrative state Welfare state National security state Garrison state	Market state Hollow state Neoliberal state Network state
Meso-level implications	Urban reform Political reform Civil service reform New regulatory agencies Military professionalization Colonial administration	Military-industrial complex "Imperial presidency" Intergovernmentalism Federal regulation "Due process revolution"	"Reinvented government" Devolution to states Liberalization of trade and finance Military downsizing NATO expansion
Micro-level implications	Enfranchisement of women Neglect of African-Americans Subjugation of Filipinos Persecution of radicals	Extension of franchise Protections against discrimination Extension of entitlements Protections against arbitrary state action	Reframing of citizens as "customers" Restriction of due process protections Felon disenfranchisement Criminalization of minorities

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