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# Social Class, Sexual Orientation, and Toward Proactive Social Equity Scholarship

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An analysis of data from the premier public administration journals in Australia, Brazil, Canada, and the United States shows academic public administration has taken both a narrow and a conservative approach to four social equity issues, including gender, race, sexual orientation, and social class. The findings show these periodicals (a) seldom and sometimes never publish articles on the four themes; (b) confine nearly all their social equity writings to race and gender; sexual orientation and social class receive little or no attention; and (c) only publish such papers long after the matter has become fashionable in most other social circles. The article concludes by suggesting ways American public administration can develop a more intellectually diverse, proactive professoriat, thereby allowing for publishing more—and more timely—articles about emerging social equity topics.

**Keywords:** *social class; sexual orientation; race; gender; indigenous issues*

You can contribute to the public good by identifying other values that receive too little attention in political arenas. Are there identifiable groups that consistently suffer losses from public policies?

—Weimer & Vining (1992, p. 408)

In speaking of social equity policy and scholarship in the United States, Walter Broadnax (2000) explains, “the ‘beef’ here is found in the discussions of race and gender” (p. xviii). This focus has been justified, as extraordinary race- and gender-based discrimination and so inequality have long existed in the country. As we enter the new millennium, perhaps it is time to assess academic public administration’s social equity performance to verify that the field’s efforts remain relevant. We will argue they do not, for two reasons.

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First, the U.S. public administration academic discipline “has taken a narrow view of which groups are disadvantaged” (Oldfield, 2003, p. 446). In her diversity chapter in the influential *Handbook of Public Administration*, for instance, Ospina (1996) casts a wide net, noting

The most common social groups discussed in the diversity literature include women, people of color, individuals from ethnic or national groups, gay men and lesbians, older workers, physically challenged individuals, employees with HIV or AIDS, and individuals with particular needs in areas as varied as family obligations and religious mandates that affect their appearance or require dietary restrictions. (p. 443)

Note first how the race and gender “beef” marginalizes the rest of Ospina’s (1996) list. Note too that “the poor” are conspicuously absent even from Ospina’s broader list. Antipoverty and welfare reform are areas of considerable research, though much welfare reform has, as Hollar (2003, p. 90) points out, focused on “declining case loads or some other economic measure” and so lessening the cost to the middle and upper classes of antipoverty measures, rather than necessarily attacking the underlying causes of inequity. However antipoverty policies have been crafted, American public administration scholars have been reluctant to identify social class—structured inequity itself—as a fundamental focus of analysis. In other words, there has been an aversion to questioning whether two children born into radically different economic circumstances—say, a child with two highly paid professional parents versus a child raised by an unemployed single mother with an eighth-grade education—*really* have the same chance of succeeding in America.

Second, the discipline has long been conservative on social equity issues. As Frederickson (1980) remarked a quarter century ago, “The irony is that the real impetus toward social equity in public service has come not from public administration or from the executive branch or from the legislative branches, but from the courts” (p. 42).

As this article will show, rather than leading, it has taken the discipline up to a decade to address new social equity issues, and then only by a small group of scholars. The discipline was woefully absent during the race and gender equality movements of the 1960s (Broadnax, 2000, p. xv), has been mostly silent during the current debate over sexual orientation and has yet to engage the issue of structured class inequality.

The article proceeds through three major sections. The following and largest part evaluates the broader social equity record of public administration scholarship. Given that *Public Administration Review (PAR)* is the “premiere journal of public administration,” we first demonstrate that it has not lived up to its own edict on social equity questions. The analysis is conducted in a four-nation comparative context, demonstrating that the poor social equity record of *PAR*, and by extension academic public administration in the United States, is not a peculiarly American problem. A brief discussion follows of social class and sexual orientation: two contemporary social equity issues still mostly overlooked by academic public administration in all four countries. The article suggests that a significant part of the explanation for the reactive social equity stance of public administration may be endemic to the academic environment. We close by suggesting ways American public administration can develop a more intellectually diverse, proactive professoriat, thereby allowing for publishing more—and more timely—articles about emerging social equity topics.

## Social Equity in Temporal and Spatial Context

A content analysis was conducted on major public administration journals from four countries: the United States, Australia, Brazil, and Canada. In addition to *PAR*, the analysis included *Australian Journal of Public Administration (AJPA)*, *Revista de Administração Pública (RAP)*, and *Canadian Public Administration (CPA)*. *AJPA* was first published (as *Public Administration*, not to be confused with the British journal of the same name) in 1939. *CPA* began publishing in 1958, and *RAP* started in 1967. To extend the scope of the analysis through to 1960 in Brazil, *Revista de Serviço Público* was also analyzed from 1960 to 1970. Following Lan and Anders's (2000, p. 144) method, article titles and abstracts (when available) were read for an indication of the paper's focus. The articles were read if their focus could not be determined from the noted information. The articles were coded as addressing the various social equity topics if they included a specific focus on the issue, versus only a passing reference. This generally meant at least a section of an article had to apply explicitly to a social equity issue, though the coding tended to be generously inclusive rather than strict. To ensure consistency, one author coded all the data.<sup>1</sup>

Case selection for this study was based on the second author's linguistic abilities and familiarity with the cases, being competent in both Portuguese and French, and his having a strong familiarity with the Brazilian, Australian, and Canadian national contexts. Despite the somewhat arbitrary nature of the case selection, the choices are defensible on at least two grounds. First, given the dearth of comparative work, especially in American public administration,<sup>2</sup> both comparative studies and especially research that crosses linguistic lines are to be welcomed. Second, the cases reflect certain similarities especially useful for Americans interested in the lever offered by comparative analysis. In Louis Hartz's (1964) terms, the four cases in this study are European "settler societies," "fragments of the larger whole of Europe struck off in the course of the revolution which brought the West into the modern world" (p. 3). As a result, unique insights can be gleaned through comparison with these "other societies with a similar fate" (p. 69). The United States especially shares an English cultural heritage with Canada and Australia, whereas Brazil's history of slavery provides a unique comparative contrast on this key social equity variable.

Streib, Slotkin, and Rivera (2001, pp. 516-517) and Stallings and Ferris (1988, pp. 580-581) make the case for using the premier journal as a window on the field even in the United States, which has several highly regarded public administration journals, because of the breadth and depth of *PAR*'s reputation (also see Forrester & Watson, 1994; *PA Times*, 2003). In the other three countries that are the focus of this research, a concentration on the premier journal is less problematic, as these nations lack the competition for prominence within the discipline characteristic of the U.S. context.

The analysis focused on four social equity issues: gender, race, social class, and sexual orientation. The categories were chosen as reflecting considerable variation among social equity topics. Gender, for instance, has been on the Western social equity agenda at least since Mary Wollstonecraft's 1792 *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* and scored its first major victory in the United States with the 1920 ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

Race has had an equally long lineage as a social equity concern in the United States, again as reflected in the even earlier 19th-century Reconstruction Amendments and the Civil War they followed. As will be discussed, racial diversity has somewhat different implications in

our four cases. However, as settler societies each share a history of appropriation of lands from existing (Indian, First Nation, and Aboriginal) populations (Hartz, 1964), articles dealing with indigenous issues are coded separately. Both gender and race, too, returned to the top of the nation's policy agenda because of the social ferment of the 1950s and 1960s.

Beyond this long-standing social equity "meat" of race and gender, sexual orientation adds a new element to the analysis as a still hotly contested issue. In definitional terms, we take an expansive approach to the topic, not drawing distinctions among gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or other nonheterosexual orientations. Instead, we focus on research about orientations that deviate from the heterosexual norm (see also Smith, 2002, p. 19, footnote 1).

Finally, social class is analyzed as an issue that is part of mainstream political discourse in much of the world but remains mostly absent from the U.S. scene. Again, our definition is expansive. Kingston (2000), for instance, argues that class does not exist in a "fairly strong" (p. 212) Marxist sense of "relatively discrete groupings—with distinctive life chances, outlooks, and involvements" (p. 205) that have a "real and consequential" (p. 234) impact on politics. Yet, Kingston acknowledges there is an underclass; "the children of the rich have a much better chance of getting ahead than the children of others" (p. 1); "class location—an objective position within the economic order—significantly shapes the fundamental content of social lives" (p. 3); and capitalist "Creative Destruction, to use Schumpeter's famous phrase—often entails painful disruptions in individual lives and in the fates of large social groups and entire regions" (p. 234). This article's conception of social class, then, is functional, drawing on Kingston's "objective position within the economic order" (see also Myrdal, 1944, p. 673), indicated by variables such as income, education, and occupation (Kingston, 2000, p. 217; Myrdal, 1944, p. 673; Oldfield & Conant, 2001). Critical to this conception of social class is the effect of factors beyond Broadnax's race and gender, in what Myrdal (1944) says systematically disadvantages the poor and so impedes their "full social integration" (pp. 673-674). Put another way, in this study social class refers to factors beyond race and gender that create the "gross inequalities of opportunity" for which "government is viewed as the vehicle for smoothing out" (D. Porter & Porter, 1974, p. 36; see also Oldfield, 2003, p. 441).

In sum, the four categories analyzed here represent two long-standing social equity issues that resurfaced in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, one currently contested concern, and a fourth that has yet to fully enter the U.S. policy agenda. This research tests whether public administration has lived up to Weimer and Vining's proactive charge to "contribute to the public good by identifying other values that receive too little attention in political arenas. Are there identifiable groups that consistently suffer losses from public policies?" If public administration has met this charge, one would hypothesize that writers in the field will have been publishing extensively on these questions. In other words, using the stated criteria, one would expect to see three clear patterns involving published articles appearing in the selected journals. First, writers in the discipline would have been addressing race and gender concerns in the 1940s and 1950s, prior to the social ferment of the 1950s and 1960s. Second, one would find numerous articles that both foretold and contributed to the current debate over sexual orientation. In particular, long ago several authors would have been addressing myriad aspects of this topic, ranging from marriage to employment discrimination. Finally, one would anticipate finding numerous journal articles addressing the age-old question of structured patterns of economic inequality, including vastly unequal birth circumstances.

**Table 1**  
**Comparative Social Equity in Public Administration Scholarship**  
**in Brazil, Canada, Australia, and the United States**

Country/Category	Year First Article	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
United States (1940-1999)							
Gender	1956	0	1	1	18	15	10
Race/ethnicity	1947	1	2	5	30	11	11
Indigenous	—	0	0	0	0	0	0
Class	1941	1	2	5	8	1	2
Orientation	1996	0	0	0	0	0	2
<i>n</i> =		249	243	307	627	535	520
Brazil (1960-1999)							
Gender	1990			0	0	0	2
Race/ethnicity	2000			0	0	0	0
Indigenous	1991			0	0	0	1
Class	1982			0	0	4	3
Orientation	—			0	0	0	0
<i>n</i> =				242	237	264	440
Canada (1958-1999)							
Gender	1973		0	0	2	6	11
Race/ethnicity	1986		0	0	0	4	7
Indigenous	1960		0	3	1	6	8
Class	1963		0	1	0	0	1
Orientation	2002		0	0	0	0	0
<i>n</i> =			26	302	271	275	258
Australia (1943-1999)							
Gender	1945	2	0	0	1	2	6
Race/ethnicity	1984	0	0	0	0	3	3
Indigenous	1983	0	0	0	0	5	9
Class	1966	0	0	1	1	1	5
Orientation	1996	0	0	0	0	0	2
<i>n</i> =		103	181	251	248	233	490

## Findings

Table 1 summarizes the record of the public administration academic discipline both over time and in comparative context. The table presents the number of articles on the social equity topics identified above published in the journals in question.

As can be seen, the social equity record of public administration scholarship has been uniformly woeful in each country—that is, this is not a problem unique to public administration in the United States. In each key area, the discipline has either lagged well behind the pace of social change (gender in the United States, Australia, and Canada, e.g.) or has resolutely failed to address an issue altogether (orientation in Brazil). Even in the traditional hot-button social equity topics of race and gender, the discipline has lagged.

## Race and Ethnicity

Only Brazil features a racial reality similar to that of the United States, with extreme inequality in both opportunities and outcomes suffered by individuals of African descent. Yet, in Brazil “the ethnic or racial agenda has not been very salient” (Schwartzman, 2000,

p. 42). The country has long featured a “myth of racial democracy”: Race relations in Brazil are perhaps best reflected in *carnaval*, where people of all races (it is claimed) mingle harmoniously in the streets (see Bennett, 1999; Santos, 1998, pp. 119-122; Twine, 1998, pp. 6-7). However, especially applying North American criteria to the issue, the existence of great racial discrimination and inequality is clear. Afro-Brazilians constitute a larger percentage of the Brazilian than African Americans do the American population, yet descendants of Afro-Brazilians are less represented in economic and political circles than their North American neighbors. As in America, they also fare much less well on a range of socioeconomic indicators (Fry, 2000, pp. 90-94; Hasenbalg, 1995; Nascimento, 2003, pp. 113-156). Though race has only just entered the public agenda in Brazil (Burdick, 1998), this is not for lack of effort by activists. Indeed, Alberto Guerreiro Ramos (1955), a cofounder of the public administration discipline in Brazil, was active in dispelling the myth as early as the 1950s with his *Patologia Social do “Branco” Brasileiro* [Social Pathology of the White Brazilian]. Ramos argued that Brazil *did* have a racial problem; the problem was one of discrimination *against* Afro-Brazilians rather than a problem *of* Afro-Brazilians; and *economic disadvantage, independent of race*, was a major factor in the issue (1946; 1955). The public administration discipline has failed to take this lead, with the exception of two recent, innovative articles by Vergara and Irigaray (2000a, 2000b) that analyze organizational culture through the lens of Afro-Brazilian mythology.

Combined perhaps with a reluctance to expose the otherwise pleasant-sounding myth of racial democracy, the unwillingness to openly address the issue of race has seriously hindered treating race as an independent variable in Brazilian public policy. Calls for some sort of affirmative action policies, for instance, are only now surfacing (Fry, 2000, pp. 100-101; Schwartzman, 2000, pp. 43-44), and Hasenbalg (1995, pp. 367-368) reports that although more than half of Brazilians favor explicit class-based mobilization and action to redress class-based social inequity, fewer than 10% approve similar racially based mobilization and action to redress race-based inequity.

The reality of race in Australia and Canada differs from that of the United States and Brazil, with indigenous issues at the forefront of the policy agenda in the former two (Forbes, 1998), along with the multiculturalism resulting from heavy recent immigration. Canadians especially focus further on “the French Quarter.”<sup>3</sup> Kernaghan’s 1978 *CPA* article offering a Canadian perspective on representative bureaucracy, for instance, emphasizes “franco-phones, women and native people” (p. 498), and *CPA* early published work on “public administration in a bilingual and bicultural country” (Gosselin, 1963). The broader research from which the data in Table 1 are derived also found 19 articles related to either Québec separation or bilingualism, both nearly as much as for race and indigenous issues combined. Discussions of Québec and bilingualism have a longer history, having started in the 1960s, nearly two decades before race, gender, or indigenous issues gained the attention of Canadian public administration scholarship.

In Australia, gender is almost synonymous with affirmative action, reflecting the marginalization of race (see Braithwaite & Bush, 1998). However, as Table 1 shows, indigenous issues have clearly caught the attention of *AJPA*, with Dillon’s (1983) indictment of the failure of Aboriginal heritage policy in West Australia the first in a recent spate of articles on Aboriginal matters in that journal. Again though, the subject did not enter *AJPA* until nearly two decades after the 1965 “freedom rides” that helped put the matter on the national policy agenda (see Garton, 1989, p. 96).

Finally, the record of public administration in the United States in addressing race has been equally woeful. Aufrecht (1999) notes that Native American governance has been “missing” from the U.S. public administration literature. Especially worrying is that the opening provided by Williams’s (1947) article on efforts of the Office of Price Administration to overcome the discrimination and marginalization of minority groups, and to incorporate them into the office’s programs, was not followed upon until the civil rights movement was well under way. Save for a tangential 1952 reference, and an article by Janowitz and Wright (1956), the next substantial article on race appeared in *PAR* only in 1966. This period of neglect, too, included several articles on current and future trends in the discipline (Ascher, 1950; Emmerich & Belsley, 1954; Fleming, 1953; Gulick, 1955; Nigro, 1961; Sayre, 1951), as well as a discussion of public administration in the South (Clapp, 1948), which failed to follow Williams’s lead and raise the question of discrimination against and marginalization of Blacks as a research interest.

## Gender

Gender, too, has finally gained traction in the Canadian and Australian public administration literatures, yet again long after both gender and race had a firm foothold in broader policy circles. Kernaghan (1978) early noted the importance of gender in Canadian representative bureaucracy policy, as in 1885 “only 23 of 4280 public servants were women” (p. 502). He cites the 1963 Glassco Commission’s report as a watershed, with antidiscrimination policy following shortly after (pp. 502-503), yet the first *CPA* article on this matter did not appear until the 1970s. As Table 1 shows, the topic is now a major focus of Canadian public administration, with current research addressing issues as diverse as differences between male and female management styles (Rinfert & Lortie-Lossier, 1997) and the efficacy of programs meant to improve access and equality for women (Gagnon & Létourneau, 1996). In the Australian context, gender has been on the popular agenda at least since Miles Franklin’s 1901 novel, *My Brilliant Career*. Yet, save for two articles in the 1940s—Arnot’s (1945) discussion of “employment of women in the civil service” and Gladden’s (1947) similar discussion in the British context—gender did not generate substantial attention until the 1990s.

In Brazil, ignoring gender comports with Araujo’s (2001, pp. 155-156) assertion that a serious challenge to the historical exclusion of women has only surfaced in the past decade. As Table 1 shows, gender attracted strong research interest in the United States only from the 1970s, yet Rubin (2000) argues that the record of the discipline in addressing gender issues has been mixed, at best. Public administration again has lagged in addressing this issue.

## Sexual Orientation

Perhaps the most strikingly consistent finding in this analysis is the near absence of attention to sexual orientation in the public administration literature in the four countries. The public administration discipline has not seriously engaged what is one of this generation’s cutting-edge human rights issues. This is especially significant given the string of high-profile policy debates relating to sexual orientation in the United States, including AIDS and the Reagan administration’s delay in acknowledging this looming threat to public health (Shilts, 1988), the “don’t ask, don’t tell” debate that surfaced during the Clinton administration, the



**Table 2**  
**Social Equity Compared**

Country	Per Capita Income (PPP US\$)	Share of Income Earned by	
		Poorest 20%	Richest 20%
Japan	24,898	10.6	35.7
Italy	22,172	8.7	36.3
Germany	23,742	8.2	38.5
Canada	26,521	7.5	39.3
France	22,897	7.2	40.2
United Kingdom	22,093	6.6	43.0
Australia	24,574	5.9	41.3
United States	31,872	5.2	46.4
Brazil	7,037	2.6	63.0

Source: United Nations (2001).

Note: PPP = purchasing power parity.

current series of civil union and gay marriage court cases, and the Bush administration's mooted Constitutional amendment to squash these.

Canadian and Australian scholars have been equally inattentive to this issue (the two articles noted in the 1990s in *AJPA* in Table 1 make only tangential references to the topic), despite an equally long history of gay rights activism in each country. A few notable exceptions are Miriam Smith's (2002) recent article in *CPA* and Lewis's (1997; Lewis & Brooks, 2005) research in the United States. In Brazil, gay rights issues are only beginning to surface on the national consciousness (see Antunes, 2003).

## Social Class

Similarly, social class has not been a major focus of the public administration discipline in any of the four countries. This is especially important given that save for Canada, the other three have poor records of economic equality. Table 2 above reflects this. The table presents income equality data for the four cases studied in this analysis, as well as the other large (G-7) industrialized economies. As can be seen, Australia and the United States have two of the poorest records among developed countries, and Brazil is one of the least equal societies in the world.<sup>4</sup>

The inattention to social class is perhaps most surprising in Brazil, given how race has been overlooked partly because "the existence of racism is repeatedly denied and confused with forms of class discrimination" (Guimarães, 2001; see also Nascimento, 2003, pp. 46-47) and given that a Partido Trabalhista (Worker's Party) candidate was recently elected president on a platform featuring a strong social equity plank (Silva, 2003). Yet, even though the country's yawning racial disparities, among the most rigid in the world (Ribeiro & Scanlon, 2001), have been excused as a social class problem, the public administration discipline has failed to address social class issues.

Australian public administration's inattention to social class is also surprising given the country's long history of class-based politics. Reeves's (1902/1968) classic *State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand* describes a number of social policy "experiments" that resulted in a range of industrial, social, and political innovations taken for granted today.

These came about because of class mobilization and the early establishment of class-based political parties (McMullin, 1991). Yet, despite this century-plus of class-based politics, *AJPA* has generally ignored class-oriented topics. Finally, though Canada's history with class-based politics has been less extensive than Australia's,<sup>5</sup> John Porter's (1965) *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* established social class as an important variable in both the popular and academic policy vocabularies. *CPA*, again, has all but ignored this issue (the 1963 article indicated in Table 1 was a summary by Porter of his *Vertical Mosaic*).

Mainstream U.S. academic public administration has likewise generally disregarded the role of social class in policy development and implementation, including avoiding addressing politically sensitive issues such as inherited wealth and unequal starting points. Even two of the three articles from the 1940s-1950s noted in Table 1 are set outside the U.S. context: Mexico in MacMahon (1941) and Britain in Hillis (1951). One has to go outside *PAR* to read such unconventional discussions, and even then they occur *very* rarely.<sup>6</sup>

## Discussion

One might argue it is understandable that the discipline of public administration has not addressed the various issues mentioned here. As Wilson (1887, p. 210) noted, "politics sets the tasks for administration." This politics/administration dichotomy might seem especially salient for issues such as social class and sexual orientation in a society where the president equates criticism of a regressive tax cut with "pitting so-called rich against poor" and a Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruling in favor of gay marriages results in a gubernatorial dissent on grounds of "3000 years of recorded history. . . . Marriage is an institution between a man and a woman" (Eagen, 2003). In short, perhaps public administration should not set the tasks for social equity but should maintain the reactive stance it has heretofore adopted.

This criticism is readily disregarded within the public administration discipline. Even leaving aside subsequent elaborations of the politics/administration dichotomy (see, e.g., Frederickson, 1990, p. 229; Lynn, 2001; Van Riper, 1958)—not to mention wide support for abolishing slavery despite its acceptance through 3,000 years of recorded history—the National Academy of Public Administration's (NAPA; n.d.) homepage indicates its Standing Panel on Social Equity is charged, in part, to

review and evaluate developments in public administration, including existing and emerging issues and problems, new ideas and current opinions, significant research and research needs, institutional development, and critical matters in social equity and governance in need of attention.

Furthermore, ASPA's Code of Ethics enjoins public administrators to "Work to improve and change laws and policies that are counter-productive or obsolete." Academic public administration, then, has a proactive charge on social equity.

Yet, on the issues of social class and sexual orientation—the two new social equity issues analyzed here—as noted earlier at least one prominent social equity scholar has said the courts, not public administration academics or practitioners, provided "the real impetus toward [race and gender] social equity" (Frederickson, 1980, p. 42). Little seems to have changed. The courts, and not public administration, have provided the impetus in the contem-

porary debate over sexual orientation. The correctness of the recent string of judicial decisions regarding gay marriage is not the issue. Rather, that public administration has been mostly absent from this debate, on either side, says little for the discipline's record in meeting its proactive charge.

The American inattention to social class is especially worth noting. Americans want to believe they live in a classless society ("The Curse of Nepotism," 2004; Johnson, 2004; "Special Report," 2005). Countless authors have commented on this unwillingness to recognize social divisions. In the 1940s, Gunnar Myrdal (1944) noted, "The American Creed has insisted upon condemning class differences, and it continues to do so in the face of the facts" (p. 671), and hooks (2000, p. vi) acknowledges that class is "uncool" in the United States. Raskin (1996, p. 42) labels class "the great unmentionable of American politics," and Freedman (1998, p. 15A) calls it "the social fault line that our nation pretends does not exist." Fussell (1983, p. 18) describes America's beliefs about being a classless society as "the official propaganda of social equality," whereas for Kingston (2000), "the very notion of class appears to contradict American ideals of equality of opportunity. It has seemed much 'too European,' and with its inexorable links to the Marxian legacy, much too radical in its political implications" (p. 10). Even President George W. Bush (2001) has weighed in, arguing, "I think that the class warfare debate has kind of worn itself out. I believe that. I think the American people are going to reject that debate, pitting so-called rich against poor. I hope so."

The failure of American public administration to address social class is also odd given that the issue was fundamental to the theory of representative bureaucracy, both in the United Kingdom (Kelsall, 1955, pp. 146-160; Kingsley, 1944, pp. 142-148) and the United States (Long, 1952, p. 814; Van Riper, 1958, p. 552). A subsequent focus on what Rae, Yates, Hochschild, Morone, and Fessler (1981, p. 32) term "bloc equality" has resulted in considerable advancements for the "meat" in social equity, as women and racial/ethnic minority blocs have made gains in the past decades (see, e.g., Lewis, 1988). Yet, Rae et al.'s *individual* equality has paradoxically suffered, as the income disparities that worried Kingsley, Kelsall, Long, and Van Riper have risen steadily. As Frederickson (1990) put it, "while social equity has undergone development as a theory—and while public administrators have, following a social equity ethic, ameliorated the effects of inequality—still inequality has increased as a fact" (p. 236; see also Jacobs & Skocpol, 2004, pp. 651-655; Kingston, 2000, p. 55; Myrdal, 1963, pp. 34-39).

A greater focus on inequity itself in social equity policy has implications beyond income distribution, as inequality also affects social processes. This is especially relevant in the inherently classist institution of higher education. Not only is higher learning disproportionately populated by those from upper-middle- and upper-class backgrounds (Oldfield & Conant, 2001), it is dominated by upper-middle-class sensibilities (Dews & Law, 1995; Johnson, 2004; Lubrano, 2004; Ryan & Shackrey, 1984). People from working- and poverty-class backgrounds therefore suffer problems of culture shock and prejudice similar to those faced by minorities in a White cultural milieu. Poor Blacks and Latinos suffer twice, through the intersection of class and culture.

The classism in higher education occurs on both sides of the podium. A recent study of social class variation among students at the nation's most competitive schools, for instance, found the most underrepresented group of Americans at the nation's top colleges and universities is students from low-income families. Only 3% of freshmen at the 146 most selective colleges and universities come from families in the bottom quarter of Americans ranked by

income. About 12% of students on those campuses are Black or Hispanic, who, combined, also account for about a quarter of the population (Kahlenberg, 2000). The report noted, "There are four times as many African-American and Hispanic students as there are students from the lowest quartile" (Savage, 2003; see also Carnevale & Rose, 2003).

There is evidence regarding a lack of class diversity on the other side of the podium. A growing body of literature shows professors are much more likely to come from families where the parents were highly educated and employed in various upper-status occupations, such as law, engineering, and medicine. Conversely, few professors' parents are truck drivers, prison guards, or short-order cooks (Oldfield & Conant, 2001). Therefore, it is interesting that so far the drive for diversity has not led universities toward recruiting and hiring more professors of nonelite origins. In public administration this is doubly surprising, as the fundamental role of social class in the development of theories of representative bureaucracy has not been reflected in efforts to create a representative public administration professoriat. Indeed, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) collects no information about the socioeconomic backgrounds of either faculty or graduate students in public administration.

A diverse faculty has important pedagogical implications. Pegueros (1995) describes the rewards this way:

Society benefits when all social classes are represented in higher education. . . . A professor who understands only those students from comfortable circumstances will seldom do justice to those whose struggle for education is the end of a long and difficult road. The participation of working-class and minority faculty in higher education assures that the university reflects the diversity of viewpoints found in the society at large. (p. 102; see also Shepard, McMillan, & Tate, 1998)

Quoting Finer, Kelsall (1955) made the same argument in justifying representative bureaucracy, pointing to the likelihood of both better administration and better policy if the bureaucracy's "composition included the memory of misery, hunger, squalor, bureaucratic oppression, and economic insecurity" (p. 192).

## Remedies

The discussion to this point has diagnosed two problems: a more immediate failure to contribute to two contemporary social equity debates (social class and sexual orientation) and a longer record of consistently being well behind the curve in identifying and addressing such new social equity issues. The remainder of this article proposes some remedies for these problems.

In the broader comparative context utilized here, one hopes public administration scholars in Brazil, Canada, and Australia will evaluate their level of attention to social equity concerns. Perhaps public administration in one or more of these countries will say the obligation to "change those policies and structures that systematically inhibit social equity" (Frederickson, 1980, p. 312) lies with another social or academic actor. Or, they might claim the social equity concerns this article identifies are either inappropriate or well addressed in their national contexts. But certainly such questions are worth asking.

Similarly, within the United States an obvious first remedy at the program level involves broadening social equity curricula to incorporate the debate on sexual orientation and the

impact of social origins on life trajectories. Programs should also become conscious of both student and faculty diversity within the broader conception of social equity this article suggests.

Much could be achieved for class diversity if various inequities—affirmative action for the privileged—were simply removed. These most overt aspects of class privilege include legacy recruitments within university education. Institutions will inevitably point to the financial impact that legacy-related donations have on the bottom line (“The Curse of Nepotism,” 2004; Thomas & Shepard, 2003), but this amounts to little more than openly acknowledging accepting bribes to admit otherwise less qualified (and so reject other less affluent) students.

Similar aspects of institutionalized classism include judging job and university applicants by the “quality” of their previous educational institutions. Yet, this quality is often an indicator of class privilege, as the Ivy League Ph.D. is hired or admitted in significant part because of the prestige of the previous institution, independent of faculty productivity (Burris, 2004), and student acceptance into these elite institutions strongly correlates with attending affluent suburban or elite prep schools (Sullivan, 1996), with both heavily determined by inherited privilege. Although public administration programs have little influence on such matters at the university level, fealty to the discipline’s code of ethics at least requires attempting to initiate change from within.

NASPAA and NAPA might also act by adding sexual orientation and social class to their social equity programs, as appropriate. This would especially involve NASPAA’s monitoring of program curricular sensitivity to these two issues, along with more traditional social equity concerns, while also insisting on evidence of faculty and student diversity in terms of this broader conception of social equity.

As this article has suggested, there is also a role for the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), The Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), and related professional organizations and especially their journals and conferences. This would surely start with periodic journal symposia, conference panels, and encouraging individual articles on social class and sexual orientation, by themselves or integrated with existing social equity concerns. Editors and conference organizers should also encourage ongoing dialogue through articles such as those on the “big issues” in public administration and management in *PAR* (see Behn, 1995; Kirlin, 2001).

Moreover, these organizations might ponder why their journals have systematically been behind the curve on emerging social equity topics. Are the mission statements, submission rules, or other factors less conducive to articles that challenge the status quo? Although this conservatism may simply be reflective of a conformist discipline that has not generated acceptable papers on these topics, our experience, buttressed with anecdotes from others who share our interests in sexual orientation and social class, suggests that the senior, self-selecting boards of editors play a large part in this traditionalism. A remedy for this may not necessarily imply more rapid generational change in the leadership of the discipline, as professional socialization can blunt the new ideas and reforming impulse of the young. Instead, the field’s senior members should avoid the temptation to see social equity in terms of their (previous) generation’s cutting edge and remain open to the possibility of paradigm shifts (see, e.g., Kanazawa, 2003; Kuhn, 1962).

Authors should be encouraged to write challenging pieces about looming social equity questions, much as Justice Harlan did as the lone dissenter in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). Although the majority readily accepted the constitutionality of “separate but equal,” Harlan

stood resolutely against the common prejudices of his day by presciently saying that equal protection meant

the destinies of the two races, in this country, are indissolubly linked . . . and the interests of both require that the common government of all shall not permit the seeds of race hate to be planted under the sanction of law. . . . [T]he judgment this day rendered will, in time, prove to be quite as pernicious as the decision made by this tribunal in the Dred Scott case. (pp. 559, 560)

All the above suggestions may go some way toward addressing the deeper issue of the discipline's reactive nature. But, some long overdue attention to sexual orientation and social class is not enough. The discipline must lessen the likelihood that academic public administration will once again fail to identify the next major social equity issue.

Orion White (1969) notes, "bureaucratic agencies would not easily tolerate personnel who exhibited lower social class behavior patterns" (p. 39), yet these agencies "often find that they can neither understand nor communicate with lower-class clients" (p. 38). The same surely applies to academia. A focus on inequity itself in social equity concerns may therefore prove an especially powerful antidote to the discipline's conservative orientation. Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (1998) observe that although women and minorities have made gains, these newcomers' class backgrounds reflect those of the old "White wealthy Christian male" power elite. A multiplicity of perspectives is less likely when diversity candidates either come from the same (higher-) class background or have experienced a decade of elite class socialization via prestigious university and prep school systems. The deepest, perhaps most important, remedy to the problems identified in this article would, therefore, be for programs to proactively seek students and faculty from outside socioeconomically privileged groups and so from the margins of society where the next frontier in social equity will inevitably develop.

## Notes

1. *Revista de Serviço Público* was first published in the 1930s and then took a decade-plus hiatus after 1970. Raw data are online at <http://mypage.iusb.edu/gcandler/GCan/data.htm>.
2. For example, Caiden, 1994; Riggs, 1998; Wilson, 1887; Ventriss, 1991.
3. See, for instance, Graham (1992) for a recent, accessible book on this theme.
4. See, for instance, Förster and Pearson (2002) for a broader international comparison and Castro (1997) for a recent discussion of the Brazilian context.
5. Though more so than in the United States (see Lipset, 1990).
6. See, for example, Oldfield's (2003, especially pp. 446-448) recent work on social class, inherited wealth, and unearned advantages, and Ventriss's (1998) article in the *American Review of Public Administration*, which only indirectly addresses social class matters.

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