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Public Voices

Narrative in Public Administration

Mini-Symposium

Mini-Symposium Editor

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This paper explores the nature of political satire through the work of Canadian humorist Terry Fallis. Following an analysis of Fallis’s novels, the author parses out the narrative characteristics that distinguish Fallis’s keilloresque “affectionate” satire from conventional political satire’s cynicism. Delving into the literary theory of Northrop Frye, White examines Fallis’s major theme of restoring faith in government in terms of Frye’s definition of satire as “militant irony”. Finally, the author contends that Fallis’s gentle satirical style follows from particular contextual factors, namely, the relative affluence as well as the pervasive use of irony in Canadian society. In conclusion, he argues that Fallis’s novels constitute a distinctly Canadian political narrative.

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The fear over the potentially catastrophic consequences of hacking is increasing, as the number of critical systems and infrastructure that are connected to the World Wide Web is growing. Hollywood films, known for their big budgets and sophisticated technologies,

have been inspired by the complex subject matter of hacking and able to depict it in a visually compelling way, using special effects and the computer graphics interface (CGI). The security threats that arise due to hacking and are depicted in some of these films are not just merely theoretical, but could conceivably occur in real life. For example, the movie *Blackhat* derived its plot from recent concerns regarding cyberattacks against nuclear power plants. Hacker movies have also brought major changes to government policies and institutions. The urgency of issues explored by the movies *WarGames* and *Sneakers*, for instance, resulted in the creation of new laws and a new mandate for the National Security Agency (NSA), respectively. It is evident that, when movies about hacking become popular and catch policymakers' attention, they may have real-world policy consequences with lasting impact into the future.

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Open data refers to the idea that public data should be available for use in any way without restrictions placed on users. While open data is a relatively new concept, many governments tend to focus on the benefit to governments, communities, and business users. One avenue that has yet to be fully explored is how open data can be used in creative endeavors. While there have been several efforts to showcase open data in the arts, there is no general framework for how open data may be used for these purposes. This article explores the use of open data in the creation of music-oriented samples and in electronic music composition. Using Ratcliffe's (2014) typology of sampled material in electronic dance music, we create samples and a composition using National Aeronautics and Space

Administration’s sound recordings. Doing so allows us to demonstrate how open data can be used creatively, but also how open audio data may be used to overcome legal limitations and risks associated with the sampling of copyrighted audio.

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The historical literature in American public administration has included a focus on some of the key individuals involved in the founding of the field, such as Louis Brownlow and Luther Gulick. They sought to create a dense, coordinated, and permanent infrastructure that would serve the needs of a new academic discipline and practitioner profession, such as the American Society for Public Administration. The current historical literature, however, is incomplete, as it does not yet fully cover some of the second-tier organizations and people also playing tangible roles in these developments. This inquiry provides an exploratory biography of the National Institute of Public Affairs (NIPA) (1934-1985), which had the mission of providing real-world training and educational internships in public administration. It was influential in launching and incubating new programs, many later assumed by the federal government. In particular, this examination focuses on NIPA’s early development. Its founder and initially its only staffer, Otis Wingo Jr., was fired in 1937 due to financial fraud. This awkward event has been largely unknown due to a successful historical cover-up by the board and staff of NIPA. It is an embarrassing and untoward story, but scholarship is not hagiography. A disinterested history of NIPA needs to include it.

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This short story is about choices life-long government employees make when facing change.

Having spent 20 years with the federal government, Alex Butler is an unhappy, disaffected employee – a middle-aged bureaucrat without a cause, whose work life in EPA’s Productivity Management Division has recently been made irrelevant by Trump and his band of deregulators. Alex is full of regrets for squandered opportunities and yet does nothing to change the status quo. He is the only one among his colleagues who does not have a fallback plan. Thinking he will have to spend ten more years with the EPA before his pension is fully funded and he would be able to sustain a reasonably comfortable retirement, one day he gets a rude awakening when his boss announces that their division is being eliminated.

After the initial wound of being laid off had lost its sting, Alex was able to reframe his job loss from being something mildly terrifying to an experience abounding with opportunity. From his point of view, being laid off became the kind of kick-in-the-butt he had needed to fill his life with purpose once again.

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Narrative in Public Administration: Introduction

Sandford Borins

This mini-symposium had its genesis in a seminar I taught in the University of Toronto's graduate program in political science in 2017. The seminar, entitled Narrative and Politics, was based on my book *Governing Fables: Learning from Public Sector Narratives* (Borins 2011) as well as my ongoing research. *Governing Fables*, reviewed in this journal by Charles Goodsell (2012) discusses some thirty authored texts (movies, novels, histories) about British and American politics and government produced between 1960 and 2011. Notable examples are the television series *Yes Minister* and *The West Wing*; the movies *The Remains of the Day*, *The Fog of War*, and *Thirteen Days*; the novels *Corridors of Power* and *Advise and Consent*; and Richard Crossman's three-volume *Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*.

Governing Fables develops a four-quadrant matrix for classifying narratives, based on the plot trajectories for protagonists and for their organizational or societal context. In the heroic fable (upper left quadrant), a leader enables an organization to overcome a challenge and thereby renew itself, and is rewarded both intrinsically and extrinsically. The opposite of the heroic fable is the tragic or satirical fable (lower right quadrant), in which the organization declines as a result of the failings of its leader or leaders. The ironic fable concerns a protagonist enriching himself in the context of organizational decline (lower left quadrant). An example is the kleptocrat who exploits his position of public leadership. The sacrificial fable (upper right quadrant) involves organizational renewal due to action by a protagonist that leads to his or her decline or even demise. The book classified the texts in terms of these fables and, for both countries, discussed the significance of the patterns by which texts populated the matrix.

My recent research has extended this model from authored texts to political campaigning, in particular, the instantiation of these fables in political advertising (in effect, mini-movies). I have also begun studying how life narratives instantiate these fables. These topics were also introduced in the course.

I initially planned the discussion of narrative texts chronologically, moving from the Seventies (*The Candidate*, *All the President's Men*), to the Eighties (*Yes Minister*), to the Nineties and

Aughts (*The West Wing*). In the classroom discussion of *The Candidate* and *All the President's Men*, I asked students to comment on the portrayal of women in those movies, expecting that their secondary and occasionally demeaning roles would elicit strong reactions. I was surprised that students welcomed my question about gender because it was rarely asked in their other seminars. The appetite of students of both genders for portrayals of women in positions of real power led me to make a mid-course correction, substituting the Danish television series *Borgen* for *The West Wing* and adding *Zero Dark Thirty* and *Eye in the Sky*.

In a graduate seminar, I expect the students (in this case, eight graduate students and three fourth-year undergraduates) to be active producers rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Each student was required to give two presentations about texts as well as a personal narrative. Rather than take a final exam, students were required to write a term paper of approximately 25 pages analyzing one or more political narrative texts other than those discussed in *Governing Fables*. I wanted students to apply the four-quadrant framework, but I expected much more analysis, which could include discussions of gender issues, cinematic technique, the facticity of docudramas and rationale for deviations from the historical record, creator intentions, or audience and critical reaction. The students gave two presentations about their papers. The first, mid-way through the semester, was a five-minute outline of the topic, after which I decided whether to approve it. In the second and third last classes, students gave 15-minute presentations of their research results. The papers were due at the last class, though extensions of a week or two, without penalty, were given.

I was delighted with the quality of many of the papers the students produced. I came up with the idea of publishing the papers in a symposium in *Public Voices*, which was accepted by the editors, and I invited many of the students to submit their papers. It is a long leap from a term paper to an academic publication and some students didn't want to make it. Others tried but failed to clear the peer review hurdle. The two papers published here did.

Joshua White was interested in doing a paper about satire, and I suggested he look at the novels of the contemporary Canadian political satirist Terry Fallis. White situates Fallis's gentle and optimistic satire as comparable to Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion*, and a sharp contrast with more caustic British (*House of Cards*) and American (also *House of Cards*) political satires. White also discusses the novels in terms of the ironic strain in Canadian culture analyzed by the renowned Canadian literary scholars Northrop Frye and Linda Hutcheon. White interviewed Fallis, and the interview provided valuable insights into the origins and objectives of Fallis's writing. White is now studying for a J.D.: the law's gain is academe's loss.

Irene Poetranto is a doctoral student in political science and a senior researcher at the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab, a research unit renowned for its studies of cybersecurity, particularly in the developing world. Poetranto's paper, dealing with movies about computer hackers, builds on her research. She characterizes the hacker genre (of which I was minimally aware) and focuses her attention on *WarGames* (1983), *Sneakers* (1992), and *Blackhat* (2015), a choice which nicely shows the evolution of the phenomenon and its cinematic representations. She also discusses the roles played by women in the three movies, as well as the substantial influence *WarGames* and *Sneakers* had on public policy. I look forward to following Poetranto's academic career.

The two articles in this mini-symposium should give their authors a sense of accomplishment in taking this next step in their careers. For me, they provide proof of concept as talented graduate students successfully applied the analytical approach developed in *Governing Fables* to other texts.

Along with co-author Beth Herst, I am working on a sequel to *Governing Fables*, provisionally titled *Public Representations*. It will deal with British and American political narratives for the last decade as well as Canadian political narratives over the last 60 years. And it will also discuss election campaign and personal narratives. I intend to teach the seminar a few more times, and it is my hope that at least some of the students taking it will produce papers of quality comparable to White's and Poetranto's.

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- Borins, Sandford. 2011. *Governing Fables: Learning from Public Sector Narratives*. Durham, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Goodsell, Charles. 2012. Review of *Governing Fables*. *Public Voices* XII-2: 104-7.

Dr. Sandford Borins is Professor of Public Management at the University of Toronto. Links to some of his 11 books as well as his weekly blog on politics and narrative can be found at www.sandfordborins.com.

Terry Fallis and Canadian Satire

Joshua W.P. White

Satire has stolen the scene of the political moment. As Leslie Moonves said cynically of Trump’s 2016 campaign: “it may not be good for America, but it’s damn good for CBS” (Leslie Moonves, quoted in “CBS CEO Les Moonves clarifies Donald Trump ‘good for CBS’ comment” *Politico*, October 19, 2016). While late-night television hosts may currently enjoy a surge of attention, the popularity of political satire is not at all new. *Saturday Night Live* has a long tradition of presidential parody stretching back to Chevy Chase’s lampoon of Gerald Ford. Much of the current roster of American late-night political satirists, including Stephen Colbert and Samantha Bee, blossomed out of Jon Stewart’s highly influential *Daily Show* of the 2000s. In the early 1980s, the United Kingdom watched its government satirized by the classic *Yes Minister*. While political satire has taken center stage for the time being, the “acid-tongued” bite of satire has always had a place in the chorus of American and British modern politics.

Lesser known is the gentler political humor of Garrison Keillor. While his *A Prairie Home Companion* enjoyed four decades of airtime, the quaint setting and light style of Keillor’s work placed it comfortably afield the more fashionably cutting mainstream. Keillor’s work has been described as “civil instead of sarcastic” (Rigsby 2016) — an important piece of American small-town nostalgia that characterizes his work. The variety show format of Keillor’s long-running radio show hearkens back to popular entertainment of the 1930s and ‘40s, and as one reviewer put it, “as everyone knows, the out-of-dateness of *Home Companion* is its glory” (Denby 2006). In this way, Keillor’s work is a gentle satire from a fringe mid-western perspective. Unsuitable for mainstream attention, but with a deeply affectionate appeal (Frye 1999). Keillor’s affectionate satire takes shots at its target, but takes special care to preserve the heart, and thereby stands apart from the pessimistic mainstream.

Even less known within the mainstream is Canadian satirist Terry Fallis. The words used to describe Keillor’s work could, however, equally describe Fallis’s gentle take on Canadian politics. Both bury their satirical jabs away from the foreground, such that their work appears “uncommonly amusing and seem[s] to have no reason for being other than to entertain, to make us chuckle or chortle.” (Frye 1999). Moreover, the small-town setting of Keillor’s mid-western Minnesota bears striking similarities to the rural Eastern Ontarian setting of Fallis’s work.

Most importantly, the two writers share a peculiarly affectionate satirical voice. Like Keillor, Fallis eschews cynicism in his work and, instead, mocks the state of Canadian politics within a mood of hopeful optimism. His novels are light, ironic without being cold, and yet also seriously critical of Canadian political life. Unlike the political satire of the mainstream, Fallis and Keillor's curious satirical voice is never acid-tongued, but rather, sweet.

Fallis's style seems appropriate for his subject, since Canada is not known for its hard-hitting satire. Neither is the unassuming nation notable for the drama of its politics. While current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's uncommon charisma and even rarer good looks have earned Canadian politics some time on the world stage, the attention paid to the Canadian story remains paltry in comparison to the scintillating drama currently unfolding in the United States.¹ The star potential of Canadian politics dims further when one considers the long thriving tradition of British political narratives.

It is small wonder then that the Canadian political narratives of Terry Fallis went very nearly unpublished. Fallis, putting his experience as a Liberal staffer provincially and on Parliament Hill to use, wrote his first novel in 2007. After repeated failures to secure a publisher, receiving not so much as an "automated rejection letter" (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017), Fallis submitted his self-published novel for consideration to the Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal for Humour. A surprise winner, McClelland & Stewart soon after published *The Best Laid Plans* in 2008.

Fallis's first three novels, *The Best Laid Plans*, *The High Road*, and *Up and Down*, each relate satirical narratives of Canadian politics.² The success of Fallis's novels, with their "keilloresque" satirical voice, raises a question regarding the peculiarity of Canadian satire given satire's conventionally cold reputation. The following will contend that Fallis's novels constitute a distinctly Canadian political narrative. To do so, I will first provide an analysis and summary of the three novels to draw out their distinctive themes. Second, I will situate Fallis's political narratives within the literary theory of Northrop Frye. Lastly, I will suggest the ways in which features of Canadian society help make Fallis's satire a distinctly Canadian political narrative.

Summaries and Analysis

The Best Laid Plans

The Best Laid Plans is a satirical narrative of the politics that plague Canadian federal campaigns. The story follows Daniel Addison, a disillusioned young speechwriter for the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, who is desperately seeking escape from life on Parliament Hill. As a self-professed "idealist policy wonk", Addison admits to being pushed out of politics by the "cynical political operators" who "tend to erode public confidence in the democratic process and infect the electorate with the cynicism, self-interest, and opportunism that flow in their veins" (Fallis 2008, xi). This is the tension that animates the story, as the dynamic of cynicism and idealism constitutes the novel's ultimate theme.

Finally, sufficiently repulsed by the political scene, Addison resolves to formally abandon his career with the Liberal Party of Canada, returning to academia at the University of Ottawa instead. However, the fictional Liberal leader's chief of staff cannot let Addison off so easily, and certainly

not on the eve of a federal election. In exchange for clemency, Addison commits himself to managing the Liberal Party's campaign in the unwinnable riding of nearby Cumberland-Prescott (the "safest Tory seat in the land," Fallis 2008, 23), where an incumbent and popular Tory finance minister looms like a Goliath (but with a considerably deadlier cache of charisma). The stage now set, Fallis quite subtly alerts his readers to the madness to unfold, writing, "...well, during an election period, seemingly rational people commonly take leave of their senses and replace reason with hope" (Fallis 2008, xviii).

The novel quickly introduces the "seemingly rational people" that will round out the cast of the novel's characters. First is the eighty-one-year-old Muriel Parkinson, the stalwart Liberal candidate for Cumberland-Prescott of the past five consecutive (unsuccessful) campaigns. While Parkinson mirrors Addison's idealism, she refuses to serve as the vehicle for yet another defeat. She does, however, commit to advising for the campaign, and thereby becomes a source of political wisdom for Addison and an object of inspiration within the novel. Her granddaughter, Lindsay, plays the role of love-interest to Addison. As a master's student advancing a thesis extolling the merits of an elected senate, Lindsay's character symbolizes an interesting confluence of traditionalism and youthful optimism. Lastly is the eccentric Angus McLintock, a recently widowed engineering professor, who rents his boathouse to Addison. Angus is the hero of the novel, whose pristine integrity above all else drives the narrative forward.

The arc of the narrative begins with a deal struck between Addison and Angus. In order to escape another dreaded year of teaching English literature to uninterested first-year engineering students, Angus agrees to serve as Addison's desperately needed Liberal Party candidate for Cumberland-Prescott in exchange for Addison's taking over the first-year "English for Engineers" course. Angus clearly gets off with the better part of the deal, as, aside from an "inane pamphlet for soft-drops," Angus "had to do absolutely nothing, diddly-squat, nada – other than sign his nomination form to put his name on the ballot" (Fallis 2008, 24). Armed with a candidate, Addison sets out on the quixotic mission to maintain at least a semblance of a campaign. He enlists the help of a young pair of punked-out Petes (Pete 1 and Pete 2) for canvassing, establishes campaign headquarters in his decrepit Ford Taurus in lieu of an office, and deftly spins Angus's proscription of lawn-signs and other serious advertising materials as a deep commitment to environmentalism. All the while, Angus inadvertently betrays a deep knowledge of policy and a profound commitment to democratic ideals (Fallis 2008, 55-57).³

The climax and turning point in the narrative comes when the imposing and incumbent Tory MP's political career is ruined by an S&M sex scandal. The shock to the delicate morals of Cumberland-Prescott's constituents presents an opportunity for victory to Addison and his motley group of loyal aides. However, the prospect of victory is initially unwelcome, as Addison fears the reaction of an irascible Angus if he fails to deliver the certain defeat on the assumption of which his candidacy was promised. Thanks to a disproportionate number of spoiled ballots delivered in disgust, Angus McLintock is declared the winner – though unbeknownst to Angus himself. Having spent the two weeks prior to the election installing water-filtration systems in Papua New Guinea, Angus becomes aware of his political victory in the midst of a flock of reporters at the Ottawa airport. Notwithstanding his surprise, Angus delivers an improvised (and inspirational) speech in which he reiterates his abiding commitment to integrity and to the national interest.

In the final slope of the narrative, Angus and Addison arrive in Parliament and find success through acting with integrity. Angus quickly develops a reputation as a maverick MP by defying the Liberal Opposition's presumptive function of blindly "[opposing] things the government does, everything the government does" (Fallis 2008, 190). Instead, Angus supports the Tory government's well-reasoned throne speech in spite of party loyalty, and consequently wins the support of Liberal backbenchers as well as the admiration of the public. For his constituents, Angus and Addison manage to convert a failing shoe factory into a thriving hi-tech "wave router" manufacturing plant, in addition to shutting down the dishonest "Ottawa River Aggregate Inc." – guilty of both egregious health and safety violations and even bolder ecological transgressions. In the end, the minority Conservative Government desperately tries to push through a budget promising popular tax-cuts despite its detriment to economic growth by holding the vote in a snow storm, which Angus decidedly defeats through valiantly riding down the Ottawa river in a homemade hovercraft to cast his vote on Parliament hill. The story thus winds up neatly with faith in government restored in the public, in Addison, and ignited in Angus.

The High Road

Fallis's second novel is a sequel to the first. *The High Road* picks up almost immediately where *The Best Laid Plans* left off, with Addison, Angus, Muriel, Lindsay, and the Petes united again to mount yet another Liberal campaign in Cumberland-Prescott. This time around, the disgraced Tory finance minister is replaced with Emerson Fox, known widely as "the flamethrower" for his scorched-earth negative campaigning tactics. For the sequel, the stage is set for Angus to face shameless attempts at character assassination without veering off the high road, hence the title.

As before, Angus, Addison, and the rest are able to succeed in unlikely circumstances with integrity. Fox's attempt to defame Angus's reputation through exposing his twenty-three past arrests backfires when Angus responds honestly, and with pride, that his arrests were for peacefully protesting Canada's laws proscribing women's right to choose abortion. The Liberal team engages in some subterfuge when Muriel assembles a task force of unassuming seniors to put embarrassing questions to Fox. In one incident, an elderly woman publicly reveals Fox's damaging admissions that he "could not care less about policy" and that in an election "who cares what you stand for?" (Fallis 2010, 111). When Fox attempts to ratchet up the offensive by attacking the feminist politics of Angus's late wife Marine Lee, a prominent feminist academic, the voters go from inured to Fox's negative tactics to sickened with them. The influence of Angus's character is driven home when it is revealed that "the candidates' integrity, trust, and character" has risen to prime place of importance for the voters of Cumberland-Prescott, and has also risen in national polls thanks to "the Angus effect" (Fallis 2010, 136-137). In the end, a convenient split in the conservative vote caused by a religious independent candidate along with Angus's inspiring integrity results in re-election for Angus and Liberal minority government.

Back in Parliament, Angus and Addison's success continues even more dramatically. In the early morning of Election Day, the Alexandria Bridge, a major bridge connecting Ottawa's governmental centre to its buildings in Hull, Québec, suspiciously falls into the Ottawa River below, and Angus is commissioned by the leader of the Liberal Party to investigate the cause of the collapse. Angus eventually discovers the bridge fell because of twenty years of unconscionable cuts to infrastructure spending, undertaken to hide a growing deficit, initiated (problematically) by a past Liberal government. For political reasons, the Liberal Leader is hesitant to include the necessary,

yet unpopular, commitments to infrastructure spending in the budget. However, amidst Angus's steadily rising national popularity, including a visit from the President of the United States at his home (during which Angus and the First Lady go for a joyride in his hovercraft), honest Angus eventually persuades the Leader to act honorably and forget partisan politics for the sake of the national interest. Before the end, even the thoroughly dishonorable and cynical Emerson Fox confesses to having been converted by Angus's integrity, saying "for the first time in my life I see politics coexisting with common sense ... Canadians trust you in a way they could never trust me" (Fallis 2010, 317-318). Thus, Angus's odyssey concludes with the reinvigoration of public faith in Canadian politics, and whereas Daniel Addison began declaring he was "naïve, innocent, and excited when I arrived... embittered, exhausted, and ineffably sad when I left" (Fallis 2008, prologue, ix), he confides in the end that "it really does help when you actually believe you're doing the right thing" (Fallis 2010, 314).

Up and Down

Fallis's third novel carries the same narrative of renewal through integrity. Much like Daniel Addison, David Stewart has just recently left his position as a young staffer on Parliament Hill—although he did not depart from politics in disgust—and moved to a Toronto PR agency, Turner King, to be closer to his ill mother. The story is animated by Turner King's opportunity to secure NASA and the Canadian Space Agency together as a client – a prospect for which Stewart's prior experience working for the Minister of Science and Technology proves useful. Just before Turner King's pitch to NASA and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA-ASC) fatally falters, Stewart pitches his own far-fetched idea of launching the "Citizen Astronaut contest ... [which is] like Willy Wonka's golden ticket but the prize is not touring a chocolate factory on foot, but orbiting the Earth in the International Space Station" (Fallis 2012, 62-63). Turner King is selected on the rationale that Stewart's astronautical lottery will best achieve NASA and the CSA's goal of restoring public interest in the exploration of space. The inexperienced Stewart is thereby thrust into the center of an important PR organization. The ensuing antics are helped along by Amanda Burke (love-interest and confidante to Daniel), as well as the experienced and formidable PR executive Diane Martineau.

The introduction of Landon Percival, the Canadian winner of Stewart's contest, drives the narrative further. As Daniel Addison is to David Stewart, Landon Percival is to Angus. Extremely accomplished, eccentric, and principled, Landon occupies the same heroic place that Angus had in the above narratives. Likewise, her eccentricity pushes the narrative on, as her being "a seventy-one-year-old Oscar Wilde-quoting lesbian bush pilot doctor from Cigar Lake, B.C., who'd like to visit the International Space Station," (Fallis 2012, 155) seemingly poses a potential PR disaster. Crawford Blake, the brash American senior executive of Turner King and villain of the novel, opposes Percival in every respect and crudely urges Stewart to surreptitiously replace her with "a young and strapping, hale and hearty, maybe even a hockey player in a lumberjack shirt" (Fallis 2012, 100-101) kind of candidate more "representative" of Canada.

In the end, Stewart is defiant, and the narrative concludes on a hopeful note of success for Turner King as well as Stewart and Percival. Defying every expectation, Percival outdoes the archetypal "American hero" contest-winner at every turn and is cleared for her adventure in space. The American Crawford is disgraced and fired after it is revealed that he fixed the American contest winner. Stewart and Amanda Burke begin a promising relationship out of their increasing closeness

following Stewart's grieving for his mother. Finally, not before performing a miraculous emergency appendectomy on the International Space Station, Percival returns to Earth safely and Turner King succeeds handily in raising public interest in international space exploration. Thus, in the end, Stewart finds success in following his Mother's words to "use your head ... but follow your heart" (Fallis 2012, 104).

There are three striking similarities that succinctly characterize these narratives. Firstly, all three novels present positive growth for their protagonists, integrity restored to institutions, and a simple happy ending, which together make for a general mood of hopeful optimism. Secondly, the centerpiece of each story is an aspiring character of heroic integrity who achieves incredible success. Thirdly, the central tension of each narrative surrounds the competing pulls of cynicism embedded within the institutions of politics and public relations against the idealism introduced by the heroic characters, the locus of which is in the character of the narrator. In sum, Fallis enacts a narrative of heroic satire in which good inevitably triumphs over evil.

The Thorny Question of Satire

However, precisely this distinctive character of Fallis's over-arching narrative poses difficulty for its categorization as satire. Whereas it is clear that the novels humorously deride Parliament Hill and the seedier parts of the Public Relations industry, the integral optimism of the stories fits awkwardly with commonly accepted conceptions of satire as "acid-tongued" (McFarlane 2011, 155). Yet, it appears appropriate to speak of Fallis's work as satire nonetheless.⁴ This ambiguity raises the question of the nature of satire; pursuing the problem will lead to a clearer view of what satire is, what it does, and specifically what Fallis's distinctively hopeful satire reveals about Canadian political narratives.

In his pioneering work on narratology within the field of public management, Sanford Borins develops a four-quadrant classification matrix of basic public sector narratives (Borins 2011, 8-10). Based on a study of political narratives from the US and UK, Borins identifies four dominant "fables" along the axes of organization renewal or decline alongside the growth or decline of the protagonist. Thus, he derives four basic political fables, those being heroic, sacrificial/retributive, ironic, and tragic/satirical. However, Fallis's narratives defy simple classification within the matrix. In terms of organizational renewal and the growth of the protagonist, Fallis's work would exist firmly within the "heroic" category – yet the backdrop of organizational and personal decline would suggest a tragic/satirical fable.

Borins presents *The Candidate* (1972), starring Robert Redford, as a classic example of an American heroic fable (Borins 2011, 244).⁵ The film tells the story of the young, idealistic Jim McKay's fraught journey to unlikely electoral victory over California's popular Republican governor. While McKay wrestles with uncomfortable compromises, initially advancing progressive policies (including a strong welfare program, environmental action, and abortion rights) but winding up peddling platitudes to prospective voters (Borins 2011, 156), McKay's victory may suggest personal growth. Rather than being a "freewheeling iconoclast" who takes his political ambitions for an elaborate joke, McKay instead emerges as "a man with convictions who will find some of his soul again" (Borins 2011, 157). The unlikely intervention of a charismatic figure with integrity thus brings a

refreshing voice to the Senate. The combined outcomes of personal growth and organizational renewal present a heroic narrative.⁶

The Candidate bears striking resemblances to *The Best Laid Plans* and *The High Road*. Like McKay, Angus accepts his own candidacy only on the premise that defeat is certain. Both narratives portray an unlikely electoral victory following surprising success on the campaign trail. Moreover, like Larner's, Fallis's work is informed by his insider experience in politics. In an interview, Fallis was forthright about the direct relationship from his political experience to his work, saying:

I did work on Parliament Hill for a cabinet minister first in the short-lived Turner Cabinet, and then for a year in Opposition. So I've seen it from both sides. And I grew frustrated with [the fact that] what seemed to be important when I was up there was not what I thought should be important. I was much more of an 'idealistic policy wonk' ... that's why I created these two [archetypes] – I was much more interested in policy than politics. In fact, I thought I was interested in politics until I realized that there was no policy in politics (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

However, whereas Larner's experience interested him "not in a predictable moral melodrama of *external corruption*, but in the much more insidious process by which a candidate loses himself" (Borins 2011, 155, emphasis added), Fallis's experience interested him in the failings of the political institution. Of course, it is central to Fallis's narrative that his young narrator characters undergo a struggle of idealism and cynicism (Fallis 2008, ix). This tension, however, is explored in the broader institutional context in his novels.

This points toward the difference in how heroism is characterized in *The Candidate* versus that in Fallis's novels. Robert Redford's Jim McKay is an idealistic character with unquestionable integrity – for instance, he refuses to engage in any backroom deals (Borins 2011, 155). His struggle is with the larger institutional structure around campaigning, as he is forced to compromise his ideals to achieve his goals. McKay himself is the hero, and the story is *about* his struggle with compromise. Conversely, in Fallis's novels, this tension is sidelined to Addison and Stewart – who narrate the story as well as undergo personal growth – but are nevertheless not the central characters of the narratives. The heroes are Angus and Landon Percival, characters who undergo little growth but manifest steadfast integrity. This has the obvious effect of making the characters less believable. When asked about the inspiration for these fantastical characters, Fallis responded:

Angus is the physical amalgam of Robertson Davies, Alexander Graham Bell (two of my great Canadian heroes), and my first-year physics professor at McMaster. But his personality, his ethic ... I cut that from whole cloth to create this character that might be able to achieve some of those things by sheer force of his will (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

Unlike the heroism of McKay, which relies on a believable human struggle with integrity, the heroism of Fallis's narratives is manifest in aspirational characters of *superhuman* goodness and

ability. Accordingly, the struggle of integrity is relegated to the sideline figures of Addison and Stewart, whom Fallis characterized thus:

My narrators tend to be good people, flawed people, but good people with their heart in the right place ... I didn't want them to be heroes, I wanted [each of them] to be the kind of person that is a good person but maybe slips in the dog crap (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

Thus, Fallis's narratives involve a crucial separation of struggle with human flaws and heroic character. For this reason, Fallis's characters are even more unambiguously heroic than is presented in this American example, with the effect that the narrative appears unrealistic, exaggerated, and overall comedic.

Perhaps the prime example of a satirical fable for Borins is the classic British series of the 1980s, *Yes Minister*. The series portrays the hapless minister Jim Hacker and the cunning bureaucrat Sir Humphrey as each ostensibly fulfills his obligations to the public interest while quite obviously interested only in private ends (Borins 2011, 75-80). Creators Anthony Jay and Jonathan Lynn have acknowledged the narrative influence of public-choice theorizing, which postulates that a reductive self-interested psychology can be ascribed to the motivations of individuals in the public sector, and which is portrayed quite clearly in the series (Borins 1988, 17-22). As the two principal characters vie for the upper hand, the hypocrisy of government shines through in various ways. At its most reified, the irrationality is encapsulated by the fact that "the people who have the permanence have the power but the ones with the elected office have the theoretical authority." (Anthony Jay, quoted in Borins 2011, 77). The combined features of moral bankruptcy in the characters along with the abuse of public institutions land *Yes Minister* squarely in the satirical quadrant of Borins's analytical matrix.

The most glaring contrast between *Yes Minister* and Fallis's over-arching narrative is the persistent hopefulness that characterizes the latter. Once the laughter has subsided, *Yes Minister* ultimately presents a nihilistic picture. The self-serving exploits of Hacker and Humphrey undermine any public respect for the government (Borins 1988, 22), and the narrative difficulty of *Yes Minister* consists in "maintaining the balance between outrage and amusement" (Borins 2011, 80). Whereas *Yes Minister* possibly inspired the public's desire for change by negative example (Borins 1988, 21-22), Fallis takes the opposite approach, saying:

I don't want people to be more depressed at the end. I want them to perhaps think about their obligations as citizens in a democracy, in a functioning democracy, and I want them to get more engaged. So I hope both of the first two novels have enough *hope* in them that [people feel] 'you can effect change, you can do the right thing and it will actually work its way through the system' (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

In fact, Fallis expresses skepticism regarding *Yes Minister*'s satirical strategy, remarking:

I don't know whether anger lends itself to clear thinking about public policy or lends itself to resolving issues that are going to require more than one party coming together to fix something (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

With this, we can see that both narratives can be seen as “corrective” (Borins 2011, 64), but that each employs divergent means. *Yes Minister* nakedly reveals the dysfunction of the government, while Fallis's novels enact the hopeful prospect of extraordinary individuals rising above it.

Perhaps as a consequence, the two differ in comedic style as well. *Yes Minister's* comedy is never crude, but the wit is quick, dry, and cynical – in other words, characteristically British (Borins 2011, 241). Fallis's humor is far gentler. The jokes often arise out of absurd situations, self-deprecation of the characters, or puns. When asked about his kinder style, Fallis linked it with the hopeful mood of his narratives, saying:

The other reason [for remaining hopeful] is I don't have a real hard ass sense of humour – I don't want blood on the floor. It's a gentler humour, more Leacockean. It's my style. I like to stay in my wheel-house. I'll never write a dark, or black, comedy, or one that is really offensive or anything like that (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

An example from Fallis's *Up and Down* is illustrative of his comedic style. In the middle of Stewart's personal story running alongside the major PR narrative, his mother passes away and he and his sister are making arrangements at the funeral home. Stewart and his sister suffer through a surreal experience considering various urns when Stewart unleashes a jeering impression of a tactless funeral director's sales pitch. After extolling the “secure-lock technology” and the “leading-edge super-grip adhesive surface” of the urn, Stewart notes his “habit of resorting to humor to avoid the serious” (Fallis 2012, 193-196). Confessing how close-to-home this passage is, Fallis said:

The Urnstar 2000! What you don't know is that wasn't fiction at all. That scene, well frankly ... my mother passed away in the exact same way ... nobody really knows that ... but it was kind of a quiet tribute to my mother ... and that scene that plays out in the funeral home? That was *reportage*, that wasn't fiction. It was my twin brother who made that comment (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

The personal source of this passage reveals the character of Fallis's comedic style, which is even more pronounced considering Fallis's admission that his narrative voice is his own (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017). The gentle humor arises out of a playful treatment of pitiable subject matter, as Fallis's narrative “resorts to humour to avoid the serious” (Fallis 2012, 196).

So why should we talk of Fallis's works as satire, when it appears to fit somewhere between the comedic heroic drama of *The Candidate* and the cold satire of *Yes Minister*? Recourse to the scholarship of Northrop Frye will help to answer this question. Frye is widely recognized for undertaking “the most influential study of satire in the twentieth century” (McFarlane 2011, 153). He distinguishes satire essentially as “militant irony,” necessarily requiring “wit and humour founded on

a sense of fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, [as well as] an object of attack” (Frye 1957, 223-224).

The first criteria are obvious in Fallis’s work, but identifying his “object of attack” requires some parsing out. For Frye, satire’s attack cannot simply be denunciation issuing from overly partisan or personal antipathies. As Frye explains, the author and reader must agree on the “undesirability” of satire’s object, and therefore the literature relies heavily on convention (Frye 1957, 224-225). Satire *reveals* a disjunction between conventional norms and their misapplication, as the literature enacts “the comic struggle of two societies, one normal and the other absurd, [which] is reflected in its double focus of morality and fantasy” (Frye 1957, 224). Thus, even if only implied, the satirical writer takes “a high moral line” (Frye 1957, 225), against which the “object of attack” is skewered and tried.

As *Yes Minister’s* object of attack is easily identified with bureaucracy in the UK, Fallis’s object of attack appears to be the preoccupation with power in Canadian politics. As suggested above, Fallis’s narrator characters give voice to a struggle with cynicism and idealism. Confiding his reasons for leaving politics to Lindsay, Addison explains that he “became one of them. Image became supreme. Sound bites replaced meaningful discourse. Opinion polls no longer informed policy development, they dictated it ... it finally dawned on me one day that I really was thinking like them. It was time to get out” (Fallis 2010, 25). By Fallis’s own admission, these novels are “a measure of my frustration with the current state of politics” (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

The primary source of Fallis’s frustration was the ongoing struggle on Parliament Hill between the archetypal political personalities of “cynical political operators” and “idealist policy wonks.” As he perceived it, the problem boiled down to

the challenge of gaining and keeping power. And it also is greatly influenced by how engaged the electorate is, and how focused on their democratic obligations they are because, you know, voters who aren’t that interested in politics, who don’t bother reading the articles on the issues we’re confronting are more easily bought with their own money – with their tax dollars. They do stuff around election time, it may not be in the national interest – in a happy coincidence sometimes it is in the national interest – but often it’s not really. It’s intended purely for the purpose of persuading voters to vote for them so they can stay in power. The people who run political campaigns, generally, the really powerful people who run political campaigns, tend not to have too much of an interest or background in policy. (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

For Fallis, the means of gaining power had overtaken policy as the end of government in Canadian politics. The properly symbiotic relationship between the two political personalities (that is, where the skills of the “cynical political operators” functioned as a means to executing policy) had been unfortunately disrupted. As illustrated by Fallis,

The policy wonks ... they don’t know much about how to get power or even how to keep it. So we’re at a disadvantage in a way ... so you really do need both ...

you need both to get across the finish line ... I mean let the CPOs get us across the finish line and then let the policy wonks take over and lets do something ... but it doesn't tend to work out that way. The CPOs like to be in power, they like to work those levers and policy gets in the way. (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

In this way, Fallis's satire critiques a general imbalance on Parliament Hill between the means and legitimate uses of power.

More concretely, when it comes to the business of government, Fallis treats various specific policy issues following from the abiding moral claim of the narratives that the national interest ought to precede the local interests of constituents and personal interests of politicians.⁷ The character of Angus incarnates this principle, and supporting characters repeatedly praise "his honesty, his integrity, his commitment to the national interest," which they say is "above all else is what we need to restore Canadians' faith in our democracy" (Fallis 2010, 34). In one episode from *The High Road*, Angus successfully establishes a necessary 'halfway house' in his constituency despite the protestations of the wealthier part of the community. The episode illustrates the abiding principle of the novel, as Fallis explained:

Who wants a Corrections Canada Halfway House in their community? But. There are reasons to locate them in certain places, and if the research has been done well and this is in fact an ideal location – suck it up! That's what we need to do in the national interest. (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

Similarly, in *The Best Laid Plans*, Angus quite conveniently converts an economically stagnant shoe factory into a highly progressive (and successful) "wave-router" manufacturer. While the episode is certainly fantastic, it was informed by principle as Fallis revealed in an interview:

We see bad decisions being made often just to try to shore up a local political interest. Decisions that set back our industrial policy by a few years ... as a country we are spending a lot of time in our sun-set industries, when, if we're really going to continue to compete, we have to move into the sunrise industries. And it doesn't just mean moving into the sunrise industries; it also means purposefully withdrawing from the sunset industries! They will drag us and down, and I think we are taking economic activity away from countries that can't have sunrise industries (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

Lastly, the plot of *The High Road* is driven by a crisis of infrastructure spending. Rather than shirking responsibility by continuing to hide the embarrassing problem of deplorable government, Angus persuades the Liberal Prime Minister to right the wrongs of the past – despite the action's political unpopularity. According to Fallis, this narrative was an attempt to deal with

the challenge of the four-year electoral horizon ... some of our issues require a lot more than four years to resolve – infrastructure perhaps being one of them. So short-term political decisions are made to compromise our long-term ability to solve long-term problems. And a bridge fell down! Again, an extreme example, but that's what you do in comic novels. (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

Thus, Fallis's political narratives have a clear object of attack, under which many examples follow. The pervasive preoccupations with power on Parliament Hill lead to specific policy mistakes that are treated satirically in the novels. Entertainment is not the primary purpose of the novels. Rather, the narratives seize upon a disjunction in society from a recognized moral ideal and seek to remedy it – thereby conforming to Frye's definition of satire as "militant irony" (Frye 1957, 223). As Fallis himself maintains:

It's quite possible to read this novel, as well as all my novels, just at the humour level and think 'oh that's a fun story [with] good characters'. But I think my ultimate objective would be to use humour as an entry point to have [readers] think about these issues in a different way. In way perhaps they hadn't thought of before – maybe they'll think about them without even knowing that they're thinking about them because their fists aren't clenched and they're not angry and upset – they're enjoying the story (you hope). (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

This points toward the major innovation of Frye's theoretical treatment of satire. Prior to his work (and even within Frye's early thought on the subject), satire was thought of as "an acid, a literary corrosive, or caustic" (McFarlane 2011, 155. Cf. 170-171). As serious literature, satire was lowly regarded on the assumption that it merely dissembled established systems of thought and/or belief (McFarlane 2011, 156). However, Frye recognized the element of "fantasy" in satire. That is, Frye showed that satire also points toward an ideal and is therefore generative. In other words, satire tears things down *so that* it can clear the way for something better, as befits its "tendency to seek out the new" (McFarlane 2011, 166. Cf. 155, 160-162). This is expressed quite beautifully at the end of Frye's groundbreaking essay, in which he explains the "visionary" nature of satire with reference to Dante's *Inferno*:

At the bottom of Dante's hell, which is also the center of the spherical earth, Dante sees Satan standing upright in the circle of ice, and as he cautiously follows Virgil over the hip and thigh of the evil giant, letting himself down by the tufts of hair on his skin, he passes the center and finds himself no longer going down but going up, climbing out on the other side of the world to see the stars again. From this point of view, the devil is no longer upright, but standing on his head, in the same attitude in which he was hurled downward from heaven upon the other side of the earth. Tragedy and tragic irony take us into a hell of narrowing circles and culminate in some such vision of the source of all evil in a personal form. Tragedy can take us no farther; but if we persevere with the mythos of irony and satire, we shall pass a dead center, and finally see the gentlemanly Prince of Darkness bottom side up (Frye 1957, 239. Cf. McFarlane 2011, 161).

While Fallis's modesty would never permit a comparison to Dante, the example helps to see how Fallis's narratives relate to satiric form. As stated expressly, Fallis intends to inspire a desire for change through his novels. Describing *The Best Laid Plans* and *The High Road*, Fallis said,

These are my ‘love-letters to democracy’. They are intended to contribute to a different approach to politics. They are not intended to set fire to what we have with nothing to put in its place (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

As is similarly played out in *Up and Down* with respect to the field of Public Relations, the characteristic hopefulness that appears to distance Fallis’s narratives from satire actually confirms it as such.

In this way, *Yes Minister* and Fallis’s novels both conform to Frye’s conception of satire but put different methods to work in its execution. Whereas *Yes Minister* portrays dysfunction as if it were the norm, Fallis portrays an idealized norm as if it were fantastic. By these diverging methods, both nevertheless emphasize the distance in society from the moral ideal implied by each.

Canadian Political Narrative: A Suggestion

While the differences in tone might easily be ascribed to the varying preferences in style or taste between Lynn/Jay and Fallis,⁸ the difference can also be explained in part by differences of context. The colder touch of *Yes Minister*’s satire lived in a British context which was, as noted above, dominantly pessimistic. Around the time of its airing, the United Kingdom was struggling with its diminution on the world-stage next to American hegemony, in addition to a host of domestic issues (Borins 2011, 240-242). Canada, however, is a very different political community. The land of “peace, order, and good government” began as a collection of colonies and has been an independent nation for only 150 years. There is thus little of a political legacy to draw upon, which may explain Fallis’s complicated journey to find a publisher.⁹ Fallis himself felt he was addressing a specific lack of interest in politics among Canadian citizens, saying:

I think [the problem is] disinterest bordering on disdain, bordering on boredom, bordering on ...I think of it as ‘the apathy of affluence’. We live in a very wealthy country; hot water comes out of our tap when we turn it on in the morning, and the garbage is picked up ... things generally – obviously with violent exceptions – work in a pretty civilized way around here, and it doesn’t give great incentive to the electorate to get engaged with politics because it works pretty well. But [the problem is] democracy needs care and feeding and tending or it can slip away – and we get the governments we deserve (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

In this way, we can see how the Canadian context invites a satirical approach like Fallis’s. It is plausible that a public accustomed to an acceptably well-functioning government would be less receptive to a more acerbic style of satire. The complacency bred by the so-called “apathy of affluence” makes it easier to ignore satire that portrays dysfunction, since it does not align with an experience of dysfunction or decline. Rather, Fallis’s satire portrays an aspirational ideal, and thereby emphasizes problems in society through focusing the reader’s attention toward something better. In a word, the indignation aroused by *Yes Minister* is effective for a nation in political decline, while the stubbornly hopeful character of Fallis’s narratives is fitting for a political community in relatively good health.

In fact, the hopefulness of Fallis's work aligns it more closely with typical American political fables. As presented by Borins, the characterization of American political heroism as reflecting "a desire to serve the best interest of their polity or collectivity, quiet determination, persistence, and an ability to persuade and enlist their fellow citizens to support their cause," could just as well be applied to Fallis's Angus (as well as Landon Percival outside of the political context). However, as noted above, the obvious fantasy involved in indulging these characters ultimately distinguishes Fallis's narratives from the heroic American fables.

Neither British nor American, yet influenced by both, Fallis's Canadian political narrative can be seen as part of an identity crisis stretching back to Canada's founding debates.¹⁰ Indeed, Fallis agrees that his novels carry "a distinctly Canadian sensibility [or] tone that you can find in all my books," and that "it is perhaps instructive that I don't have publishing deals in the US" (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

While Fallis's political satire exists in an otherwise striking dearth of Canadian political narratives, there has been a strong tradition of radio political satire in Canada (Hepner 1992, 12-14). In an interesting study, Lisa Hepner highlights the importance of political satire for identity formation in Canada. Discussing programs stretching from Max Ferguson's *The Rawhide Show*, *Double Exposure*, and *the Royal Canadian Air Farce*, Hepner argues that these programs reinforced the idea of a unified Canadian political community through referencing distinctive Canadian icons (Hepner 1992, 13).¹¹ The satiric impulse of skewering "pomposity and people who take themselves too seriously" (Max Ferguson 1958, quoted in Hepner 1992, 6) encourages the modest self-deprecation for which Canada is known (Hutcheon 1991, 1). Hepner suggests that this helps distance Canadians culturally from Americans, who tend to take a more reverent stance toward their politics (Hepner 1992, 9-10). At the same time, she makes sure to point out that "a lot of Brits would consider what we do to be less biting and nasty than some of their stuff" (Don Ferguson, quoted in Hepner 1992, 10). Thus, Canadians appear to be an "in-between" people, wherein humor can help bind together a nation of multiple identities. As one critic of *Air Farce* put it, "by poking fun at our politicians, our passions, and our pastimes, they allow us the chance to laugh at each other and ourselves, to remind us who we are and why we really are different, in subtle and significant ways, from our behemoth neighbours to the south" (David Barber 1989, quoted in Hepner 1992, 13).

Linda Hutcheon takes this argument a step further, arguing that irony deeply permeates Canadian identity. She argues that the peculiar heterogeneity and many dualities of Canadian society ensure that when any Canadian attempts to speak as distinctly Canadian, he or she is forced to "speak with a doubled voice, with the forked tongue of irony" (Hutcheon 1991, 1).¹² Hutcheon analyzes an impressive swath of Canadian literature to demonstrate her point, but one example will suffice here. Noting that, "'peace, order, and good government' do not have quite the same ring as 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness'" (Hutcheon 1991, 34), Hutcheon refers to what she calls "an instructive ironic political fable" to illustrate the typical Canadian attitude toward the United States:

There was once a country which existed to the north of a much stronger nation. Its southern neighbor considered itself to be beyond any other the seat of all that was good in both politics and culture and it believed that its influence over the

course of human events would stretch to many millennia. The southern nation looked upon this northern territory somewhat with contempt, viewing its inhabitants as barbaric and its land as their own. Although there was trade between the two it was not often free due to the strength and wealth of the southern country. Such was the power of the southern country that it could at any moment wage war of many different kinds. And yet the little northern territory still managed to ward off the might of the other and even occasionally produced exports which had greater impact on its stronger neighbor than was ever fully realized. One such moment occurred when the practices of a certain artist became wide spread amongst the peoples of the south – his name was Orpheus and he entered Athens from Thrace sometime during the 6th century BC (Geoff Miles *Foreign Relations: Re-Writing a Narrative in Parts*, reproduced in Hutcheon 1991, 34-35).

As Hutcheon explains, the example illustrates both the pride Canadians typically derive in distancing themselves from the United States, along with the self-deprecating acknowledgment of Canada's peripheral importance relative to the world at large. Thus, Canadian identity is here reinforced as *not* American, yet nothing is positively affirmed.¹³ Therefore, if perhaps uncomfortable with articulating a distinctive identity, Canadian society is quite comfortable with irony. Perhaps there is more to Frye's quip that Canadians "have a highly developed sense of irony" (Frye, quoted in Hutcheon 1991, 4).

In conclusion, these contextual factors of Canadian society suggest Fallis's novels can be viewed as distinctly Canadian political narratives. As outlined above, the relatively "efficient" functioning of society perceived by Fallis in Canada is likely more congenial to this "affectionate" style of satire. From the other direction, the pervasive use of irony within Canadian society makes it more receptive to a satirical treatment of political narratives than an earnestly heroic fable more typical of American political narratives. Thus, the success of Fallis's political narratives, to the exclusion of others, suggests these factors may define the contours of a distinctly Canadian political narrative.

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Endnotes

¹ Notwithstanding the recent media coverage of the SNC-Lavalin Affair [reference to globe and mail article].

² Canadian politics is more peripheral to *Up and Down*, in which the field of Public Relations instead is the major setting.

³ In particular, consider this emblematic passage in which Angus voices his characteristic integrity: *Every candidate in this country should be thinkin' first about the national interest, second about their constituents' interests, and third about their own interests. Everyone is more concerned with their own fortunes than with the nation's. That's the problem with the democratic institutions in this country. It's no wonder voters are cynical.*

⁴ Not to mention other writers of "affectionate" satire, who bend genre conventions in similar ways, especially the "nostalgic" work of Garrison Keillor mentioned above. Another obvious example is Stephen Leacock (in honor of whom Terry Fallis himself was awarded the *Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal for Humour*), who has been widely noted for the same sweetness of style. Cf. Pacey, Desmond. 1951. Leacock as a Satirist. *Queen's Quarterly* 58(1): 208-219.

⁵ I am here preferring Borins's interpretation to Larner's.

⁶ Conversely, under Larner's own interpretation *The Candidate* would present an ironic fable. However, since these contrasting readings hinge on an outcome that is not portrayed but only suggested in the film, *The Candidate* could be best classified as polyphonic. For the purposes of this paper, the ironic interpretation will be discarded, and I will instead focus on the heroic side of film.

⁷ This is confirmed by Fallis's own words: *I was looking at that conflict that seems to exist between the national interest, the local interest, and the personal/political interest. Sometimes those latter two are together, sometimes they are not. I always thought politicians and MPs should be serving the country first, and their constituents a close second – but second! In those rare instances where the local interest should conflict with the national interest we should weigh in favour of the national interest* (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

⁸ Perhaps tellingly, Fallis spoke of his influences as follows: *I have been influenced by some great Canadian writers: Robertson Davies, Mordecai Richler, Paul Quarrington ... Christopher Buckley (son of William F. Buckley) – a great satirist. John Irving has been a great influence, not so much to write about politics, but ... John Irving taught me the power of juxtaposing humour and pathos and sometimes rubbing them right up against one another to make the journey more meaningful ... to make the humour stand in starker contrast to ... the tragedy* (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

⁹ When asked if the state of Canadian political narratives has changed since 2008, Fallis responded: *I don't think it's changed that much ... it's not a genre that logically lends itself to publishing* (Fallis, personal interview, 7 April 2017).

¹⁰ Consider the debates of the "fathers of confederation" on the issue of British versus American identity; Cf. "British or American?" in *Canada's Founding Debates* ed. Janet Aizenstat, Paul Romney, Ian Gentles, and William D. Gairdner. University of Toronto Press, 1999: 167-199.

¹¹ She lists CBC announcers, hockey players, Mounties, and Members of Parliament.

¹² Some of these dualities include: "east/west, empty northern tundra/dense southern urbanization ... balmy British Columbian and frigid Newfoundland winters," not to mention the obvious English/French as well as Settler/First Nations (p. 16).

¹³ Hence the tongue-in-cheek title of Hutcheon's essay: *As Canadian as ... possible ... under the circumstances*.

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Narrative and Politics of Hacking in *WarGames, Sneakers, and Blackhat*

Irene P. Poetranto

1. Introduction: The Evolution of Hacking on Screen

One of the first instances of computer hacking on screen was in the 1982 Disney cult classic *Tron*. A programmer named Kevin Flynn (played by Jeff Bridges) hacked into his employer's computer system to find evidence that the code for a game called "Space Paranoids," which Flynn invented, has been stolen by one of the senior executives (*Tron*). Hacking has since been portrayed in increasingly sophisticated ways in movies, documentaries, and TV series. It is an enduring subject matter arguably due to its enigmatic nature: people are both fascinated and terrified by the complex nature of computing technology. As our lives are increasingly connected to networks and systems, the potential consequences of hacking are becoming even more alarming. For instance, the United States continues to be concerned with cyberattacks against its critical infrastructure, including the power grid, nuclear power plants, and water facilities. Fears over a "cyber Pearl Harbor" has led the U.S. government to pass laws for critical infrastructure protection (Lawson and Middleton 2019). It is evident that cyber threats have provided fodder for filmmakers and policymakers alike.

The narrative and portrayal of hacking on screen have evolved in accordance with the shifts in the geopolitical landscape and the rapidly developing nature of technologies. In the Cold War-era, the predominant fear among the public was of the Soviet-American nuclear warfare, which could accidentally occur due to vulnerabilities of the nuclear arms systems. These Cold War concerns could be seen in the plot of *WarGames*, for example, which was released in 1983. Computer graphics technology at this time was only in its nascent stage and thus its portrayal of hacking was very crude. Nevertheless, together with science-fiction films like *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Jurassic Park* (1993), hacker movies pushed the development of special effects forward ("The Evolution of VFX in Movies: The 60s Till Now").

The visualization of hacking in the 1980s and 1990s was heavily reliant on the computer graphics interface (CGI) and mostly with disregard for technical accuracy. This is true in the case of the cult-classic *Hackers* (1995), which became the most well-known movie involving computers from the 1990s, despite a number of films released within the same period that feature computers (e.g.,

Johnny Mnemonic (1995), *Virtuosity* (1995), James Bond's *GoldenEye* (1995), and *The Net* (1995)) ("Hackers Watch *Hackers*"). *Hackers* has been lampooned for its unrealistic use of special effects to depict hacking. For instance, a malicious, self-replicating computer program known as a "computer worm" was shown in the movie using animated Cookie Monster, running rabbits, and Pac-Man ("11 Most Ridiculous Movie & TV Hacking Moments"). The late movie critic Roger Ebert acknowledged that he took the demonstration of hacking in *Hackers* "approximately as seriously as the archeology in *Indiana Jones*" ("Reviews: *Hackers*").

Cybersecurity issues that have dominated the public's attention since the end of the Cold War include the rise of competitor countries against the West, like China and Russia, and state-sponsored cyberattacks (or also referred to as "cyber warfare") and cyber espionage, as well as privacy and mass surveillance. As a result, these geopolitical and security concerns have informed the plots of recent movies about hacking. How hacking is illustrated on screen has also evolved, as computer graphic capabilities have become more sophisticated over time, and thus enabling a more understated, yet still visually captivating depiction of such a tedious activity as hacking, which typically involves repetitively typing lines of code. Dynamic imagery about hacking is sometimes combined with action sequences to bolster its believability. In *Blackhat* (2015), although animation was still used to illustrate the digital intrusion of computer systems, offline tactics were also used to target victims. Social engineering is an example of a tactic used in the film, whereby a target is persuaded to infect herself with malware (e.g., by plugging a compromised device into her computer) so that hackers can gain access into her systems (Goodschmidt, 2018). In this case, a young and attractive female hacker persuades a bank's security guard to plug a USB device containing malware into his computer and she then infiltrates the bank's computer network (*Blackhat*).

A number of filmmakers today have elected to show a relatively accurate depiction of hacking, perhaps because the phenomenon has, unfortunately, become commonplace. They have hired consultants or writers from the tech-security industry or former law enforcement. Some have even hired prominent hackers, who have been convicted for their crimes. The TV series *Mr. Robot*, for example, is one that has been lauded for its convincing portrayal of hacking. The show's staff writer and technology producer, Kor Adana, was a network security analyst and forensics manager for Toyota Motor Sales prior to his career in Hollywood. The team behind the show has also been known to comb through online reviews to look for feedback on both the plausibility and accuracy of previously-aired episodes ("How the Real Hackers Behind *Mr. Robot* Get It So Right"). In contrast, this type of precision and high attention to detail were largely missing in hacker movies from the 1990s and earlier.

This paper outlines how Hollywood's portrayal of hacking has changed over the past few decades—e.g., in terms of the narrative techniques and technologies used—and their policy impact. It does so by analyzing three movies in particular, *WarGames* (1983), *Sneakers* (1992), and *Blackhat* (2015). The rest of the paper is divided into the following sections. The first section is an audit of each movie according to the following questions: What is the story and is it plausible? Who are depicted as protagonists and antagonists? What are the noteworthy cinematic or narrative techniques used and how do they contribute to each film? And finally, the movies' narratives are assessed using the four-cell classification of public sector fables in Sandford Borins' *Governing Fables* (the heroic, the ironic, the sacrificial, and the tragic)¹ to summarize its portrayal of hacking (Borins 2011, 9). The final sections compare the similarities and differences in terms of how

hacking-related issues and activities are shown, including the role of women, and discuss the legacy of these films as we look into the future.

2. Analysis of *WarGames*, *Sneakers*, and *Blackhat*

2.1. Analysis of *WarGames* (1983)

WarGames was released by MGM Studios in 1983 and is one of the most influential hacker films of all time. The script was written by Lawrence Lasker and Walter F. Parkes with John Badham as the director. It stars Matthew Broderick as a tech-savvy teenager named David Lightman, while Ally Sheedy plays a fellow teenager named Jennifer Mack, who is Lightman's best friend (*WarGames*). The movie was well-received in its release and went on to receive three Oscar nominations for best cinematography, best sound, and best screenplay written directly for the screen (Chilton 2015).

The movie opens with a shot of Lightman playing the classic arcade game, Galaga. A lazy student who is obsessed with playing video games, Lightman's first foray into hacking is against his school's database to change his lackluster grades. After seeing an advertisement for a new game by a company called ProtoVision, Lightman thinks of hacking into the company's server to play it ahead of its public release. He programs his computer and telephone modem to dial all of the telephone numbers in Sunnyvale, California, where ProtoVision is based, to connect to its modems on dial-up phone lines—a technique known as “demon dialing” (Liska 2002, 148). Using demon dialing, once modem tone has been detected, a hacker (or “demon dialer”) can connect to it and try different username and password combinations to gain access into the system (“Demon Dialer”). After dialing for hours, Lightman's computer finally connects to what he thinks is ProtoVision's modem. In reality, this modem is connected to a wargaming computer in NORAD's (the North American Aerospace Defense Command) headquarters, known as the War Operations Plan Response (WOPR), which runs simulations and plays strategy games. Lightman sees the option for “global thermonuclear war” listed in a directory of games such as chess, checkers, hearts, poker, and “Falken's Maze,” but the system does not allow him to proceed without first entering a username and password. Lightman calls on his two (male) hacker friends for help, who suggest he study the “Falken” referenced in “Falken's Maze,” the first game listed in the directory. After hours of painstaking library research, he discovers that “Falken” refers to Dr. Stephen Falken, an artificial intelligence (AI) researcher. Lightman guesses correctly that Falken's deceased son's name, “Joshua,” is the password needed to play the games, and he finally accessed the system.

Lightman chooses to play “global thermonuclear war” against the computer, as a player known as the Soviet Union. His selection initiates the wargaming computer into action, which convinces the military personnel at NORAD that Soviet nuclear missiles have been launched against the United States. It turns out that the WOPR also controls the U.S.' nuclear arsenal, and its purpose in playing strategy games is to help ensure the country's predominance in the event of an actual war. Lightman is discovered to be behind the WOPR's intrusion and he is brought to NORAD headquarters. He convinces military officials that the “attack” the computer is experiencing is actually a game session that he initiated, and the military immediately cancel the retaliatory missile strike against the Soviet Union. The WOPR, however, continues to play and attempts to launch the nuclear missiles by itself. All attempts to force it to cancel the countdown fail, yet if the computer is disabled

or unplugged, then all the missiles will launch. Lightman, now with Falken's assistance, programs the WOPR to play a game of tic-tac-toe against itself, resulting in a string of draws, and forcing it to learn the concept of "no-win" scenarios. It resumes the nuclear war game and once again finds the results to be a stalemate. It concludes that "global thermonuclear war" is "a strange game," in which "the only winning move is not to play." The WOPR relinquishes control of the missiles and asks to play "a nice game of chess" instead.

Using Sandford Borins' classification of fables, *WarGames* falls under the heroic fable (Borins 2011, 9). In the heroic fable, both the protagonist and the institution or society are considered to be better off at the conclusion than at the outset. The protagonist, David Lightman, is able to overcome challenges, and as a result, he is rewarded both intrinsically (gaining a sense of self-worth despite being known as a troubled teenager) and extrinsically (getting good grades and preventing global nuclear warfare, thanks to his hacking skills). The Soviet Union, on the other hand, is depicted as the antagonist and the reason why the U.S. fears the occurrence of World War III.

The plot of *WarGames* reflects the political climate that existed in the U.S. at the time. An arms race was ongoing with the Soviet Union, whom the President Ronald Reagan called the "evil empire" (Reagan 1983). There were also reports that the Soviets had infiltrated American computer networks to steal advanced technologies like the microchip, thus threatening the U.S.' technological (and consequently, geopolitical) dominance (Schulte 2013, 25). The movie also imitated real-world fears because, in the same year as it was released, a Los Alamos nuclear weapons center was hacked by a group of Milwaukee-based teenagers, who referred to themselves as "the 414 hackers," after their Milwaukee telephone area code. They first became hackers because they wanted to play computer games ahead of their public release (just like David Lightman) (Storr 2017).

Computers were not widely used when *WarGames* was released—only three to five percent of American households used personal computers—and therefore, for most people, the movie was their first "experience" with what we call "the Internet" (Schulte 2008, 488). Yet because of Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (also known as the "Star Wars" project) and movies like "Dr. Strangelove" (1964), "Fail Safe" (1964), and "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968), the American public was already anxious about the possibility of technology going awry (Schulte 2013, 25). Following the movie's release, media coverage on hacking by popular outlets like NBC, ABC, CBS, and *Life* magazine, amongst others, further reinforced fears of accidental nuclear warfare. An ABC news report even quoted the then Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's comments that nuclear warfare could very well occur by accident, thereby proving to the public that the movie's plot was not mere fiction (Schulte 2013, 26). The "hacker panic" partially engendered by the movie also resulted in new U.S. government policies, which will be discussed in the "Legacy" section below.

WarGames includes several notable cinematic and narrative techniques. First, the movie uses close-up shots of Lightman's face and the computer screen he uses (with what looks like DOS (Disk Operating System), a text-based user interface). These shots show the contrast between the dark computer screen and the bright, expressiveness of Lightman's face, and allow the viewers to share his excitement (and later on, terror) of hacking into systems. Second, the movie depicts realistic hacking sequences, methods, and consequences. This is because screenwriters Lasker and

Parkes interviewed Willis Ware, the head of the computer science department at RAND Corporation (a think-tank formerly affiliated with the U.S. Army Air Force), who helped design the software for the real NORAD computer. In 1967, Ware had warned the government of the potential vulnerabilities of computer networks, especially as an increasing number of people and systems are interconnected (“*WarGames* and Cybersecurity’s Debt to a Hollywood Hack”). He told Lasker and Parkes that government computer networks were supposed to be closed systems, but because some officers wanted to work from home on weekends, a port was left open for them to dial in remotely. Consequently, if the right number was dialed (e.g., using the demon dialing technique mentioned earlier), then anyone could get into the system (Kaplan 2016, 8). Finally, the movie uses subtle, but effective animation to depict the WOPR in action. Nuclear war games were shown using dotted lines shooting out from and colliding with different nations (representing nuclear payloads) resulting in blindingly white circles (depicting absolute annihilation). This portrayal was so ingenious that it inspired an entirely new game with the same aesthetic. Called “DEFCON,” the game is named after the threat levels frequently referenced in the movie (Sullivan 2017).

The technology used in *WarGames* may look dated today, but the issues raised remain pertinent. At the 2012 Tribeca Film Festival, a hacker named Pablos Holman said in a panel following *WarGames*’ screening that the movie “is as relevant as ever,” because many challenges exist today, as they did in the 1980s, with regard to the protection of our computer systems (Ryan 2013). Many of the key players in Silicon Valley also grew up watching the film. In *WarGames*’ twenty-fifth anniversary screening in 2008, Google co-founder Sergey Brin told the audience that *WarGames* was “a key movie of a generation, especially for those of us who got into computing” (Gardiner 2014). As we grapple with the threats that arise in the age of AI and the Internet of Things, it is certain that *WarGames*’ relevance will continue to persist.

2.2. Analysis of *Sneakers* (1992)

Sneakers was released by Universal Studios in 1992, featuring an all-star cast including Robert Redford, Sidney Poitier, James Earl Jones, Dan Aykroyd, Mary McDonnell, Ben Kingsley, River Phoenix, and David Strathairn. The film was directed by Phil Alden Robinson, who co-wrote the script together with Lawrence Lasker and Walter F. Parkes, the writing team behind *WarGames* almost a decade earlier (*Sneakers*). *Sneakers* is famous for being the first major Hollywood movie to focus on the National Security Agency (NSA). It was a box office success, grossing over \$105 million worldwide (Sugarman 2013). The term “sneakers” is used to refer to ethical individuals who conduct analysis to determine, improve, and guarantee the safety and integrity of security systems (also known as “white hat hackers”) (“What is a White Hat”).

The movie begins in 1969 with two university students, Martin Brice (played by Gary Hershberger as the younger version of Robert Redford’s character) and Cosmo (played by Jojo Mar as the younger version of Ben Kingsley’s character), sitting in a university library. The students use the library’s computers to hack into the Federal Reserve. They first access the Republican Party’s bank account and make a \$25,000 donation to the Black Panthers, followed by accessing Richard Nixon’s personal checking account, which is donated entirely to the National Association to Legalize Marijuana. The gravity of these activities caused Cosmo to worry over getting caught, but Brice urges Cosmo to trust him and carry on hacking other accounts. Brice gets in the car a few minutes later to pick up some food, but Cosmo is ambushed at the library and arrested by the

police. As Brice is outside of the building at this time, he manages to escape. The scene then shifted from the 1960s to the present (1990s).

With the movie's setting now being in the 1990s, we find out that Martin Brice has changed his name to Martin Bishop (played by Redford) and he runs a company of "sneakers" in San Francisco, California. His team includes Donald Crease (Sidney Poitier), a former CIA officer; Darren "Mother" Roskow (Dan Aykroyd), an electronics technician who is fond of conspiracy theories; Carl Arbogast (River Phoenix), a young hacker; and Irwin "Whistler" Emery (David Strathairn), a visually impaired hacker who specializes in telecommunication systems. Bishop is approached by men proclaiming to be NSA officers, who know of his former identity and criminal history. The officers offer to clear Bishop's records if he would steal a "black box" from famed mathematician Dr. Gunter Janek, who allegedly developed the technology contained in the mysterious box for the Russians. Bishop agrees to do so to avoid going to prison. After he and his team take possession of the box, they find that it is capable of breaking the encryption of nearly every computer system in the world. The box is to be handed over to the NSA, but Crease discovers that Janek had been killed and he forces Bishop to cancel the meeting out of suspicion. Bishop contacts a friend named "Gregor" at the Russian Consulate, who confirms that the NSA officers he spoke to were rogue agents and that Janek, in fact, was the one working for the NSA. Gregor is killed by fake FBI agents, who also kidnap Bishop. Together with the box, Bishop is brought to an unknown location and is met by Cosmo, who Bishop thought had died in prison. Cosmo tells Bishop that he escaped from prison and is now really wealthy due to ties with organized crime. Cosmo confesses to wanting to use the box to cripple the world economy and create a utopian society. He urges Bishop to join him in his mission, but Bishop refuses and steals back the box. Bishop returns the box to (legitimate) NSA Agent Bernard Abbott (played by James Earl Jones), who agrees to clear Bishop's records and grants all of the team members' wishes in exchange (e.g., a fully equipped Winnebago with burgundy interior for Mother (Dan Aykroyd)). The NSA takes away the box, but it turns out that Bishop has rendered the box useless by taking out the main processor.

Sneakers depicts a heroic fable (Borins 2011, 9). The protagonists, Martin Brice (Martin Bishop) and his team, defied the challenges posed unto them by Cosmo. They are rewarded both intrinsically (the sense of having done the right thing) and extrinsically (Brice has clean records and the team members receive what they asked for). The antagonists are Cosmo, the Russians, and even the NSA, all of whom are considered to be untrustworthy and therefore cannot be allowed to possess the decryption technology.

The movie's initial hacking sequences take place in the Sixties, a time of radical activism in the U.S. A February 1991 draft of the script mentioned that Bishop and Cosmo had hacked into the draft board's computer during the Vietnam War and sent out one hundred deferment letters before the hack was discovered, but this scene was removed from the finished film (Gruner 2016, 81). Brice / Bishop is an apt role for Redford, who has played rebellious characters in movies like *The Chase* (1966), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), *The Candidate* (1972), *The Sting* (1973), *Three Days of the Condor* (1975) and *All the President's Men* (1976). Redford is also involved in political activism and known for campaigning on issues such as gender equality and environmentalism. He also founded the Sundance Institute for independent film (Gruner 2016, 82). Redford became even more keen to play Bishop after he found out that he had been investigated for six months by the Treasury Department for going to Cuba to encourage Colombian novelist

Gabriel Garcia Marquez to visit the Institute. This experience made him concerned with the government's unchecked surveillance powers (Callan 2011). He said:

We are in a society now that has hidden cameras in malls, at banks, at drugstores. We have computers on our desks that are as much windows into our lives as windows on the world. People can hack into our personal information. Our credit cards are routinely stolen. Our Social Security numbers are traded. *Sneakers* reminds us to pay attention to all this new technology (Callan 2011).

Several narrative techniques in *Sneakers* are worth noting. The depiction of the intrusion of systems in *Sneakers* does not focus on a single methodology, character, or technology, but as the work of a team. As a result, even though the movie is a few decades old, it does not feel as dated as most "old" films about hacking are (Brew 2013). The music is by James Horner and features the work of an American saxophonist named Branford Marsalis. It is improvisational and spare, but really effective in creating a suspenseful atmosphere during action sequences (Britell 2012). The antagonist, Cosmo, appeared only for a brief period, but the charisma that his character exuded (played by Ben Kingsley) and his stinging criticism of capitalism and the information age make his character memorable. Although he is cast as the villain, his story could have easily been told in the opposite manner. Cosmo is the anti-capitalist hero and Bishop is the "sell-out," who abandoned both his best friend and the utopian cause (Pangburn 2011).

The Cold War had ended when the movie was released, but the Russian threat was still palpable. Hence, it is not surprising that Russia was depicted as a competitor to the U.S., especially where advanced technology is concerned (Sugarman, 2013). Concerns today over Russian-state sponsored cyberattacks, the 2013 Edward Snowden revelations on mass surveillance, and the 2016 Apple vs. FBI encryption dispute make it clear that, more than two decades later, *Sneakers* is still a relevant movie to watch.

2.3. Analysis of *Blackhat* (2015)

Blackhat, the movie, was released by Universal Pictures in 2015. It was co-written, co-produced, and directed by Michael Mann, starring Chris Hemsworth and Viola Davis, and Chinese film stars Wei Tang and Wang Leehom (*Blackhat*). The movie was a box office "bomb," costing \$70 million to make and earning only \$4.4 million after its release (MacAloon 2015). The term "blackhat" is used to refer to individuals with extensive computer knowledge, who aim to breach or bypass Internet security ("What's a Blackhat Hacker?"). They are in contrast to "whitehat" hackers, who work to maintain the security of computer systems. The movie portrays the main character, Nicholas Hathaway (played by Chris Hemsworth), as a "whitehat" hacker, who is engaged in a struggle against "blackhat" hackers.

Blackhat opens with an animated sequence of a hacker penetrating the computer systems of a nuclear plant in Chai Wan, Hong Kong, causing the coolant pumps to overheat and explode. Soon after in Chicago, a cyberattack against the Mercantile Trade Exchange causes soy futures to rise. Both attacks are determined by the FBI to be related, as they use the same Remote Access Tool (RAT), which opens a "backdoor" in the computer system that enables hackers to effect damage. Captain Chen Dawai (played by Leehom Wang), a rising star in the Chinese military's cyber warfare unit, is tasked to find those responsible for the attacks and to liaise with the FBI in his

investigation. He enlists the aid of his sister, an experienced network engineer named Chen Lien (Wei Tang). Together, they travel to Los Angeles to meet with FBI Agents Carol Barrett (Viola Davis) and Henry Pollack (John Ortiz), who are both reluctant to work with the Chinese on national security matters. Pollack told Davis that it is tantamount to “inviting [the foxes] into the henhouse.” Captain Dawai reveals that the code in the RAT was written by him and Nicholas Hathaway (Chris Hemsworth), his college roommate, during their college days at MIT. The next scene shows Hathaway in prison for an unrelated crime. Dawai asks for the FBI to arrange for Hathaway’s temporary release in exchange for his assistance in the investigation. The request is granted and Hathaway is released. The team travels together to Hong Kong to obtain a computer drive from the Chai Wan plant’s control room, but the data on the drive is corrupted. Agent Barrett allows Hathaway to hack into the NSA to use a tool called the “Black Widow,” which allows him to reconstruct the corrupted data in the hope of identifying the attacker. Meanwhile, the team manages to trace the proceeds from the Chicago hacking incident to a Lebanese paramilitary operative named Elias Kassar. After learning that the hacker has been buying satellite photos of a potential target in Malaysia and that the hacker has a server based in Jakarta, the team travels to Indonesia. Hathaway finds and confronts Kassar, and Hathaway killed him in a dramatic fighting sequence. The film ends with Lien and Hathaway leaving Jakarta together for China, with the hacker’s funds having been transferred to their bank accounts.

The movie depicts a heroic fable as the protagonist, Nicholas Hathaway, converts the use of his hacking skills from nefarious to virtuous purposes—in other words, he is a “blackhat” who turned “white” (Borins 2011, 9). He is rewarded both intrinsically (with the sense of having done the right thing) and extrinsically (getting released from prison, a new girlfriend, and money in his bank account). Both China and the U.S. are depicted as allies in the film, as they are both victims of cyberattacks who must work together to find the perpetrators. The antagonists are the Lebanese crime boss Elias Kassar, the unknown hacker and, the FBI who was reluctant, at least initially, to release Hathaway and to work together with the Chinese officials.

In making the movie, *Blackhat* director Michael Mann consulted with hackers and decided to use realistic systems and tools. He became interested in cybersecurity issues after reading about Stuxnet, a malicious computer worm first discovered in 2010 that destroyed the centrifuges inside Iran’s Natanz uranium enrichment site (Goodin 2016). Kevin Poulsen, a senior editor at *Wired* magazine who was sent to jail for taking over an LA radio station’s telephone lines to win the prize of a Porsche 944 S2, was one of the hackers consulted (Escallier 2011). Another consultant was Christopher McKinlay, a mathematician who hacked dating website OKCupid’s algorithm to find a match (he found “the one” and is now married) (Poulsen 2014). As a result, despite numerous criticism leveled against the movie more generally—e.g., over the choice of actor (Hemsworth previously played *Thor*, the god of thunder, and thus makes for an unconvincing hacker) and at times simplistic plot devices (the director of the NSA falls prey to a common phishing attack)—it was lauded by the hacker community for its accurate depiction of hacking. Morgan Marquis-Boire, who assisted Google in the handling of the alleged Chinese hack on its infrastructure in 2009, praised the movie for not using fake “Hollywood operating systems,” and instead displayed on screen the Linux operating system that many hackers use in real life (Metz 2015). The movie’s plot also utilized a well-known hacking tool, the Remote Access Tool. RATs, for instance, were present in cyberattacks against Sony Pictures, South Korean banks, and gas refineries in the Middle East (Goodin 2016). As an increasing number of critical infrastructures, like power grids and

transportation systems, are being connected to the Internet, the threat of catastrophic cyberattacks invoked by *Blackhat* is likely to continue to be a pressing concern.

3. Hacking on Film: From the Eighties to Today

An analysis of *WarGames* (1983), *Sneakers* (1992), and *Blackhat* (2015) reveals that similarities exist in terms of how hacking is portrayed. Hacking is a tedious activity that takes hours, if not days or weeks, of sitting in front of the computer while typing lines of code. Therefore, filmmakers have had to figure out how to depict hacking in ways that the audience can comprehend and enjoy, while at the same time capture the sense of rapid connectivity and excitement that the Internet and other computing technology provide.

Differences exist in terms of the technology used and how they are visualized. Being a recent film, *Blackhat* is visually more appealing than its predecessors, featuring animated graphics, thin portable computers, and high-speed modems. The opening sequence of *Blackhat* is an animation of an unknown hacker launching an attack on the Chai Wan nuclear power plant, which sends the audience flying through the keyboard's casing, wires, motherboard, and miniature mountains of silicon (Plante 2015). It is in contrast to the hacking sequences in *WarGames*, which has a minimal amount of animation and uses technology that now looks archaic (e.g., the IMSAI 8080 computer) (Johnson 2013). Unlike modern-day information gathering, Lightman is depicted in the movie as having to dig through library books and index cards, use microform readers, and ask the librarian for assistance to find information on his target, Dr. Falken. This painstaking process is summed up on screen by Jennifer Mack bursting into Lightman's room, while he is lying in bed on many sheets of printed paper, shouting: "Where have you been! I haven't seen you all week in school!" (*WarGames*).

Similarities among the movies also exist in terms of the nature of the threat. The U.S. in *WarGames* and *Sneakers* fears attacks emanating from the Soviet Union and Russia, which reflects the political climate in which the movies were set. *Blackhat*, however, was not negative towards any country in particular. Although Agent Barrett (Viola Davis) mentions that the U.S. goes "head-to-head with the Chinese on their cyber intrusion every day of the week," this issue is not further explored in the movie ("*Blackhat* Movie Script"). In fact, *Blackhat* ended with the Chinese and American characters working together.

Throughout the decades, the hacker stereotype remains the same. They are young men who are bent on defying authority. *WarGames* in particular, as the first Hollywood film about Internet use, placed this technology at the intersection of Cold War anxieties and the anti-establishment youth culture, which had been prevalent in the U.S. since the 1960s. It cemented the image of hackers and gamers as youthful rebels, which has had a lasting impact not only in how hackers are portrayed by the entertainment industry, but also reflected in the policies implemented by the U.S. government against what it perceived to be cyber-criminal activities, which will be discussed in the "Legacy" section below (Schulte 2008, p. 490).

Female roles in hacker movies have grown to be increasingly more capable throughout the years, though not yet as the "leading" hacker or protagonist. In *WarGames*, Mack is clueless about

technology and needed Lightman's help, but in *Sneakers*, it was Bishop who needed Liz's help to understand the complex mathematical concept behind the "black box." Finally, in *Blackhat*, Lien is a young network engineer, who is as skilled in hacking as Hathaway is. Nevertheless, these women only played supporting roles.

The male-dominated hacker roles in the movies reflect the current reality of the tech sector, which is also male-dominated, although this was not always the case. From the 1960s to the early 1980s, women played an integral, albeit mostly invisible, role in the development of computing technology. An article titled "The Computer Girls" in the April 1967 edition of *Cosmopolitan* magazine highlighted the emergence of "a whole new kind of work for women: [computer] programming" (Lewis 2011). At the time, around thirty percent of programmers were women. In 1969, the Data Processing Management Association gave Grace Hopper, a pioneering computer programmer and United States Navy rear admiral, the very first "man of the year" award in the computer sciences (Ensmenger 2010, 116). The number of women enrolled in computer science continued to increase from the 1960s until it reached its peak at thirty-seven percent in the 1980s. Over the next two decades, women left computer science in droves. By 2006, the portion of women in that field had dropped to only twenty percent (Lewis 2011). Today, women are present only in about a quarter of U.S. computing and mathematical jobs (Munday 2017). As more attention is being paid to close the gender gap in the sciences, and computing technology becomes more ubiquitous, it is hoped that the number of women in computer science will rise once again and more prominent female hacker roles will finally be seen on screen.

4. Legacy of *Blackhat*, *Sneakers*, and *WarGames*

Movies like *Blackhat*, *Sneakers*, and *WarGames* are not just entertaining, as Hollywood films often are, but have also informed our understanding and imaginings of cyber threats. The extensive background research and preparation that Michael Mann conducted for *Blackhat*, including hiring prominent hackers such as Poulsen and McKinlay and requiring Hemsworth to take typing lessons, resulted in it being praised for accurate hacking sequences. Other filmmakers will perhaps be keen to follow his example. Deriving inspiration from recent hacking incidents also makes movies like *Blackhat* believable to the audience. Despite being widely panned, *Blackhat* contributes to debates on key issues of concern today, particularly cyberattacks against critical infrastructure and the contentious nature of U.S.-China relations.

Sneakers' release in 1992 coincided with the NSA's rethinking of its role in the post-Cold War world. As relevant officials in the agency saw the movie, it informed the trajectory of NSA's development. The agency received a new director in 1992, Rear Admiral Mike McConnell (1992-1996), who quickly learned that many of the agency's antennas and radio receivers around the world were no longer picking up signal because everyone was switching to digital. His aides also showed him a map of fiber optic cables around the world and urged him to study it closely. At the same time, McConnell's colleagues urged him to watch the newly-released *Sneakers*, as it deals with the NSA (Kaplan 2016, 32). He watched the movie and was struck by the scene near the end of the film when Cosmo (Ben Kingsley) explains to Bishop (Robert Redford) why he wants the "black box":

The world isn't run by weapons anymore, or energy, or money. It's run by little ones and zeroes, little bits of data. It's all just electrons ... There's a war out there, old friend, a world war. And it's not about who's got the most bullets. It's about who controls the information: What we see and hear, how we work, what we think. It's all about the Information.

McConnell found the movie so pertinent that he obtained a copy of the final reel and held a screening for the agency's top officials. He informed them that this was the vision of the NSA's future that they should keep in mind (Kaplan 2016, 32). McConnell soon contacted Rich Wilhelm, his right-hand man during the Gulf War who was then the head of the NSA listening station at the Misawa Air Base in Japan (one of the agency's largest foreign sites), and created for him a new role called the "Director of Information Warfare" (Kaplan 2016, 32). Wilhelm's first task was to investigate the U.S.' strengths and weaknesses in this "information warfare." He found that the digital revolution had reached the American military and businesses alike. Generals and CEOs were hooking up their systems to computer networks, and because most of them were not secured properly, they were vulnerable to hacking. Wilhelm reported back to McConnell: "Mike, we're kind of f*cked here" (Kaplan 2016, 33).

The fear that plagued the NSA and other parts of government was that, in the age of information warfare, if the U.S. attacks another country's networks, then its own networks are also subject to attacks. Thus, the U.S. must have an upper hand in the event of cyber warfare, and the first step is to have the NSA secure its networks from potential adversaries. The consternation over the vulnerability of U.S. networks was not new. It had already been brought to the government's attention more than two decades earlier by Willis Ware, the computer scientist who was interviewed by screenwriters Lasker and Parkes for the movie *WarGames* (Kaplan 2016, 9). As many of these security issues remain unresolved, *Sneakers* is still an important film to watch.

WarGames was released in the U.S. in 1983. There had been only a few known cases of the "demon dialing" hacking method that Lightman used in the early 1980s (e.g., by the 414 hackers), but it exploded in popularity after the film hits the theatres (Haridy 2016). President Reagan saw *WarGames* while at Camp David on June 3, 1983. At a meeting in the White House the following week with his national security advisers and sixteen members of Congress, he asked if anyone had seen the movie. As no one had, Reagan proceeded to describe the plot in great detail, ending with a question directed to General John W. Vessey Jr., then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: "Could something like this really happen? Could someone break into our most sensitive computers?" General Vessey said that he would look into it. One week later, he returned to the White House with an answer: "Mr. President, the problem is much worse than you think" (Kaplan 2016, 19). Reagan's inquiry sets off a series of interagency memos and studies that culminated in his signing of a classified national security decision directive titled the "National Policy on Telecommunications and Automated Information Systems Security" (or NSDD-145). The directive makes the NSA the agency in charge of securing all of the nation's computer servers and networks. However, since the agency's purpose is to intercept foreign communications and is barred from spying on Americans, some were worried that Reagan's directive might undermine this distinction. Representative Jack Brooks, a Texas Democrat, sponsored a law to override it, which eventually passed. Reagan's order officially hit a roadblock (Kaplan 2016, 42).

The “hacker scare” in the 1980s also encouraged other lawmakers to take action (Schulte 2013, 47). A 1983 congressional hearing on computer security began with a clip from *WarGames* in which Lightman hacked into his school computer to change his grades, followed by testimony from seventeen-year-old Neal Patrick, one of the 414 hackers (Peters 2015). This presentation at Capitol Hill ultimately conveyed the message that the security of critical computer networks is potentially at risk due to anti-establishment hackers—specifically the young, male, and teenager kind—and both (computers and hackers) need to be regulated (Schulte 2013, 22). As a result, no fewer than six different anti-hacking bills with criminal penalties were introduced that year, primarily aimed at shielding key federal computers like NORAD’s (McCullagh 2013). President Reagan signed the “Counterfeit Access Device and Computer Fraud and Abuse Act” into law in 1984. Then, in 1986, an amendment to the Act called the “Computer Fraud and Abuse Act” (CFAA) was passed. It states that: “whoever intentionally accesses a computer without authorization or exceeds authorized access, and thereby obtains information from any protected computer if the conduct involved an interstate or foreign communication shall be punished under the Act” (“Computer Fraud and Abuse Act”). Congress has since expanded the law numerous times at the urging of the Justice Department. The CFAA is notorious for its vague and overbroad provisions, which gives the U.S. federal government authority to charge people multiple times for a single offense. The law also effectively criminalizes routine online behavior. Sharing passwords or violating a website’s stated terms of service would render an individual as an offender (Peters 2015).

The most infamous application of the CFAA law was against Internet activist Aaron Swartz, who was a co-designer of tools like RSS (Rich Site Summary / Really Simple Syndication) and services like Reddit. He worked for the Creative Commons organization, which provides public copyright licenses to enable free distribution of an otherwise copyrighted work (“About the Licenses”), and had a history of downloading paywalled academic materials and releasing them to the public. He allegedly downloaded nearly five million academic journal articles from the JSTOR database, which generally charges for access, while he was a Fellow at Harvard University (Reader 2016). Despite JSTOR not seeking a suit against Swartz, federal prosecutors maintained that the unauthorized downloading and the intent of publicly disseminating the downloaded documents were criminal offenses. He was charged with thirteen felonies, eleven of which fell under the CFAA, which could have earned him up to fifty years in prison. Swartz killed himself in January 2013; he was twenty-six years old (Peters 2015). After Swartz’s death, Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) introduced a bill called “Aaron’s Law” to reform some of the CFAA’s most egregious provisions. However, the bill failed to pass, reportedly after tech companies lobbied against it (Reader 2016).

5. Conclusion

WarGames, *Sneakers*, and *Blackhat* depict hacking and its potential consequences in a contextual way, reflecting the general mood and concerns of their time. However, many of the issues explored have remained relevant. As we increasingly rely on computers and the Internet, these movies are likely to continue to inform our thinking on cybersecurity well into the future. They have also had a lasting impact, particularly with regard to cybercrime and surveillance. Of the three, *WarGames* has the most obvious policy implications: the creation of the controversial “Computer Fraud and Abuse Act,” which remains in effect in the U.S. to this day. Although the impact of *Sneakers* on the NSA’s reinvigoration is not as widely known, the movie and Redford’s advocacy provide

important reminders that we need to be concerned with advanced technologies, like tools to break encryption or to allow “backdoors” for law enforcement, as they could be deployed for nefarious purposes or to violate our basic human rights, given the lack of transparency and accountability on their deployment. Finally, *Blackhat* portrays the dire consequences of cyberattacks on critical infrastructure and illustrates the reality that China may be a partner of the U.S. in some respects, while a competitor in others. As information and communication technologies continue to become an integral part of our lives, we would surely benefit from (re)watching these movies and heeding their lessons.

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Endnote

¹ In the heroic fable, both the protagonist and the institution or society are better off at the conclusion than at the outset. It is in contrast with the ironic, where the protagonist becomes better off by exploiting the institution or society, which ends up worse off. Meanwhile, the sacrificial fable sees the institution or society becoming better off at the expense of the protagonist, while the tragic fable results in both protagonist and society ending up worse off.

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Exploring How Peripheral Items Reach the Governmental Agenda: The Case of Earmark Usage

Daniel Baracskay

You will begin by only appropriating the surplus of the post office revenues; but the other revenues will soon be called into their aid, and it will be a scene of eternal scramble among the members, who can get the most money wasted in their State; and they will always get most who are meanest.

— Thomas Jefferson, 1796.

Introduction

As an important aspect of the public administration literature, studies on agenda setting assume that public officials and other internal governmental actors, along with external stakeholders inclusive of interest groups, the media, and the broader public, have certain incentives to push an item onto the public policy agenda quickly to maximize benefits. Public administrators at all levels of government are instrumental in shaping how issues are framed, and once agenda status is reached, implement policies according to broad mandates established by elected officials (Montjoy and O'Toole 1979; Mazmanian and Sabatier 1989; O'Toole 2000). Proponents of issues that are of high to moderate appeal bolster the prospects of success in having an item placed on the governmental agenda by using the national mood to intensify issues, particularly pivotal ones of a controversial nature. The conventional literature assumes that conditions are rarely ambiguous or evade conceptualization, but rather items exist and become significant when attitudes and views shift to favor the need for an issue to be agendatized (Majone 1989). The academic literature does not devote serious attention to how peripheral items, or issues with lower interest levels to the public and weaker momentum, are instead better positioned for agenda-setting strategies that are discreet and prolonged. This is particularly the case when there exist considerable public apathy and weak knowledge levels which make rapid, intense approaches untenable.

To address this shortcoming in the literature, this article develops an applied typology that integrates peripheral items into the broader theoretical framework of agenda setting by utilizing earmarks as a case study. Typology development facilitates the construction of a series of

classifications that illustrate how issues reach or fall short of agenda status, according to broad categories of intensity levels and time frames derived from the literature on agenda setting. The below analysis explores how discreet and prolonged agenda setting, through a strategy of attrition, differs from rapid and intense approaches that have historically been the focus of conventional studies in the public administration literature. This article contributes to the literature by exploring how alternative strategies for pushing peripheral agenda items forward break with conventional approaches by assuming that there are mixed or segmented levels of support usually among pockets of proponents, an apathetic national mood characterized by unfamiliarity and a lack of issue awareness, and an absence of significant levels of momentum which typically energize highly controversial and penetrating issues. As a case study for understanding peripheral issues, a focus on earmark usage facilitates the development of an exploratory typology to simplify the many complexities associated with how items reach agenda status. It also offers the opportunity to study how proponents of change seek to discreetly revisit a policy that has previously been decided and reformed, with an outcome that has been costly to segments of internal and external stakeholders that benefited from the issue prior to when the changes in policy were implemented.

Developing a Typology to Understand Agenda Setting

This article constructs an exploratory typology on agenda setting grounded in preceding theory and research. Typologies as “organized systems of types” represent a powerful analytic tool and tradition across academic disciplines (Collier et al. 2012). Their utility for advancing conceptualization in previously vague areas of research according to relevant dimensions of exploration has permitted the creation of applied categories that have significant value in terms of classification and measurement. Typology development is grounded in traditional studies like Weber’s study of traditional, charismatic, and rational authority, Dahl’s typology of polyarchies, oligarchies, and hegemonies, Krasner’s exploration of international regimes from the standpoint of makers, breakers, and takers, and Carmines and Stimson’s classification of voters from the standpoint of non-issue, easy-issue, hard-issue, and constrained-issue voters (Weber 1978; Dahl 1971; Krasner 1977; Carmines and Stimson 1980). Further applications to public sector analysis have been of particular utility in understanding the applied settings of governmental organizations.

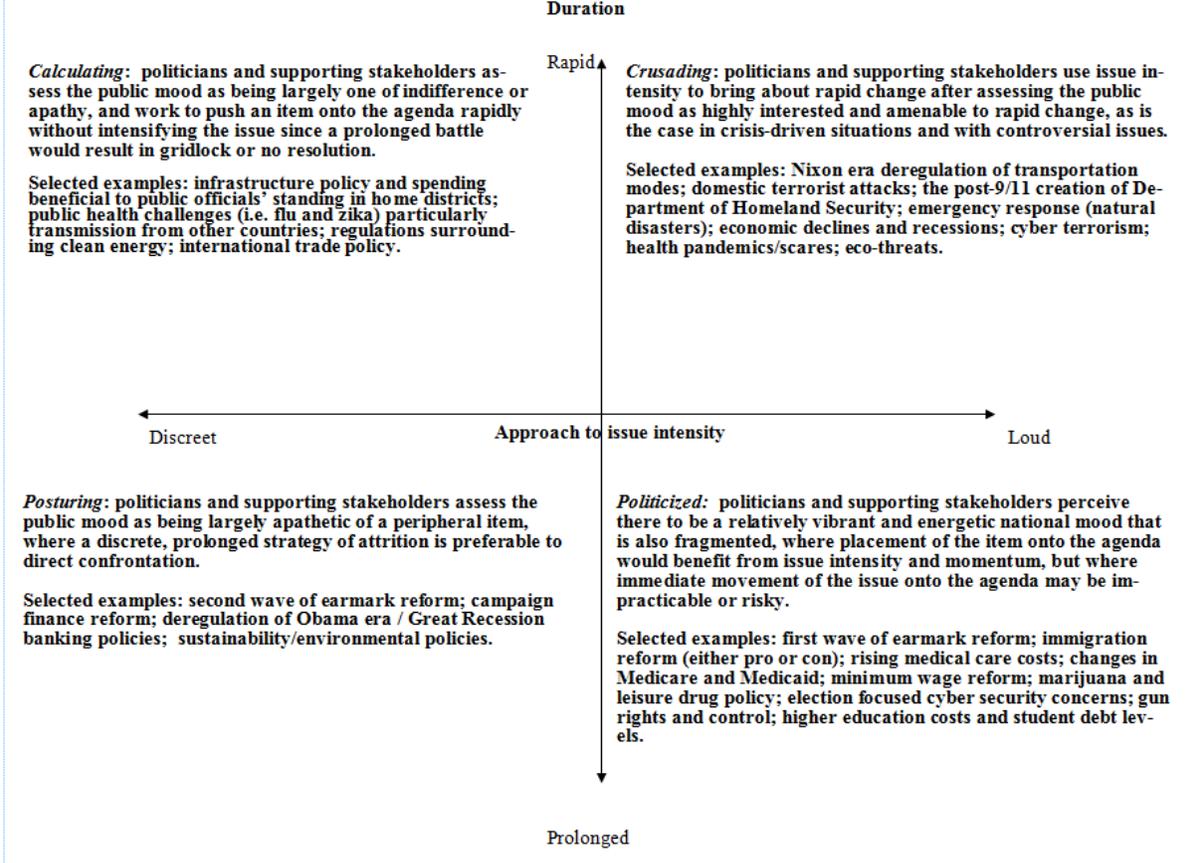
Identifying Two Dimensions in a Typology of Agenda Setting

Conceptual typologies offer the benefit of elucidating the meaning of concepts by mapping dimensions that correspond to specific rows and columns found in the typology, and the conceptual categories are defined in relation to their positioning according to the rows and columns constructed (Collier et al. 2012). A conceptual typology for agenda setting first draws distinctions between how pivotal and peripheral items are conceptualized along specified dimensions, and second provides a theoretical framework upon which broader policy contexts may be based according to the categories produced along the dimensions identified. Consequently, the dimensions of duration and issue intensity are two accentuated aspects in the literature of agenda setting (Majone 1989; Mazmanian and Sabatier 1989; Rahn 1996; O’Toole 2000; Roe 2001; Rosenthal et al. 2001; Cox and McCubbins 2005; Enns and Kellstedt 2008; Baumgartner and Jones 2009; Kingdon 2010). For duration, the path toward agenda attainment may be rapid or prolonged, depending upon the item and unique characteristics that frame it as a policy issue. Crisis situations tend to elicit quicker action, as do highly contested and widely marketable issue items (Montjoy 1979;

Hewitt 1983; Majone 1989; Rosenthal et al. 2001). Rapid durations represent a short to moderate term movement toward agenda status (particularly by necessity to bring about a quick resolution to an impending problem), while prolonged durations denote longer term or extended periods (as are common with non-pressing issues where there is greater latitude for issue reflection and smaller protracted “give and take” steps). Thus, dividing duration into rapid time frames (quick to high-medium moderate periods) for pivotal items versus prolonged time frames (low moderate to extended periods) for peripheral items provides a basis for establishing the first interval dimension of an agenda-setting typology.

For issue intensity, items may be characterized along a loud to discreet spectrum. The traditional literature on agenda setting relates significantly to theories of how the public develops an interest in salient items that are in turn monitored by policy makers for windows of opportunity. For instance, an early study by Downs established an issue attention cycle, where the public becomes aware of a problem quickly, but gradually loses interest over time (Downs 1972). Downs’ study rests on the assumption that issue intensity is of significant stature to warrant media coverage as part of establishing a media-public linkage for agenda setting. However, this ignores how non-controversial peripheral items seek agenda status despite not having broad support or intensity levels. The opinion-policy linkage is relevant, in that policy changes shift with preferences displayed through the public’s mood, an aggregate measure of what inclinations the public displays for various issues (Enns and Kellstedt 2008) whether strong or weak, positive or negative, etc. In understanding the national mood as having positive and negative aspects, personal and collective experiences, predisposing factors, and emotional responses to events all comprise relevant considerations (Rahn et al. 1996), particularly when considering how issue intensity varies along a spectrum and corresponds to associated political strategies pursued by proponents. For agenda-setting strategies, loud approaches treat issue intensity as an expression of strength, or force, in impelling an item forward toward agenda status. This coincides with conventional assumptions relating to intensity and momentum building in reaching agenda status (Cassekens 1980; Cobb and Elder 1983; Majone 1989; Stone 1989; Cutting and Kouzmin 1999; Cox and McCubbins 2005; Enns and Kellstedt 2008). By contrast, discreet approaches represent the opposing end of the spectrum where pockets of interests recognize that debate, lack of issue popularity, and the potential for opposition make a rapid resolution implausible, and instead, small incremental movements forward are generated through subtle and modest maneuvers. This aspect of typology development recognizes that levels of political sophistication in the national mood differ, and affect whether more intensity-driven approaches are feasible. Loud approaches that cultivate awareness and attention are based upon higher sophistication issues, such that the level of exposure to information is higher, there is a more robust ability to organize and retain information, and there is a more developed sense of motivation to comprehend information since it is of personal benefit (Enns and Kellstedt 2008; Luskin 1990). In developing an agenda-setting typology, the figure below illustrates significant variation across four categories of styles used to push an item onto the governmental agenda: Politicized, Crusading, Calculating, and Posturing. The following sections discuss applications in the typology according to time duration and approaches to issue intensity.

Figure 1: A Typology of Agenda Setting Styles



Applications in Typology Development: Loud Agenda Setting Styles

To begin at the loud end of the intensity spectrum, the politicized and crusading categories denote that more controversial items benefit from momentum-building strategies that take advantage of highly energized policy environments. Depending upon the category and nature of the issue, success is achieved by rapid action (crusading), or at times through more extended short to moderate term tactics (politicized) that seek to build stakeholder support and mitigate the effects of having the item stop short prior to reaching agenda status. Issue networks and policy communities provide technocratic expertise for the item but also serve as advocates that build momentum and take advantage of the national mood and intensity levels to market the issue (Hamm 1983; Ripley and Franklin 1987; Berry 1989; Walker 1991). Public administrators (national, state, and local) affect how items are imagined and help frame (potentially contentious) pragmatic issues related to budgeting, the deployment of personnel resources, and the implementation process for plausible alternatives attached to the item’s agenda status.

The qualities of the crusading style are perhaps most commonly found in the academic literature, where the focus is based upon using loud publicity and issue intensity to push an item onto the agenda and promote change quickly (Montjoy 1979; Hewitt 1983; Majone 1989; Rosenthal et al. 2001). Hewitt once noted that the unscheduled, unexpected, and unplanned nature of crisis

situations creates the need for quick response times, both in terms of agendatizing items so that courses of action can be rendered, and for public administrators to proceed forward with implementation in environments where uncertainty and a lack of complete information abound (Hewitt 1983). This pertains largely to pivotal issues and highly controversial situations where there is an inherent expectation that public officials will act quickly to put an item onto the agenda and decide appropriate courses of action, and, in fact, they benefit from doing so as an aspect of credit claiming and political strategizing. “Technological disasters” like Three Mile Island, large-scale oil spills and pollution calamities, and non-routine events that pose significant public management problems reinforce the action-driven nature of the administrative process where items reach agenda status quickly (Erikson 1994; Cutting and Kouzmin 1999; Dayton et al. 2004). Examples of the crusading approach include: cyber-terrorism events; health pandemics; deregulation policies which have close linkages to economic performance; terrorist attacks and the post-9/11 creation of the Department of Homeland Security; foreign policy decisions (e.g. the deployment of troops in war) which necessitate quick action; emergency responses in times of natural disaster; and governmental involvement in significant and penetrating economic downturns (e.g. the Great Recession).

The politicized style is a more gradual approach for contested but intensified non-crisis issues of controversial appeal. The style advances through a moderate to loud momentum-building approach by energizing the national mood in favor of pushing the item onto the agenda at a future point in time when the greatest levels of support make the potential for success most apparent. In contrast to crusading approaches, the politicized style is better suited in scenarios where there is less of a threat to governmental structures or social systems. While there exist degrees of uncertainty and distraction, there is tactical emphasis on averting widespread negativity or a lack of consensus which may prevent mobilizing support for the item and moving it forward to agenda status, particularly when framing an issue from a social or technical point of view may potentially cause a loss of interest (Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Greenberg et al. 1977; Edelman 1989). In a politicized environment, there are apparent public management implications that are tied to the ambiguity that exists in how the item will be implemented once agendatized. Selected alternatives foreshadow inherent budgetary, personnel, and administrative constraints in the implementation process and may also come under scrutiny when efficiencies are not immediately realized (Rahn et al. 1996; Rosenthal et al. 2001). Consequently, a loud intensity but moderated duration allows multidisciplinary approaches to seek broader solutions to complex problems that span traditional policy lines and help bolster the chances of success from a political-managerial standpoint. Even so, items that are laced with considerable indecision, where coordination and managerial intricacies abound, present potential political gains under this style but also innate pragmatic challenges once agenda status is achieved (Roe 2001). Selected examples of this include: pro and con arguments to reform immigration policy in the Trump administration where considerable political leverage and financial resources are needed; marijuana and leisure drug policy; altering minimum wage levels (where intensification occurs but where there is also a necessity to involve subnational and local levels of government); election-focused cyber security issues; gun rights versus control legislation; and addressing higher education costs and growing student debt levels.

Applications in Typology Development: Discreet Agenda Setting Styles

At the discreet dimension of the typology are the calculating and posturing styles, as shown in Figure 1 above. Conventional research tends to overlook the need for discreet approaches, though

segments of studies have pointed toward certain inherent “roadblocks” which potentially surface to jeopardize an item from moving forward using traditional, highly publicized tactics. Particularly, Baumgartner and Jones among others have highlighted the weakening of subsystems relating to health care items, environmental concerns, and the deregulation of the 1970s which fragmented the political system and altered considerably how items build momentum through intensity levels to move forward quickly (Derthick and Quirk 1985; Campbell 1988; Baumgartner and Jones 2009). Mobilization, once driven by partisan appeals, has in recent decades encountered higher apathy levels across the public in a political system that is no longer organized according to partisan lines but instead shows much more of a propensity to decide upon issues independent of party platforms (Walker 1991). Preceding single-issue longitudinal studies have offered some insight into how issues emerge and recede from the public view, focusing largely on regulatory and redistributive policy items (Derthick 1979; Carmines and Stimson 1989). Yet, traditional longitudinal studies of the rise and decline of issues on the public agenda were suitable under conventional assumptions, though today are inadequate from a comparative perspective or in allowing for broader generalizability across issues, making typology development and application germane to studying discrepancies in agenda setting styles. The calculating style of the typology distinguishes when there is an indifferent or apathetic public mood, such that discernible pockets of stakeholders surface with an interest in pushing an issue onto the agenda where it largely benefits them directly (using a more rapid approach in light of public apathy and to diminish costs from prolonging the route to agenda status). In such cases, the public and outside stakeholders have lower knowledge levels of the issue, and interested parties (particularly policy specialists) use this to their advantage to minimize issue intensity and quietly move the item onto the governmental agenda so as to minimize the potential for disruption. This style is appropriate for items of low to moderate controversial appeal, where proponents abate and head off disputes that may plausibly stall the issue in anticipation that it will be placed on the agenda quietly and internal and external stakeholders can subsequently shape the development of alternatives and the decision-making process. Issue examples of the calculating strategy: infrastructure policy and spending, which may be confined to regional and local constituents; public health challenges that may originate or spread within areas of the population and necessitate specialized medical care; clean energy policy where specialized interests and pockets of activists lobby government; and international trade policy where experts and issue wonks primarily follow indicators and trends.

Yet, it is the posturing style that best illustrates the strategy of attrition introduced above by gravitating toward both the discreet and prolonged spectrums of the duration and intensity spectrum most significantly. Several studies in the past have reinforced the strategic nature of agenda setting, such as Riker’s contention that manipulation is an innate facet of agenda control where issue proponents seek to manipulate the rules and institutions involved in setting the agenda and in shaping issue alternatives, as well as how the issue is imagined by the public as an aspect of the national mood (Riker 1986). Kingdon reinforces how issue content changes over time, thus causing agenda status changes as well where items are either pushed toward or away from the public agenda (Kingdon 2010). And multiple, varied, and competing interest groups tend to clash to divide and subdivide attention on items and compete for access to government, a trend particularly observable since the 1960s (Salisbury 1984). Consequently, for peripheral items where there are limited benefits primarily favoring segments of interested parties, posturing styles represent an approach grounded in a “low and slow” attrition strategy that seeks to abate the potential for controversy and use public apathy to mitigate potentially harmful intensity levels for issues that may plausibly become

controversial if politicized, and risk stalling prior to reaching agenda status. This is representative of the current wave of earmark usage as a possible agenda item, where public opinion and widespread apathy of the item preclude more aggressive and issue-intensive strategies. Other examples of posturing include: campaign finance reform which largely benefits elected officials and donors; deregulation of Obama era banking policies and restrictions on mortgages and loans; and gradual changes in environmental policies where issues like fracking, automobile emission standards, and the like have the most appeal to pockets of interests and there is less media attention.

Typology Application: Examining Differing Assumptions, and Discussion of How Items Reach or Miss the Agenda Level

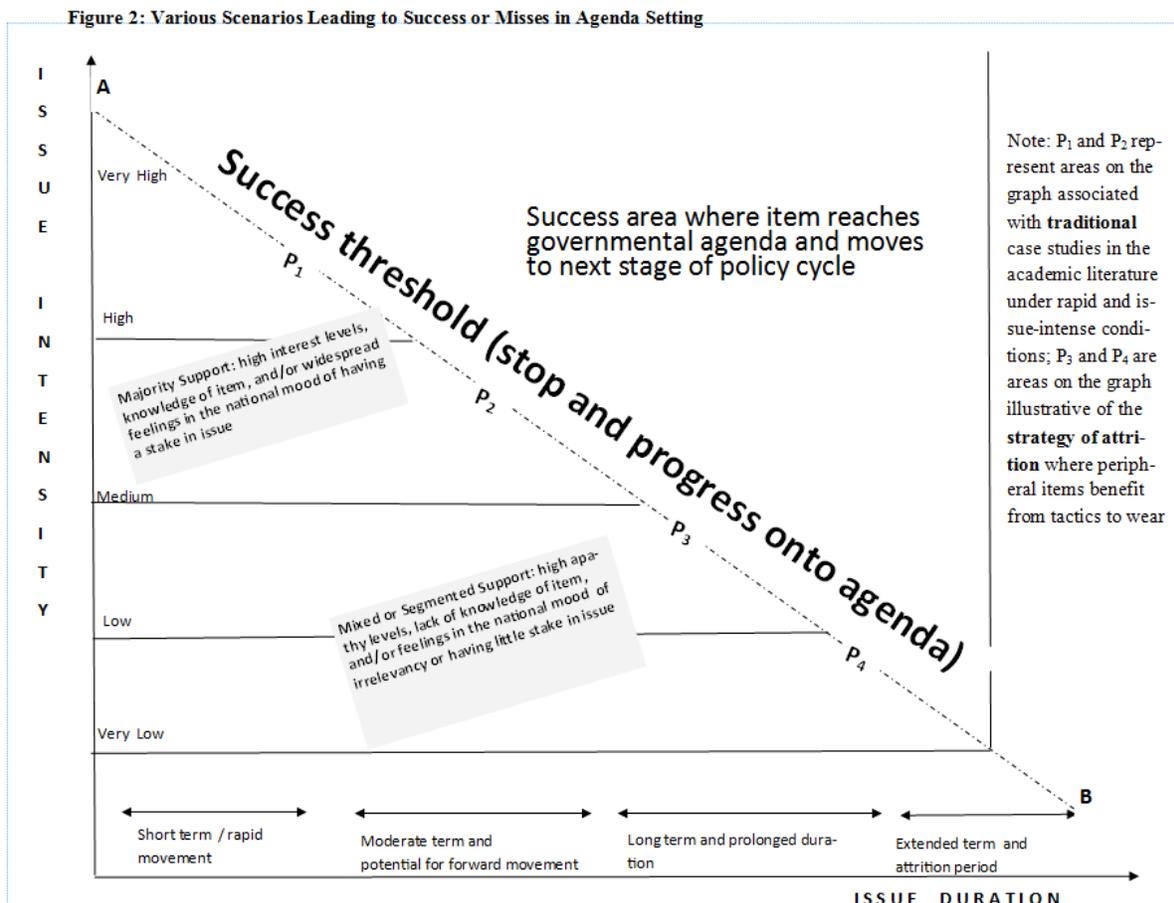
In constructing the above typology of agenda-setting approaches, it is important to delineate between several key assumptions that have significant applications in earmark usage (and for other peripheral issue areas). As noted, the basis for the strategy of attrition is grounded in the notion that politically unpopular and noncontroversial issues like earmarks do not elicit considerable outside pressure from the broader public, but rather reflect a small, concentrated wave of (internal and/or external) support that may surface and resurface over time based upon favorable political conditions. Consequently, pockets of external support lobby receptive internal public officials, who in turn perceive there to be benefits in utilizing earmarked projects. Peripheral items often preclude the use of intensity-driven and rapid approaches to agenda setting, which would potentially stall the issue. Rather, widespread public apathy refocuses the assumptions toward a gradual and discreet approach where interested parties wear down opposition and potential stopping points in reaching agenda status through a prolonged course of “wait and see.” This represents a scenario that departs from conventional perspectives and has practical applications to earmark usage and other similar peripheral items. Table 1 below table considers various theoretical distinctions in the underlying assumptions for pivotal versus peripheral items.

Conventional theory assumes that all issues along the duration and intensity spectrums have proponents and opponents that seek to push an item toward agenda status or prevent it from moving forward (Bacheller 1977; Cobb and Elder 1983; Campbell 1988; Berry 1989; Atlas et al. 1995; O’Toole 2000). This is also a supposition of attrition strategies, though items that are best suited for the posturing style are distinguished from intensity-driven and rapid techniques in that they lack broad popularity in the eyes of the public, where the primary external constituents involved in advancing an item onto the agenda may involve private contractors, special interests, and segments (rather than widespread collections) of public officials inside government, all of which comprise networks or subsystems of influence (Meier 1985; Berry 1989; Thurber 1991; Cox and McCubbins 2005). From the standpoint of agenda setting, policy entrepreneurs seek to build synergy among similar interests to create a wave of momentum that can be used to open windows of opportunity (Majone 1989; Walker 1991; Kingdon 2010).

Table 1: Differing Key Assumptions of the Traditional Perspective versus a Strategy of Attrition

<u>Assumption</u>	<u>Traditional Issue-intensive Perspectives (pivotal)</u>	<u>Strategy of Attrition (peripheral)</u>
Support bases for introducing the item	Draws upon broader bases of majority support aggregated together	Recognizes mixed or segmented (low) pockets of support
Utility maximizing behavior	Stakeholders utilize issue intensity to maximize benefits, drawing momentum from majority support	Stakeholders continue to pursue items of benefit despite the lack of widespread support and are open to lower variations of intensity to maximize benefits based upon conditions and the political environment
Duration in reaching agenda status	Emphasis is on shorter time periods	Moderate to longer time periods help diminish issue resistance through a “wait it out” strategy of attrition
Issue intensity	Higher intensity levels are used to build momentum	Moderate to lower intensity levels may help abate resistance and allow for strategic planning through attrition tactics
Public mood	Intense feelings of positive and negative opinion are used to move an item forward	The public is largely apathetic and uninformed on a vast majority of issues, making a quiet strategy preferable
Issue clarity	Stakeholders build momentum by drawing clear distinctions between the issue to outcomes and how it affects the general public	Pockets of support bank upon issue ambiguity and lack of conceptual clarity as part of a “low and slow” approach to move the item forward quietly with as little resistance as possible
Risk and uncertainty	Rapid time frames are preferable for positive outcomes (particularly with controversial issues)	Strategizing and using quiet approaches that do not rely upon higher levels of intensity help address uncertainty and reflect attrition schemes
View of external stakeholders and the public	External stakeholders are largely collectivized as a group	Disparities exist between stakeholders which view the issue through different lenses as external stakeholders

However, the discreet and prolonged attrition strategy for attaining agenda status observes that earmark usage and unpopular items may become more perilous for public officials and participants internal to government using traditional strategies associated with pivotal issues found in the academic literature, since public opinion, media criticism, and citizen interest groups raise concerns relating to accountability, weak levels of transparency, and frivolous spending tactics, thus rationalizing a quieter approach. As indicated in the table above, a lack of issue clarity and/or transparent linkages between policy outcomes and the national interest may actually be used as a tactical advantage under the posturing style, such that quiet approaches are tailored toward trends in public apathy, pockets of support, and diversity in stakeholder views which make momentum building more challenging. In expanding upon the above agenda setting typology and in differentiating between the assumptions outlined above, it is possible to illustrate the disparity of movement in pivotal versus peripheral agenda items. The figure below constructs a simplified diagram showing plausible variations in reaching agenda status under the dimensions of duration and issue intensity. Items surface as distinctive issues that are linked to broader policy spheres in order to provide context.



By bringing identity and detail to an item, this in effect exposes the item to the many complex interactions which occur where competition among interests exists to push forward or prevent agenda status from being achieved (Meier 1985; Thurber 1991). Preceding research has drawn a linkage between intensity and the national mood,¹ with the latter reflecting broader levels of

awareness and interest across constituencies which affects intensity levels. Issue intensity may fluctuate from both positive and negative surges in the national mood but diminishes with apathy or a lack of interest in the item. As mentioned earlier, negative agenda power is a micro-aspect of agenda setting and has a particularly detrimental effect where opposition seeks to prevent issues that it opposes from reaching agenda status, in effect by creating inertia to prevent forward motion (Cox and McCubbins 2005). From a broader perspective, a supportive national mood at the macro-level can also be a stimulating force in pushing an item onto the governmental agenda as the basis for change rather than maintaining the status quo, where public officials feel pressure to correct a pressing problem surrounded by negative publicity. This differs from a lack of interest, or high apathy levels, where there does not exist broad support to push an item forward on the agenda. A supportive national mood likewise occurs when there is overwhelming majority support to place an item onto the agenda, as has been the case with civil rights legislation, environmental policy, and employee safety and health provisions for example (Greenberg et al. 1977; Ripley and Franklin 1987; Walker 1991; Rahn et al. 1996; Rosenthal et al. 2001). Consequently, issue intensity represents an area inclusive of various segments on the graph where the path toward success status is achieved according to the duration of time which is item-specific.

Analyzing Earmarks as Reflective of the Posturing Style in Typology Development: How the Strategy of Attrition Contrasts to Pivotal Item Strategies

While there are a multitude of factors which make peripheral items differ from pivotal items in the use of strategies employed to reach agenda status, this section will identify and discuss four primary factors relating to: 1) how the item is defined and conceptualized; 2) how the item is imagined and marketed to the public, particularly in terms of the lack of data and/or presentation; 3) how the item is measured and used as part of the evaluation process to determine suitability for agenda inclusion; and 4) how differences in public opinion inform trends in the national mood and point to disparities in the styles used to reach agenda status.

Conceptual Clarity vs. Ambiguity

The first departing assumption of the posturing style of agenda setting denotes that there are implicit benefits in items that are conceptually vague or present complexities that confound the American public's understanding of the issue or policy process. The conventional literature makes the case that issues are rarely ambiguous or evade conceptualization, but instead take on greater significance as the attitudes and views which comprise the national mood shift to favor agendatization (Majone 1989). Yet, peripheral items like earmark usage compete in a crowded arena of items seeking attention and agenda status, such that proponents have an incentive to use definitional ambiguity as an advantage as part of the strategy of attrition to push forward the item. Earmarks were often hidden in the language of reports as nonstatutory add-ons (in lieu of actual legislative measures), which were not readily available to Congress prior to voting on appropriation bills (Kasdin 2010). A perceptible challenge to a more systematic analysis of data trends lies in how earmarks are defined, and what projects are included under the definition. Conceptual and definitional disparities abound which confound how earmarks are analyzed and befuddle knowledge and awareness levels in the public, thus resulting in a less intensified and interested public mood than would otherwise be perceptible with hot topic items that have a clear relation to the public in terms of benefits that are derived from placing an item on the agenda for decision. Operationally, the

Citizens Against Government Waste (CAGW) and Taxpayers for Common Sense (TCS) definitions of earmarks differ from public sector uses by the House Appropriations Committee (HAC), Senate Appropriations Committee (SAC), Government Accountability Office (GAO), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Congressional Research Service (CRS), and Department of Defense (DOD).² Adding to this complexity, the U.S. Senate began using the designation “congressionally directed spending item” instead of earmark in 2007. The lack of definitional consistency has affected the ability to truly measure earmark allocations and distributions in a consistent fashion, making it difficult to build support for or against revisiting the moratorium by the public. A 2008 study by the GAO, for instance, concluded that it was not feasible to provide concrete conclusions on earmark data given that there does not exist a “methodologically sound approach for systematically identifying ‘new projects of special interest to senior executive branch officials,’” and there are also conceptual obstacles preventing the application of definitions for congressionally directed spending items and congressional earmarks as used by Senate and House Rules committees (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2008, 2).

Imagining and Marketing the Item

Second, proponents in the initial wave of earmark reform marketed the item as being a costly issue for taxpayers, public sector organizations responsible for implementation and oversight, and the American public in general. Earmark costs were imagined by proponents of reform in the 2000s as being sufficiently high to warrant a change in existing policy, and since the moratorium, there has been little public support to agendatize the item and return to allocating funds to earmark projects. In fact, earmarks were initially agendatized because of accusations that actual costs tended to be buried from public view since the expenditures incurred were spread across all taxpayers as a facet of the federal deficit, and stringent provisions to ensure transparency did not exist (Shepsle and Weingast 1981; Ellwood and Patashnik 1993; Evans 2004; Savage 2009). A longitudinal analysis of percentile changes across a twenty-year period from 1990 to 2010 shows considerable fluctuations in earmark costs, particularly in the 2000s when the national mood turned against their usage. The findings vary when comparing actual cost data with 2010 figures which account for the effects of inflation when reform efforts were being weighed. For instance, the actual change in earmark costs decreased by almost 13 percent from 1991 to 1992, but represented an increase of 35 percent when accounting for inflation. The most significant change came in 1992 to 1993 when an increase of 144 percent marked the start of a politicized era, though this was less pronounced when examining constant dollars when the growth rate was 48 percent.

However, the marketing of reform efforts for earmarks was weakly tied to data trends, particularly those that accounted for inflation, such that the mid-1990s saw only moderate increases in actual yearly earmark costs, at 18, 38, 15, and 16 percent for 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997 respectively, or 15, 24, 12, and 13 percent respectively for each year when accounting for inflation (Citizens Against Government Waste, various years 1991-2011). Data trends had, however, been indicating an increase in the number of projects for several years, with a focus on parochial projects that benefited a relatively confined segment of interests rather than the American public. The turn of the century marked a significant 46 percent increase in earmark costs (41 percent in constant dollars), though this moderated for several years at less than 12 percent (10 percent in constant dollars) until a rise in 2005 just prior to the Congressional election in 2006 (Citizens Against Government Waste, various years 1991-2011). The actual percentage change from 2005 to 2006 was 6 percent (3 percent in constant dollars), but a significant decrease came from 2006 to 2007 when earmark

costs plummeted approximately 55 percent in both actual and constant dollars. This was followed by an upsurge of 30 percent (25 percent in constant dollars) from 2007 to 2008, a moderate upsurge of approximately 14 percent in actual and constant dollars in 2009, and a final down surge of around 16 percent for 2010 just before the moratorium period was instituted. Reform efforts in the period just prior to the 2011 moratorium were substantiated by the direct costs that earmarks posed for the federal budget, inclusive of administrative costs incurred by agencies to execute transactions, and accompanying opportunity costs associated with devoting resources to such tasks in lieu of other activities (Savage 2009).

Measuring and Evaluating Earmark Usage

Third, there must be consideration of how the item is measured and used as part of the evaluation process to determine its suitability for agenda inclusion. Posturing styles of agenda setting tend to benefit proponents when prior outcomes are not clearly paired to current decisions, and negative results from the past fail to produce a stoppage in the agenda-setting process. Specifically relating to the oversight function and bureaucratic accountability of earmark usage, there have been both practical and empirical difficulties apparent in measuring the relationship between expenditures committed to attaining projects, and the value of policy outcomes that are linked to securing funds (De Figueiredo and Silverman 2006). This is an area of interest for policy specialists but rarely is disseminated in detail to the American public. From an administrative perspective, there has been a perceptible lack of uniformity in evaluating earmark projects and in holding members of Congress accountable for ensuring the best use of taxpayer's money (Doyle and Roberts 2011). In fact, earmarks represent a form of distributive policy that is issue-oriented and locally-driven which competitive formula-driven allocations tend to overlook (Kasdin 2010).

Critics of earmarks charged that the escalation of costs in the mid-1990s into the 2000s coincided with the rise of Newt Gingrich (R-GA) to Speaker of the House early in 1995 when opponents raised challenges that he was exploiting earmarks as "political currency" to increase the chances of Republican Party members being reelected. A memo by Gingrich one year later requested that the chair of the House Appropriations subcommittees make earmarks available to members of Congress beyond the committee's purview, to include freshman Republicans who were not yet established in their positions (U.S. House Rules Committee 2018). However, the percentage increases moderated when accounting for inflation, and the late 1990s actually exhibited a negative trend in earmarks, when an actual decrease of 8 percent occurred in both 1998 and 1999, or 10 percent when accounting for inflation. This coincided with the Clinton administration's surplus budgets which broke a cycle of seventy-years of budgetary debt.

Public Opinion, the National Mood, and Agenda Setting

Fourth, the posturing style of agenda setting proceeds on the assumption that apathetic public support for the item is a constant, and will not waver to warrant pursuing an alternative style in the typology. This is what makes unpopular, noncontroversial, peripheral items unique from those where the crusading and politicized styles use the national mood to intensify momentum in a more rapid fashion. Initially, earmark spending drove public opinion toward a negative attitude, thus making its usage a politically risky prospect that today does not garner enough support from the public to make it a hot topic item again with the level of positive feedback necessary to push it onto the governmental agenda. Consequently, this is an aspect of this segment of the typology

which departs from conventional assumptions, namely that a strategy of attrition under the posturing style becomes a tactical necessity, as also reflective of public opinion polls in the pre-moratorium era that indicated a relatively strong wave of resistance against earmark usage (across several studies). Preceding public opinion polls have shown that Americans generally do not favor earmark usage. While the topic has infrequently been asked in polls, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) and CBS News/New York Times data from various studies provide the best measure of national mood as relating to perceptions of earmark usage. When asked in a 2006 poll (N=477) whether it is acceptable for members of Congress to add local spending projects to pieces of legislation, 61 percent of respondents indicated that it is not acceptable, followed by approximately 29 percent who indicated it is acceptable. These findings account for missing values/cases being removed, and reflect fewer than ten percent of those respondents selecting the “it depends” or “DK/NA” categories. When asked again in a 2007 poll (N=836), a preponderance of respondents (71%) indicated not acceptable, followed by fewer indicating acceptable (18%), with fewer than 10 percent again selecting the “it depends” or “DK/NA” categories (ICPSR 2018). This was when publicity for earmark reform had intensified to push it onto the governmental agenda.

Concluding Comments

Development of the above typology provides a useful means for understanding neglected areas in the research which do not fully account for alternative scenarios in how proponents of items quietly seek to attain agenda status through more prolonged maneuvering. The strategy of attrition offers a contrast to existing theories on agenda setting which assume that issue intensity over shorter periods increases the chances of agenda success, only to be followed by incrementalism in identifying alternatives and implementing items that reach the agenda. The attrition perspective accounts for posturing tactics where interested parties wear down potential resistance and wait for an opportune period in which to discreetly move an item onto the governmental agenda, taking advantage of the public’s lack of awareness and general apathy for an issue that may be both unpopular and of little perceived benefit to the average person. Can other peripheral items benefit from utilizing the “low and slow” strategy of attrition? Agenda setting endures as a compelling theme of the policy cycle, though the literature has not extended analysis much beyond traditional approaches that began assessing the topic four decades ago. This article hopes to inspire further dialogue on how the path toward agenda status differs for pivotal versus peripheral items, and how items may arise for agenda consideration in different periods or waves, such that they engender alternative strategies for utilizing lower levels of intensity and longer progressions of time. A theoretical exploration of the topic constructed various agenda setting approaches that can serve as the basis for future discussion for how actors rationalize the process and seek to maximize the likelihood of reaching agenda status.

The recent interest in revisiting earmark usage by pockets of interests provides a useful case study for drawing out how an alternative set of assumptions leads proponents of an agenda item to pursue the success threshold differently. Peripheral items that lack controversial and broader public appeal like earmark usage do not engender consideration in the academic literature, and this article addressed this by examining agenda setting styles in a typology that facilitates theory building and allows for potential comparisons to be drawn in subsequent studies. Whether or not the second

wave of earmark reform reaches agenda status, this article provides a framework for understanding how attrition strategies factor into agenda successes. The posturing style may not necessarily be conducive to promoting principles of democracy in an open and transparent environment, but instead denotes the complex reality of the policy process where stakeholders focus upon small tactical gains.

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Endnotes

¹ Capturing the many divergent interests (internal and external to government) and degrees of interest is challenging. This may be facilitated in the typology by aggregating interests together into broad categories of support, where majority support (> 50%) represents mass interest from internal and external governmental stakeholders and a national mood that perceives an item of considerable value in terms of placing it on the agenda. Mixed support (30-50%)

delineates lower perceptions that the issue will affect people considerably, as is the case with most items of a noncontroversial nature. Segmented support (<30%) is based upon pockets of interested parties that perceive there to be benefits from having an item reach agenda status, but the item is largely peripheral where apathy levels are high. Item duration and issue intensity are two primary aspects where disparities arise.

² For instance, the GAO defines earmarking as “dedicating collections by law for a specific purpose or program or designating any portion of a lump-sum amount for particular purposes by means of legislative language,” while the OMB defines it as “funds provided by the Congress for projects or programs where congressional direction (in bill or report language) ‘circumvents’ the merit-based or competitive allocation process or specifies the location or recipient, or otherwise curtails the ability of the executive branch to control critical aspects of the funds allocation process.” In contrast, the DOD defines directed spending as “add-ons” which increase the funding amounts in a bill that appears as part of the appropriations conference report but was not originally included in the President’s budget request, and the CRS regards earmarks as “funds set aside for a specific purpose, use or recipient.” (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2008, 5-6).

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Harnessing Government Open Data for Creative Expression: Composing Electronic Music Using Publicly Available Sound Re- cordings

Marcus D. Mauldin and Matthew Johnson

Introduction

Many governments provide open data. The open data concept is the idea that public data should be available to anyone who wants to use it so they can use and publish it as they wish without restriction. The openness of such data can be assessed in terms of its availability and access, reuse and distribution, and universal participation. The reported potential benefits of open data include government transparency, improved service provision, and the promotion of innovation and start-up activities. (Hendler, Holm, Musialek, and Thomas 2012). In addition, open data should be reused for social or economic value (Lourenco 2013). Beyond these touted uses, opportunities exist for open data to be used in unintended, but innovative ways. Notably, we argue that open data can move beyond these benefits to be used in creative pursuits. To make this connection, we must modify the definition of open data to be more inclusive of various types of data. In particular, sound can be considered a form of data, therefore it is possible to use open sound data as samples for music composition and production. While some attention has been paid to the use of open data in music-related or other creative activities, there hasn't been similar attention given to open government data and how this data may be used for such purposes. Using open data in musical pursuits may be beneficial in allowing sample-based musicians to create without the limitations and risks imposed by using copyrighted recorded materials in compositions or limitations imposed by data quality. As the open data movement has focused on how raw or primary data becomes available to the public (Sa and Greico 2016), a focus on the use of open data allows us to demonstrate a product of open data.

Innovation and Open Data

Innovation includes the introduction of a new product or change in existing product, new processes, etc. (Zuiderwijk, Helbig, Gil-Garcia and Janssen 2014). Lessig (2001) argues that "free content fuels innovation" (265). The benefits of open data can be classified as either a) political and social; b) economic; or c) operational and technical. The use of open data in creative endeavors

falls under the economic classification. Relative to the economic value of open data, van Schalykwyk, Wilmers, and McNaughton (2016) assert, “open data unlocks value as it flows from governments, between firms, researchers and entrepreneurs, and to citizens, and is adapted in the process.” (69). The benefits touted under the economic classification include innovation stimulation and development of new products and services. Creative endeavors are exemplary of these benefits even though such efforts are not promoted in open government data initiatives. Recognizing such a gap, intentionally or not, several efforts have been implemented to highlight creative uses of open data. For example, a Sound Visualization & Data Sonification Hackathon was held in New York in December 2015 featuring the “Data-Driven DJ”, Brian Foo. Foo creates songs from a variety of open data sources (Foo n.d.). Further, the media network Data Canvas hosted the Sense Your City contest in which contestants were asked to use environmental sound data, as well as other forms of data, in some creative way (Data Canvas n.d.).

Pisutova (2012) provides a definitional framework for the use of open content that is particularly useful in understanding open data use in music. This “4R Framework” is based on a definition of “open” provided on opencontent.org. This framework includes *reuse*, *revise*, *remix*, and *redistribute*. *Reuse* implies a right to reuse the content as it is provided. *Revise* refers to the right of users to adjust, adapt, modify, or alter the content. *Remix* suggests that users can combine the original or revised content with other content to make something new. Finally, *redistribute* means that users can share copies of the original content, revisions or remixes with others. The question, then, is how can open data be used in creative musical pursuits. The answer lies in how we define data.

Sound as Data

Miller (2015) contends that sound and video files are data. Sound contains information such as loudness, pitch, and timbre (Sterne and Rogers 2011). Sound also consists of tone, which consists of the properties of frequency, intensity, waveform, and time (Olson 1971). Audio converted to a digital form is raw information that can be manipulated and reconstructed in a variety of creative ways (Jordan 2008; Katz 2005). In particular, digitized sounds can be manipulated in a variety of ways such as changing pitch and tempo (Katz 2005). Sterne and Rodgers (2011) explain that the rawness of sound implies a readiness for processing. This rawness applies to open sound data as it is recorded without consideration of how it will be processed or interpreted by users. Several governments have made certain sound recordings available for public consumption and unrestricted use. Audio recordings may include hearings, meetings, musical performances, nature, and the universe. For example, in the United States, sound data are made available through the National Parks Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The National Parks Service records and analyzes sounds in national parks to improve park management. Recordings provide information about park visitors, operations, wildlife and how they interact. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service provides recordings of various animals. The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration provides recordings such as presidential speeches. Finally, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration gives access to a variety of space-related recordings. As sound is data, one challenge is to convert the data into something that fulfills the purpose for its use. In this case, the idea is to turn government open audio data into something new, but musical. As such, sound can be transformed for the purposes of representation, figuration, or

expression (Sterne and Rodgers 2011). Musical elements can be formed from how we sample and restructure this data.

Open Data and Digital Sampling

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration makes a variety of audio files available for free usage and without noted restrictions. These sounds are from historic and recent space missions and include voice recordings and various noises from space and come in MP3 and M4R format. All available NASA sound files were downloaded from <http://www.nasa.gov/connect/sounds/index.html> in June 2016. The sounds are employed in this article for demonstration purposes as the use of NASA sound files in music is not a new idea. Musicians from the Fabrica Music Area created an EP from NASA sounds (Fabrica 2014). While the composers limited themselves to only using NASA sounds, they did not define the compositions by any music genre. These artists processed, reconstructed and synthesized the samples.

Samples of music recordings serve as creative tools in some musical styles (Sewell 2014). The purpose of sampling is to convert and use the sampled material in new music (Ponte 2006). Digital sampling is a compositional method (Colton 2016) where an artist takes a portion of one recording and incorporates it into another (Katz 2005). Sampling is often rooted in technological, cultural, social, historical, legal, and geographic contexts (Morey and McIntyre 2014). Artists resorted to sampling to overcome economic obstacles associated with hiring live bands (Sharma 1999). The limitations and risks of sampling commercial recordings have legal roots (Sharma 1999; Sirois and Martin 2006; Sewell 2014). Ponte (2006) notes that sampling opponents argue, “digital samplers are ordinary copyright infringers who unfairly appropriate and exploit the creative efforts and innovations of others...” (517). Copyright infringement is perhaps the most common limitation to sampling. Other limitations include clearance attainment and royalties. The utilization of open data serves to overcome copyright limitations.

Another limitation of open data pertains to quality. Sadiq and Indulska (2017) suggest that it may take a long time to get value from open data due to quality issues. They further note that a big risk in using open data is the lack of awareness about data quality, particularly when the data is used for unintended purposes. Using sound data could overcome these issues because worries associated with other data formats are not evident. Audio data is an exact reproduction of the source material so issues pertaining to authenticity and human error are greatly reduced. Further, quality concerns identified by Sadiq and Indulska (2017) such as accuracy, consistency, and completeness are diminished, particularly when sampling. However, the sound quality of the audio recordings may be an issue in itself. Recording technologies, file format, and source play a role in quality. Sound quality limitations can be overcome by employing a cleaning and production method similar to that described by Mysore (2015). Accordingly, cleaning entails removing unwanted elements from raw recordings. Production involves processing the files with various audio effects such as equalizers, compressors, and limiters.

A Typology of Sampled Material to Transform Raw Sound

Ratcliffe (2014) proposes a typology of sampled material in electronic dance music (EDM). This typology includes the following categories: 1) Category A: short, isolated fragments; 2) Category B: loops and phrases; 3) Category C: larger elements; and 4) Category D: transformed materials. While not definitively stated by Ratcliffe, we contextualize his typology in the following ways. Category A may include percussive elements such as kick drums, snares, shakers, and hi-hats. Category B consists of rhythmic elements and chords. Category C could include vocal elements such as words, numbers or complete phrases. Finally, Category D may consist of risers and other dramatic elements as well as synthesized lead and bass sounds. Ratcliffe's aim is that this classification will "facilitate a better understanding of the materials and processes of EDM composition and lead to a more informed listening experience" (98).

The use of Ratcliffe's typology here deviates from his use in that the samples are not pulled from popular copyrighted recordings, but drawn from a publicly available government source. However, the source data is such that it could fit into the typology with few limitations. One such limitation is that open data may not be musical and thus may only reflect the non-musical aspects of the typology. Regardless, the typology is useful as it provides a framework to guide sample-based artists in the use of open data in their creative pursuits. Because open data typically may not be musical, open audio data must be converted in some fashion through digital technological means. The digital audio workstation serves as an analytic tool allowing EDM composers to reconstruct open audio data into musical elements.

Methodology: The Digital Audio Workstation as an Analytic Tool

Prior (2008) asserts that the growth in music software, along with Virtual Studio Technology, are major transformations in music production. Consistent with this notion, Mendez (2015) frames software applications known as Digital Audio Workstations (DAW) as analytic tools. He argues that new audio and music technologies, tools and resources have changed the process of making music. Further, he notes that the computer has become the primary tool of sound recording because it allows, through the DAW, the ability to cut, paste, loop, correct pitch and adjust the timing of musical information. As such, computers allow for sound creation through synthesis or by sampling and altering sounds through processing (Jorda 2007). DAWs contain tools that allow for composing, sound modeling, and production (Mendez 2015).

We employ Propellerhead Software's Reason 8 (Reason) and Ableton AG's Live 9 (Live) Digital Audio Workstations to transform NASA sound recordings into musical elements to be used in composition. Reason contains computer-controlled music instruments, which are tools for sound production, processing, and recording. In addition, Reason contains virtual synthesizers and drum machines, sound effects and samplers used for music creation (Jeppesen and Frederiksen 2006). The software further allows users to compose, edit and mix musical compositions. As such, Reason is popular in electronic music communities (Prior 2008).

NASA sound files are imported into Reason. Each file was listened to in isolation to find fragments that could be used for samples. After finding suitable fragments that coincide with Ratcliffe's (2014) proposed typology, the fragments are isolated and saved as samples inside of Reason. After

saving, each sample is placed into one of two Reason virtual instruments, depending on function, including the Kong Drum Designer and NN-XT sampler. Percussion and vocal oriented samples were placed into the Kong Drum Designer while samples used for synthesis were loaded into the NN-XT sampler. The critical aspect is to process the samples in such a way as to align with the Ratcliffe’s proposed typology for creating new samples that would be useful in a composition whether on their own or in conjunction with other non-governmental sample material and with electronic or acoustic instruments. Both virtual instruments allow for the placement of samples that can be edited and processed in various ways. For example, samples may be layered, pitched, reversed and dynamically processed. Loading the samples into, and manipulating them in, the Kong Drum Designer and NN-XT sampler allow for compositional experimentation. This experimentation can take place either by triggering samples using a MIDI¹ controller or by playing samples using built-in software pattern sequencers. Exhibit 1 shows the Reason session which includes the Kong Drum Designer and NN-XT sampler virtual instruments.

Exhibit 1: Propellerhead Reason Session with the Kong Drum Designer and NN-XT Sampler

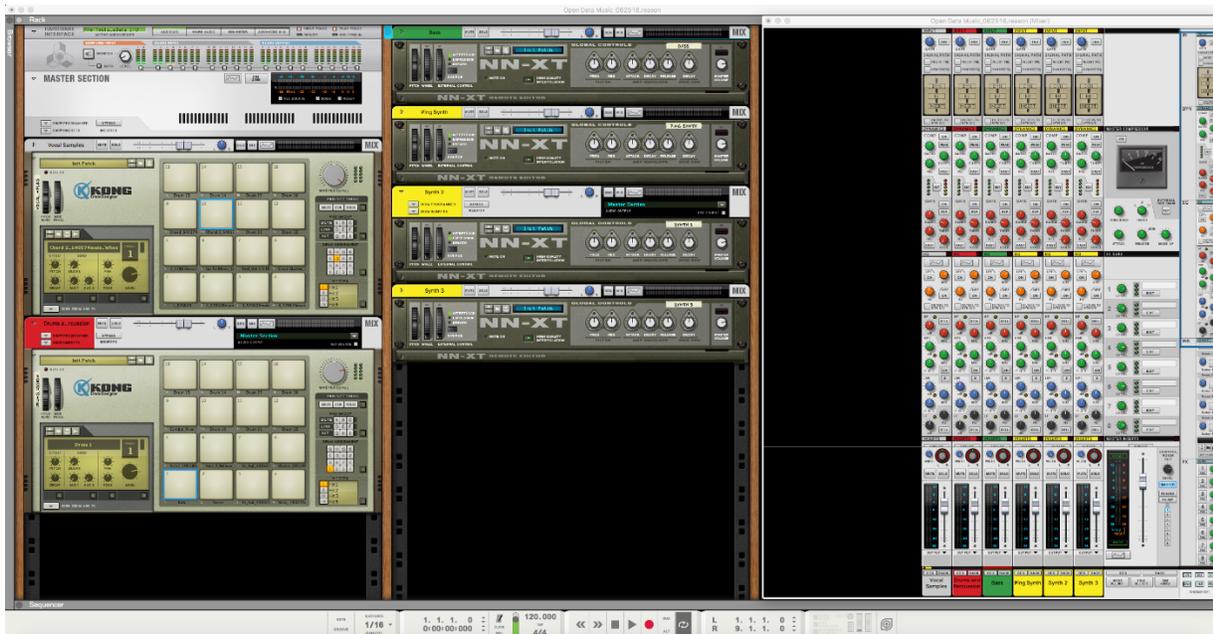


Table 1 on the next page highlights Ratcliffe’s typology, musical elements, and the corresponding NASA files we used for each element. Each file is analyzed to identify fragments that correspond with each element. Percussion elements were identified in each of the listed NASA sound files. The percussion elements are isolated in reason, named, saved and placed into the Kong Drum Machine for processing. Processing percussion elements mainly involves shifting pitch, adding saturation, equalizing and compressing.

Rhythmic elements are identified in the listed NASA sound files. These elements are isolated from the original files and left intact for loading in the Kong Drum Machine. Equalizers and compressors were used to process the files. Vocal elements are isolated and loaded into the Kong Drum machined for processing. Like the rhythmic elements, vocal elements are processed with equalizers and compressors. Finally, risers and dramatic elements are identified in the listed

NASA sound files. These sounds are saved as samples and loaded into the NN-XT sampler. The NN-XT sampler contains a pitch detect function that spreads the sounds across a piano keyboard in the corresponding tone. The samples are pitched according to the type of instrument to be created (lead synth or bass synth). To further demonstrate open audio data sample use within the context of Ratcliffe’s typology, we produce an electronic dance music track using the NASA sound files along with sounds from built-in DAW sound libraries.

Table 1: Ratcliffe’s EDM Sample Typology and Corresponding Musical Elements and NASA Sound Files

Ratcliffe's EDM Sample Typology	Element	NASA Sound Files
Category A: Short Isolated Fragments	Percussion: Kick, Snare; Shaker, Hi Hat	591240main_JFKmoonspeech.mp3; 590189main_ringtones_131_launchNats.mp3; 590327main_ringtones_landingGearDrop.mp3; 583775main_lcross_marmie_water_moon.mp3
Category B: Loops and Phrases	Rhythmic Elements	RingTone01_Longer.mp3; 640174main_Wheel Stop.mp3
Category C: Larger Elements	Vocal Elements: Numbers, Phrases	578628main_hskquindar.mp3; 582371main_Aurora-7_Liftoff.mp3; 586447main_JFKwechoosemoonspeech.mp3;
Category D: Transformed Material	Risers, Dramatic Elements; Synth Leads; Synth Bass	578626main_sputnik-beep.mp3; 578628main_hskquindar.mp3; 590327main_ringtones_landingGearDrop.mp3; 578359main_kepler_star_KIC7671081B.mp3; Atmosphere_584791main_spookysaturn.mp3

The Electronic Music Composition

While we use Reason to sample and convert the samples to elements of Ratcliffe’s typology, we compose using Ableton AG’s Live Digital Audio Workstation. Live allows users to record, edit, manipulate and arrange audio clips (deSantis et al. 2017). Crow (2006) asserts that software like Reason allows for sound creation and the ability to record and mix musical performance while Live allows one to interact with sounds, thus turning computers into performance instruments. Its interface lets users drag and drop audio sound clips into clip slots. A clip is a piece of musical material: a melody, a drum pattern, a bassline or a complete song. Live allows users to record and alter clips, and to create larger musical structures, such as songs, scores, remixes, DJ sets or stage shows, from them (deSantis et al. 2017). Each of the sound files from NASA is represented as an audio clip in Live. Composition in Live may take place by playing back pre-recorded clips into its sequencer. In addition, other sounds and MIDI-based instruments may be added to these compositions. The Live composition is based on the raw NASA sound recordings as well as transformed NASA sounds played back as MIDI-based instruments.

To use NASA’s sound clips as MIDI instruments, we select a small portion of audio to create an instrument. We select sonically rich samples because the quality of the original sound determines the quality of the instrument. We create one audio track and vocal elements and four MIDI tracks in Live and label them Vocals, Drums, Bass, Piano, and Arp, respectively. All audio files are played from audio clips. We placed drum sounds in a Live Drum Rack virtual instrument. Drum sounds include bass, snare, and cymbals. Once placed in a Drum Rack, each individual sound sample was sculpted further. Individual sounds in the Drum Rack are mapped to a MIDI piano keyboard for triggering playback.

Each of the other instruments is made using Live's Simpler virtual instrument. Simpler takes user-defined samples and combines them with the basic elements of a synthesizer. Samples are placed into Simpler, regions of the sample were selected, then mixing tools such as envelope, filter, low-frequency oscillator, volume, and pitch were used to sculpt the raw waveform into something more useable. Once the sample is inserted into the Simpler, it is transposed chromatically onto a keyboard where each key changes the pitch of the original sample.

The actual composition of song parts occurs mostly by experimenting while creating the instruments. We create a grid consisting of MIDI patterns, one-shot sounds, and vocal samples. The completed composition is performed and recorded by manipulating these MIDI and audio tracks in real-time. While not all the NASA sounds are used in the composition, and even though some outside instruments were used, this publicly available data provides an inspirational foundation while composing. The song and related samples are available by request.

The Promise of Open Data in Music Production

This article demonstrates how open government data can be harnessed for creative expression. We use the National Aeronautics and Space Administration audio recordings to demonstrate how open data can be used in electronic music compositions and how electronic musicians and others can use open data to overcome issues related to digital sampling of commercial audio. Sampling, as a creative practice, is hampered by laws limiting the use of copyrighted music samples in music production. Open data allows a means by which to remove such creative barriers. Open data is the equivalent of intellectual property that is not owned by individuals or institutions, but by the people. By definition, it is the notion that governmental data, in any form, should be available to anyone for any use without copyright restrictions (Kassen 2013). While much of the open data literature focuses on use by governments, communities, and businesses, we argue that these same data can be used in creative endeavors, particularly audio data.

While we demonstrate how open audio data may be used creatively, we must note some limitations related to sound file quality. One challenge was sculpting the individual samples into something that was sonically pleasing. The audio quality of the sample has a lot to do with its viability for an instrument source, and many of the NASA files are of lesser quality. This quality is related to the recording age, original means of recording and transfer into the MP3 format in which NASA provides the files. Users of open government audio data would likely need to process files in such a way to mask file deficiencies, but maintain the spirit of the file itself. Users could also use open audio data alongside other higher quality sounds to produce more sonically pleasing compositions. Finally, users of open government sound data should pay attention to usage guidelines. While some governments make such audio data available for use, there may be restrictions placed on its usage that do not allow for the data to be used in ways that benefit the user. For example, NASA's usage guidelines state that audio data is not copyrighted, but special permission may be needed if the audio files will be used commercially.

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Note

¹ MIDI stands for musical instrument digital interface. It is a protocol that allows electronic musical instruments, computers and other devices to communicate with each other.

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Public Administration's First Training and Development Arm: The Origins and Pioneering Programs of the National Institute of Public Affairs, 1934-1985

Mordecai Lee

Trends in Public Administration Historiography

The history of American public administration has given significant (and perhaps exaggerated) attention to some key organizations that played roles in the founding of the academic discipline and the professionalization of the practice. These include the New York Bureau of Municipal Research (BMR) (McDonald 2010), the Brownlow Committee (Newbold and Rosenbloom 2007), the International City Management Association,¹ and the American Society for Public Administration (Lee 2014). There also have been stirrings of interest in some of the second-tier entities such as Gulick's Institute of Public Administration,² and Brownlow's Public Administration Service (Lee 2017). Going beyond such relatively prominent and remembered organizations, the field's historiography has also recently shown an interest in a more nuanced and textured narrative by focusing on overlooked organizations or trends that also played important roles in the formalization of the discipline and the professionalization of the practice. These have included the links between the New York School of Philanthropy and BMR's Training School (Schachter 2011), the influence of settlement house women on the good government movement (Stivers 2000), Philadelphia's Bureau of Municipal Research (Schachter 2002), William Allen's Institute for Public Service (Lee 2013), and the fiscally conservative director of the Bureau of the Budget during FDR's first term (Zelizer 2012, chap. 7).

These early years reflected a struggle to define and shape public administration (Stillman, Williams, and Schachter 2016). There were tugs and pulls between those seeking to make it a specialized field of professional practice versus those wanting to root it in the academic world. The former sought professional recognition and status comparable to other emerging professions such as social work and urban planning. The latter group sought a literature based on scholarship, peer-review quality, and empirical social science. Other differing visions were if American public administration should emulate the British model of politically neutral senior civil servants serving as permanent undersecretaries of Cabinet departments versus the more politically-oriented supporters of a strong presidency with a unitary executive branch and White House management and budget

agencies. From another perspective, the question was where public administration was located in government. All civil servants? Only civil servants who were supervisors and up? Only bureau chiefs and above? What about an assistant secretary of a Cabinet department who was nominated by the President and subject to Senate confirmation? Was he (as they all were in those days) a public administrator? Or merely a partisan politician? Were specialists in, say, HR, public administrators or did only generalists qualify? Even geography played a role. Should the center of gravity of the nascent public administration be in Chicago, New York, Washington or California?

The purpose of this article is to supplement public administration's historical literature with a revisionist telling of the origins of the now-largely forgotten National Institute of Public Affairs (NIPA) and a brief exploratory overview of its entire biography.³ From 1935 to 1949, NIPA played a major and pioneering role in post-university training of future managers through the on-site and real-world experience of internships. This mission made NIPA one of the early building blocks in the organizational infrastructure of the emerging profession. Leaders of the nascent field, such as Brownlow and Gulick, recognized the vital role that management training outside a classroom would have in the development of the profession. In particular, they saw the need for programs to provide practical training such as internships (Mandell 1953, 106). NIPA became dormant in 1949 when the US Civil Service Commission (CSC) took over its signature internship program. The organization was then revived in the early 1960s to host another major training effort. It then conducted other educational and research programs until about 1985, when it fully merged into the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA).

NIPA in the Literature: Important Then, Largely Forgotten Now

Textbooks generally represent the conventional wisdom of their time. As depicted in introductory textbooks on public administration, NIPA was very prominent in its heyday. The second edition of Pfiffner's textbook described it as "probably the most notable effort" of what he termed positive recruitment (1946, 267). Lepawsky called NIPA "a leading American public service training agency" (1960, 174). The first edition of Nigro's textbook stated that NIPA's pre-service internship was "the first program of this kind" and that its 1960s scholarships to public administrators to study for a year at a major university "is of special significance" (1965, 338-39). Also, in 1938, a good government periodical lauded NIPA's novel mission (Waldron 1938).

The arc of NIPA's rise and fall was demonstrated in White's *Introduction to the Study of Public Administration*. His second edition noted that NIPA had "initiated" the first internship program in Washington (1939, 362). The third edition referred to NIPA three times, including praise for its "leadership" in launching the first in-service training program for the federal civil servants. He viewed that NIPA program as "successful" (1948, 398). Then NIPA disappeared from his fourth and last edition in 1955. Similarly, the first two editions of the textbook series by Dimock and Dimock that were published in the 1950s prominently mentioned NIPA's pioneering role in internships even though those programs were no longer being offered (1953, 175-76; 1958, 333). In their 1969 edition, they dedicated a subchapter of the training chapter to NIPA, lauding it for its "vital" role and its multiple training programs. They concluded that "results have been good" from all of NIPA's training efforts (1969, 251-52).

The more specialized literature on governmental human resources (HR) also lauded NIPA. Kammerer characterized NIPA's contributions to the federal civil service during World War II as "unique" and "pioneering" (1951, 177, 179). Similarly, Van Riper's history of the federal civil service credited NIPA's internship programs as the precedent for later CSC initiatives (1976, 431). More recently, Sherwood stated that public administration internship programs "began" at NIPA (1997, 217). The longest-running textbook series on public sector HR also consistently recognized NIPA's role. The first edition of *Public Personnel Administration* in 1936 described NIPA's new internship program as a "promising development" (Mosher and Kingsley 1936, 231). The second edition twice mentioned NIPA positively (1941, 277, 287). The third edition in 1950 referred to it twice as well as citing a NIPA publication (Mosher, Kingsley and Stahl 1950, 155, 398, 408). The fourth edition in 1956 also referred to it positively several times (Stahl 1956, 45, 345, 354). In the fifth edition, now 13 years after NIPA's pre-service internship program had ended, Stahl still called it "the most notable" of such activities (1962, 291).

Somewhat more recently, Neihoff's review of Floyd Reeves' contributions to public administration included a chapter on Reeves' membership on NIPA's board in the 1960s. He characterized NIPA's activities in that era as "highly innovative" (1991, 268). However, NIPA had largely faded from the discipline's history. In 2003, historians of public administration education viewed it as having been little more than "symbolic," rather than tangible (Keyssar and May 2003, 232). Newland's extensive description of the field's "Golden Era" made no mention of NIPA (1984) nor did Plant in his short historical summary (2015).

NIPA's Self-Told History: Erasing its Founder

All literature from NIPA-related authors omits references to its founder, Otis T. Wingo, Jr. He was completely erased from NIPA's self-generated history. For example, NIPA staff were active in contributing to the academic and professional literature on its training programs. Henry Reining, NIPA's longtime educational director, wrote prolifically about the organization's work and accomplishments (1938, 1939, 1941, 1944; Reining and Stromsen 1942a, 1942b) as did other staffers (Coman 1944; Houghton 1945; Stromsen and Dreese 1950).⁴ Similarly, before closing its doors at the end of its first incarnation, NIPA issued an extensive final report (1949). The Forward was written by President Frederick Davenport (iii-iv), followed by a summary of its history (1-4) and a list of (impliedly all) past and current professional staff (18). Wingo was unmentioned. Also, Brownlow, who had been recruited by Wingo to chair NIPA initial board, never mentioned Wingo in the section on NIPA in his autobiography (1958, 462-63).

In part, this omission is understandable. Wingo was fired in 1937 for financial fraud. He had forged a signature on several NIPA checks made out to himself for nearly \$6,000. Brownlow convened an emergency board meeting to deal with it. Recounting his role would be an embarrassment that NIPA preferred to excise from the record. However, this selective and self-serving version of NIPA's history is itself fraudulent because of what Wingo had done before that transgression. He single-handedly founded the organization in 1934, incorporated it, recruited a board of directors, publicized NIPA's existence, organized some initial internship programs, and made extensive efforts to obtain grant funding for the new organization. He kept it alive during the lean years. Wingo deserves his place in NIPA's history.

Wingo was also absent from the academic literature on NIPA's early years authored by faculty unaffiliated with NIPA and therefore less susceptible to self-serving narratives. Graham's comprehensive review of early public administration pedagogy included a chapter on NIPA but did not mention Wingo (1941, chap. 6). Neither did Jones in the abridged version of his 1949 University of Wisconsin political science dissertation (1953). A rare mention of Wingo at NIPA in contemporary literature is a glancing reference to him in a discussion of the accomplishments of German émigré and Harvard Professor Carl Friedrich (Greenberg 2014, 48).⁵

Hampering any renewed historiographic interest in NIPA's entire biography is the absence of a comprehensive archive of the organization's records. Some of NIPA's office files for the 1930s and 1940s are within the papers of Frederick Davenport at Syracuse University's archive. There is no archive of the office records during NIPA's second existence in the 1960s-80s. At that point, it fully merged into NAPA, but NAPA has no archival collection of NIPA's pre-NAPA work.⁶ Therefore, this inquiry had to be based mostly on a reconstruction of NIPA's early biography through triangulation of the modest amount of original material located in other archives along with two other contemporaneous and relatively independent sources of information: academic or professional publications and from news media coverage.

Founding NIPA, 1934-35

The idea of an organized effort to recruit college graduates to go into public service in general and public management in particular emerged from a conference of the National Student Federation of America (NSFA) in December 1933. NSFA was a moderately left-of-center association of student governments at US colleges and universities. Founded in 1925 as a merger of several smaller groups, it originally focused on support for internationalist foreign policy proposals of the 1920s, such as the League of Nations and the World Court (Altbach 1997).

One of the speakers at its December 1933 annual conference in Washington, DC, was Chester McCall, an assistant to FDR's Secretary of Commerce, Daniel Roper. McCall suggested creating what he called a "national laboratory for leadership in public affairs." This would be an educational institution based in Washington that would recruit 150-200 college students to come to the nation's capital for an intensive program to introduce them to the workings of the federal government. They would meet with senior officials of the executive and legislative branch, hear lectures, and have a chance for open discussions. Such a program would not only help promote democracy but, more specifically, encourage public service by those students.⁷ Elaborating on the idea, a few months later Secretary Roper said he hoped the new institute eventually "would be to the Government what West Point and Annapolis are to the Army and Navy,"⁸ a kind of university of public affairs. But McCall sometimes openly identified the idea with partisan politics, mentioning it in a speech on "Youth and the New Deal" at a conference at Emory University (1934). This relatively amorphous proposal could have unfolded in many directions. For example, it could have become a program of the Democratic Party to train college students for party roles. Or a nonpartisan organization to encourage college students to become active in politics and civic affairs. Another scenario would have been as a residential and degree-granting school to train professional civil servants for careers in the federal government.

One student took up Roper and McCall's idea with alacrity.⁹ Otis T. Wingo, Jr., had a Democratic background, too. His father had been elected to Congress from a district in Arkansas in 1912. When his father died in 1930, his mother, Effiegene, was elected to succeed his father. (She did not run for reelection in 1932.) Wingo Jr. had just graduated from Princeton earlier that year. At the time, he was national college chairman of the Young Democratic Clubs of America, an affiliate of the Democratic National Committee.¹⁰ In that position, he was the "organizer of Democratic clubs in hundreds of universities."¹¹ Moving quickly and on his own initiative, in the early months of 1934, he founded an organization he called the National Institution of Public Affairs. He opened an office in downtown Washington and gave himself the title of executive secretary. Now with a title, letterhead, and office, he reached out to prominent civic activists to recruit them to support NIPA, whether by serving on the board, referring him to others, or providing financial support. In some cases, they would have known him (or of him) from his parents' political activities in Washington. Some of his early contacts included Frederic Delano (the president's uncle), Edward R. Murrow of the Institute of International Education, and Eugene Meyer, owner of the *Washington Post*.¹²

Another interaction was with Louis Brownlow, then head of the Rockefeller-funded Public Administration Clearing House in Chicago.¹³ Brownlow was leery. He knew that the idea for the organization was "being prepared very largely under the direction of Secretary Roper and the President."¹⁴ His own formulation of the nascent field of public administration included a strict principle that it was wholly separated from politics and partisanship, rather it was a science of neutral civil service experts implementing the goals set by elected institutions. Brownlow met with Wingo in April 1934. Wingo shared with him a document he had drafted outlining the mission of NIPA. It included a strict nonpartisan orientation. Under those conditions, Brownlow agreed to serve on the organizing committee for the new nonprofit.¹⁵ When NIPA was incorporated, Brownlow further accepted the title of chairman of the board.¹⁶ Notwithstanding his title, Brownlow was relatively passive in his involvement. Certainly, NIPA was not his brainchild, like the Clearing House and the dozen professional associations affiliated with it. Nor was it an academic research organization, like the Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council, which he also chaired. If in the long run, NIPA could contribute to the emergence of the new profession, fine. But Brownlow would not personally shake the Rockefeller money tree – or any other source – to fund it. In his diary, he wrote that he was "unwilling to be a party" to any NIPA programs unless Wingo found adequate funding for quality and useful training experiences.¹⁷

Moving fast to spread the word, Wingo was prolific, writing short pieces introducing NIPA in the American Council on Education's *Educational Record*, *Public Administrators' News Letter*, and *National Municipal Review* (1934a, 1934b, 1934c). In the *American Political Science Review*, he described NIPA's main goal as "the first fundamental step in a conscious, objective program for the training of public leaders to replace the hit-and-miss haphazard methods which have prevailed in the past." The first NIPA program was planned for a two-to-three-month period in 1935. Ambitiously, he described a process by which a small cadre of elite students would be selected "upon a plan similar to the selection of Rhodes scholars." They would participate in a planned educational program including lectures and seminars. The central feature of the program would be that "each student will be assigned as an 'interne' [*sic*] to some" federal agency.¹⁸ He also hoped for NIPA programming to affect a larger number of college students, such as by sponsoring "public affairs

forums” at about 600 colleges and universities (1934d). Wingo’s publicity and marketing efforts for NIPA included several appearances on national radio networks.¹⁹

Wingo wanted to get real programs up and running – not just spreading the word – as quickly as possible. While waiting for the detailed application, review, and admission process during the winter of 1934-35 for the first cohort, he initiated other activities. He announced that NIPA would sponsor a one-week program during spring break in 1935 for college seniors. It would include briefings by senior officials, visits to federal institutions, and trips to Capitol Hill.²⁰ The next year, the spring one-week training program was for 60 seniors including ten each from Yale and Princeton.²¹ NIPA also placed some students in federal agencies through individualized ad hoc internships and invited applications from recent college graduates for similar placements.²² According to Gaus and White, by early 1935, NIPA had “commenced” a program of “preparatory internships [*sic*]” with about 30-40 students (1935, 448). On the pedagogic front, Wingo recruited professor Harvey Walker, an Ohio State political scientist who was on sabbatical that year, to be at NIPA briefly in the spring of 1935 as an “educational counselor” (Ogg 1935, 667). Walker wrote a detailed outline of the curricular and pedagogical principles which NIPA (and other educational institutions, for that matter) should use for public service training programs (1935; 1936). By mid-1935, NIPA’s first two-month summer cohort was underway. It was organized in cooperation with American University’s School of Public Affairs. The joint program offered formal instruction (and credit), as well as “internships [*sic*]” and round-table discussions.²³

But all this time, NIPA had practically no money. All of Wingo’s early efforts to obtain grants from foundations had been unsuccessful. While some were willing to consider funding scholarships for students, none were interested in funding the cost of the organization itself: salaries, rent, and office expenses. Wingo tried to keep NIPA going on a shoestring, including using some of his own money to keep it going,²⁴ but it could not have a future without major underwriting. Brownlow felt that unless such funding came soon, NIPA’s “projects should be abandoned” and, presumably, NIPA disbanded.²⁵ As a result of the lack of adequate funding, the few programs that NIPA had already conducted appeared to be somewhat slapdash and disorganized pedagogically. Some students complained.²⁶ A professor who had agreed to serve on NIPA’s educational advisory council resigned.²⁷ This was something of a chicken-or-egg problem. Without a track record, funders were less interested in financing the ongoing operations of a nonprofit. But without funding, decent and credible programs could not occur.

Cold Shoulder from the Apolitical Professionalizers, 1935

Something wasn’t quite right. There were straws in the wind that indicated the emerging public administration establishment was dissatisfied with NIPA in its current form. For example, when the newsletter of the Chicago group (later called ‘1313’ for its street address) first reported on McCall’s December 1933 speech, the lead article stated that Dean Mosher of Syracuse quickly expressed an interest in pursuing the idea. A separate article in the same issue reported that Wingo had formed NIPA “presumably at least in part as a result of” McCall’s speech. It was an odd and distancing phrasing.²⁸ A few months later, the newsletter printed a short article by Leonard White (newly appointed by FDR to the bipartisan CSC as a Republican) calling for recruiting and training elite college graduates to work in public administration in the federal government (1934). Oddly,

he made no reference to NIPA's program then underway, even though he certainly knew about it.²⁹

Perhaps the partisan origins of NIPA gave pause to those who believed they could invent a new profession of public administration that was wholly nonpolitical and nonpartisan. This was a comprehensive goal shared by faculty (such as Charles E. Merriam), academically trained researchers (such as Gulick), and organizers (like Brownlow). Standing behind this effort were the Rockefeller philanthropies which, beginning in the mid-1910s, were willing to support public administration and good governmental reform as long as it was neither controversial, ideological, nor partisan. A related concern might have been an apprehension that Wingo thought of NIPA as a springboard to a political career, a rather obvious option for someone with his background and interests. The concerns about a partisan tinge to NIPA were not hypothetical. Some political attacks had been occurring. In July 1934, a conservative columnist insinuated that there was something politically sinister about NIPA. "Just who started the project... is not clear," wrote Kirke Simpson. He pointedly noted that FDR and Roper supported this "scheme," a conspiratorial sounding term.³⁰ Arch-conservative businessman Pierre DuPont denounced NIPA as part of a "dictatorial government" he saw emerging in Washington.³¹ A few years later, a *Washington Herald-Times* columnist criticized NIPA as part of a larger effort by FDR, Brownlow and the Rockefellers "in the partitioning of the public service under the sway of important money and of the professorial domination."³²

In 1934, the Rockefeller philanthropic funds had underwritten the Commission of Inquiry on Public Service Personnel. It was dominated by Brownlow and Gulick. The commission issued a report in January 1935 calling for the increasing professionalization of civil service at all levels of government. Its recommendations included the importance of appropriate training for civil servants. It also focused on the need for recruiting personnel for positions in an "administrative service," i.e., junior managers. But the commission did not address what, if any, specialized training or preparation these candidates needed to qualify for such a career track (Commission 1935). In June 1935, picking up where the Commission left off, Brownlow convened a three-day conference at Princeton University on "Training for the Public Service." The conference was apparently underwritten by the Public Administration Clearing House or by the Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council, both Rockefeller-funded. Invitees included a select group of other figures in the effort to professionalize public administration, including professors William Mosher, Leonard White, Harold Dodds, Carl Friedrich, Samuel May, and John Gaus. Other invitees included Gulick, Lewis Meriam from the Brookings Institution,³³ Harold Smith, budget director of Michigan's state government (later FDR's budget director), and Harry Mitchell, CSC president (appointed by FDR to a Democratic slot). Also attending were Guy Moffett and Stacy May from the Rockefeller philanthropies, central figures in funding most of these early public administration initiatives.³⁴

Quite pointedly, even oddly, neither Wingo nor professor Walker was invited, even though they clearly were on the front lines of implementing public service internships. Brownlow, of course, knew NIPA because he was its board chair. While the internal machinations and organizational politics seem opaque, Brownlow clearly had made a deliberate decision. Perhaps it related mostly to who Wingo was and was not. Wingo was not from "our crowd." He was just a kid in his 20s, more of a student activist and budding (Democratic) politician than a good fit for the new,

academically oriented, and – especially – *apolitical* profession of public administration. This just would not do. Brownlow may as well have posted a sign: outsiders not welcome.

The conference proceedings indicated awareness of NIPA. For example, Gulick referred several times to Wingo and Walker, specifically Walker's NIPA paper containing pedagogic recommendations for internship programs (Princeton Conference 1935, 9-10). At other times, conferees discussed the desired parameters for an internship program in Washington, such as limiting each cohort to a small group of about 30 and having an educational director to oversee the program. Somehow, they managed to have these discussions without ever acknowledging what NIPA was doing (Princeton Conference 1935, 114-15). It all seemed quite deliberate. About six months later, Public Administration Service (another Brownlow creation) published the formal report and recommendations from the conference. Its suggestions included having "a Washington center for supervising interns," a federal internship program, and a director of education at the center to oversee the interns' educational curriculum (Lambie 1935, x). Again, NIPA was unmentioned. This could not have been happenstance.

Similarly, in August 1935, a University of Chicago master's thesis on training in the federal government, which White supervised, conspicuously omitted any reference to NIPA. In addition to examining internal training programs of individual federal agencies, it reviewed in detail the related educational programs at George Washington University and American University (and several others briefly) but made no reference to NIPA's training programs (Divine 1935, chap. 8).³⁵ The same odd omission happened in September 1935, when Brownlow, Mosher, and Wingo addressed the annual conference of the Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada. Even though they spoke back-to-back at a session on "Training for the Public Service," neither Brownlow (NIPA's board chair!) nor Mosher referred to NIPA. Gamely, as the third presenter, Wingo presented a summary of lessons already learned by NIPA about its internship program (Civil Service Assembly 1935, 80-93).³⁶

These were shots across the bow from the emerging public administration establishment. NIPA in its current incarnation and with its overt partisan roots and staff would not be recognized as part of the solution. The unspoken message seemed to be that either the profession's leaders gained full control of the organization or NIPA would be excommunicated.

Out with the New, In with the Old, 1935-1936

Frederick Davenport was an academic from upstate New York, a good government activist, and a former politician.³⁷ He became affiliated with NIPA in May 1934 as its "Counsellor," a title suggesting an advisory, unpaid, and part-time role.³⁸ It is unclear whose idea it was, but likely Brownlow, et al., wanted a "grown-up" involved with NIPA on an ongoing basis between board meetings. During the winter of 1934-35, after failing in the November 1934 election to reclaim the congressional seat he had lost in 1932, Davenport quietly increased his involvement in NIPA. There was no public announcement. His title was now "General Chairman." Even though the term chairman in the nomenclature of American nonprofits is usually that of the citizen volunteer who is the head of the lay board of directors, Davenport was *staff*. On NIPA's letterhead, he was listed in the staff column above Wingo, indicating he was Wingo's supervisor.³⁹ A different document, a few

months later, described him as NIPA's "chief executive officer" who "supervises the Institution's policies and activities." Executive Secretary Wingo "assisted" the general chairman in the "execution" of training programs and also served as the Board's secretary.⁴⁰ Wingo had been demoted.

Davenport's presence gave NIPA a legitimacy and entrée to the small clique which was insistent that public administration was a free-standing profession and that it had no inherent link to politics, partisanship, and elected officials. (Davenport's own political history somehow was excused.) In particular, Brownlow and colleagues strongly influenced funding decisions by the Rockefeller funds, which were dispensing significant amounts for the professionalization of public administration. NIPA was now in this in-group. With Brownlow's behind-the-scenes work and the reliable and familiar Davenport on site, the spigot of Rockefeller dollars was ready to start flowing. Up to now, NIPA had been a shoe-string activity, supported largely by contributions from board members and other friends of the institution (and, as stated earlier, some of Wingo's personal funds). Davenport quickly submitted a proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation for funding the first year of such a program for 40-120 "pre-service" interns and requested about \$26,000 for NIPA management of the program (i.e., exclusive of any scholarships). In October 1935, NIPA announced the approval of the grant request simultaneous with the public disclosure of Davenport's new role.⁴¹

To strengthen the credibility of NIPA's training programs, Davenport and Brownlow hired Henry Reining, Jr., already well-established as a Princeton faculty member, to a new full-time position as NIPA's educational director.⁴² Reining's presence at NIPA signaled that the organization's programming would have the respectability that the nascent field of public administration sought to have as an academic discipline and practitioner profession. Brownlow also bulked up the board of directors, successfully recruiting, amongst others, former Republican Secretary of State Henry Stimson (later secretary of war during WWII) and Edward R. Morrow (by now with CBS radio).⁴³ Finally, during that same period, the board changed the organization's name from "Institution" to "Institute."⁴⁴ In retrospect, it can be seen as another signal of the gradual takeover of the agency by the public administration establishment and a further disassociation from its founder's regime. Clearly, Wingo was being marginalized by these developments and his Institution was being superseded by a new entity, new leadership, and a new name. He had gone from the top-ranking staffer and de facto CEO to third in standing and in salary.⁴⁵ Despite the demotions, he soldiered on. He kept writing about NIPA, including short articles in journals (1936; 1937a; 1937b) and newspaper columns and reviews.⁴⁶

Then a financial scandal relating to Wingo's integrity unfolded in early 1937. On February 27, Wingo abruptly notified the bank that "effective immediately" he would no longer handle NIPA's financial affairs.⁴⁷ Alarmed, the bank, in turn, suggested to Davenport that he not accept any resignation by Wingo "until our conferences on this matter are complete."⁴⁸ On March 3rd, Brownlow telegraphed all board members that he was convening an "important special meeting" for March 5th.⁴⁹ At the meeting, the trustees passed a motion that Wingo "is hereby separated from, and is no longer a member of" NIPA.⁵⁰ What had happened? Apparently, within the last few months, Wingo had forged the signature of NIPA's treasurer on two checks made out to himself totaling \$5,680 and then cashed them. He may have engaged in other fraudulent financial acts around the same time.⁵¹

All this was done quietly. The new leadership did not want to degrade NIPA's brand or reputation, especially now that it was funded by a Rockefeller grant, a kind of Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval for public administration. For example, in response to an inquiry about Wingo, Davenport directed NIPA's attorney that any reply should be "brief and cryptic" and that neither NIPA nor its counsel "desires to make any comment upon the matter referred to," wording that avoided even stating the subject at hand.⁵² NIPA's founder was gone and erased.⁵³

After Wingo: NIPA's Training Programs, 1937-1960s

One of the reasons the founders of the profession of public administration focused so much on training and internships was because these were rarely in-house activities in government agencies. The most prominent example was the federal government. The CSC and most executive branch agencies had almost no training programs nor internships. This was largely because of the strict constructionist approach that the General Accounting Office (GAO) used for judging the legality of expenditures by federal agencies. If the statutes did not explicitly permit an agency to do something, then it could not do it (Walker 1986, 27). This policy was particularly the case for in-house training programs (Mosher 1979, 74-76). Second, the conservative coalition in Congress reflected a small government ideology with a cramped view of the executive branch. Agencies should engage exclusively in their mandated missions. Staff and auxiliary activities, such as training, in-house libraries, travel to conferences, and public relations, were a waste of money. For these conservatives, training was not something government should be paying for (with some exceptions for highly specialized positions). Their general attitude was that anyone the CSC deemed eligible for hiring for a specific position should *already* possess the qualifications and credentials that the position required.

All this meant that NIPA's training programming was in a tabula rasa context. It became a kind of greenhouse for start-ups of training and internship programs. The hope was that, if successful, these programs would eventually be permitted and assumed by the federal government. The departure of Wingo at roughly the same time as the Rockefeller grant funding started flowing were the events that launched NIPA into the top tier of the new profession. It could now hit its stride. NIPA had a mission, funding, and legitimacy that the public administration establishment wanted. It would be the innovative launching pad for those interested in careers in federal service and the venue for respected training programs that were bridges into the practitioner world. In retrospect, the size of these programs seems quite modest compared to NIPA's prominence in the literature. However, given that practically no other post-college experiential training programs existed, the attention NIPA got was understandable.

Pre-Service Internship Program, 1936-1949

NIPA's signature program and the one for which it was most renowned at the time was a nine-month pre-service program for college graduates. It combined internships at federal agencies with training programs organized by NIPA. This was the initiative that Davenport had applied for after he arrived at NIPA and that the Rockefellers had then agreed to fund. Cohorts were relatively small, about 30-40 men and women who were college graduates. They were placed full-time as unsalaried interns in federal agencies, had weekly evening meetings to discuss their experiences, and met with guest speakers. Indicating the level of importance attributed to this modest training

program, the 1939-40 cohort met with FDR (King 1940, 8).⁵⁴ Mrs. Roosevelt met with at least two more, presumably to encourage women to pursue careers in public service.⁵⁵ Interns were also encouraged to enroll in evening graduate courses at local universities. The Rockefeller funding did not include a stipend for the students, it was limited to covering NIPA's internal costs. The program closed in 1949 when Rockefeller funding ended and the CSC took it over. Some interns went on to prominent careers in government, including CSC Chair John Macy and Assistant Secretary of State Harlan Cleveland. Others went on to impressive careers in the academy, including James MacGregor Burns, Herbert Kaufman, and Robert Dahl (NIPA, 1949). A few interns wrote about their experiences, creating a small participant-observation literature (Hall 1939; King 1940; Bellows 1940; Matteson 1948; Scott 1990).⁵⁶

Management Training for Native Americans, 1937-1941

In 1937, the Rockefeller Foundation awarded NIPA a \$54,000 three-year grant to fund public administration training for Native Americans.⁵⁷ In cooperation with the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs, each year the Southwest Field Training Project recruited about 8-12 Native Americans who were college graduates to a one-year training program (Reining 1938, 301; Knepper 1940, 363). Based in Albuquerque (NM), the program included in-service internships in the Indian Service, particularly "administrative assignments of increasing severity and complexity."⁵⁸

In-Service Training for Civil Servants, 1943-1945

In 1943, at the request of the CSC, NIPA designed and implemented a pilot program of managerial training for people already employed by the federal government. This was a major break from the earlier mentality of Congressional conservatives and the GAO that expenditures for this purpose could only occur if specifically authorized by law. Called "in-service" training, it was similar to the pre-service internships: a one-year program including rotating assignments in different federal offices, educational programs, weekly meetings with guest speakers, and group discussions (Coman 1944). The first cohort consisted of 32 relatively junior civil servants. The list of speakers for the 1944 cohort was impressive: William McReynolds, presidential administrative assistant, Senator Pat McCarran (D-NV), Dean William Mosher, and Assistant Budget Director Donald Stone (Reining 1944, 12-13).⁵⁹ In 1945, the CSC took over direct management of the program (Olson and Pollock 1945; Connor and Landis 1945; Mathewson 1947 [participant-observation]; Brown 1950).

A Sabbatical Educational Year for Mid-Career Managers, 1962-1969

NIPA was resurrected in the early 1960s to resume its franchise of receiving external funding for training programs for the federal civil service. In 1962, the Ford Foundation awarded it \$5 million for a program for mid-ranking federal administrators to cover the costs of one year of graduate courses in public administration at five universities: Chicago, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, and Virginia.⁶⁰ The grant funded about 40-50 appointments each year and covered tuition and living expenses (Niehoff 1991, 268-69). An evaluation of the program in 1967 by the CSC concluded that it was successful, providing a "major contribution" to the managerial careers of the participants and the agencies where they worked.⁶¹ The CSC took over the operation of the program in 1970. A prominent participant was Richard Holbrooke, later assistant secretary of state.

Other Training Programs, the 1960s

NIPA got involved in urban problems, including mid-career training for urban public administrators (Seashore and McNeill 1971, vii-viii, 4-5; Palmer and Patton 1981, 382). The project began with a study of existing programs for urban managers and developing a curriculum for a new program (Mosher 1967). As a result, in 1967, NIPA received a \$1.4 million, three-year grant from the Ford Foundation.⁶² The grant was not centrally focused on training per se, rather on a broader educational and research effort to improve urban areas. As one of the sub-programs financed by the grant, NIPA sponsored two-week conferences in major urban areas for mid-career administrators and other urban leaders to discuss approaches to dealing with central city problems. About ten regional conferences occurred.⁶³ Another focus was to promote application of the aerospace industry's streamlined problem-solving management culture to urban problems (Stover 1967). However, La Porte wrote that "a visit to the National Institute of Public Affairs revealed less activity" than other organizations interested in knowledge transfer from science and technology to public affairs (1967, 24).

The Sloan Foundation funded a \$10,000 grant to NIPA in 1965 to promote training for mid-career managers in use of systems and economic analysis (Niehoff 1991, 270; Dimock and Dimock 1969, 252).⁶⁴ Intended to grow into a nine-month program at selected universities such as the Carnegie Institute of Technology, it is unclear if it ever got off the ground. Other small management training programs included a \$15,000 grant from the Carnegie Foundation to provide training programs to federal managers on writing in plain English (Niehoff 1991, 271) and a grant from the US Office of Education for 10-month fellowships at its Washington office to about 35 emerging leaders in education at public universities. The latter focused on identifying minorities in particular.⁶⁵ In the late 1960s, with some funding from the Ford Foundation, NIPA sponsored several industry-government seminars to link the business sector and government leaders. This led to a more formal executive exchange program (Staats 1969, 89).⁶⁶

Fade Out, the 1970s-1980s

By the late 1960s, NIPA seemed like an organization in search of a purpose. By now, its major training programs for federal civil servants had been assumed by the CSC and grant funding for other training-related programs had concluded. Something of a precursor to the fellows program at NAPA, in the late 1960s NIPA appointed fellows (Bradley 1969, 89; Williams 1971, 1) and honorary fellows (Cleveland 1967, 946). Also, during the 1960s and -70s, NIPA housed the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines (Kane 2004, 342), proposed a national press council (Ritter and Leibowitz 1974, 853), and hosted the Committee on US-China Relations.⁶⁷ Other NIPA-related activities seemed even more diffuse and unfocused: a 1967 lecture on German cities, an occasional paper on freedom and positive government, a 1969 pamphlet on hunger in the US (reprinting a series from the *New York Times*), a 1981 study of Philadelphia's civil service system (Klingner 1982, 280), and a 1984 workbook for a seminar on the intergovernmental system.

During these decades, NIPA's status as a free-standing nonprofit began devolving. In 1979, a staffer stated it was "being reactivated as the educational arm of the [National] Academy of Public Administration" (Beaumont 1979, 507). In 1982, NIPA was described as NAPA's "educational and training affiliate" (Orlans 1982). Similarly, a NIPA book on presidential appointments

identified the organization as “the educational affiliate” of NAPA (Macy, Adams and Walter 1983). The last activities of NIPA as a distinct entity were in 1985. Early that year, it submitted a report to the US Administration on Aging on the implementation of a sub-contract to organize a conference on technology adaptations for the elderly. Its letterhead identified it as “affiliated” with NAPA, but without any qualifying or limiting adjectives.⁶⁸ A few months later, a newspaper article quoted Don Wortman as NIPA’s “acting director.”⁶⁹ After that, it wholly dissolved and merged into NAPA. NIPA’s activities in the 1970s and 1980s seem quite similar to what is now associated with NAPA: contracts, fellows, reports, books, and conferences. In that respect, perhaps NIPA’s final years can be seen as something of a precursor to, and template for, what NAPA became.

Conclusion

History is supposed to *not* forget. However, the historical literature of American public administration has largely been limited to some key organizations and developments. At times these writings have omitted the full biography of an organization or focused only on the most prominent and extant institutions. A fresh examination of the dense organizational infrastructure that public administration constructed in the 1930s-40s and the subsequent fates of those organizations contributes a fuller understanding of the state of the field at a given time. A more complete overview of these early infrastructure organizations can add texture to understanding the agenda of the discipline at that time.

NIPA was one of the early organizations that contributed to the full flowering of the nascent profession of public administration. Its history helps reveal a more three-dimensional view of the emergence and maturing of the discipline. There are many other early organizations deserving comprehensive biographies, including the Public Administration Clearing House, Gulick’s Institute of Public Administration, the Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council, the Chicago-based *Public Administrators’ News Letter* (1931-1934), and the “1313” building (renamed in 1977 by the University of Chicago as the Charles E. Merriam Center). Regarding the latter, there’s also something of a mystery to be solved: What happened to the public administration collection of 1313’s Joint Reference Library when it closed in 1991? Planning books went to the American Planning Association’s new headquarters and library in Chicago, but what happened to public administration books, pamphlets, and miscellanea? Some went to the University of Chicago Regenstein Library, but those appear to be mostly books and bound periodicals. To historians, the missing parts of the collection would be priceless. In general, there are probably some interesting stories about these and other organizations that are currently largely unknown. If explored, they could contribute to a better understanding of the history of the profession.

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Endnotes

¹ Daniel W. Williams, "The Role of the ICMA in Promoting Performance Measurement through 'Standards': 1927-1956," paper at annual conference of the American Society for Public Administration, March 29, 2004.

² In 2009, the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at NYU hosted a symposium on the Legacy and Contemporary Relevance of Luther Gulick and IPA. In 2015, Baruch College Library opened to researchers Gulick's and IPA's papers.

³ Confusingly, there were two nonprofits with the acronym NIPA. In 1921, the New York Bureau of Municipal Research was renamed the National Institute of Public Administration. However, ten years later, Gulick changed its name by deleting "National," hence IPA. The change was intended to convey its interest in international work. There was a three-year interval between the two NIPAs (the first ending in 1931, the other starting in 1934), which helps reduce confusion.

⁴ Coman and Houghton were women, suggesting that NIPA was ahead of its time in employment of women as professionals, rather than limiting them to secretarial positions.

⁵ At the time, Friedrich was trying to convince Harvard to create a public administration training program. As part of that effort, in December 1935, Friedrich and Wingo organized a conference on “surveying the standards by which administrative and executive ability is being evaluated or determined” (Ogg 1936, 128). The three-day conference took place at the Brookings Institution and about 20 people attended. For Wingo, this may have been a way to promote NIPA’s credentials after the public administration establishment had excluded him from its June conference in Princeton.

⁶ Email to the author from Joseph P. Mitchell, Director of Academy Programs, National Academy of Public Administration, January 8, 2016, author’s files.

⁷ For a partial text of the speech, see “A Laboratory for Leadership in Public Affairs,” *Public Administrators’ News Letter* 4:3 (March 1934) 1-2. For news coverage see Eunice Barnard, “Urges Laboratory of Public Affairs,” *New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*), December 28, 1933, 16; “U.S. University of Public Affairs Project Outlined,” *[Boston] Christian Science Monitor* (hereafter *CSM*), December 28, 1933, 2. It is unclear if the original idea had been Roper’s, McCall’s, or both.

⁸ Associated Press (hereafter AP), “Roper Advocates School to Train New Brains Trust,” *Washington Post* (hereafter *WP*), March 17, 1934, 3.

⁹ A gossipy syndicated column claimed that “McCall is not secretive” about hoping to head the new organization. Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen, “Washington Merry-Go-Round,” *Joplin [MO] Globe*, March 14, 1934, 3.

¹⁰ “O.T. Wingo Jr. to Wed Barbara Holdsworth,” *New York Herald Tribune* (hereafter *NYHT*), October 17, 1932, 11.

¹¹ “Baker Assails Tariff as Error of Republicans,” *NYHT*, November 4, 1932, 14.

¹² Based on the contents of the folders for 1934 in Box 15 of the Frederick Davenport Papers (hereafter DP), part of the Maxwell School Collection, University Archives, Bird Library, Syracuse University.

¹³ Brownlow had been the de facto city manager for Washington, DC from 1915 to 1920 and perhaps became acquainted with the Wingo family during that period.

¹⁴ Entry for March 13, 1934, Brownlow Diaries (hereafter BD), Special Collections Research Center, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago.

¹⁵ Entry for April 10, 1934, BD. The entry includes the entire text of Wingo’s draft of NIPA’s mission statement.

¹⁶ Entry for May 16, 1934, BD.

¹⁷ Entry for December 10, 1934, BD.

¹⁸ At the time, there was no standardized American spelling of the word, perhaps because it was a relatively new concept for public service. Eventually, common usage dropped the “e.”

¹⁹ “Wingo to Broadcast,” *Washington Star* (hereafter *WS*), November 19, 1934, 1; “On the Air,” *Hutchinson [KS] News*, January 25, 1935, 16.

²⁰ “To See Capital in Action: Yale Students Will Go to Washington for Week’s Survey,” *NYT*, November 7, 1934, 25; “Princeton Students Get Week’s Study in Capital,” *NYHT*, March 8, 1935, 12; “Yale Men Arrive for Week’s Study,” *WS*, March 18, 1935, 4.

²¹ “13 Yale Students Named for Trip to Washington,” *Boston Globe* (hereafter *BG*), February 9, 1936, A20; “The Reporter,” *Journal of Higher Education* 7:5 (May 1936) 276.

²² Eunice Barnard, “Plan Centralizes Federal Youth Aid,” *NYT*, December 31, 1934, 15; “Federal Diary” (column), *WP*, December 18, 1934, 20.

²³ *WP*: “Summer Course Listed in Government Study,” May 20, 1935, 9; “American U. Gives Courses on New Deal,” June 23, 1935, 15.

²⁴ Entry for October 12, 1934, BD.

²⁵ Entry for October 23, 1934, BD.

²⁶ Memo from Dr. Reno to Wingo, July 5, 1935, Subject: Dissatisfaction Among the Interns, Box 17, DP.

²⁷ Letter from Walter J. Shepard, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Ohio State University, to Wingo, September 19, 1935, Box 18, DP.

²⁸ “National Institute [sic] of Public Affairs,” *Public Administrators’ News Letter* 4:3 (March 1934) 2.

²⁹ Letter from White to Wingo, February 27, 1934, Box 15, DP.

³⁰ Kirke Simpson, “Washington Letter” (column), *[Sandusky, OH] Register*, July 6, 1934, 6.

³¹ Letter from Joe Cadden, National Student Federation, to Wingo, November 16, 1934, Box 16, DP.

³² George D. Riley, “Control of Public Service Again Shifts More Tightly into Hold of Minority Politico-Professor Group” (“U.S. and Us,” daily column for federal workers), *Washington Herald-Times*, February, 1939. Reprinted in the *Congressional Record* by Congressman Guy Moser (D-PA), Thursday, February 23, 1939 (p. 1848). He said the column was published “Monday last,” which could either mean the 13th or the 20th. Two years later, Riley again

attacked NIPA and the Rockefellers for what he considered their elitist effort to create an administrative class à la the UK: "Many Parallels can be Drawn in Comparing British and American Civil Service Plans," May 4, 1941. Reprinted in the *Congressional Record* by Congressman Charles W. Tobey (R-NH), May 8, 1941 (p. A2199).

³³ At the end of that summer, Meriam began a year at the University of Chicago as a Visiting Professor of Political Science. In April 1936, he delivered a series of lectures on the importance of training in public service. Later that year, the University's Press published them as a book in its Studies in Public Administration series (Meriam 1936). In 1937, Meriam broke with the public administration establishment over the proposal by the Brownlow Committee to eliminate the autonomy that the federal CSC had from direct presidential control (Lee 2016, 44-50).

³⁴ Some other participants became more prominent later in their public administration careers. G. Lyle Belsley was on the White House staff of William H. McReynolds (one of FDR's original six administrative assistants and who specialized in personnel matters) and Raymond Zimmerman was Truman's Liaison Officer for Personnel Management (Lee 2016).

³⁵ Two years later, a newspaper article stated inaccurately that the study had been prepared "for" NIPA. Eugene Guild, "Schools Train U.S. Employees [*sic*]," *WS*, March 20, 1937, B-1.

³⁶ Equally odd was the presentation after Wingo by Professor Emery Olson, then heading American University's In-Service Training Division in its School of Public Affairs. Just a few months earlier, the School's summer session had been integrated with NIPA's first cohort of summer interns. Olson, too, did not refer to NIPA (Civil Service Assembly 1935, 94-101).

³⁷ As a former Republican congressman and state senator, Davenport of course had had a partisan affiliation. But, from the perspective of Brownlow et al., there were mitigating factors. First, Davenport also had academic credentials, including a PhD, serving on the faculty of Hamilton College in upstate New York, and involved in the founding of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University. Second, his overtly political roles were linked to good government reformism, especially Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive (Bull Moose) Party. With the dissolution of that party, Davenport returned to the Republican Party and was elected to Congress from upstate New York in 1924. He was defeated for re-election in the 1932 Democratic landslide. In 1938, Davenport began playing a role in FDR's efforts to professionalize federal HR by chairing the Council of Personnel Administration (Lee 2016, 65).

³⁸ Entry for May 16, 1934, BD.

³⁹ NIPA letterhead, letter from Davenport to Sydnor Walker, Rockefeller Foundation, November 21, 1934. RG 1.1, Series 200.S, Projects, Folder 4443, Box 376, Rockefeller Archive Center.

⁴⁰ NIPA, "Prospectus of the Project," submitted to Rockefeller Foundation, May 11, 1935, 9 (ibid).

⁴¹ October 24, 1935: "Capital to Train College Men in Public Service," *NYHT*, 9; "Public Service Practice Work Planned for College Graduates," *CSM*, 1, 3; AP, "Internes' [*sic*] are Going to Learn How to Operate a Government," *Baltimore Sun*, 1.

⁴² "Dr. Reining to Direct Public Affairs Study," *NYT*, February 12, 1936, 19.

⁴³ "Public Affairs Institute Adds Three Trustees," *WP*, February 12, 1936, 4.

⁴⁴ Entry for December 23, 1935, BD. A few months later, Wingo explained that the term institution was "unwieldy" and that most people incorrectly, but routinely, already referred to it as an institute. The change was simply formalizing common usage. Letter from Wingo to Robert Paige, Public Administration Clearing House, March 3, 1936, Box 19, DP.

⁴⁵ Davenport's annual salary was \$7,500, Reining's was \$6,000, and Wingo's was \$5,000. Memo from Wingo to F. P. H. Siddons, American Security and Trust Co., September 16, 1935, Subject: Annual Budget for the Institution, Box 18, DP.

⁴⁶ "Public Life Now Offers a Great Chance for Men with Broad College Training," *Harvard Crimson*, February 27, 1936; "Training for Statecraft," *CSM Weekly Magazine*, April 1, 1936, 3 (including a photo of Reining with a woman identified as "Miss Cary B. Baldwin, a former intern now engaged in private secretarial work in Washington"); "The Personnel of Our Government" (book review), *WP*, November 1, 1936, B8.

⁴⁷ Wingo letter to F. P. H. Siddons, February 27, 1937, Box 21, DP.

⁴⁸ Letters from Siddons to Davenport, March 1, 1937, *ibid*.

⁴⁹ Brownlow telegram to John Dickinson, Philadelphia, March 3, 1937, *ibid*.

⁵⁰ Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting, March 5, 1937, Box 37, DP.

⁵¹ Letter from Roger Whiteford, NIPA's attorney, to Wingo, May 18, 1937, File: May 1935 [*sic*], Box 17, DP. Evidently, the letter was misfiled when placed in the chronological office files. Even though Wingo subsequently repaid that amount, Whiteford stated that he was "still substantially indebted to the Institute for monies improperly withdrawn by you."

⁵² Memo from Davenport to Roger Whiteford, October 22, 1937, Box 21, DP. It is possible that the query opaquely mentioned by Davenport was from an employer considering a job application from Wingo. Back in his parents' home

state, in the fall of 1937, Wingo had applied for a position with the Lion Oil Refining Corporation in El Dorado, AR. The company's Industrial Relations Department wrote Davenport that "we are especially anxious to know just why Mr. Wingo severed his connection" with NIPA. Letter from J. F. Hansard to Davenport, September 28, 1937, *ibid*.

⁵³ Wingo's post-NIPA professional career was apparently not successful. Between 1938 and 1947, he worked for (and departed from) about half a dozen public relations and lobbying agencies in Washington and New York City. In 1943, he pleaded *nolo contendere* to a federal indictment that he had failed to register as a foreign agent (for Sweden and Finland) and was fined \$500. He filed for personal bankruptcy in 1943 and again in 1949, both times in New York City. In the early 1960s, he briefly resided in Canada and his mother died while visiting him there. In his private life, two much-publicized engagements to prominent socialites in 1932 and 1937 never led to marriage. He married in 1942, divorced in 1947, remarried in 1951, and eventually married a third time. He died in 1969 in Washington. Sources: *BG*, *NYHT*, *NYT*, *WP*, *WS*, and *Virgin Islands Daily News*.

⁵⁴ FDR's calendar for May 23, 1939 includes this 15-minute meeting: "Dr. Frederick M. Davenport with group of 70 internes [*sic*]." FDR Day-By-Day, Roosevelt Presidential Library, accessed July 20, 2017: <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/daybyday/>. The size of the group must be inaccurate. FDR had had lunch with Davenport on May 4 to urge him to accept on a larger role in his civil service reorganization, but Davenport eventually declined (Lee 2016, 65). During lunch, Davenport likely asked FDR for a favor to meet the NIPA cohort. Roosevelt, who disliked disagreeing with anyone in person, probably felt compelled to accept. This was the only time he met with NIPA interns, indicating it was a one-time favor.

⁵⁵ Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day" (column), *Atlanta Constitution*: "Present Demand for Nurses," February 27, 1941, 20; "Knowledge of Past Needed for Future," August 2, 1943, 14.

⁵⁶ Hall, King, Bellows, and Scott were women. For a detailed examination of the experiences and post-internship careers of the female interns, see: Berneita K. Randall, "A Follow-Up Study of the Women Interns of the National Institute of Public Affairs," master's thesis, George Washington University, 1950.

⁵⁷ Letter to Davenport from Norma S. Thompson, Secretary, Rockefeller Foundation, October 19, 1937, Box 21, DP.

⁵⁸ *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1940* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1940), 393.

⁵⁹ Another speaker was Walter Heller. Twenty years later, he was President Kennedy's chief economist.

⁶⁰ This was not a wholly new idea. In 1941, the University of Minnesota offered a one-year post-graduate fellowship in public administration for men and women who had worked at least three years for a government agency, preferably in an administrative capacity. "In-Service Fellowships in Public Administration," *Public Welfare News* 9:1 (January 1941) 7.

⁶¹ Bureau of Training, US CSC, "A Study of the Career Education Awards Program of the National Institute of Public Affairs," 1967, 6.

⁶² Anthony J. Yudis, "3-Year Study Planned on Metropolitan Life," *BG*, March 24, 1967, 4.

⁶³ Alan Lupo, "Sick-City Study Gets Under Way," *BG*, April 2, 1967, 24.

⁶⁴ To promote "use of technological thought in public management," NIPA published an occasional paper by Guy Black on "The Application of Systems Analysis to Government Operations" (WorldCat #15528674). No publication year was listed, but it likely was about 1966.

⁶⁵ Implied by its coverage in African-American newspapers: "Project Develops Top Educators," *Chicago Defender*, September 17, 1966, 11; "Project Develops Leaders," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 24, 1966, 28.

⁶⁶ Philip W. McKinsey, "U.S. Charts Talent Swap with Firms," *CSM*, September 30, 1968, 12.

⁶⁷ "Grants Made for Research on U.S., China," *WP*, June 7, 1967, A2; AP, "Former Envoy Denies Advising LBJ on Southeast Asia Policy," *Hartford [CT] Courant*, March 21, 1968, 11.

⁶⁸ NIPA, Attachment B, "Final Report on a Roundtable Forum: The 350 Billion Dollar 60 and Over Market" (typescript), January 18, 1985. WorldCat/OCLC #82783421 and 21850711.

⁶⁹ Alison Muscatine, "Officials' Private, Public Lives Blur," *WP*, March 2, 1985, A7.

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Hard Times on the Potomac

Larry Hubbell

Alex Butler has worked for the federal government for 20 years and most recently with the Environmental Protection Agency, and he is unhappy. There are multiple ways to describe his state of mind: burn-out case, disaffected employee, Trump resister, bureaucrat without a cause, middle-ager on the verge of a nervous breakdown. He isn't sure whether any of these descriptors adequately captures the alienation he is experiencing. However, one thing is for sure. Alex is bored and it is only getting worse. There doesn't seem to be an upside. He has ten more years before his pension is fully funded and he would be able to sustain a reasonably comfortable retirement, as long as it is supplemented by some kind of part-time work. Is Uber in his future? But, ten years is a long time to wait. Is senility a greater possibility because of his lethargy?

Alex works in EPA's Productivity Management Division. As the name implies, the office has the broad mandate of improving efficiency throughout EPA. Officially, their mission is

- Making jobs at EPA more interesting and fulfilling;
- Encouraging employees to work smarter not harder; and
- Providing funding for innovative ideas that foster efficiency and high-quality service.

Any EPA employee who is aware of Alex's office is skeptical of their mission, because in addition to expressing these banal sentiments and providing other divisions with badly needed funding, they also, on occasion, do the bidding of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The employees of OMB serve as Trump's administrative henchmen – cutting budgets, deregulating as many policies as possible and generally creating havoc, particularly in regulatory agencies. There is an oft-used warning about the OMB, which even some OMB officials use as a half laugh line – beware of the OMB official coming to your agency offering help.

Even during normal times, the OMB is not looked upon kindly by most federal employees. That sentiment is especially true during the Trump administration. Traditionally, the budget masters at OMB, on occasion, would open the funding floodgates during Democratic administrations,

particularly if an agency performs a regulatory function; those floodgates are likely to become hermetically sealed when the Republicans are in power, except, of course, for the military. EPA's access to funding is to a large extent cyclical. There are affluent times when new programs are initiated and the associated regulations are bountiful. However, during the periods of reaction money becomes much less plentiful and one hears the abhorrent word "deregulation" bandied about frequently. All in all, the budgeteers and their Republican political overlords at OMB are both feared and loathed.

But, aside from the budget execution and formulation function, OMB also has a management function. The management side of OMB lies considerably below the budget side in the Executive Branch power firmament. They are like third-order royal princes who get some attention but exercise only rudimentary power. The reason: they don't control money, and at least in theory, direct the management agenda. In doing so, they occasionally ask their management counterparts throughout the bureaucracy for hard-to-get information; bully them to implement next-to-impossible Administration initiatives; or require them in some way or the other to pay obeisance to their mandates.

However, frankly, in most federal bureaucrats' view – they matter very little. Although, they can, at times, be a nuisance, especially to their management counterparts in the federal agencies. These OMB managers are, in fact, first-class bloviators. If in their opinion, an agency has not fully complied with their edicts, a war of memorandums usually ensues. The first shot from the OMB bow is aimed at an upper middle career official at the offending agency. If that volley does not induce compliance, then OMB chooses a target higher up the management pyramid – usually aimed at some political appointee, who is still choosing the furniture for his office and doesn't want to appear to be someone not on the Administration's team. That sort of political appointee is usually a good target. OMB's managers seldom have to go much higher. They usually win, but the victory is often pyrrhic because the offending agency inevitably at some point in the future proves unworthy and then the war of memos is renewed and once again the offending agency haltingly complies. It is a war of attrition. This process only concludes when the Administration ends.

Divisions, like Alex's, are inevitably caught in the middle. Like their OMB counterparts, their employees are the designated diggers of information and the perennial naggers. They must, at least, appear to comply with OMB's demands while not antagonizing people throughout their agency, who, more than most, have an even more active distrust of all things OMB. The managers Alex's division interacts with have a simple rule: provide the management side of OMB and EPA's Productivity Management Division with as little information as possible and in so doing – either obfuscate, claim the information is not available or simply refuse to comply.

That is the principal drama the Productivity Management Division engages in. However, on most days the on-going drama is relatively subdued. Honestly, the Division is normally dominated by torpor. Its heyday was during the Reagan administration when they had a substantial amount of funds to dispense in exchange for providing OMB with the management information they seemed so intent upon gathering. That need for information has declined significantly during the Trump administration. The Trump Administration doesn't want information. Indeed, the Trump officials

seem to be totally lacking in curiosity about EPA, except how to make it ineffective and compliant with industry.

Since there is often little to do, the members of the Productivity Management Division typically expound at length about the evils of Trump and his grafter political appointees. Alex knows that Trump and his rape-the-earth minions are malevolent, but he is tired of hearing from his colleagues about their latest infraction. He does not require further confirmation. Alex watches MSNBC without fail every weekday night and can recite in detail the latest scandal foisted on the federal government by Trump's criminal syndicate. But what else might his colleagues choose to talk about? They have become largely government dead-enders. None of them, including Alex, are ever going to leave their mark on the agency, let alone develop a cure for EPA's alleged productivity woes. Adding to the problem, Trump and his band of deregulators have made their work lives irrelevant.

With the advent of Trump, his increasingly disconsolate colleagues are desperately in search of diversions at work. He doubts if they've always been like this. At one time, some of them were undoubtedly dedicated civil servants, youthful and full of optimism. But he only knows their present selves, since Alex is relatively new to the division. Even prior to Trump, their division was hardly on EPA's cutting edge. Over the decades of its existence, it lost its vitality and surprisingly has evaded OMB's red pencil. Trump and his scofflaws only tended to increase the Division's irrelevance and it had reached a new nadir. Indeed, the behavior of some of the employees of the Productivity Management Division gives some credibility to Trump's penchant for claiming that he wants to befoul the swamp – a swamp that he has not only befouled but enlarged significantly.

There is Howard, who is always trying to find a way to game the federal government. Howard is beyond obese. He is in his mid-40s and, for someone so young, he always seems to be popping pills. Who knows for what? Howard is so large that he wears suspenders daily, probably because he is unable to buy a belt that encompasses his massive girth. However, like the swamp rat that he has become, he uses his weight to obtain advantages unknown to his colleagues. Howard is always bragging that, unlike everyone else in the agency, he is allowed to book first-class tickets on government business. Is it really such a perquisite to be consistently awarded first-class flights on the government's dime because his 400-pound body cannot fit into an airplane seat in coach? But aside from that, why is it so damned inviting to be EPA's representative on the board of the squirrely meeting planners association? Is it really so desirable to attend conferences in Toledo, Utica, and Enid, especially during their annual meeting held in the winter?

Jasmine is the administrative assistant. She seldom leaves her desk. She is simply too busy to leave. If she gets up, she is likely to miss a Facebook post, an Instagram adorable pet shot or a text from one of her multiple boyfriends. In truth, Jasmine is disabled, although it is a self-induced disability. Her pink fingernails on her left hand measure at full eight inches. Each of the five nails is decorated by a different theme. They include a ghost, vaguely resembling Casper; sparkling icicles; a red and gold sunset; a puppy, probably a chihuahua; and a golden ring. The nails do not project straight out, rather at about inch four, they curve in – thus damning any hope of her being ambidextrous. Fortunately, she is right-handed. Not that Jasmine cares. No one in the office ever asks Jasmine about her nails. Nor does Jasmine explain why she apparently is trying to transform

her left hand into a kind of art form. How long is she prepared to let her talons grow? It is a subject politely avoided in the office. She goes to great lengths to try to avoid marring her nails since, presumably, they are likely subject to all kinds of perils, including chipping, scraping or breaking off. Consequently, she types with one hand, drives her car with one hand, cuts her food with one hand, among other normal two-handed activities.

What stands out about Tim is his pencil-thin mustache and his perpetual look of intensity. With the advent of Trump, Tim began running his not so part-time business from his office desk. For that aspect of his life, he demonstrates not just a proclivity but a passion. Tim is an “always be closing” kind of guy. He owns an import business, enabled by his ex-Peace Corps spouse who maintains her contacts with her former clients in Indonesia. Tim and his wife specialize in batik, exotic jewelry, and other various art forms. On slow days, Tim devotes his time at work to managing inventory, meticulously attending to his website, taking orders and when he thinks nobody is looking – packing and arranging for deliveries.

John is Alex’s boss. He is in his mid-40s. What stands out about John is that all of his clothing, especially his suits, are two sizes too small. It’s not as if he has recently gained weight. John simply consistently buys his clothing too small. At times, it seems like he is likely to pop out of them. John epitomizes discomfort. Does his physical discomfort contribute to his often frenetic tempo? Despite this, John is especially conventional – the type of person you would expect to be a government lifer.

Of all the people in the office, John is probably secretly the most discontent, although his work diligence is deceiving. John is a team player, but he doesn’t really have managers directing him who want him to go forth and do good work. His Type A personality doesn’t find an outlet at work. John desperately wants to serve this Administration, any administration, but the Trump Administration officials seldom give him anything of substance to do. He remains a team player, albeit abandoned by management.

During his more productive days, John had been especially adept at assiduously handling the needs of his immediate supervisor, and when the occasion called for it, the other dogs up the food chain. His passion to please has spanned multiple administrations. Even today, John is a stickler for details and since the office’s primary activity is producing memorandums for his superiors, he is particularly obsessive about spelling, grammar and the passive voice. You have to love John, because neutral bureaucrat that he is, it doesn’t matter to him that the barbarians have stormed the castle, breached the gate and now sit on the throne. When he receives a rare assignment from the higher-ups, no matter how trivial, he completes it efficiently and with due diligence.

Doug, a bachelor in his 40s, is obsessed with sex. He has red, neatly trimmed hair and is always dressed in some shade of red – red shirts, red sweaters, red socks, burnt red belts. Everything he wears is red, except for his shoes. If he wasn’t so obviously lecherous and obsessed with the color red, some women might find him attractive. Instead, the women in EPA who know Doug, studiously avoid him, choosing longer footpaths around the office so that they can avoid him, shunning even the most incidental contact. Doug often recounts to Alex in hushed but excited tones his latest sexual conquest. Most of their conversations could better be described as Doug monologues. His stories, told in hushed tones, invariably involve descriptions of the body parts of his sexual

partners and those body parts are universally without flaws – no stretch marks, misplaced moles, surgery scars or rolls of fat. Following his vivid descriptions, Doug invariably also urges Alex to participate in a future foray with him – an invitation Alex has never accepted. Alex wonders how much Doug’s stories are fact and how much fiction? Is the basic story line drawn from his ample porn collection and the incidental facts simply embellished? And if these sexual encounters are always so great, why do they never seem to be repeated with the same woman? It is because of his nearly complete lack of emotional intelligence and his creepy demeanor that Doug is the office leper. Alex feels sorry for him. No one else in the office speaks with Doug, except in the most circumscribed of work conversations.

Felicia, the 20 something with the long auburn tresses and the suitably short designer skirts stops by Alex’s desk sometimes twice a week to share some tidbits of gossip. She claims to be a Republican, but in Alex’s opinion, she is not a very serious party member. She graduated from Barnard in English two years ago. Her memos are always impeccable – no split infinitives, use of the passive voice or prepositions at the end of sentences. That especially pleases John. She is a speller and grammarian extraordinaire. Why is she here? Alex doesn’t know. Does she think that given Trump’s zeal for deregulation that he and his political minions would create some brave new world in which industry would lock hands with the regulatory agencies and in concert would “Make America Great Again?” Her youthful idealism is misplaced. Her daddy must be a Republican. Unlike all of his office colleagues, with the exception of John, Felicia always maintains at least a minimum of workplace enthusiasm.

Jerry is always ruffled, wearing ten-year-old suits, decorated by the occasional moth hole. Jerry is 55, but he looks much older. During the summer on most days, his shirts are stained by rings of sweat. Jerry has clocked in 29 years and three months of federal service. Alex knows that piece of trivia, because each day, Jerry indicates on his erasable board how many working days are left on his remaining 30-year sentence. *The New York Times* crossword puzzles are seemingly his only passion. He is so good at solving them that he typically completes the Monday through Wednesday puzzles in less than 30 minutes. The more difficult Thursday and Friday puzzles take a little longer, but he is usually able to polish them off within an hour. When he isn’t solving puzzles, his eyes are often fixed on the traffic on 14th Street and the Department of Commerce across the street.

Then, there is Alex. When he was a Presidential Management Intern 20 years ago, the future seemed so hopeful. What went wrong? Should he have taken that job at Energy ten years ago? Early in his career should he have chucked the federal government for that job his brother Hal offered him at his start-up? Now he seems left with only undesirable alternatives. If he leaves the federal service early, he faces an early, underfunded pension. Furthermore, it’s unlikely that managers in the private sector would find his work history or skills interesting. Alex waited too long. He got too comfortable. Who wants to hire a 20-year federal government lifer?

Alex’s non-work life is no better. Should he have pursued a Ph.D. part-time at George Washington and developed a second career in academe? He could now be teaching for at least a second or third-tier college somewhere, denouncing the phenomenon of Trump, instead of living through its daily indignities. Alex always had enjoyed what contact he had with academe and the world of books. Perhaps he wouldn’t have become a brilliant scholar, but with more than an adequate skill as a writer, he could have easily penned an occasional article – certainly enough to achieve tenure.

But Alex didn't have the energy to jump through the necessary academic hoops – even the first one, the Ph.D., the one that would have given him the union card. Doug didn't want to devote most of his evenings at George Washington, grinding out a Ph.D. in public administration. That was a mistake – an opportunity squandered.

Should he have devoted more time to Claire, his spouse? Maybe that's why her eye wandered? His wife of 26 years, who was so excited to move with him to Washington in the 1990s, is no longer his partner. Their marriage started to run down in the early 2000s. Two years ago, Claire announced unexpectedly with a Cabernet in her hand at the dinner table that she wanted a divorce. Not a trial separation – a divorce! She commanded him to move down the hall to the vacant bedroom immediately and leave their house in a month. Claire did not frame her statement as a negotiation, it was, in fact, a non-negotiable demand. Alex accepted her command without comment and quickly packed up one suitcase full of clothes and left the premises. It was only fair that he leave the house, instead of her. Her father, the stockbroker, had provided virtually all of the down payment on their house – a house now worth almost \$1.5 million. She was probably right about seeking a divorce. They needed to take different paths. By the time of the divorce settlement, she was engaged to a guy down the block, who incidentally was also a stockbroker. In the settlement, she got the four-bedroom house in North Arlington; he got the two-bedroom apartment they used to rent out in Adams Morgan. Alex hasn't seen Claire since the divorce.

He has yet to take up cruising the Adams Morgan restaurants and bars, but who knows where the next year will lead? Since his bar chat is subpar, perhaps he will choose an alternate fate. For now, Alex usually dines at home. His evening meals are relatively Spartan. He has never managed to become the male who embraces the kitchen. What joy he derives from those things culinary, he gets at lunch. Downtown Washington has a plethora of restaurants and they would be more enjoyable if they included more than one glass of wine, but one must maintain at least a semblance of decorum and sobriety.

Alex is lonely, companion-less. Should he sample the dating sites? They strike him as rather weird – matchmaking by algorithm. Anybody who is his contemporary is likely to be a fellow divorcee. What sort of secrets and intolerable habits would that sort of person harbor? Nor does it appear seemly to date someone 20 years his junior. There would be few common memories. So, what is his future going to look like? As a 49-year old, he is beginning to experience his own mortality full bore. Will he die alone in an assisted care facility – a breathing tube, during his last days, stuck up his nose? Alone and subject to the whims of his nurses?

The regular Thursday morning staff meeting

The Thursday morning staff meeting has become ritualized. And as with many rituals that have persisted over time, they sometimes lose their reason for being. The agenda and non-agenda items seldom vary. John makes some announcements, most of which are not memorable. Once the announcements are completed, the non-agenda items are usually the same – the staff bark, kvetch, and occasionally reminisce about the Obama years. Today, John appears to have the staff's half-attention. Felicia is looking at her new dog's Instagram. Tim is checking stock prices on his

iPhone. Jerry is surreptitiously completing the day's *New York Times* crossword puzzle hidden within a folder situated on his lap. Doug is in an uncaffeinated daze. Jasmine is admiring her nails. Howard is eating a sticky, oversized Danish, careful that the pastry does not touch his hands so that he can avoid using one of the towelettes he recently swiped from Red Lobster. Alex is thinking about where he is going to dinner.

John: I'm glad to see everybody is here on time.

Tim: None of us would want to miss even a minute of our weekly get-together.

Tim replies with more than a tinge of sarcasm.

John: Tim – I didn't realize that you looked forward to our meetings so much.

John, often surprisingly innocent, does not recognize that Tim is being sarcastic.

Tim: Our meetings hold a permanent docket on my iPhone at 10:00 AM on Thursdays.

Howard: What's happening with our staff retreat?

John: It hasn't been approved yet.

Howard: I hope it's going to be off-site. If it's on-site, we'll all be distracted by our phones and we won't have a chance to bond.

Tim: To hell with bonding, I just want to breathe that fresh Maryland air for a few days.

Doug responds to Tim's comment in a hushed voice.

Doug: Being away from the office... won't that cut into your profit margin?

John: Doug... did you say something about profit?

Doug, always fast with a riposte, replies:

Doug: I was agreeing with you, John. I think an off-site conference would be *profitable*.

Tim: I'm glad we're on the same page. How many here would like to see the staff retreat off-site?

Everyone raises their hand.

Alex: That was a great place we went to three years ago – the one near Camp David.

Jerry: You can forget about going there again. That was during the Obama salad days. Don't count on it being off-site either. As we all know, this administration is pretty tight with the purse strings.

Howard: I can see it now. Instead of going on a retreat, we'll be sitting around this table for three hours, griping about the usual and eating donuts from Dunkin that *we* pay for. That's not my idea of a retreat.

John: Look, if we don't get funding for the retreat, we could do it at my house.

Howard: C'mon John, everyone wants to go to Maryland.

John does not respond but looks mildly peeved. The conversation pauses briefly.

Jerry: Well, if it's any consolation, it's not just us. I have a buddy at Justice, who tells me that his office doesn't have enough money to stock their office supply cabinet.

Howard: At least, we haven't come to that yet. Jasmine... do we still have plenty of the normal size writing pads? You know I prefer them to the 8 ½ by 11s.

Jasmine: I stocked up on them at the end of last fiscal year. We're rich in paper, pens, clips, tape... you name it.

Jerry: What about staplers? You know... the ones that don't jam.

Jasmine: That's taken care of.

Getting back to business, Felicia asks:

Felicia: What's going on with the planned reorganization? We're already way into Year Two of the Trump administration and still no task forces, no preliminary plans – nothing. They told us that we were supposed to be well into the task force stage by now.

Jerry: These reorganizations always take longer getting off the ground than expected. Hell, most of the politicals didn't get hired until two months ago.

Alex: Maybe we'll get reorganized out of existence.

John: That's not going to happen. I haven't heard even the slightest hints about that.

Howard: No news is usually good news around here.

Tim: I hear we're going to have a hiring freeze and that all travel to conferences will end.

John: C'mon, Tim, you know all of the rumors that have circulated around here during the past year. Most of them have been half-baked.

Doug: I heard that our mark from OMB cuts the agency by 25 percent. We may be in for some tough times. Our budget office is keeping their cards close to their chests.

Jerry: I heard the opposite. Sounds like we're doing okay, but not great.

John: I haven't heard anything about that, but I did receive a memo from the Deputy saying he's going to cancel the three-year review we were going to conduct of the procurement process.

Howard: That's ridiculous! That review is a central part of our five-year strategic plan. And not only is it in the plan, but Procurement actually wants it.

Jerry: John, do you think the Deputy is persuadable?

John: After the memo came to me, I met with him. He gave me an emphatic "no."

Doug: That's bullshit.

Uncomfortable with the vulgarity, Felicia grimaces.

Felicia: Doug, he is our superior. Maybe a little respect is in order.

Doug: Yeah and he's a horse's ass.

John: We're not going to get anywhere by blaming some so and so in the Administration. We've just got to plow ahead.

Doug brings the conversation back on point.

Doug: John – that was going to be the main project that was going to tie up Felicia, Howard and my time over the next month.
John: Maybe the Inspector General would be interested in a review?
Doug: John... what are you smoking? The IG isn't interested in a review. They only want to review others and they already do a damn good job of scaring the bejesus out of half of the agency.

Tiring of the sarcasm, John discards his normally sunny disposition and become visibly frustrated.

John: Well, that's all I have to say. Does anybody have anything more, preferably something that isn't a rumor?
Tim: Are we having a Christmas party this year? I have some dynamite decorations from Thailand that we can put on our fake tree.
Alex: Where is our tree? I didn't see it next to the supply closet.
Jasmine: Facilities took it away. They said it was a fire hazard.
Tim: Great! What's next? John has Trump decided to take away our Christmas holiday?
John: Now you know that won't happen.
Doug: I could see him keeping the holiday, but ending it for federal employees.

John wants to end the meeting on an up note.

John: Let's start planning for our Christmas party. Jasmine, could you head the planning committee?
Jasmine: Yes, boss.

A hastily called staff meeting two weeks later

Unlike the meeting two weeks ago, this time John has everyone's attention. John very seldom calls a staff meeting, except for Thursday's weekly gathering. He must have something important to relay. If it's important, it's probably not good news. John appears flustered. He is not an expert at delivering bad news.

John: Did everybody have a good weekend?
Tim: As good as can be expected since it is early December.
Doug: It was so warm ... I was able to wash my 'Vette.
Howard: I had a great time at "Elephant Jumps."
Jerry: What the hell is "Elephant Jumps?"
Howard: A posh new restaurant in Falls Church. It's on my A-list.

A rather longish pause.

John: You may be wondering why I called this special meeting.
Tim: Don't tell me – all Christmas parties have been canceled.
Jerry: Don't put anything past the Trump Scrooges.

John: No, I'm afraid it's worse than that.
Tim: Scott Pruitt is coming back to EPA and he is going to run our division?
Alex: Hey, John ... just get to it.
John: Okay, here's the news unvarnished. They're eliminating our office and if you don't have the requisite time in the federal government, you're likely to get riffed. You'll be receiving notices in your mailboxes tomorrow, explaining your options.

An even longer pause.

Tim: This ain't April, so I'm assuming this is not an early April Fool's joke.
John: I'm not joking, nor is the agency.
Felicia: I must be missing something, what does it mean to get riffed?
Tim: Some of us are going to be out of a job in a fairly short period of time.
Felicia: That can't be possible. John, did you get this right?
John: Yes, the deputy administrator told me directly.
Felicia: We are the ones who are supposed to be recommending downsizing, not the ones who get downsized.
Jerry: Up is down and down is up. That's how these guys figure it.
Doug: Those bastards!
Felicia: Are we all going to get pink-slipped?
Jerry: Not all of us. The federal government has some very precise procedures for RIFs. The personnel weenies follow a playbook that takes into account whether you are a veteran, your length of service, your type of appointment and your performance ratings.
John: It's not entirely bad news. For some of us... well, we have additional options.
Tim: Well ... isn't that sweet of them.
John: Career employees with ten or more years of federal service can convert to permanent part-time.
Tim: How many hours are we talking about?
John: Thirty hours a week.
Tim: Wonderful ... a 25 percent salary cut!
Doug: Any other options?
John: Some of you may be eligible to move into a lower grade.
Doug: At the same salary and a higher step?
John: No, step one.
Tim: What about a reimbursable detail at another agency?
John: Sorry ... not going to happen.
Tim: I don't suppose we could be reassigned to another office in EPA?
John: Not in the cards. There will be RIFs occurring throughout EPA.
Tim: A buddy of mine at the FBI told me that when they did a RIF there that they gave employees with five or more years of service a buyout option of \$25 thousand.
John: The good news is that there is a buyout option. The bad news is that it's only \$10 thousand, but you have to commit to the buyout in the next ten days and leave within three weeks.
Howard: John ... you're just full of good news.
Alex: How long do we have?

John: This office will be dissolved in two months. Sorry folks. If it makes any difference to you, I think we did one helluva job over the years. OMB respected us. The senior management here frequently complimented me on the quality of our work.

Doug: That doesn't mean crap. If we did such a damn good job, then why are they shit-canning us?

John: It wasn't because of our work.

Doug: Then... what was it?

John: I can only speculate.

Doug: Well ... speculate.

John assumes a sternly formal tone, similar to the one his father adopted during grace at the Sunday dinner.

John: As you probably are aware, this administration generally does not like regulations and the protection of the environment is not of their priorities. In fact, I guess you could say that they wouldn't mind if we went back to the days before the Clean Air Act and the Superfund.

Doug: Tell us something we don't know.

John: Don't get cross with me. I'm just the messenger.

Doug: Yeah, but you're the messenger who has been so damn positive since those Republican vultures got here.

Alex: Don't be so hard on John. He's done right by us. It's the senior administrators who screwed us, not John.

Doug: Don't give me that shit, Alex. What are you doing – angling for one last outstanding performance evaluation?

Alex: Fuck off, Doug. You can't talk to me like you do to those unfortunate women you date.

Doug, visibly angry, rises slightly from his chair, almost standing, but then thinks better of it. Trying to relieve the group of a moment most awkward, Howard quips:

Howard: Well, Jerry, you've got it made in the shade – 29 years, a veteran and a career employee. Who cares what kind of evaluation you got from John?

Jerry tries to hold back a grin, but he feels like the soldier who missed the bullet, only to see his buddy riddled with ammo.

Jerry: Yeah, I've got only 8 months 2 weeks and 2 days left. Borrowing from the language of Trump, I don't have much time left in "this shithole."

Tim: Is that it? Is the meeting over?

John: I'm afraid it is.

Tim: It's two o'clock. I don't see any reason to give Trump any more of my time today. I'm going to withdraw to the Willard for a drink or maybe two or three. Who's going with me?

Howard, Alex and Jerry, and Tim make the short trek to the Willard Hotel – the upmarket bar of the political elite since Abraham Lincoln. Partly in deference to Howard’s massive girth and their down mood, they slowly saunter rather than briskly walk the short distance to the Willard. They exchange few words. The office banter has been supplanted by the solemnity of something resembling a funeral march. They traipse up to the second-floor bar, overlooking the busy corner of 14th and Pennsylvania Avenues. The after-workers have not arrived yet, so they have their pick of the tables. They choose the prized corner table. The older bartender with a meticulously shaped Afro comes over to their table to take their order.

Jerry: We’re looking for something good.
Tim: I would prefer something hard.
Alex: Guys, it is only 2:30.
Howard: Yeah, but how often do you get fired. This is my first time.

The bartender, not acknowledging their obvious distress, proceeds professionally with the order taking.

Bartender: It’s not especially hard, but it is our specialty. It looks like you gentlemen could use it. How about a mint julep?

Howard, Jerry and Tim assent. Although the Willard is famous for its mint juleps, the drink is uncharacteristic of the season. Alex, deviating from the group and stepping outside his comfort zone, orders a vermouth-less martini, straight up, decorated with an enormous green olive stabbed with a red cocktail stick, the tip of which is decorated by a cherubic Eros.

Tim: Man ... are we screwed! Well, not you, Jerry.

Jerry smiles, although somewhat grimly, so as to be consistent with the mood of the occasion.

Jerry: I feel for you guys.
Howard: Alex ... you know we all agree that Doug is a worthless, lecherous jerk. Sorry you had to put up with his shit. You were right to stand up for John.
Jerry: John is caught in the middle. He’s a good guy.
Howard: That might be so, but don’t you think that John is sort of a suck-up?
Alex: Yeah, but aren’t we all suck-ups to some extent? Maybe sometimes we are resentful of John because he has been such a successful suck-up. He’s a GS-15. I doubt if I will ever make it to that lofty level.
Howard: Certainly not now. You can forget about an upwardly mobile career in this Administration.
Tim: I agree, Howard. Let’s say that Trump doesn’t die from a Big Mac attack during his first term and the damn voters re-elect him to a second one. Don’t you think we are likely to have a whole string of Trump lookalikes? I’m not confident that our dimwit electorate won’t elect Pence or someone else who carries on the Donald’s legacy. I’m becoming more pessimistic. We could be entering a kind of Dark Age. Things might just get tougher for the federal worker. This populist,

deep state message may catch on more than we thought possible. The federal government does not have many fans out there.

Howard: Well ... it was pretty good while it lasted.

Jerry: What was so good about it?

Howard: Look ... none of us were straining under the workload.

Alex: Was that good?

Tim: It wasn't bad. I know I took advantage of the laxity in the office. I know I've been dogging it recently. Could you blame me?

No one dares interrupt the beginning of Tim's narrative, whether out of trying to maintain group solidarity or because of sheer embarrassment.

Tim: One thing sort of led to another. Generously, I have a 15-hour a week job that happens be drawn into a 40 hour a week job. I got bored. Working on my business while I was at work was a useful diversion. Some people play games on the Internet when they're trying to kill time. I run a business. I sort of lurched into it. First, I filled the tedium by working on my website. That was harmless enough. Then ... wouldn't you know it, I started managing my inventory. It wasn't long before I started taking orders and, when necessary, making deliveries. It was a slippery slope, but I was happy to have the time at work.

Alex: Didn't any of the higher-ups ever talk to you about it?

Tim: I was pretty careful. Besides ... how many of the politicals have you ever seen in our office? I don't believe one of them has ever blessed us with an appearance.

Alex becomes somewhat bolder in his inquiry.

Alex: How did you get away with it?

Tim: I always tried to be discreet, especially when someone visited the office. I knew you guys were up on what I was doing, but I didn't want everybody else in on it.

Alex: Didn't John say anything?

Tim: John and I go way back. We worked in Commerce together in the late 90s. I've never mentioned this, but I am the godfather of his oldest. And he is one of my best customers. He loves those masks from Java. They're all over his house. He can't get enough of them.

Howard: So what are you going to do now? With 20+ years of federal service, you might survive this.

Tim: You're probably right. I'll have to see what those mongrels from HR say in my letter. But ... I think I might become an honest man again. Maybe I'll go full-time. The business ... I mean. We've always wanted to expand our import business to include all of Southeast Asia. We've got the contacts.

Howard: Could you make enough money at it?

Tim: Mona and I have always lived frugally. Hell ... the house is paid for. Only one kid and he's becoming a plumber's apprentice. I can take a 25 to 50 percent pay cut and it'll just mean fewer trips to these overpriced steak houses and more trips to, I don't know, Red Lobster.

The Red Lobster reference got Howard's attention.

Tim: Howard ... you go there, don't you? I bet you can't get enough of those endless shrimp dinners.

Trying to appear less than glutinous, Howard offers a mild assent.

Howard: They are quite delicious!

Changing the subject from Howard's restaurant habits, Howard asks Jerry:

Howard: Jerry – what the hell are you going to do?

Jerry: I'll just ride the RIF out. They'll probably move me to some do-nothing part of the agency and I'll retire when my 30 years are up.

Alex: Yeah, but what after that?

Jerry: I dunno. I've got about ten years of unread books on my shelves.

Alex: Yeah, but won't you sort of wig out reading all those books?

Jerry: Fran and I have some serious travel plans. We'd like to visit the "Old Sod." Never been there. And I've got quite a few buddies who have recently retired. Maybe we'll form some sort of an old geezers club. You know ... hang out at Starbucks once a week and ogle the baristas.

There is a pause in the conversation. Everybody at the table wants to ask Jerry the question, "Is that it?" But they are too polite to interrupt him with that interrogatory.

Jerry: To be honest guys, I don't know. I've never had any serious hobbies. I know I don't want to spend each morning in my pajamas staring at the TV. I also don't want to volunteer at my local assisted care facility, worrying that someday I will become an unremittent slobberer.

Alex: Okay, since this has become something of a confessional. Jerry ... why have you so religiously been recording for all to see how many weeks, days and hours, you have left in the federal government? Especially, since you're not sure what comes next? I thought you were looking forward to retirement?

Jerry: I dunno. Maybe I thought it would help spur me to think more about my future. I don't know what will fill my days. The Starbucks thing will probably get old after a while.

Alex takes a chance.

Alex: That sounds sort of depressing. Damn it! How many people experience this narrative: We work. We slowly decay. We die.

Tim: Aren't you getting a little depressing?

Alex: Shouldn't we be? Getting fired is a major life event.

Tim: Sure, but we're guys, we're supposed to buck up.

Alex: Certainly, that's what we were taught. Sometimes, there is no alternative to grieving.

Tim: Is that what we're doing now?
Alex: Sort of.
Jerry: Maybe I need to focus more on Fran. Since she retired two years ago, she's been spending a lot of her time over at our church. You know bake sales, Bible study, volunteer work. That sort of thing.
Tim: Is that what you want to do?
Jerry: Hell no. I am an atheist. She does her thing on Sunday and beyond and I do mine. She accepted my heathenism when we got married.
Tim: It's too bad you atheists don't have a forum similar to a church.
Jerry: We're probably too grouchy to want to get together on a regular basis.
Tim: What about grandkids? A lot of retirees get a big kick out of spoiling them.
Jerry: We don't have any grandkids and we probably won't have any either. Our high-flying Gen Exer adult children don't seem like they have the time or the inclination to have kids. Oh... well.
Howard: Yeah, why is this latest generation so unlikely to conceive? And why do they get married so late in life? Don't they know that for a lot of people when you turn forty, your time is often up? They either can't get pregnant or they don't want to assume the financial responsibility.
Alex: How many kids do you have?
Howard: Three. We did our part.
Jerry: Okay, Howard, it's your turn.
Howard: I'm in no hurry to decide.
Tim: Howard, are you going to live off your wife's income?
Howard: No ... I've thought that something like this was coming. We've even thought about both of us quitting our jobs.
Tim: Must be nice.
Howard: June and I inherited a nice chunk of change from her wealthy spinster aunt about ten years ago. She was the sole beneficiary. We invested all of it in the stock market. And you know what's happened to the stock market during that time period.
Tim: It's gone through the roof. Did you buy individual stocks or mutual funds?
Howard: Mostly mutual funds. I'm looking for a steady return. I don't want to do retirement at age 44, but I don't want to jump into a new job either.
Tim: Yeah, but how are you going to fill your days?
Howard: June and I have the travel bug. I figure we'll spend the next few years doing some serious traveling.
Alex: Where do you want to go? Cleveland?

Alex guffaws, but after saying it, he wishes he could take it back.

Howard: You can forget that. I'm saying good-bye to the meeting planners. I'm talking Antarctica, Angkor Wat in Cambodia and the Baltic States.
Alex: Why those places?
Howard: I haven't been there yet.
Alex: Would you take your kids with?
Howard: I wouldn't take them out of school. But, they would come with us on our summer trips.

Alex: So, there will be fall, winter, and spring trips too?
Howard: You betcha. We've got two sets of parents, who are dying to take care of our kids while we travel the world.
Tim: Wow, what a setup!
Jerry: Can we still expect some of your trademark postcards from your various ports of call?
Howard: You can count on it. That's my M.O.
Jerry: I do enjoy getting them. You've been to a lot of places that I can't even pronounce.
Howard: Yeah ... I have a lot of good memories. My favorite postcard is probably the one made for me when I was sitting on top of an elephant in India.
Jerry: That was something else.

Alex is wondering how the tour operators got Howard on top of the elephant and whether it caused the elephant a serious neck injury.

Howard: I'm sort of famous for my postcards. I must scribble at least thirty of them each time I visit a place. I've got at least 75 people on my address list.
Alex: What's your favorite destination?
Howard: I don't know if I have a favorite. However, I do like Paris a lot.
Alex: Will that be a stop on your next trip?
Howard: Unlikely ... I always try to avoid going to the same place twice.
Alex: How come?

Howard displays a distinct incredulity at Alex's question.

Howard: Well ... because I've already seen it. I've logged 75 countries. If I kept going back to the countries I've already visited, I'll never reach my goal of 125 countries.
Alex: Why 125 countries?
Howard: It's sort of arbitrary, but it's more than anybody I know has ever visited.
Alex: Sort of a Guinness record!
Howard: I wonder what is the record?
Alex: I don't know.
Howard: I bet I could find it on the Internet.

Howard consults his Galaxy.

Howard: Looks like I've got something to work toward. It says here that there are 195 countries and somebody visited all of them in 193 days. I'm not sure I could break that record. I don't think June would go for it. Maybe there's some sort of more attainable American record. Hey Alex ... thanks for raising the question.
Alex: My pleasure.
Jerry: That leaves you, Alex. What are your plans?
Alex: I really don't know. You guys seem to be pretty well set. Jerry – you're close to retirement. Tim – you've got your business. And Howard – it seems like you have an inclination to travel and enough money to do it in style. I guess my options are

both unknown and wide open. That's probably both an advantage and a disadvantage.

Jerry: How so?

Alex: On the one hand, you could say, especially at my age, this is a chance for a life do-over. On the other hand, I'm not sure whether in a second life, I would make decisions that are any better than those I made during my first life.

Tim: Alex... just like you to get metaphysical on us.

Alex: Not metaphysical – just scared.

Jerry: Alex, I wish you the best. I'll always be there for you. I think that the rest of the guys will, too.

The other two members of the group nod their assent.

Jerry: But in the meantime, I suggest we get another drink. Too bad, I don't have a government credit card, so I could charge it to the Donald.

The next two months in the Productivity Management Division went by fairly quickly. The pace of work slowed even more as the announced closing approached. The Division received no new marching orders from either the politicals in EPA or the Management Division at OMB. The Productivity Management Division was being allowed to die a slow, quiet death. However, the grief was not confined to the Division. Roughly 20 percent of EPA employees were rified. The depression and sometimes quiet anger were evident in the hallways and in the break rooms. The men's stalls in the area where the politicals worked were filled with snide vulgarities about Trump and the EPA politicals, so much so that the stalls were painted over by Maintenance every three weeks.

What few projects that in the past had fallen under the purview of the Productivity Management Division remained forever pending. Standards in the office slipped even further. Two to three-hour lunches became common. It was unusual to see anyone in the office except for John and Felicia after 4:00 PM. For most employees in the office, the computers were primarily used for personal business. Day-to-day office work was largely spurned. One day the copying machine broke and no one called Facilities to fix it.

The staff spoke less to each other, seemingly embarrassed by their collective fall from grace. Counter to an office tradition, no one adorned the walls with Christmas decorations. There was no Christmas party. There was no pre-holiday New Year's Eve celebration.

Doug avoided Alex, never speaking to him again. No one knew or cared about Doug's continuing sexual dalliances, except for those lonely souls privy to his anonymous website.

Following the eve of the RIF announcement, Tim, even more blatantly than before, operated his business in his workspace with such vigor that he was just short of placing a company shingle on his desk. One week before the office shutdown, Tim sent out special invitations to his favored EPA customers and held a final markdown sale of the inventory he had accumulated in his office.

Howard seldom left his desk. He frequently was seen pounding on his computer's calculator determining among other values – his net worth; his expected pension; his annual budget, post-RIF; the cost of his children's future college educations; his likely disposable post-EPA income; whether he could still afford a late model Audi TT; and the net present value of his many investments. The rest of his time he spent researching arcane destinations throughout the world.

Felicia's wardrobe expanded dramatically. She frequently shared lunch with the expensive suits in the upper management wing, attending primarily pro-Trump establishments of fine dining. Her conservative ideology became sharper. During her lengthy phone conversations, one could hear her complain about "losers," "Mexicans," and "climate change harpies."

Following the announced RIF, Jasmine decided to commit to one of her boyfriends and eloped with him to Cancun. She became the office manager at his booming auto body shop. Reportedly, after breaking one of her nails when she picked up a tire rim, she decided to abandon her nail project and clipped them back to a mere two inches in length.

Within two months, John's suits ceased being two sizes too large. John had lost fifteen pounds, reducing his previously slim frame into something decidedly gaunt. In his desire to try to please those who were unpleasable – the ranks of EPA's senior staff – he not only lost weight but also managed to increase his blood pressure.

Jerry stopped his semi-public 30-year countdown as he prepared to be reassigned to another EPA division. Not coincidentally, given his presumed lack of viable retirement alternatives, Jerry began contemplating how life could be made tolerable in Trump's EPA. Gone was his public cynicism.

During the interim, Alex spent much of his time in contemplation. The initial wound of being laid off lost its sting after about two weeks. He reframed his job loss from being something mildly terrifying to an experience abounding with opportunity. From his point of view, being laid off became the kind of kick-in-the-butt he had needed.

Three years later

"Cyril, when you go to town, could you pick me up a bag of three-inch nails and 15 of those three-meter boards at Henderson's?"

"Sure Alex, do we have an account there?"

"I think so, but in case we don't – here's my credit card."

For the past 2 ½ years Alex has been working as a building site coordinator for the American-based nonprofit Professionals Abroad in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa. Drawing upon his early experience in the construction industry, he works with locals to construct A-frames funded by his organization. Alex enjoys his job. He gets a particular satisfaction out of doing something that is both tangible and needed by the local population. His salary is meager, but his spending is also

considerably below his days at EPA. However, frankly, there's not a lot to spend money on in the South African bush.

His social life has improved. One year ago, he married Mary Viljoen, a person of mixed race, whose family are prominent farmers in the area. They are very much in love. Mary is 10 years Alex's junior and wants children, but Alex isn't sure whether he is willing to commit to a second round of fatherhood.

Since he was laid off by the EPA, Alex has left his Washington-based lifestyle behind. After selling his condo, car and other personal possessions and cashing in his retirement, he was left with a nest egg of almost \$600 thousand – not enough to retire comfortably in the DC area, but a lavish amount in rural South Africa. The only remaining contact with his former work life is Tim. Surprisingly, Tim is an occasional emailer and keeps Alex informed about the whereabouts of the former denizens of the Productivity Management Division. To Alex's further surprise, Tim asked Alex for an invitation to his home, mentioning that he wanted to expand his source of goods to Africa. At first, Alex was wary of enlarging upon a link to his past, but after some thought relented.

Tim is due at his house in 30 minutes. To kill time, Alex watches a local rugby game on the television. During one of the breaks, Alex goes to the fridge for a Coke and sees Tim roll up in a convertible Benz. Alex walks out to greet him, Coke bottle in hand.

Alex: Tim it's good to see you. Your business must be doing well.

Tim paused a moment, brushing some African dust off his Polo.

Tim: Yeah, we've done well. Grown a lot since we went full-time.

Tim carefully surveys the property.

Tim: Say is that a Shona sculpture on your front porch? Where did you pick it up?

Alex: Mary has some friends in Zimbabwe who are stone carvers.

Tim: Could you put me in touch with them?

Alex: Tim, there will be plenty of time for that. Let's go inside. You must be thirsty as hell.

Tim: Yeah, sorry about that, but once I see something so desirable, it's hard for me to hold back.

Tim looks longingly at Alex's pool, mildly hypnotized by the sunlight radiating off the water's surface. His stare only ends when Alex mildly nudges him in the rib cage. Both of them retrieve Tim's suitcases from the snug trunk of the Mercedes. After Alex has shown Tim his bedroom and the facilities, Tim plops on an oversized sofa in the living room, a room bedecked with all sorts of African artifacts, including colorful African beadwork, a traditional Zulu wedding dress, and a frightful mask.

Tim: Alex – you did alright. This place looks great. What am I still doing in the Washington area? I should move to a place like this.

Alex: The move was difficult, but I'm glad I did it.

Tim: You know... it's sort of a mixed bag about what's happened to the folks in our office.

Alex: I don't know much about them. What I do know, you've told me. Did Howard ever take all those trips he was planning?

Tim: Just one. He made it to Antarctica, but had to be airlifted out of there. Shortly after the trip, he ended up in the hospital. Howard is dead. Four months ago – he died from complications of diabetes. Poor guy – before his death, in a losing effort, he had his left foot amputated.

Alex: Too bad, he had so many plans. How is his wife doing?

Tim: She seems to be coping. She's kept up Howard's tradition. I've gotten three post-cards from her. One of them was from Bhutan.

Alex: Not much of a mourning period.

Tim: I don't think Howard would have minded. She's probably on a mission to reach Howard's goal of 125 countries. Remember that?

Alex: Yeah, I do. What about Jerry?

Tim: Jerry has 33 years in the federal government, going on 50.

Alex: Is he still at EPA?

Tim: No – after moving temporarily to the Planning Division at EPA, he moved on to Commerce. Trump is never going to kill Commerce. It's a good place to wait the Republicans out.

Alex: So... he's on his second wind?

Tim: Second wind! More like his third or fourth.

Alex: And Felicia?

Tim: She's the only one left at EPA. Word is she may be up for a Senate-confirmed post... Deputy Administrator of something.

Alex: Sounds like her Republican contacts came in handy.

Tim: She's done alright. But maybe when she gets a little older, she'll have a hard time sleeping at night – working for those scumbags.

Alex: You haven't followed Doug, have you?

Tim: All I know about Doug is through the grapevine. But my wife knows somebody who knows his sister. According to her, Doug got married shortly after leaving EPA and six months later got a divorce. And then six months later, he got married again and a year later got another divorce.

Alex: Where does he work?

Tim: He bought a one-third interest in an upscale bar near DuPont Circle. That's where he met both of his ex-wives.

Alex: Still wearing all the red.

Tim: He'll be buried in it.

Alex: John – what happened to him?

Tim: He's still a GS-15, working as a senior staffer at the VA. I'm sure he's still kissing up over there.

Alex: You never gave John enough credit. He's a survivor. He knows how to work the system.

Tim: Maybe I was a little tough on him. With all his kissing up, at least he seemed to do his best to protect us from OMB and who knows what else?

Alex: What more can you ask from a supervisor?

Tim: Maybe a little integrity?

Alex was sorely tempted to remind Tim of his own shaky moral standards but thought better of it.

Alex: You haven't said anything about Jasmine.

Tim: I saved the best for last. Jasmine has made out better than anybody else in the office. If I really wanted to make some real money, I should have gone into the auto body business. She and her hubby bought a 5,000 square foot house in Upper Northwest. It must be worth at least three mil.

Alex: Good for her.

Tim: Yeah, I guess life goes on. Sometimes we fail and sometimes we prosper. But if we keep moving, eventually we sometimes get things right.

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Review of *Mastering the Metropolis: New York and Zoning, 1916-2016*

Museum of the City of New York, New
York, November 9, 2016-April 23, 2017

Reviewed by *Jonathan Woolley*

If there's one thing everyone can agree Donald Trump is an expert on, it's New York City's zoning rules. (Building codes may be another.) One simply can't build the buildings he's built around Manhattan without being aware of the permissible building heights of the land parcels involved, particularly since air rights – the right to build above a ground floor – are treated as valuable commodities in the city. In fact, no person – architect, developer, builder, construction engineer, or planner – in any city can expect to erect any sort of non-governmental building without being cognizant of the land usage rules – the so-called zoning laws – of the city in question.

Which is why I was intrigued when I saw the Museum of the City of New York was hosting an exhibit about the history of zoning. This subject that has such bearing on urban life, whose purpose is so widely understood but whose results are so often criticized, and whose history is so rarely discussed, is one which is worthy of further illustration to both the academic community and the general public. The museum hosted the exhibit entitled “Mastering the Metropolis: New York and Zoning, 1916-2016” in honor of the 2016 centennial of the passage of New York's first zoning ordinance.

The exhibit, which comprises approximately 6,700 square feet, starts by chronicling the problems that prompted the 1916 zoning codes, namely, the high-density and unregulated chock-a-block development in Lower Manhattan that had resulted in chaotic streets, overcrowded tenements, and an unstable real estate market (as a consequence of new buildings' shadows blocking sunlight – and thus causing a loss of premium rentable space – to neighboring buildings). Photos from the 1890s and early 1900s, a Thomas Edison movie, and two period maps are used to illustrate these problems. Next, the exhibition's core area consists of two wall displays (each about 15 ½ yards long) and two center island displays. The wall displays chronologically discuss, respectively, how zoning was used as a tool both by local businesses and by city officials to separate irritants (often industrial facilities or their immigrant employees) from pricier residential or commercial properties and how zoning was used to ensure buildings did not prevent light from reaching pedestrians on the street (including the use of setbacks and plazas in return for increased height). The final section displays zoning issues of the two most recent mayoral administrations: the construction of

“supertall” buildings (which the exhibit correctly notes raises issues that prompted zoning a century ago – the possibility of blocking light from reaching neighbors), the changing regulations for a particular district to promote or restrict development, and the de Blasio Administration’s efforts to use zoning to promote affordable housing. A comparison of the original 1916 code’s twelve pages with the current code’s fourteen hundred-odd pages is also provided to illustrate how complex zoning has become.

The two center island displays are the most important part of the exhibition. They discuss, respectively, the structure and passing of the 1916 zoning codes and the structure and passing of the 1961 zoning codes. Precedents to the 1916 regulations such as Cologne’s attempts to concentrate development in its central area, Chicago’s height limits, and Los Angeles’ separation of industrial and residential real estate, and their effects on development are discussed and documented in maps and pictures. The motives and methods of the zoning commissions that led to the 1916 regulations are highlighted. Particular attention is paid to the commissions’ fear of the regulations being overturned by the courts: the codes were framed as public health regulations (e.g., allowing light and air circulation at street level would help prevent diseases such as tuberculosis) to give the city a strong position. Edward Bassett, who the exhibit describes as “the father of American zoning,” is given due importance: the exhibit tells us that, as both a lawyer and former Congressman, he was particularly concerned with ensuring the regulations would withstand an expected legal challenge. (Los Angeles’ zoning had been upheld by the Supreme Court in 1915, but Bassett and the other commissioners apparently feared New York’s more comprehensive law would make a tempting target for real estate interests and property rights-obsessed Supreme Court justices.) The role of George Burnett Ford is also highlighted, both for his interest in ensuring the regulations would pass judicial muster (displayed in a period newspaper article) and for his role in designing the building regulations adapted by the zoning commission.

The zones themselves were hierarchical, with only residential zones being exclusively devoted to their stated purpose. The exhibit provides visual illustrations of this, essentially, by figuratively displaying Fischel’s observation that “the detached and (typically) owner occupied home is at the top of the zoning pyramid” (2004, 326-327). This meant it was possible to build residences next door to factories in zones where manufacturing was allowed, and this occasionally happened. The result, the exhibit tells us, was increased pressure on manufacturers, who sometimes had to choose between facing additional operational restrictions or moving elsewhere to avoid disturbing residents living downwind of the smokestacks. Commercial and residential zones, however, were planned out better, with the tallest commercial buildings zoned for where they already existed (in Southern Manhattan) and residential housing density arranged according to travel time to the central business district. Thus, the zoning commission anticipated the transit-oriented development plans of a century later – communities with shorter travel times and better transport got higher density zoning than did the more rural off-the-train-track neighborhoods of the outer boroughs. A description of how zones were designed and structured, illustrated by an oversized panel’s worth of period maps of Manhattan as well as a smaller map covering the other boroughs, does a superb job of providing the viewer with a good understanding of the zoning system.

But demographic and economic patterns changed after World War II. Residents left denser neighborhoods for Queens, Staten Island, or the suburbs; manufacturing, pressed both by residential neighbors and the need for different types of factories, found the city’s industrial zones

constricting. The result was the zoning code of 1961, which sought to adjust zoning to the city's economic and demographic trends. The hierarchical design of 1916's zones, the exhibit tells us, was replaced by the horizontal design of the 1961 regulations: residences could no longer encroach upon industrial or commercial areas. Manufacturing zones, in turn, were designated into three different types based upon their effect on their local neighborhoods, thus positioning the most polluting industries farthest from residential areas. Architects and developers, in the meantime, were no longer required to adhere to the step pattern of the 1916 code when erecting tall buildings (which was designed to allow sunlight to reach the street): the 1961 plan introduced both the concept of height bonuses in return for ground-level public plazas and the concept of deciding a building's size based upon its Floor Area Ratio.

The exhibit does a good job of explaining the cause and process of the 1961 rezoning. A photo of an automotive factory in Linden, a New Jersey town opposite the city's borough of Staten Island, demonstrates both the acreage and transport issues wanted by manufacturers after World War II – requirements simply unavailable in most traditionally industrialized parts of the city (certainly not in Manhattan's SoHo). A map prepared by the City Planning Commission displays the population changes that affected the city's boroughs between 1950 and 1970 and caused city officials so much angst – Manhattan alone lost 220,000 people during this period while suburban counties such as Bergen and Nassau gained 150,000 and 140,000 apiece. A photograph of a City Planning Commission hearing on the proposed rezoning, architectural firms' proposed zoning revisions commissioned by the city, and a 1959 book promoting new zoning ideals distributed by an activist group at the behest of the city are used to illustrate how the city promoted and considered the idea of rezoning. A map displaying Manhattan's Lower East Side, Brooklyn's Fort Greene, and surrounding areas illustrates how post-1961 zoning works: how industrial, commercial, and residential areas are separated from each other and how gradations of each area (the three types of industrial zones and the various subtypes of each, for instance) are arranged relative to each other. Models do a good job illustrating how developers are able to gain height in a building by limiting its footprint; the accompanying text does the best job of concisely explaining Floor Area Ratio (the concept of dividing the building's total floor area by the lot size) I have ever seen.

The exhibit implies, without saying specifically, that the 1961 plan's zoning of Staten Island as largely residential was a poor decision, particularly from an industrial policy point of view. It explains that, at the time, much of the island consisted of undeveloped land large enough to accommodate the kind of "horizontal" factories that had sprouted across the channel in Linden, New Jersey. It also displays a B&O Railroad flyer promoting Staten Island as a prime industrial location (at the time, the B&O operated freight service between Staten Island and New Jersey). Yet the zoning plan made much of that land residential while encouraging industry to remain within already-existing areas in the other outer boroughs and Manhattan, where pre-war, vertical factories were mostly located. The result, according to the museum, was a mismatch resulting in a loss of industry while, at the same time, creating an inner suburbia on Staten Island. The industrial mismatch was ultimately rectified only by ditching the idea: industrial neighborhoods, such as SoHo, became residential (and ultimately commercial) while industry presumably moved elsewhere.

One could argue with this view. Changing industries were leaving vertical factories for more than just locational reasons, and the costs of moving to and constructing new plants on Staten Island might have proven too great an economic hurdle to stop them from leaving the city anyway.

Furthermore, encouraging middle class residential development on Staten Island, even if it should have been done in a less suburbanized manner, was not all bad: it kept a number of middle-class families within the city who might otherwise have moved to the suburbs, and thus kept their taxes filling city, rather than suburban, coffers. It also meant they had an interest in seeing the city as a whole succeed, whereas living outside the city might have encouraged them to write it off as a failure during the problems of the subsequent Lindsay, Beame, and early Koch administrations. Thus, while industrializing Staten Island might have provided even greater tax revenue and additional businesses committed to the city's future, the residential development that occurred helped avoid the declining-middle-class and the resulting declining-tax-base fates of some other cities, such as Detroit.

The exhibit also could use a better discussion of privately-owned public spaces (or POPS, as it refers to them). They are mentioned as an issue in urban landscapes, but a good explanation of why is lacking – the explanation given is too brief to be comprehensive. One gets the idea the curator was too familiar with the issue of the private sphere administering the public sphere to realize not everyone else is. Zuccotti Park, for instance, is mentioned for being a POPS separated from the office tower it is affiliated with – admittedly a rarity in New York City worth mentioning – but the issues raised by the Occupy Wall Street movement's protests there, such as who should grant the permission to protest there, are not really discussed. Yet these are some of the central issues of POPS and relate to a larger issue of both planning and public administration: what rights do the public have when a private entity assumes control of part of the public sphere and are those rights immutable or can they be changed through future legislation or litigation? This topic is very relevant to the issues faced by today's public administration practitioners – witness the recent heated discussion over allowing a Starbucks coffee shop at Philadelphia's Dilworth Park. The exhibit refers tantalizingly to both the existence and the importance of this issue but leaves the viewer wanting by failing to give it its due.

Zoning codes (and perhaps also building codes) are the point where public administration and planning intersect. Administrators must understand not only the needs and desires of citizens, businesses, and the elected officials who have to consider both, but also both the concepts of urban planning and the real-world effects of implementing any of these needs, desires, or concepts. Elected officials, despite their best intents and abilities, frequently lack the specialized experience and knowledge to turn these needs, desires, and concepts into reality – particularly as the location in question is usually not a completely blank canvas, but one where existing structures and persons may be impacted by any decision made. Career administrators can, therefore, serve an essential role. As Fleischmann (1989, 343) noted in his study of 1980's Atlanta, “professionals [have] a major influence on rezoning decisions” because “having planners and other staff members with both professional competence and political awareness is crucial to the rezoning process because limited citizen participation makes staff advice a key source of information for planning commissions and governing bodies.” A professor could thus use the information conveyed by this exhibit as a catalyst for a discussion of the role of administrators in both the formation and the implementation of zoning codes – and city regulations in general.

Boschken (1977, 496), citing previous authors,¹ tells us, “The essential purpose of public land use control has been three-fold: to maintain orderly development by separating uses physically, to protect property values by restricting obnoxious activities, and to provide public land for private

development.” In New York City’s case, only the first two were reasons for the 1916 codes. But a version of the third cause does apply to New York City: zoning has been used to promote specific types of development and is currently being used to promote the development of affordable housing. A professor could, therefore, use the themes discussed in this exhibition to raise the issue of using administrative tools for policy purposes. Not only is “[z]oning by local governments [currently] widely viewed as a highly contentious policy process” (Fleischmann 1989, 337), but the entire concept was invented because businesses and homeowners were deemed unlikely to “voluntarily concede some of their individual rights in order to form a new collective neighborhood organization” that would voluntarily self-regulate development.² Thus, a professor could generate a spirited class discussion on policymaking through administrative means by linking the causes and effects of specific types of development decisions either mentioned in the exhibition or elsewhere to the regulations and regulation-making discussed on the exhibit’s panels. The exhibition, therefore, whether visited in person or merely discussed in retrospect, serves as a potentially important extra-curricular teaching tool.

“Since zoning has often been aspirational,” the exhibit’s introductory panel tells us, “its history often highlights the dissonance between theory and practice, between optimistic projections and reality.” This sentence perhaps best describes the curator’s framing of the history of zoning. Certainly, this exhibit considers the subject from this angle more than from any other. It does an excellent job of getting this message across to the visitor, not only with regard to the veritable uniform walls which unintentionally lined Manhattan’s avenues after the 1916 code was implemented but, particularly, with regard to the results of the 1961 code’s implementation. Thus, it leaves the viewer with a good overview of both the positives and negatives of zoning.

The last portion of the exhibit touches upon zoning issues currently affecting the city: the emergence of supertall buildings and the current mayoral administration’s efforts to use zoning to create additional affordable housing. It will be interesting to see how these issues play out over the next decade – will the results be what is intended or will the results be a manifestation of the aforementioned dissonance between projections and reality with builders finding hitherto-hidden loopholes to create entirely unintended structures?

It is indeed true that “[t]he decisions made about land use then continue to have ramifications today, given the durable nature of real estate, historical lock-in due to economies of scale and zoning regulations, which tend to ‘freeze’ land use types when implemented” (Barr and Ort 2013, 2). Overall, this exhibit does a good job of explaining the causes and history of New York City’s zoning laws. It also does a good job of explaining both how zoning was used to socially design neighborhoods and how zoning has affected both building design and people’s lives. Thus, the exhibit is valuable equally to administrative and planning historians and to urban and social historians. In a wider sense, it is also valuable to public administrators and planners generally (and perhaps also to a few real estate developers) because its lessons about city zoning can be applied to today’s environment.

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