

Conclusion: An Agenda for the Scientific Study of Bureaucracy

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Why the Need for a Scientific Study of Public Bureaucracy?

The literature on how political institutions (i.e., chief executives, legislatures, and the judiciary) attempt to control bureaucratic performance via ex post and ex ante methods is well developed. In the former case, numerous studies have discussed how tools such as budgets, appointments, and oversight, to name a few, can influence bureaucratic performance. In the latter case, the politics of procedural choice has shown theoretical ways to constrain the behavior of administrative agencies through the use of rules. These works have enhanced our theoretical and empirical understanding of the motivation, incentives, and tactics employed by political institutions to mold bureaucracy. They provide a body of systematic inquiry that follows the social scientific enterprise of theory building and empirical testing.

At the same time, however, this work typically ignores or obscures the central role of public bureaucratic organizations and how they behave on institutional and organizational levels. Instead, it treats bureaucratic performance as the result of political bargaining between some combination of the president, Congress, and the courts, yet it fails to reserve a place for the bureaucracy at the table. In doing so, we get a portrait of bureaucracy that is neither bureaucracy centered nor institutionally balanced. In concluding, we provide several suggestions meriting further scientific inquiry. All have a *bureaucentric* focus, as opposed to a political

institutions focus, on understanding how the administrative state functions in a democracy.

An Agenda for the Scientific Study of Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy is a growth area in political science. The number of scholars and the quality of skills is at a level unmatched since at least the 1940s. Articles on bureaucracy, while by no means prevalent, are no longer rare. In the last two decades, 110 articles with bureaucracy as a central feature have been published in the four leading general political science journals.¹

Paralleling the growth in scholarship is the development of institutional apparatuses designed to foster more study of public bureaucracy. The Midwest Public Administration Caucus along with the Public Administration Section of the American Political Science Association (APSA), the development of the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, and the recently established National Public Management Research Conference data archive and paper posting Web site (<<http://bush.tamu.edu/pubman/>>) create an infrastructure capable of supporting greater intellectual progress in the area. The Scientific Study of Bureaucracy (S²OB) group met for the first time as part of the Fifth National Public Management Conference in College Station, Texas; those papers became the core of this volume.

At this stage, taking a broad overview of the field and becoming more strategic about developing it seems appropriate. Given our present situation, where are we likely to make the most progress learning more about bureaucracy? Five areas of work are especially promising: getting inside the black box of bureaucracy, taking theory more seriously, exploiting the variance in bureaucracies, making an explicit return to the structural aspects of bureaucracy, and adopting methods that correspond to the data-generating processes of public bureaucracies. The unifying theme for these five areas is a new organizations approach to studying public bureaucracies. By new organizations, we mean a study of public bureaucracy focused on administrative organizations, whether at the macro-(organizational) or microlevel (individual), that generates empirically testable deductive and nondeductive theories of how bureaucratic agencies function to guide research inquiries. In many ways, this new organizational approach can be viewed as the use of rigorous logical, analytical,

and statistical methods applied to studying the timeless issues of interest raised by esteemed scholars of public administration such as Max Weber, Herbert Simon, Luther Gulick, James March, Anthony Downs, Francis Rourke, Herbert Kaufman, and James Q. Wilson.

Inside the Black Box

We often treat bureaucracies as black boxes, mysterious entities that respond to environmental pressures. In doing so, we learn a great deal about the interaction between bureaucracy and other political institutions but learn little about how the internal workings of the bureaucracy structure these external activities. Probing inside the black box has classic roots. Barnard's *The Functions of the Executive* (1938) was the first modern scholarship to provide insight into superior and subordinate relationships both within and outside administrative organizations. Simon's first major contribution, *Administrative Behavior* (1947), continued the focus on individual bureaucrats in organizations. His later work moved to the organizational level (Simon, Smithberg, and Thompson 1961) yet retained a behavioral focus that was bureaucratic in nature.

Bureaucracy is not the only field of political science to study a phenomenon as a black box. Virtually all of the quantitative work on the presidency deals with this institution and some other institution or process (e.g., Congress or public opinion) and then studies the presidency in an external fashion. The first priority of bureaucracy scholars should be to understand what bureaucracies do and why they do it. This requires a bureaucratic focus. To illustrate, if compliance in the cases that Brehm and Gates (1997; Brehm, Gates, and Gomez, this volume) study is so difficult (i.e., in hierarchical organizations of a paramilitary nature with a great deal of professionalism), why would we assume that it is so easy in other organizations that we study? Further theoretical and empirical work within organizations on issues of trust, culture, and learning following the lead of Brehm and Gates (1997) and Miller (1992) should reveal a great deal about why organizations respond as they do.

A second illustration is presented by Meier and Bohte (1999; Bohte and Meier 2000), who examine the process of organizational cheating, specifically the ability of school districts to generate higher scores on standardized tests by exempting from the exam the students most likely to fail. The Meier and Bohte studies are only unusual in the sophisticated nature of the cheating, which involves using institutionalized rules

and procedures to cloak the activity from public officials. Less sophisticated cheating characterized the Russian bureaucracy, which appeared to simply make up data when reporting results (Barry and Barner-Barry 1991; Conyngham 1982). Similarly, the Philadelphia police department was recently caught submitting false crime data in order to claim a reduction in crime and the U.S. Air Force's recent report that high-altitude bombing destroyed most of the tanks operating around Kosovo was later shown to be grossly inaccurate (Barry and Thomas 2000).

Blatant cheating is likely to be infrequent given the high costs of exposure (although sufficient cases appear to exist). Cheating is far more likely and difficult to counteract when it is imbedded in the rules and standard operating procedures of the organization. Such embedding is common in educational organizations with their emphasis on sorting and classification. The processes of the organization allow them to overassign students to special education and limited English classes and then exclude these students, who are less likely to pass, from state-mandated tests (Meier and Bohte 1999). In short, cheating permits schools to manipulate outputs, and thus political principles, by delivering higher test scores without actually improving performance on the exam. What looks like political responsiveness may in fact be something entirely different.

These illustrations suggest a present imbalance in both our theoretical and empirical models of bureaucracy. Political actors are viewed as having multiple tools at their disposal and also possessing sophisticated knowledge as to how to organize administrative agencies for their own advantage. These actors have access to budgets, personnel decisions, court cases, oversight hearings, and numerous opportunities to signal their preferences (e.g., Moe 1982, 1985; Scholz, Twombly and Headrick, 1991; Weingast and Moran 1983; Wood and Waterman 1994). Bureaucracies, in contrast, are often treated as naïve and unsophisticated, responding to politicians in a stimulus-response pattern.

Furthermore, bureaucratic actors and actions are determined solely by external, formal political constraints that arise out of bargaining between the chief executive and legislature. While such analyses provide an important segment of the administrative portrait, they omit the role bureaucracies play as organizations. Such a perspective runs counter to principal-agent (superior-subordinate) relationships that must be predicated on a zone of acceptable behavior between such parties (Barnard

1938; Simon 1947) that can be thought of as a “two-way street” (Krause 1999). We need models that jointly take into account the utility functions of politicians and bureaucratic agencies without relegating the latter to a constraint on the optimization problem facing the former. One excellent example of a general equilibrium-type approach is the one developed in Brehm and Gates’s enhanced principal-agent (EPA) model (1993, 1997).

If parsimony requires simplification, future gains may be greater if we move in a different direction and assume strategic, multiskilled bureaucracies and simple, naive politicians for counterfactual purposes. The implication of information asymmetry is that bureaucrats are more knowledgeable than politicians on policy matters. This might not be limited to technical issues and the supervision of interns; they could be better politicians, too. Altering the assumptions concerning sophistication can provide a complete range of theoretical relationships describing the interaction between politicians and bureaucratic agencies. This will help us know when, why, and under what conditions bureaucracies respond to political actors. Answering these research questions will be easier after scholars get inside the black box of bureaucracy to determine how administrative agencies decide to respond to various environmental stimuli.

One illustration of the benefits of a bureaucracy-centered focus might be a reconsideration of the issue of *ex ante* political controls over the bureaucracy. McCubbins, Noll, and Weingast (1987, 1989) and others stress the ability of Congress to structure the organization and its processes and thus determine its outputs. To be sure, Congress does at times act to structure a process—the well-known cases of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (Bryner 1987), with its initial bizarre procedures, and the decision to locate the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in the Department of Labor rather than Commerce illustrate such *ex ante* controls. For *ex ante* controls to be effective, however, Congress would have to engage in such structuring consciously and we would see evidence of systematic applications of applied organizational theory over time by Congress. Hall and O’Toole (2000) investigate how Congress structured policy programs during two different legislative sessions. Although their purpose was to document the use of networks, they found little evidence that Congress has an organization theory or that it possesses the sophisticated congressional strategy and understanding of organizational relationships necessary to create effec-

tive procedural (versus substantive) controls over the bureaucracy. Additional empirical evidence lends credence to this view, showing at best modest support for this proposition in diverse policy areas such as Medicare payments (Balla 1998), state air pollution (Potoski 2000), and federal hydroelectric licensing programs (Spence 1999b). Research on hazardous waste implementation reveals that informal rules are successfully substituted by an agency in place of formal rules when politicians constrain agency decision making by reducing agency discretion (Hamilton and Schroeder 1994; Hamilton 1996).

Recent work has demonstrated empirically what students of bureaucratic politics have long believed: relationships between bureaucracy and political institutions are both dynamic and reciprocal (Krause 1996a, 1999). Bureaucracies by their actions often force political institutions to respond to them or risk ceding control over a policy area to the bureaucracy. For some relatively complex programs, Congress (e.g., credit control programs; see Khademian 1995) or the president (agricultural policy; see Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard 1995) is quite willing to yield control. In other cases, Congress and the president actively seek to shape the actions of the bureaucracy. The bottom line, however, is that we should not assume that the casual force in the relationship is the political institution. This is especially true if one views principal-agent relationships requiring a basic level of agreement that comprises a zone of acceptable behavior (Barnard 1938; Simon 1947). While the literature on political control over the bureaucracy is well developed, the study of bureaucratic organizations is relatively uncharted territory for political scientists. Change does not require eschewing the analysis of political institutions' incentives, tools, and preferences pertaining to policy administration but rather necessitates a more serious treatment of bureaucratic organizations and their features in models of bureaucratic politics. Failure to do so can only result in scholars drawing biased inferences and misleading conclusions about the functioning of the administrative state.

Taking Theory More Seriously

Principal-agent theory has become the predominant paradigm in the study of bureaucracy over the past few decades. Regrettably, our reading of the literature leads us to conclude that political science scholarship has often, though clearly not always, failed to appropriately apply principal-agent theory in empirical studies.² Principal-agent models of political

control over the bureaucracy must allow for both a strategic principal and a strategic agent, with each able to behave in a proactive manner in a relationship with inherent goal conflict (Mitnick 1980; Perrow 1986; Ross 1973). Principal-agent theory requires a dynamic, inherently changing set of relationships over time. Perhaps such relationships come to an equilibrium, perhaps not. In the prime area of principal-agent theory, that is, where it originated (e.g., doctor-patient relationship), with voluntary relationships characterized by goal conflict and information asymmetry, many relationships do not evolve to an equilibrium. A large number of relationships between doctors and patients, customers and insurance agents, and homeowners and service personnel are simply terminated. Theories must consider this fact on two dimensions. First, Lewis's study on agency termination in the postwar era (2000b) finds that 62 percent of agencies created since 1946 have been terminated. This impermanence and the nonvoluntary nature of the relationship suggests that the model must be fundamentally changed if it is to be useful. Second, termination is sometimes not feasible because the bureaucracy is a monopoly provider (e.g., national defense) or the transaction costs of termination are massive (e.g., abolishing the Department of Education). Such relationships in realistic terms become mandatory, not voluntary. Both problems illustrate the need for theoretical development that incorporates these institutional aspects of bureaucracy.

Examining the empirical studies reveals few analyses claiming to use agency theory that actually take advantage of the driving features of principal-agent models—goal conflict and information asymmetry (see Waterman and Meier 1998). Principal-agent models assume conflict between the goals of the principal and the agent (Ross 1973). While this may be true for many agencies responsible for implementing regulatory policies, it is a questionable assumption in instances in which politicians and administrative agencies do not have inherently conflicting goals. For instance, distributive policies that yield positive-sum gains for clientele groups, congressional committees, and bureaucratic agencies (Ripley and Franklin 1984) do not fit the depiction of the principal-agent model as it was originally developed in law and financial economics. In these areas, agencies and legislatures will share goals. An appropriate empirical illustration of this symbiotic agency-political relationship can be found in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) farm credit programs (Meier, Polinard, and Wrinkle 1999). The conventional principal-agent hypothe-

sis, that politicians will attempt to control the bureaucracy through monitoring and incentives, is misguided in these types of agency-political relationships. The moral hazard problem endemic in conventional models is not a serious issue when bureaucracies (subordinates) acting in their own best interests take actions consistent with the goals of political institutions (superiors; see Brehm and Gates 1997).

In other ways, our empirical knowledge has far outdistanced this simple theory. As an illustration, Khademian (1995) examined what she called bottom-line agencies, those characterized by goal consensus and substantial information asymmetry. Her conclusion was that infrequent but goal-oriented legislation is the primary method of control. Procedural controls will not be considered. Meier, Polinard, and Wrinkle (1999), examining agricultural debt, corroborated Khademian's finding and demonstrated that other traditional principal-agent variables had little impact. A second, related hypothesis from the literature is that political control is enhanced by, but needed less, when clear, precise statutes are the responsibility of a single agency with sufficient resources (Mazmanian and Sabatier 1989). While this pattern rarely occurs, statutory coherence can be measured, and some evidence suggests that coherence matters (Meier and McFarlane 1996).

Developing theory in this area involves determining which types of bureaucracies respond, and in what ways, to political pressure. From the bureaucratic politics literature, we already know that agencies with support from clientele groups are less likely to respond to demands from political officials (Rourke 1984; Rubin 1985). Meier (1997) speculated that democratic constitutional legitimacy matters; if one defines the legitimacy of political pressure with legislation at one pole and *ex parte* contact on an adjudication at the other, as one moves toward the legislative pole bureaucracies are more responsive to political demands.

These tidbits of political control could be integrated theoretically. Such a theory would recognize that institutional characteristics generate certain types of interactions with other institutions. The real breakthrough in institutional theory will go to the first person who links the structural characteristics of *both* political and administrative institutions to the ways in which they interact with one another.

Miller (2000) presents another challenge to the principal-agent model. Using theoretical work developed for private sector organizations, he argues that principal-agent models will not produce benefits

consistent with the goals of principals. Private sector organizations have solved the moral hazard and adverse selection problems by divorcing ownership (principals) from management (agents) and consciously recruiting managers with goals different from ownership. In these models, goal conflict is a positive good and should not be minimized. Contemporary principal-agent theory, according to Miller, provides the wrong guidance in policy design.

In addition to macrotheories of bureaucracy and its interaction with political institutions, more middle range theories of bureaucratic decision making are also needed. This book provides two illustrations. Daniel P. Carpenter, in his chapter, argues that voting theories are inappropriate because bureaucratic decisions are essentially decisions to stop a process. His stopping processes models can be applied to a wide variety of bureaucratic decisions in which the choice is between action and inaction (Food and Drug Administration drug approvals, issuing rules by regulatory agencies, citing a violation of law, granting a license, etc.). One interesting future theoretical question is how stopping processes are altered when political principals impose a time limit on the processes. Using bureaucratic organizations as the decision unit of analysis, George A. Krause examines agency risk taking in terms of how much discretion agencies wish to obtain in relation to the policy outcome uncertainty that they confront. This allows deriving empirically testable conditions of risk-averse, risk-neutral, and risk-seeking bureaucratic behavior.

Normative theory with regard to bureaucracy has generally been ignored by political scientists, even though theories such as budget maximization have normative implications. David B. Spence in this volume uses rational choice logic to argue that in some cases citizens will prefer decisions made by bureaucrats rather than by elected officials. The degree to which expertise tempers representation processes is the key factor in this decision for citizens. Spence's work is a blueprint for those interested in designing public policy to be responsive to a set of values, be they citizen preferences, overall efficiency, or some other value.

Just as all principal-agent theorists assume that the principal's values should be controlling, an extensive literature in bureaucratic politics supports democratic control over bureaucracy (see Rourke 1984). At the same time, because the process of establishing democratic values through overhead democracy is not especially efficient (i.e., there is a great deal of slippage between the electorate and representatives) and because indi-

vidual bureaucrats are also citizens and may hold appropriate values, trade-offs between democracy and bureaucracy are possible. A normative theory that started from the premise that democratic values, while important, should not always be controlling (e.g., Meier 1997) would argue for different institutional relationships than would the conventional principal-agent model of political control over the bureaucracy with its key simplifying assumption of principal supremacy.

Exploiting the Variance in Bureaucracies

Bureaucracy scholars overstudy federal regulatory agencies. Early quantitative studies of bureaucracy (Moe 1982; Weingast and Moran 1983; Wood 1988) examined regulatory agencies, and their example provided a template for subsequent studies. Federal regulatory agencies, however, have characteristics distinctly different from those of other bureaucracies, especially in terms of variables related to political control. This overfocus on regulation calls into question how general the findings in the literature are.

At least two solutions to this problem exist. First, most bureaucracies are local. If scholars want a situation in which one can turn some of our variables into constants and get good comparability across agencies, then the best strategy is to select the same type of agencies across states or local jurisdictions (Gordon 2000; Ingraham and Kneeder 1999; Schneider and Jacoby 1996). The most common bureaucracies in both number and employment are schools, yet only recently have schools been used to examine questions of bureaucracy (e.g., Abernathy 2000; Chubb and Moe 1990). Using state or local agencies sometimes increases the difficulty of gathering data since the analyst must contact more than one agency with a survey or a Freedom of Information Act request, but the large number of such agencies means that the response rate does not have to be perfect. A cross-sectional analysis of this sort could also be done cross-nationally, although data-gathering problems would increase significantly. A theoretical effort to do this by Thomas H. Hammond, included in this volume, considers how alternative institutional arrangements produce different types of policy outcomes. Recent cross-national research on the topic of political delegation to the bureaucracy by Huber (2000) and Huber and Shipan (2002, 2000) has begun to make vital theoretical and empirical strides in addressing this issue from an electoral institutions perspective in a manner that builds on American work by Epstein and O'Halloran (1999). What remains unearthed altogether, however, is a concerted theoretical

and empirical focus on how public bureaucracies function in a variable manner cross-nationally from an organizational perspective.

Second, we could easily focus on nonregulatory agencies at the federal level. Social service agencies, as another illustration, are differently structured, with different traditions and standard operating procedures (see Goodsell 1983). Similar arguments could be made for redistributive agencies, pork barrel agencies, government corporations, and advisory organizations. If Lowi's (1964) typology of policies is not useful, then perhaps Wilson's (1989) typology of government organizations will be. Recent movements into nonregulatory agencies such as health care (Balla 1998), social welfare (Keiser and Soss 1998), and agriculture (Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard 1995) are long overdue. Keiser, in this volume, continues her work on social welfare agencies; Smith (this volume) examines bureaucratic values in educational organizations, and Corder (this volume), uses federal credit policies.

Future studies of bureaucracy need to continue these nascent efforts to expand the range of bureaucracies studied. Bureaucracy takes many forms—nonprofits, networks, government corporations—and engages in a wide variety of different relationships with political institutions. Only by increasing the variation in the types of bureaucracy that are studied can we hope to provide general findings about how the bureaucracy functions within a representative democracy.

Explicit Incorporation of Structure

As scholars, we have a great deal to contribute by relying on our strength, the understanding of how structures affect behavior. Two types of structures are relevant. First, standard operating procedures both within and external to the agencies are important. Agriculture agencies, for example, interact with Congress in ways different from, say, the Environmental Protection Agency. Health research agencies have different interactions with appropriations committees than the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) does. A brief reading of congressional hearings can document these differences. Some of these differences in interactions might be a function of mission or it might be something else, but relationships are structured differently across agencies, and this affects policy decisions.

Second, organizational structures need to be incorporated in our work. Structural questions once were central to the study of bureaucracy. The

work of Meier and Bohte reintroduces the concept of span of control to the study of bureaucracy. Meier and Bohte (2000a) derived some theoretical expectations and then examined the impact of span of control on agency outputs in educational organizations. A second essay (2000b) claims that wider spans of control provide greater discretion to street-level bureaucrats; they then test this by using the logic of representative bureaucracy, finding that minority teachers have more impact in decentralized systems.

Numerous other internal structures affect organizational performance. Decentralization is a concept that is sometimes addressed by examining local units or regions of federal bureaucracies; it is a concept that needs to be brought to the forefront. Decentralized organizations are dominated by street-level bureaucrats; attempts to generalize the models of Brehm, Gates, and Gomez to other such organizations are likely to have some positive results. Recruitment processes and structures within administrative agencies also clearly matter (Carpenter 2001). The reliance of the USDA on state land grant schools, OSHA's initial preference for industrial hygienists and safety engineers, and the 1960s Federal Trade Commission recruitment from second-rate southern law schools all affected the development of these organizations.

From the public administration literature, the concept of networks is also relevant (Milward and Provan 1998; O'Toole 1997). Policy, in many areas, is no longer implemented by means of a single organization but by a network of organizations that often operate across levels of government. The lack of hierarchical control in networks implies that different leadership styles are needed for effective policy implementation. Theoretical work on networks from sociology can be useful in trying to get a handle on interorganizational networks (e.g., Skvoretz and Fararo 1996; Skvoretz and Willer 1993). For instance, does evidence of strong or weak ties (Granovetter 1973) affect patterns of relationships between superiors and subordinates within an administrative organization, among bureaucratic organizations, and among politicians and agencies? This question has critical implications for key concepts such as control, accountability, and effectiveness. Scholarship on policy networks that focuses on national policy subsystems may be instructive for analyzing how bureaucratic agencies interact with one another as well as with the larger political environment (Carpenter, Esterling, and Lazer 1998; Laumann and Knoke 1987; Heinz, et al. 1993).

Structure is not just an internal variable; it can also be used to sharpen other analyses. Mintzberg's (1983) examination of organizational structures argues for various methods of control within an organization, including oversight, socialization of values, standardizing training, and routinization of procedures. His work is intended to operate within an organization but with little effort could be transformed into an approach to presidential control over the bureaucracy. Presidential tools such as reporting (oversight), socialization of values (orientating political appointees to presidential priorities), recruiting individuals with given values (those who share values with the president), and so on are similar to Mintzberg's internal organizational structures. Mintzberg's theory could both integrate the methods of presidential control and suggest when one set of controls is more likely to be used.

A few hypotheses about how internal structure might affect external relationships also come to mind. Overhead controls will work less well in highly decentralized organizations with strong value socialization like the Forest Service. Agencies that have regional offices but do not rotate their personnel from region to region will develop a heterogeneous set of values that will be difficult to direct centrally. In terms of formal structures, O'Toole's (1997) work on networks suggests that they are far more difficult to control than hierarchies. Relatedly, Milward and Provan's (1998) empirical analysis of mental health networks in four cities finds that the most effective network was controlled by a monopoly provider that dominated both service provision and the terms under which mental health services and funding were provided by other agencies. Taken together, this suggests that networks have considerable difficulty in undertaking concerted action unless authority can be consolidated and exercised in a unified manner.

Considerable merit exists for the thesis that bureaucratic structure is important in understanding how administrative agencies operate and that it is inherently political in nature (Moe 1989, 1990; see also Knott and Miller 1987). Recent research by Lewis (2000a) has shown that some administrative agencies are structured in a manner that makes them more susceptible to political influence than others (see also Wood and Anderson 1992). Analysis of bureaucratic structures can also help us to understand how bureaucratic decisions and outcomes disseminate through the regional field offices found in many federal bureaucracies (Gordon 2000; Schmidt 1995; Whitford 1998). Finally, the structure of

bureaucratic organizations also matters in assessing how different types of bureaucratic agents, who are appointed in a differential manner, respond to the “contractual” versus “noncontractual” principals that they must encounter (Krause 1994, 1996b).

Methods

The scientific study of bureaucracy needs to adopt methods that correspond to the data-generating process in bureaucracies. Gill and Meier (2000) make a series of general points about methods and their fit with the types of problems that are relevant to the studies in this book. The correspondence between Bayesian methods and how bureaucracies actually make decisions is self-evident. The essay also suggests greater use of qualitative methods that can reflect values (substantively weighted analytical technique, SWAT), methods that incorporate the autoregressive nature of bureaucracies (time-series), and a skepticism of traditional hypothesis testing. In this volume, two of the essays’ main contribution is to push the methodological boundaries of inquiry in the study of public bureaucracy. Brehm, Gates, and Gomez introduce both new graphical and statistical modeling approaches, using compositional data analytic techniques to analyze workers’ choices. Whitford’s analysis of agency competition, punishment, and imitation applies computational (or computer simulation) methods to analyzing bureaucratic organizations. In addition, recent research has placed considerable emphasis on the timing of bureaucratic decisions (Carpenter 2000b; Whitford 1998) and life expectancies for administrative agencies (initially raised in Downs 1967 and Kaufman 1976) using event history and duration statistical modeling techniques (Carpenter 1999; Lewis 2000b).

Other examples of adjusting methods to problems could be found. A historical example is the way courts and administrative agencies have learned to deal with each other over time. In 1965, Kenneth Culp Davis contended that agencies generally ignored courts, but by 1996 Spriggs (1996) found agencies very responsive to court decisions. The responsiveness of agencies to courts of law varies by agency, but clearly some equilibrium has been reached on the scope of court oversight and the degree of responsiveness by agencies. The conclusion that the relationships between bureaucracy and other institutions will be in long-run equilibrium implies that these relationships should be examined via the methods of cointegration. Similarly, Moe’s (1985) argument about the National Labor

Relations Board, whereby labor and management adjust their expectations to the ideology of the board, could also be analyzed in this manner with a long enough time-series.

Conclusion

This volume provides a series of essays that examine public bureaucracy from a bureaucentric perspective. The work has much in common with the “new institutionalism” of the past two decades in terms of an emphasis on systematic inquiry containing logical and/or empirical rigor and the attempt to understand how the administrative state functions in a democracy. This “new organizations” approach, however, departs from new institutionalism with respect to investigating public bureaucracies. The former view maintains that the key to understanding the administrative state is not to focus solely on democratic institutions such as the president, Congress, and the courts in order to explain bureaucratic behavior and decision making, as displayed in new institutionalism scholarship, but to also focus on a thorough analysis of bureaucratic agencies as institutions of governance that contain their own unique incentives, procedures, and preferences for administering public policy. Although administrative agencies can be notably affected by rules and procedures designed by legislatures to control the former’s behavior; they do not sit on the sidelines as spectators when chief executives and legislatures bargain and maneuver over their fate (Carpenter 2000; Hammond and Knott 1996; Wilson 1989). The point that administrative agencies play a vital role in shaping how policy is administered cannot be overlooked in the study of the politics of the administrative state.

We concur with a sentiment expressed by Moe (1984, 758) nearly two decades ago when discussing the new economics of organization and its subsequent application to the study of public bureaucracies within political science.

In all likelihood, the contractual paradigm will continue to dominate economic approaches to organization, owing to its linkages to neoclassicism. But it will also continue to include diverse approaches, some far more concerned than others with the empirical richness. The principal-agent model, ideally suited to the analysis of hierarchical relationships, is understandably the major means of formal modeling at present and should become well-established as an important tool for organizational analysis. Given the counter-

vailing influences, however, and given the broader tasks of organization theory, the current fervor surrounding the principal-agent model will likely give way to a more eclectic methodology within which that model plays a less pronounced but integral role.

Clearly, the application and utility of principal-agent and other contractually based paradigms as important theoretical devices in understanding bureaucratic performance within political science have been demonstrated. At the same time, however, these approaches suffer from inherent limitations that prevent us from acquiring an adequate understanding of many vital issues that we need to address as social scientists concerned with theory building and empirical testing of hypotheses centered on how public bureaucracies function within a democratic system of governance. We believe the time has come for more eclectic approaches in scientifically analyzing public bureaucracy in democratic settings.

The essays contained in this volume attempt to enhance our theoretical and empirical understanding of how bureaucracies operate as distinct organizations as well as in relation to the larger political environment. These works seek a better understanding of how bureaucratic organizations perform by placing primary emphasis on analyzing these entities as opposed to relying on other democratic institutions for answers regarding administrative behavior. Our goal is that future scholarship on public bureaucracy within political science will not eschew the importance of administrative organizations when developing theories and empirical tests concerning the functioning of the administrative state.

Notes

1. These four journals are the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, and *British Journal of Political Science*, covering the 1981–2000 period.

2. Our *basic* theoretical understanding of the principal-agent model is well developed in some instances (e.g., see Bendor, Taylor, and Van Gaalen 1985; Perrow 1986; Mitnick 1980; and Moe 1984). The *applied* theoretical work tends to address relatively small, specific problems (e.g., budget maximizing) in order to make the problem tractable. This permits these applied theorists to deal with a relatively sophisticated bureaucracy on the strategy side if not on the goals side.