

Policy Development and Administration: The Role of Bureaucracy

Introduction

Formal organizations can do a vast number of things that unorganized or informally-organized individuals cannot hope to do. Indeed, one can view the remarkable achievements of industrial civilization as the product, in good part, of our formal organizations. Most of us will also spend most of our working lives inside these formal organizations. Hence, it is well worth our while to understand these kinds of institutions.

Everyone who works in a formal organization quickly learns that the organization has some kind of external life: there are things that go on outside the organization that critically affect it. Hence, our first topic, treated very briefly, involves the external environment of public bureaucracies. That is, what is the nature of their relationships with critical external actors such as the president or governor, Congress or the legislature, interest groups, the bureaucracies, and the public?

Everyone who works in a formal organization also quickly learns that the organization has a rich and complex internal life. Hence, our second topic involves various aspects of the internal environment of public bureaucracies. That is, how does its formal structure define who does what, and what incentives will motivate people to do what they are supposed to do?

Finally, everyone who works in a formal organization learns that the relationship between the organization and its environment is mediated, to a substantial degree, by the organization's leaders. Hence, our third topic involves the problem of administrative leadership. That is, how can the leaders induce employees to achieve the goals that the external environment needs or demands?

Central Purposes of the Seminar

While the readings will be mostly theoretical, the central purpose of our seminar will be to help you develop a deep understanding of some organization that is vitally important to you. This may be an organization for which you previously worked, for which you currently work, for which you hope to work, or which you simply find of great interest. Our various papers and exercises will be aimed at helping you think about a variety of different aspects of your chosen organization. I also want everyone to improve their skills in making oral presentations.

Readings

The following books are assigned:

Behn, Robert D. 1991. *Leadership Counts: Lessons for Public Managers from the Massachusetts Welfare, Training, and Employment Program*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kaufman, Herbert. 1981. *The Administrative Behavior of Federal Bureau Chiefs*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Khademian, Anne M. 2002. *Working with Culture: The Way the Job Gets Done in Public Programs*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Miller, Gary J. 1992. *Managerial Dilemmas: The Political Economy of Hierarchy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

There is also a coursepack of required readings that will be available at Ned's Bookstore, 135 E. Grand River (phone: 332-4200). It should be available by the beginning of the Fall semester. Its cost is roughly \$20.

Choice of Organization

Each MPP student will be required to select one organization – either a public agency or some non-profit organization – which will be the focus of his or her thinking and writing throughout the semester. In effect, every time you read some book or article for the course, I want you to think about what the reading tells you about your organization. I have two goals for this. One goal is simply to help you understand your chosen organization as well as possible. That is, by the end of the semester, you will have analyzed your organization from a variety of critical perspectives. My other goal is for you to gain practical experience in applying the course's theoretical perspectives to real-world organizations; I want you to learn how to apply these perspectives to the organizations that will be important to you throughout your career.

For the most part, I also intend that the research paper you write at the end of the course will be on this organization which you have already been studying and analyzing all semester. I will need to work with you to define what this research topic will be.

To help you select this organization I want to have a conversation or series of conversations with each of you individually, preferably in person and preferably early in the semester. For some of you, the choice of organization may be easy and obvious. For others, the choice may be more difficult. My goal in each of these conversations is to help you select an organization from which you can learn the most. In my experience, it is best to select an organization with which you are *already* rather familiar, or an organization to which you are willing to devote a great deal of time and energy *this semester* to come to know.

It is also very important to select this organization *as early in the semester as possible*, which means that you need to come see me as early as possible.

Requirements

There will be five different kinds of academic activities in the class:

- (a) *Application papers*: Each student will write approximately 5 papers (each will be 5-7 pages max) that apply some piece of literature that is read for the class to the organization the student has chosen. The purpose of the application papers is to get students to learn to analyze their organization from the perspective of the theory or argument in the piece of literature. Value: a total of 60% of the grade.

These application papers must be emailed to the instructor and the other students no later than 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, the day before our class.

- (b) *Application presentations*: Each week I will select one or two students to make oral presentations of their application papers to the class. The presentations should be approximately 15 minutes long *and no longer*. The purposes of the presentations are (a) to show other students how the piece of literature illuminates the author's real-world organization, (b) to teach other students about some real-world organizations other than the ones they have personally chosen, and (c) for the presenter to develop his or her skills at oral presentations. These oral presentations will not be graded by the instructor. The classroom is supplied with a computer and a projector, so you will be able to present your paper to the class via a PowerPoint presentation. The computer can also be linked to email and the Web, so those can be accessed as well. The room also has a traditional overhead projector for use with transparencies.
- (c) *Presentation critiques by observers*: For each presentation, there will be 2 individuals – we will call them "observers" – each of whose job is to write a short (1-2 page) analysis of the oral presentation, with the sole purpose of helping the presenters improve their oral communication skills. Each written analysis will be emailed to the oral presenter no later than a week after the presentation.

(preferably sooner), and another copy will be emailed to the instructor. These presentation critiques will not be graded by the instructor.

- (d) *Research papers:* Students will work individually with me to define a topic. This paper is due Thursday, December 16 by 5:00 pm at my office; you may email your paper to me. Value: 40% of the grade. You will be required to submit a written (4 or 5 page) project proposal before starting significant work on the project. This proposal will describe your question, explain your general approach or research strategy, how you specifically expect to address your question, and the conclusions you initially expect that you might reach. *Even before you draft your project proposal, you must discuss your proposed project with me.* The earlier you do this, the better!
- (e) *Presentation of research papers:* In the last one or two class periods, students will make oral presentations of their research papers, to be followed by discussions. Since these presentations will be done *before* the papers are due, my hope is that the presentations and ensuing discussions will help students revise and complete their final papers.

Seminar Format

Each seminar meeting will consist of five parts. The first three parts are: (1) instructor lectures on the reading materials, (2) student presentations of application papers, and (3) class discussion of key issues for the week. Part (4) is at the end of each class, when the instructor will provide a brief introduction to the next week's readings. Part (5) involves a break that we will take at some point during the class; the instructor will provide hot water, coffee, tea, cocoa, and other instant drinks. If students wish to organize themselves to provide treats to eat with our hot drinks, we can discuss at our first class meetings how this might be done.

As noted above, each application paper must be delivered to the instructor and the other students no later than 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, the day before the seminar. Sending the paper via an e-mail attachment is a perfectly acceptable means of getting the paper to me. My email address is: thammond@msu.edu.

You must also send a copy of your paper to your fellow classmates; email addresses will be provided.

With the 5 students currently enrolled in the class (as of Friday, August 27), and with each student writing 5 papers, that means 25 papers will be written. There are 12 weeks during which application papers will be presented. This means that for each week there will usually be 2 application papers written; there will be one week with 3 application papers written. Each writer of an application paper should also prepare an oral presentation.

Office Hours

My office is 343 South Kedzie Hall. My office telephone number is 517-353-3282. My e-mail address is thammond@msu.edu. I check my email frequently throughout the day and evening. I do not have voicemail on my office telephone.

My drop-in office hours this semester will be on Mondays from 2:00 to 5:00 pm, and by special appointment.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Wednesday, September 1: Introduction and Orientation

Introduce selves
Describe course
Discuss each week's subject and readings
Discuss application papers for each week

Week X – Monday, Sep. 6: No Class – Labor Day!

Week 2 – Monday, Sep. 13: Models of Organizational Policymaking

Assign discussion papers for remainder of semester.

Read: Graham Allison (1969). "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *American Political Science Review* 63: 689-718.
Jonathan Bendor and Thomas H. Hammond (1992). "Rethinking Allison's Models." *American Political Science Review* 86: 301-322.

Application Papers: For those of you who have already selected your organization and have some familiarity with it, write an essay in which you describe your organization from the perspective of Allison’s three models (perhaps as modified by Bendor and Hammond). Be sure to consider the question of which model (if any) does the best job of helping you “make sense” of what you have learned about the organization.

For those who have not yet selected an organization, or who have not had time to gain some familiarity with the one you have chosen, write an essay in which you discuss how you might use Allison’s models (perhaps as modified by Bendor and Hammond) to understand your chosen organization.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Observers:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

Week 3 – Monday, Sep. 20: The Constraints of Institutional Environments

Read: Herbert Kaufman (1981). *The Administrative Behavior of Federal Bureau Chiefs*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
Thomas H. Hammond and Jack H. Knott (1999). "Political Institutions, Public Management, and Policy Choice." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 9 (January).

Application Papers: Write an essay in which you describe the chief external constraints on your organization, and discuss the extent to which (and how) the leader of your organization can overcome these constraints.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

- Observers:*
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

Week 4 – Monday, Sep. 27: Conflicting Values in Public Management

Read: Thomas H. Hammond and Gary J. Miller (1985). "A Social Choice Perspective on Expertise and Authority in Bureaucracy." *American Journal of Political Science* 29:1 (February): 1-28.

On Reserve: Herbert Kaufman (1960). *The Forest Ranger: A Study in Administrative Behavior*.

Application Papers: To "solve" the dilemma described by Sen's theorem, discuss the costs and benefits of the four potential strategies -- for your organization -- that are implied by Sen's theorem.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

- Observers:*
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

Week 5 – Monday, Oct. 4: Hierarchy and Incentive Systems -- A

Read: Anthony Downs (1967). *Inside Bureaucracy*, ch.11, "The Basic Nature of Control Problems in Bureaus" and ch.12, "Control Processes and Devices."
Gary J. Miller (1992). *Managerial Dilemmas: The Political Economy of Hierarchy*, Introduction and ch.1-3.

Application Papers:

1. I assume that there are "control problems" (as described by Downs) in your organization. Write an essay in which you consider the origins of, or the reasons, for these control problems in your organization. (Consider Downs' description of "control problems" and Miller's description of "voting failures" in his chapters 2 and 3.)

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. Using Miller's discussions in chapters 1-3 as a possible perspective, examine the reasons why your organization has whatever kind of administrative hierarchy that it has. (It is quite possible that the reasons for your organization's particular hierarchy are largely unrelated to Miller's arguments about business firms.)

- a. _____
- b. _____

Observers:

- 1a. _____
- _____
- b. _____
- _____
- 2a. _____
- _____
- b. _____
- _____

Week 6 – Monday, Oct. 11: Hierarchy and Incentive Systems -- B

Read: Gary J. Miller (1992). *Managerial Dilemmas: The Political Economy of Hierarchy*, ch.4-8.

Application Papers:

1. Write an essay in which you discuss why the administrative leader of your organization is seldom able to get his or her subordinates to do precisely what he or she wants them to do.

- a. _____
- b. _____

2. In your organization, which problem seems to be most important reason for control problems: hidden information or hidden action?

- a. _____
- b. _____

Observers:

- 1a. _____

- b. _____

- 2a. _____

- b. _____

Week 7 – Monday, Oct. 18: Hierarchy and Incentive Systems -- C

Read: Gary J. Miller (1992). *Managerial Dilemmas: The Political Economy of Hierarchy*, ch.9-11 and Epilogue.

Bradley E. Wright (2001). "Public-Sector Work Motivation: A Review of the Current Literature and a Revised Conceptual Model." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 11(4): 559-586.

Application Papers:

1. In your organization, describe some of the obstacles to cooperation among "horizontal equals," and evaluate the costs and benefits of some strategies -- for your organization -- for eliminating these obstacles.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. For your organization, describe some of the obstacles to cooperation between "superiors" and "subordinates," and evaluate the costs and benefits of some strategies to eliminate these obstacles.

- a. _____
- b. _____

3. For your organization, discuss the relevance of (a) the economists' description of work motivation, (b) Miller's description of work motivation, and (c) Wright's description of work motivation.

- a. _____
- b. _____

Observers:

- 1a. _____

- b. _____

- 2. _____

- b. _____

Week 8 – Monday, Oct. 25: The Politics of Hierarchy -- A

Read: Gulick, Luther (1937). "Notes on the Theory of Organization." In Luther Gulick and Lyndall Urwick, eds., *Papers on the Science of Administration*. New York: Columbia University.
Simon, Herbert A. (1946). "The Proverbs of Administration." *Public Administration Review* 6: 53-67.
Hammond, Thomas H. (1990). "In Defense of Luther Gulick's 'Notes on the Theory of Organization'." *Public Administration* 68: 143-173.

Application Papers: Write an essay in which you apply Gulick's characterization of organization and hierarchy to your organization.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- Observers:*
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

Week 9 – Monday, Nov. 1: The Politics of Hierarchy -- B

Read: Thomas H. Hammond (1993). "Toward a General Theory of Hierarchy: Books, Bureaucrats, Basketball Tournaments, and the Administrative Structure of the Nation-State." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 3: 120-145.
Thomas H. Hammond (1986). "Agenda Control, Organizational Structure, and Bureaucratic politics." *American Journal of Political Science* 30:2 (May): 380-420.

Application Papers:

1. Write an essay in which you discuss the extent to which your organization's structure can be expected to affect outcomes.

- a. _____
- b. _____

2. What do these papers tell you about redesigning your organization's structure?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

Observers:

- 1a. _____
- _____
- b. _____
- _____
- 2a. _____
- _____
- b. _____
- _____

Week 10 – Monday, Nov. 8: Fallible Components, Redundancy, and System Reliability

Read: Charles E. Lindblom (1959). "The Science of 'Muddling Through.'" *Public Administration Review* 19: 79-88
James G. March and Herbert A. Simon (1958). *Organizations*. Ch. 6, "Cognitive limits on rationality," pp.136-171.
Martin Landau (1969). "Redundancy, Rationality, and the Problem of Duplication and Overlap." *Public Administration Review* 29:4 (July-August): 346-358.
C. F. Larry Heimann (1993). "Understanding the Challenger Disaster: Organizational Structure and the Design of Reliable Systems." *American Political Science Review* 87: 421-435.

On Reserve: Jonathan Bendor (1985). *Parallel Systems: Redundancy in Government*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Application Papers: For your organization, write an essay in which you compare and contrast (a) the costs and benefits of improving component reliability for the pursuit of system reliability, and (b) the costs and benefits of duplication for the pursuit of system reliability.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Observers:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Week 11 – Monday, Nov. 15: The Impact of Organizational Culture and Ideology

Read: Anne M. Khademian. 2002. *Working with Culture: The Way the Job Gets Done in Public Programs*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Thomas H. Hammond. 2002. "Bureaucratic Ideologies." Presented at the annual convention of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Application Papers:

Write a paper which *describes* the culture (or ideology) of your organization and which *discusses* whether this culture (or ideology) is a help or a hindrance to the effective conduct of your organization's work?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

- Observers:*
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____

Week 12 – Monday, Nov. 22: Administrative Leadership in Institutional Environments -- A

Read: Behn, Robert D. (1991). *Leadership Counts: Lessons for Public Managers from the Massachusetts Welfare, Training, and Employment Program*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Re-Read: Herbert Kaufman (1981). *The Administrative Behavior of Federal Bureau Chiefs*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

On Reserve: Caro, Robert A. (1974). *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Doig, Jameson W., and Erwin C. Hargrove, eds. (1987). *Leadership and Innovation: A Biographical Perspective on Entrepreneurs in Government*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lewis, Eugene (1980). *Public Entrepreneurship: Toward a Theory of Bureaucratic Political Power: The Organizational Lives of Hyman Rickover, J. Edgar Hoover, and Robert Moses*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Selznick, Philip (1957). *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*. New York: Harper & Row.

Application Papers:

1. For your organization, to what extent does the possibility of "leadership" depend on the nature of the "situation" that your organizational leader faces?

- a. _____
- b. _____

2. To what extent could "leadership" for your organization be something that could be taught by a school and learned by a student?

- a. _____
- b. _____

Observers:

- 1a. _____
- _____
- b. _____
- _____
- 2a. _____
- _____
- b. _____
- _____

Week 13 – Monday, Nov. 29: Administrative Leadership in Institutional Environments -- B

Read: Thomas H. Hammond and Jack H. Knott (1999). "Political Institutions, Public Management, and Policy Choice." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 9 (January). Read pages 18-end.

Miller, Gary J. (1993). "Formal Theory and the Presidency." In George C. Edwards III, John H. Kessel, and Bert A. Rockman, eds., *Researching the Presidency: Vital Questions, New Approaches*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Knott, Jack H. (1993). "Comparing Public and Private Management: Cooperative Effort and Principal-Agent Relationships." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 3: 93-119.

Application Papers:

1. To what extent do you think a person from the private sector could become an effective manager in your organization?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

2. To what extent can the leader of your organization transform -- and thereby loosen the constraints of -- the organization's institutional environment?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

Week 14 – Monday, Dec. 6: Presentation and Discussion of Final Paper Drafts

Each member of the class will make a short oral presentation of his or her paper, to be followed by discussions.

Presentations:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

*****NOTE:** Final papers are due Thursday, December 16 by 5:00 pm during exam week. You may bring your paper to my office at 343 South Kedzie or else you may email your paper to me at: thammond@msu.edu