

Chapter One

BIG DEMOCRACY, BIG BUREAUCRACY

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

A discussion of the tradition and context of American public administration sets the tone for the book, focusing on American's preference for constrained public leadership. The public perception of bureaucracy (pejorative) is juxtaposed with the public's reliance upon and acceptance of public administrators (favorable). The chapter concludes by discussing the cultural, institutional, and legal contexts in which public administration takes place in the United States.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the political culture and developments that shaped U.S. government and public administration.
2. Explain the difference between Hamilton's and Jefferson's vision of the bureaucracy.
3. Understand the consequences of a constrained government and public administration.
4. Reconcile the differences between public suspicion of public administration and positive individual experiences with public administrators.
5. Identify the importance of the policy-making role of public administrators.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

AN UNPROMISING PRECIS

The Indians and the English

Administration by Ambassadors: The Articles of Confederation

Administration by Legislators: The First State Constitutions

Administration by Enfeebled Executives: Jefferson Prevails

Hamiltonian Energy

Jeffersonian Constraint

A CULTURE OF CONSTRAINT

Americans and Their Governments

Governing in a Distrusting Culture

Distrust of Elected Leaders

Distrust of Government

Why Trust Matters

Some Diverse and Unexpected Correlations

High Trust Equals High Performance

THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONSTRAINT

Hobbled Elective Chief Executives

- The Domesticated Presidency
- Constraining Governors
- An Insidious Appointment Power
- Lieutenant Governors, Term Limits, and Recalls
 - Puny Political Powers
 - The Rising Recall
- Constraining Local Elected Chief Executives
- Hobbled Governments
 - Constraining the Federal Government
 - Constraining State Governments
 - Constraining Local Governments
 - The Unclear Outcomes of Imposed Constraints
 - Hobbled Governmental Growth

INFERNAL VERNON: A CASE OF UNCONSTRAINED PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (case study)

THE BUREAUCRAT: BRAINED, BLAMED AND BOUNCING BACK

- Bashing Bureaucrats
 - Politicians' Pandering
 - Academia's Undercutting
 - Media's Mordancy
- Are Bureaucrats to Blame?
 - The Public Likes Public Administrators
 - Encountering Bureaucrats
- The Bureaucrat: Government's Savior?

THE PARADOXICAL POWER: THE GRAY EMINENCE OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR

- Staying Power
 - Discretion Counts
- Policymaking Power
 - Policymaking by Federal Administrators
 - Policymaking by State Administrators
 - Policymaking by Local Administrators
 - Lethargic Local Legislators
 - The Demise of Democracy?
- Stopping Power
 - The Contest for Control
- Presidents *versus* Bureaucrats: Mobilizing the Bureaucracy
 - Presidential Frustration
 - Bringing Bureaucracy to Heel?
 - Executive Expertise
 - Presidential Indifference
 - Control and Autonomy
 - A Bureaucracy Newly Girded

Governors *versus* Legislators: The Battle for the Bureaucracy

KNOWLEDGE: THE BASE OF BUREAUCRATIC POWER

Knowledge is Power

Knowledge, Power, and the Public Interest

KEY CONCEPTS/TERMS/INDIVIDUALS

social contract

The Articles of Confederation

Alexander Hamilton

Thomas Jefferson

the “hollow government”

“government by gridlock”

social capital

recall

referendum

initiative or initiative petition

staying power

discretionary power

legislative veto

policy agenda

noetic authority

Max Weber

TEACHING IDEAS

1. Have students, in groups, revisit and rewrite the Constitution. Ask them to design and insert an additional article that clearly articulates the role of the bureaucracy in American Government. Then discuss the problems they faced in clearly defining and limiting the “fourth” branch of government.
2. Invite the local city or county manager to speak to your class. Ask him/her to focus their discussion on their relationships with the executive and legislative branches, as well as how s/he views his/her policy-making role.
3. Ask students to relate a good experience they or their family has had with a public agency or with public services. Have them reconcile their experience with the perception of bureaucracy as a big, unwieldy, unhelpful entity.

BACKGROUND READING

De Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2003.

Goodsell, Charles T. *The Case for Bureaucracy: A Public Administration Polemic*, 2nd ed. Chatham: Chatham House, 1985.

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. *The Federalist Papers*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1987.

Lorenzo, David J. "Countering Popular Misconceptions of Federal Bureaucracies in American Government Classes." *Political Science and Politics* (December 1999): 743-747.

Wilson, Woodrow. "The Study of Administration." *Political Science Quarterly* 2 (June/July 1887): 197-222.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. The unwritten agreement between the government and the governed that defines the responsibilities of each party is referred to as a
 - a. referendum.
 - b. discretionary decision.
 - c. **social contract.**
 - d. constitution.

2. At the local level, public administration is characterized by unusually weak
 - a. **chief executives.**
 - b. budgetary officers.
 - c. legislative bodies.
 - d. judges.

3. In many states, citizens have constrained government activities by adopting principles of direct democracy. Which of the following places an issue on the ballot through petitions signed by registered voters?
 - a. a recall
 - b. a referendum
 - c. **an initiative**
 - d. a supermajority

4. _____ is the device used to reconcile bureaucracy with democracy.
 - a. **Public administration**
 - b. Public policy
 - c. Civic responsibility
 - d. Legislative action

5. American public administration is characterized as

- a. aggressive.
 - b. constrained.**
 - c. forceful.
 - d. destructive.
6. The power that is derived from knowledge is _____ authority.
- a. partial
 - b. narrow
 - c. classified
 - d. noetic**
7. What percentage of American has a favorable opinion of government workers?
- a. 20%
 - b. 50%
 - c. 70%**
 - d. 90%
8. A _____ election allows voters to determine whether an elected official can complete his/her term in office.
- a. primary
 - b. referendum
 - c. recall**
 - d. general
9. _____ power refers to a public administrator's authority to decide how to implement public policies.
- a. Discretionary**
 - b. Legislative
 - c. Judicial
 - d. Noetic
10. Congressional repeal of an executive action taken in the course of administering a law is known as a
- a. line-item veto.
 - b. legislative veto.**
 - c. discretionary veto.
 - d. political veto.

TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS

11. The Articles of Confederation created a strong national government with a centralized bureaucratic structure. **FALSE**
12. Public administration and bureaucracy are specifically referenced in the U.S. Constitution. **FALSE**
13. The majority of Americans believe that they have been treated fairly in their interactions with public bureaucrats. **TRUE**
14. In contrast to Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson supported a constrained administrative tradition. **TRUE**
15. The United States has smaller governments and lower taxes than comparable countries. **TRUE**
16. There is a clear correlation between strong social capital and low performing state government. **FALSE**

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

17. Discuss why U.S. presidents may feel frustrated by or indifferent to the bureaucracy. What are the potential consequences of these actions?
18. Why did the Framers of the U.S. Constitution create constrained government structures and processes?
19. Discuss the differences between the image and the reality of the public bureaucrat.
20. What are some of the features of constrained public administration?
21. How would you describe American's view of their governments today?
22. Discuss the ways in which legislative and executive institutions have been "bureaucratized".
23. Speculate on the "staying power" of government agencies. What mechanisms prevent the failure of government bureaucracies?