EMERGING CONFLICTS IN THE DOCTRINES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION*

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As a self-conscious discipline among the cluster of specialties or "fields" encompassed by political science, public administration came late and grew fast. Its recent arrival and rapid growth sometimes obscure the fact that its origins are to be found in a process of experimentation with governmental structure that long preceded the appearance of public administration as a subject of systematic study and is likely to continue as long as the nation exists. This process of experimentation goes on vigorously today, and the development of new forms is generating discord more profound and far-reaching than any that has ever hitherto divided students of public administration. It is with the sources and significance of that discord that this paper is concerned.

I. THREE CORE VALUES

The central thesis of this paper is that an examination of the administrative institutions of this country suggests that they have been organized and operated in pursuit successively of three values, here designated representativeness, neutral competence, and executive leadership. Each of these values has been dominant (but not to the point of total suppression of the others) in different periods of our history; the shift from one to another generally appears to have occurred as a consequence of the difficulties encountered in the period preceding the change. Much of the early literature commonly identified as within the province of public administration was written during the transition from the first to the second of these values, and the great flood of materials produced after World War I often reflected both the second and third values when these for a time (and for reasons to be explained) pointed in the same direction for governmental improvement. Lately, however, the courses of action indicated by the second and third values have been not only different, but contradictory; the cleavage is becoming increasingly apparent in the doctrines of public ad-

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1 "Although the art of administration has been practiced for centuries, it has not been widely written about until recent times . . . . The study of public administration has advanced to an extraordinary degree since 1920 . . . . (T)he study of public administration is still primarily American." Leonard D. White, Introduction to the Study of Public Administration, 4th edition (New York, 1955), pp. 9, 10, 11.

2 To be sure, the three values, which will be examined in turn, are not the only ones to be fulfilled by the governmental system, but the design and functioning of the government have been such that these appear to have received prime stress in the ordering of our political life.

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administration. What the effects will be on the fraternity of practitioners and on their aspirations to professional status is difficult to say, but it seems clear that commitments to values that have become incompatible can produce only gulls in the realm of ideas and confusion in proposals for governmental reform.

The Quest for Representativeness. The earliest stress was placed on representativeness in government, the quest for which clearly had its roots in the colonial period, when colonial assemblies were struggling with royal governors for control of political life in the New World and "No taxation without representation" was a slogan that expressed one of the principal interests and anxieties of the colonists. The legislatures thus became the champions of the indigenous population, or at least of the ruling elements in the colonies, against what was regarded in many quarters as executive oppression. When the Revolution drove the British out, the legislatures in the new states were, with but a couple of exceptions, enthroned in positions of leadership of the new governments, and, although the franchise continued to be limited to a relatively small proportion of the people, it was through the legislatures that governmental policy was formulated and legitimated. Even in the states that continued to operate under their colonial charters in the post-Revolutionary years, the governors were reduced to figureheads with little influence in the making of governmental decisions. In ten of the states, the governors were elected by the legislatures, most of them for only one-year terms; in just one state did the governor have a veto, and even that was limited by present-day standards. Governors had few powers of appointment and removal, or of administrative supervision and control. They did not function as legislative leaders. Lacking in status and in constitutional and administrative strength, governors had no source of political strength, and they therefore remained subordinate to the legislatures in every respect; they had no leverage with which to exert influence even if they had been so inclined. Hence, the office was regarded as primarily ceremonial and a symbol of honor rather than as a seat of power, and it therefore rarely attracted men of distinction in the early days of the Republic. Consequently, as late as the opening years of the Twentieth Century, the governorship was a dead-end road. As one authority has remarked, they served their short terms and returned to private life with few accomplishments behind them and nothing before them but the pleasure of being called "Governor" for the rest of their days. The legislatures ruled virtually unchallenged.

3 It is impossible to date any of the periods with precision, except arbitrarily, and it is probably unnecessary to do so for most purposes, but their origins can be identified, and so, roughly, can their zeniths.

4 New York and Massachusetts. These states provided important models for the federal executive, which ultimately was set up as an even stronger—and perhaps better—office than its prototypes.

4 There were notable exceptions of course. Cleveland became President after serving as Governor of New York, Hayes and McKinley had both been Governors of Ohio before moving to the White House, and other governors became influential in national politics. As a general rule, however, the governorship was not a springboard to power or prominence.
In local government, too, collegiate bodies were in charge. Whether they were truly "representative," and whether one ought to refer to the governing organ of a community that is not "sovereign" as a legislature, are questions we need not consider here. Suffice it to say that local executives labored under the same or perhaps greater handicaps than their state counterparts and therefore presented no more of a challenge to the local institutions corresponding to legislatures than did the governors to the state bodies.

The constitutional specifications for the Presidency constituted a counter-trend to the apparent value system of governmental designers in early America. For the President was invested with greater authority than almost any other chief executive of the time. Yet even at the federal level, there were clearly widespread expectations that the Congress would provide the primary motive power for the government, a view shared, according to Binkley, even by many incumbents of the White House whose "Whig conception" of the Presidency as subservient to the legislature may be contrasted with the "stewardship theory" of independent Presidential authority to be enunciated much later in history. While Washington and Jefferson fought to protect and extend executive power from the very first, it is probably not stretching the facts to argue that Presidents for a long time had an uphill struggle in this effort, and that many chose to yield to the sentiment of the day and the strength of the giants in Congress. Whether or not the legislatures were actually the most representative institutions need not be explored here; there is ample evidence that they were thought to be so.

The enthronement of the legislature was one of the two major tangible indications of the value placed on representativeness; the other was the rather uncritical faith in the electoral principle. It began with the extension of the franchise and a thrust toward universal adult suffrage. But the faith in elections also took the form of an increasing number of official positions filled by balloting. The first half of the Nineteenth Century saw the number of elective offices sharply increased, especially after the Jacksonian Revolution burst upon the country. The ballot grew in length until almost every public official from President down to dogcatcher came to power via the electoral route. Moreover, with the rise of the party organizations to new influence as a result, even those positions which were not made elective were filled by party faithful; the spoils system came into its own. By the time of the Civil War, voters found themselves confronted by hundreds of names on their ballots, and each change of party brought with it a change in virtually all government employees.

The Quest for Neutral Competence. As early as the middle of the Nineteenth Century, it had become clear to some people that legislative supremacy, the long ballot, and the spoils system did not in fact increase representativeness; as a matter of fact, they often seemed to have just the opposite effect. For one thing, they tended to confuse both voters and interest groups and thereby opened the way to power to political bosses who, while providing a measure of integration in the bewildering pullulation of government, often utilized their positions to advance their personal interests and the interests of the organiza-
tions they headed without regard for the interests of many of the governed. For another thing, legislators and administrators at every level of government proved themselves peculiarly vulnerable to the forces let loose by the burgeoning industrial system; corruption beset legislatures from county boards and city councils right up to Congress itself, and the venality and incompetence of many public officers and employers were common knowledge.

Disillusionment with existing governmental machinery was a result. State and local constitutions and charters grew longer and more detailed as reformers tried to reduce the discretion of legislative bodies. Limitations on the length and frequency of state legislative sessions were imposed to limit the amount of harm they could do. And at every level, reformers began to cast around for new governmental machinery that would provide a high level of responsible government service while avoiding the high costs of unalloyed representative mechanisms.

Thus began the quest for neutral competence in government officials, a quest which has continued to the present day. The core value of this search was the ability to do the work of government expertly, and to do it according to explicit, objective standards rather than to personal or party or other obligations and loyalties. The slogan of the neutral competence school became, "Take administration out of politics."

This school produced its own rationale and mechanisms for this purpose. The rationale was the now-familiar politics-administration dichotomy, according to which politics and administration are distinct and separable processes that should therefore be assigned to separate and distinct organs. The mechanisms were independent boards and commissions and the merit system, which were designed to insulate many public officials and public policies from political pressures.

The movement gathered momentum after the Civil War, although the first

... Proponents of this value generally did not demean representative institutions; on the contrary, they claimed their programs would strengthen those institutions by rationalizing governmental operations and improving their quality to such an extent that elected officers would be in a position to exert greater control over policy than they ever could hope to do in the prevailing political jungle. The case for neutral competence has normally been made not as an alternative to representativeness, but as a fulfillment of it.

The disillusionment of some was so thorough, however, that they lost faith completely in representativeness, in the capacity of a people to rule themselves, and returned to advocacy of rule by an aristocracy of talent. Civil service reform was, in fact, a movement which found its leaders among the grandsons and great-grandsons of the "Patricians" of early days, among the "Old Whigs" and their sons, among those who had been enamored of, or grew up under, British or German or French institutions (for example, the Adamses, Godkin, Schurz, Villard, Rosengarten), and among the urban mercantile and older businesses or professions rather than among the new industrialists. Distrust of the populace may still be observed in some modern writers and even in some current supporters of the neutral competence idea, but, for the most part, the concept of representation was so deeply ingrained in American thinking—and, indeed, in American emotions, for the word has become a revered one—that few dare to attack it openly whatever their beliefs may be.
agitation for some of its objectives goes back even further. In local and state
governments, library boards and park boards and police boards and boards of
health and finance boards and utilities commissions and boards of education
and boards of assessment and equalization and boards and commissions for a
dozens of other purposes mushroomed up all over the governmental landscape. At
the federal level, the Interstate Commerce Commission came into being, to be
followed in the Twentieth Century by a host of like bodies. These agencies, at
every level, differed from each other in details, but had the same underlying
structure: their members were appointed for overlapping terms supposedly on
the basis of their reputations for general ability and character and specialized
knowledge. They were granted wide discretion and secure tenure for substantial
periods, and were expected to formulate policy on nonpolitical premises. Objectivity
was reinforced in some instances by mandatory bipartisan membership
on the boards. The exigencies of the times made it necessary for legislatures to
delgatethe power to administrative agencies; the advocates of neutral competence
deflected delegation from the chief executives and the departments under their
control to what was later to be branded “the headless fourth branch of govern-
ment.”

The merit system, peculiarly, made its greatest advances where boards and
commissions were slowest to gain a foothold—the federal government. Pressure
for the merit system began before the Civil War; its first fruit was the federal
Civil Service Act of 1883. Initially, the objectives of the program were confined
principally to controlling the selection of government workers by taking the
power to hire staff from the hands of executive heads (who were politicians)
and lodging it with experts who, if they did not actually appoint personnel, at
least could screen out all but those who could pass tests of one sort or another.
This aspect of the program spread rapidly in the federal government; despite
the subsequent growth of the federal service, about nine out of ten government
employees today are under some form of merit appointment. But the process
did not stop with the removal of the appointing power from politics; over the
years, the Civil Service Commission extended its surveillance to dismissal,
promotion, and position classification; eventually, with the aid of new legisla-
tion, the political activities of civil servants were reduced to little more than
voting. A wall was erected between the government bureaucracy and the
politicians, a wall policed by the Civil Service Commission.\footnote{The states and
localities were slow to follow suit. By the turn of the century, only
two states had enacted civil service legislation and only a few of the largest cities. Even
today, the formal merit system still has a long way to go at these levels; states and
localities remain the prime targets of the civil service reformers. But they have made
some impressive gains during the last quarter-century, and the idea is still spreading.}

The quest for neutral competence, though it began about a century ago,
has never waned. The training of civil servants became steadily more formal
and systematic as time passed; courses, departments, and even schools of
administration appeared in universities. Organization and methods analysis
became a profession in itself. Boards and commissions are still common modes
of handling administrative problems—witness, for example, the Atomic Energy Commission. Supporters of the merit system continue unabated their efforts to extend it “upward, outward, and downward.” The desire to make government employment an attractive career service was given new voice by the Commission of Inquiry on Public Service Personnel a generation ago, and by the Task Force on Personnel and Civil Service of the Second Hoover Commission more recently. The city manager plan—and even the town, county, and state manager plans—have continued to score successes. Neutral competence is still a living value among students of government, career civil servants, and, perhaps more significantly, among much of the general populace.

The Quest for Executive Leadership. Just as the excessive emphasis on representativeness brought with it bitterly disappointing difficulties unforeseen by its advocates, so too the great stress on neutral competence proved to be a mixed blessing. And just as the failures of the machinery established with an eye primarily to representativeness helped produce the reaction toward neutral competence, so too the weaknesses of the governmental arrangements devised by the latter school—or, more accurately, the weaknesses of government resulting from the work of both schools—gave impetus to the supporters of a third value: executive leadership.

For both earlier philosophies, and the mechanisms to which they gave rise, created a thrust toward fragmentation of government, toward the formation of highly independent islands of decision-making occupied by officials who went about their business without much reference to each other or to other organs of government. Neither elected administrative officials nor independent boards and commissions welcomed direction from the chief executives; the former were supported by constituencies in much the same way as governors and mayors, and their tenure was linked largely to their vote-getting prowess, while the latter generally remained in office longer than the chief executives and depended very little on them for support. Besides, as these officials and agencies became more accomplished in their respective areas of specialization, they tended to resent efforts of “laymen” and “amateurs” to intervene; this tendency revealed itself even in some civil servants nominally under the chief executives, who, though formally subject to dismissal, turned out in practice to have quite secure tenure, and who, by adept maneuvers in negotiating bureaucratic armistices (“memoranda of agreement”) and in forming alliances with legislative committees and clientele groups, succeeded in carving out for themselves broad areas of discretion free of real supervision by their political chiefs.

The drive toward fragmentation could not be effectively countered by legislative bodies, despite their vast statute-making, financial, and investigative powers. Even Congress can exercise only a general and intermittent oversight over administrative agencies, and has had to confine itself to providing general standards guiding the exercise of administrative discretion and to occasional intervention to correct abuses or to force specific changes in policy. And state legislatures and city councils and county boards operate under still greater limitations; many of these bodies are in session for only brief periods out of each year (or biennium), and administrative officials conduct the business of govern-
ment with great latitude in the long intervals between meetings. Moreover, even if legislatures met often enough and had enough technical assistance of their own to exert control over administration, their composition and procedures would render them incapable of providing integration; working through tens of committees, reaching decisions through processes of compromise and concession among representatives of small territories units, functioning increasingly as reviewing bodies for proposals placed before them by executive and administrative agencies and by interest groups, they are generally too slow and too fragmented to perform this function effectively.

Neither have the courts been able to integrate the component elements of American government. They were not designed for this responsibility, and they are completely unable to discharge it. Limited to refereeing disputes between contending parties, formal in procedure and deliberate in method, they could not play this role even had they been willing. In fact, they have increasingly moved toward acceptance of findings of fact by administrative organizations and toward restriction of their own activities to review of questions of jurisdiction and procedure.

The centrifugal drives of the representativeness and neutral competence institutions thus found no important counter-force in the legislatures or in the courts. So the efforts to maximize these values brought with them the dispersion of governmental policy-making processes.

There were widespread criticisms of this fragmentation. It bred chaos; agencies pursued contradictory policies in related fields. It fomented conflict; agencies engaged in bitter bureaucratic warfare to establish their spheres of jurisdiction. It opened gaps in the provision of service or of regulation; clienteles were sometimes denied benefits or escaped supervision because they fell between agencies. It was costly; many agencies maintained overhead organizations that could have been replaced more cheaply and effectively by a common organization, and citizens had to make their own way through bureaucratic labyrinths. And, most important of all, it led to irresponsibility; no one quite knew how the pattern of organization and program came into existence or what could be done to alter it, each segment of the fragmented governments became a self-directing unit, the impact of elections on the conduct of government was minimized, and special interest groups often succeeded in virtually capturing control of individual agencies. No one seemed to be steering the governmental machinery, though everyone had a hand in it. At best, it seemed to be drifting (and just when the growth of the economic system appeared to make greater direction necessary), while at worst it showed signs of flying apart or grinding to a stop. These were among the forces that persuaded many students of government that chief executives had to be built up to take charge of the machinery.

The office of the chief executive became their hope because it furnished the

* Criticisms, that is to say, of the fragmentation "in general." When it came to the particular fragments over which they exerted their greatest influence, legislators, bureaucrats, party organizers, and interest groups were often defensive of their special positions and hostile to integrating remedies which might disturb their control.
only available means of achieving the end sought. Movement toward strengthening chief executives began long before there was an explicit body of doctrine to explain and justify it. In the federal government, it took the form of struggles between Presidents and Congress for control of policy. Since the Presidency was set up with strong constitutional powers at the very start, the battle raged over the breadth of the powers conferred rather than over formal constitutional changes. Those powers were firmly defended, liberally interpreted, and gradually expanded under the strong Presidents from Washington on. The governors, on the other hand, having been granted few powers at the start, gained strength slowly, largely through constitutional amendment, in the course of the Nineteenth Century. In the same period, many city executives developed from mere chairmen of councils to weak mayors and then to strong mayors, and there was even an occasional step in this direction among the rural units of government. These things were taking place even while the emphasis on representativeness was predominant; they continued after the pursuit of neutral competence became the order of the day; but the Twentieth Century was well on its way before executive leadership became a systematic quest supported by articulate theories, and before it really began to gather speed.

One of the first signs of the new emphasis was the rapid spread of the executive budget in government. For a long time, agency requests for funds were considered individually, and there was no central point at which total expenditures were reviewed and the competing claims balanced against each other in the light of the resources available; indeed, very often, the only way governments could figure out how much they were spending was to add up the appropriation bills after they had been passed. The reformers turned to the chief executives to rationalize the spending process, and out of it came the now familiar phenomena of executive review and adjustment of agency requests, and the submittal of a comprehensive budget supposed to make it possible to see the overall spending pattern. The practice was often far short of ideal, but, for the first time, chief executives were given a powerful instrument with which to control administrative behavior; it was a major advance in striving to equip them to integrate American government. A few large cities and states adopted budgetary legislation during the first two decades of the Twentieth Century, and the Taft Commission on Efficiency and Economy in 1912 urged such a measure upon the federal government. By the middle of the third decade, many of the largest cities, virtually all of the states, and the federal government had budget laws on the books. Since then, in general, the tendency has been toward continued increase in the budgetary powers of chief executives, and toward adoption of the process by those jurisdictions in

* Party bosses occasionally did serve this function, but only occasionally, for it must be remembered that our political parties are really congeries of smaller organizations in most places and therefore hardly equipped to provide governmental integration. Besides, they were phenomena from which governmental designers were seeking to deliver the governmental process.
which it did not previously obtain. A large body of literature now backs up this practice, and, though the lack of a theory of budgeting (as contrasted with beliefs about the appropriate machinery for budgeting) has been pointed out, the executive-budget doctrine is widely accepted and rarely challenged.

Another indication of the concern with executive leadership is the administrative reorganization movement. It is frequently described as having begun in 1917, when Illinois adopted a sweeping change in its administrative structure, although such measures had been unsuccessfully urged in other states several years earlier. Under this plan, the number of agencies was reduced, and they were grouped into comparatively few departments headed by officials appointed by the governor; an administrative pyramid, with the governor standing at the apex, was the goal, and if it was rarely achieved completely, the extent to which it was approximated is indeed remarkable considering the degree of fragmentation prior to the changes. The number of elected administrative officials was sharply diminished, and boards became correspondingly shorter. The appointing and removal power of the governor was also increased. In a single vast upheaval, the reorganizers sought to elevate him from an almost impotent exhorter to a powerful leader; if their efforts did not—as they could not—immediately produce the consequences sought, it was not very long before they began to bear fruit. Administratively and politically, the Illinois governor ascended to new eminence and influence. And more than half the states, some cities, and a few counties and towns, followed Illinois’ lead. All during the ‘twenties and ‘thirties, surveys of government machinery were commonplace, and they became even more so after World War II as the first federal Hoover Commission touched off a wave of “little Hoover Commissions” in the states and many cities. “Concentration of authority and responsibility,” “functional integration,” “direct lines of responsibility,” “grouping of related services,” “elimination of overlapping and duplication,” and “need for coordination” echoed through state capitol, city and town halls, and even through some county courthouses as chief executives became the new center of governmental design.

At the federal level, there were occasional adjustments and readjustments in the machinery of government in the early part of the century, and the President was even invested with broad powers of reorganization during the emergencies of World War I and the depression. But it was not until the mushrooming agencies of the New Deal strained that machinery to its limits that the practices and supporting dogmas of the reorganizers made their appearance in strength in Washington. Few clearer statements of the executive leadership value than the Report of the President’s Committees on Administrative Management have ever been published,\(^{10}\) with its recommendations on pulling the administrative functions of the independent regulatory commissions back under the Pres-

\(^{10}\) And no clearer or more scholarly justifications of this value than E. Pendleton Herring, Public Administration and the Public Interest (New York, 1930).
ident, on drawing the government corporations back into the hierarchy, on bringing personnel management under close direction by the President, on strengthening the White House staff, on getting the General Accounting Office out of the pre-auditing field and returning this operation to the executive branch, and in the tightly reasoned explanations of these recommendations (which were tied to the peg of the separation of powers), the Committee offered the classic presentation of the reorganization aspects of the executive leadership school.

The Reorganization Act of 1939, which reversed one formal relationship of the President to Congress by conferring initiatory responsibility for reorganization plans on the former and authorizing the latter in effect to veto such proposals, reflected in practice the theory of the Report; even the frequent use of the legislative veto does not reduce the significance of this expansion of executive power, and the fierceness of the periodic battles over renewal of the Act suggests both Congressmen and Presidents are conscious of this significance. In the course of the years since the Report, without much fanfare, other recommendations of the Committee have been put into practice, too; the influence of the Committee continued to make itself felt for a long time.

The first Hoover Commission was considerably less emphatic about strengthening the chief executive than its predecessor, and the second Hoover Commission has displayed, if anything, some coldness (if not outright hostility) to the concept. It is conceivable, therefore, that the reorganization movement has for the time being run its course in the federal government. But it would probably be an error to write off entirely this phase of the quest for executive leadership.

A third index of this quest, an index related to, but distinguishable from, the developments in budgeting and administrative reorganization, is the increase in the size of executive staffs. The archetype is the Executive Office of the President with its hundreds of specialists providing the President with advice on every aspect of policy, reviewing legislative proposals to work out the Presidential attitude, studying administrative management from the President’s point of view, planning, researching, furnishing legal counsel, serving as a source of information alternative and supplementary to the formal hierarchy, and studded with “the President’s men,” responsible and loyal to him and him alone. This is a far cry from the days when a President’s secretariat consisted

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11 This point of view received additional support at the state level, although in restrained tones, from James W. Feiler in his *The Independence of State Regulatory Commissions* (Chicago, 1942).

12 See also, for example, V. O. Key, Jr., “Government Corporations,” in Fritz M. Marx, ed., *Elements of Public Administration* (New York, 1946).

13 To be sure, the Committee also advocated expansion of the merit system, and restated the argument that stronger executive leadership would mean greater popular control of government (i.e., representativeness), thus indicating how deep-seated these parallel values were. But this cannot obscure the basic premises of the Committee’s Report, nor negate its general impact: it is overwhelmingly for executive leadership in sentiment.
of a few aides who helped him with his official correspondence; it has helped to give the chief executive the means with which to direct the administration he heads and to formulate programs and press them into statute and then into operation; it has helped make him a real center of political and administrative power. In like fashion, the executive offices of many of the governors have been transformed into instruments of leadership, and some local executives have been similarly equipped; at these levels, the evolution as been somewhat less dramatic, but not much less effective. The tendencies may be uneven in their fulfillment, but they are pronounced.

Doctrinally, the sharp conceptual cleavage between politics and administration, which gained currency during the years when neutral competence was ascendent, and which served as such a useful philosophical prop for the machinery favored in those years, became an impediment to the justification of executive leadership. For one thing, chief executives, in whom administrative responsibility and power were to be lodged, were also partisan politicians. Moreover, one of the main reasons advanced for seeking integration was elimination of the fragmentation resulting from acceptance of the idea of the separability of politics and administration. Gradually, therefore, the politics-administration dichotomy fell out of favor in public administration, and the doctrine of the continuity of the policy-formulating process, better suited to the aims of executive leadership, began to replace it. Before long, the traditional orthodoxy became old-fashioned and found few defenders.

By every measure, then, the years from 1910 to 1950 were characterized by the rise of the quest for executive leadership to a place of pre-eminence in administrative thought and action.

_The Concurrence of Values._ For expository purposes, the quest for the three values has here been treated as sequential, and, to be sure, each had a different high point in time. Nevertheless, it is worth pausing to reiterate that at no point was any of them pursued to the complete exclusion of one or both of the others; evidence of interest in all three can be found at any stage of our history, sometimes in a single document by a single author. As has been observed, the defense of any one was often framed in terms of advancement of the others simultaneously. The story is thus one of changing balance among the values, not of total displacement.

II. THE COALITION

For many years, the proponents of neutral competence and the partisans of executive leadership were able to make common cause, and their alliance became so imbedded in their thinking that the differences between them were hardly recognized. The divisive factors beginning to emerge today then lay hidden beneath the mutual striving after a shared goal—a merit system to

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14 "Merit system" and "spoils system," as used in this section of this paper, include, but are not restricted to, personnel management. Patronage, it will be seen, is but one aspect—albeit the principal one—of spoils, which includes contracts, purchases, and other "favors." The remedies of the reformers were aimed at every aspect.
replace the spoils system. Much of the standard literature of public administra-
tion was written during this honeymoon period and therefore embraced both values at once.

That the members of the neutral competence school should support the merit system as against the spoils system is not at all surprising; this reform lay at the core of their program for redesigning governmental organization. But it does require some explanation to account for the position of the executive leadership people, since spoils were allegedly one of the most effective devices through which executive influence could be exerted. There would seem to be a contradiction between advocacy of measures to strengthen executives on the one hand and endorsement of a system that appeared to reduce executive influence on the other.

The contradiction is more apparent than real. The spoils system had its uses for chief executives, but, as it operated in this country, it never really gave these officers control of the administrative hierarchy. As a source of inducements to persuade legislators to support executive-sponsored measures, it was quite helpful at times. It was also valuable in providing incentives to attract workers for the parties. But it never furnished the executives with loyal, enthusiastic, capable, disciplined administrative machines; it did not make them chief administrators.

Federal patronage, for example, about which more is known than has been revealed about patronage practices at any other level of government, was distributed largely through Senators and Representatives, hopefully in return for the legislators’ votes on issues in which the Presidents were interested. But Congressmen ordinarily had to farm out their patronage to the party organizations in their states and districts, and even disdained wings of Presidential parties which did not give Presidential measures consistent support in the legislative chambers could often count on nominating some federal appointees. During election campaigns the Presidents needed the support of all segments of the parties and could not, therefore, afford to weaken them for their legislative defections. In short, the patronage system strengthened party leaders and legislators more than it did executives. Thus the appointing power of the Presidents was bargained away—shrewdly sometimes, to be sure, from the point of view of legislation and of political survival, but at some cost from the standpoint of administrative management. Moreover, if a President’s own nomination was itself the result of bargaining in which he was the chosen rather than the choosers, then his appointing power was largely taken away at the start.

It was not just a matter of creating “ten enemies and one ingrate” with every appointment. Equally important, patronage tended to fragment the executive branch as much as did election of administrative officers. For the loyalty of appointees who owed their positions only formally to the appointing official, but in fact to the state and local party units that nominated them, lay with the nominating powers. In the exercise of their legal authorizations, the appointees tended to be as responsive to individual legislators, local and state party leaders, and local community pressures as to their nominal superiors in the
hierarchy. Moreover, since their tenure was sure to be cut short as soon as the opposing party won an election, they tried to squeeze all they could out of their posts while they occupied them; their own personal interests, therefore, were likely to take precedence over official directives when the two conflicted. Trying to lead such a staff was like trying to play croquet in Wonderland; subordinates, like the mallets, balls, and wickets of the fairy tale, operated with a high degree of independence.

To the supporters of executive leadership, it was clear that the lateral pulls of political parties and individual legislators had to be reduced, and the incentives for public employees to exploit their offices for personal advantage eliminated. Only then could the other means of building up executive influence be made effective; only then could the President assert his authority over administration. So the executive leadership supporters joined the defenders of neutral competence in the drive toward a merit system of appointment, expecting that a bureaucracy chosen by objective standards would be at least as responsive to Presidential direction as to party and legislative pressures. A merit system of appointment controlled by a Civil Service Commission thus served the ends of two schools of thought; for different reasons, and in pursuit of different goals, they united behind it.

Similar factors apparently operated to promote the adoption of objective standards of practice for other activities corrupted by the spoils system. Political discrimination in public contracting, public works, government purchasing, granting of charters and franchises, distribution of benefits and subsidies, and the enforcement of the law, provided a harvest mainly reaped by state and local party and government leaders. These practices, too, gave a bit of leverage to executives in their legislative and political roles, but they did nothing for executive control of the executive branch. So the executive leadership school approved and worked for the adoption of rigorous statutory limitations, cutting party and individual legislators out of these processes as far as possible just as the civil service system freed the appointing process from their depredations. Here, too, though apparently striving for different objectives, the neutral competence and executive leadership groups joined hands.

Consequently, the flood of literature on public administration after World War I unanimously applauded many of the measures designed to take government out of politics. By the 'thirties, however, as the emphasis on executive leadership increased, evidences of discord grew more persistent.

III. THE EMERGING CONFLICT

In thirty years the number of federal civilian employees has more than quadrupled. If power were measurable, the federal bureaucracy's power would probably turn out to have increased by an even greater factor: Governmental policy is now formulated in administrative regulations and orders, as the growth of the Federal Register vividly attests; judicial proceedings before administrative agencies probably exceed in quantity those before the courts; licensing and administrative decisions regarding benefits and subsidies, are the
order of the day; and all of this is handled by administrative officials under the very broadest of mandates from Congress and the President. Much of our legislation originates in administrative agencies, and most proposed legislation is submitted to such agencies to determine what the President’s position on it ought to be. A corresponding growth of administrative influence has taken place in all large-scale organizations, both governmental and private, but few have a record as dramatic in this respect as the federal government.

The growth of governmental bureaucracy in size and importance was subjected to vehement attacks in this country and abroad. For the most part, however, the attacks were disregarded, especially by political scientists, because it was clear that they were not aimed at the bureaucracy per se, but at the governmental programs administered by the civil servants. The programs themselves were too popular for their critics to assail directly with any real hope of success; the assault therefore took an oblique approach, hitting at what appeared to be a more vulnerable target. The criticism was therefore not taken very seriously in the study of public administration. Students of this subject became ardent and sometimes uncritical defenders of bureaucrats. Now that the controversy over the New Deal has subsided, however, the bureaucracy itself is more or less taken for granted, and attacks upon it are less frequent, less vehement, and less publicized than they once were. This has helped students of public administration to take a somewhat more dispassionate view of the bureaucracy, and some second thoughts may be at hand.

For though the mechanisms of neutral competence were remarkably successful in reducing the influence of the political parties on the administrative hierarchy, they did not necessarily increase the President’s control over administration. Rather, they encouraged the development of “self-directing” groups within the bureaucracy, and these groups in turn cultivated their own sources of support among professional groups concerned with the subject matter over which the services have jurisdiction, among their clienteles, and among appropriate Congressional committees and subcommittees. The components of the “neutral” bureaucracy, by virtue of their expertise and information and alliances, have become independent sources of decision-making power, and Presidents will probably find them no easier to direct—indeed, perhaps even more intractable, than their partisan predecessors.

As a consequence, some of the standard devices for promoting neutral competence have been openly questioned in the literature of public administration. As noted earlier, the independence of regulatory commissions and government corporations has been vigorously criticized. The Brownlow Committee also sought to make personnel management an arm of the White House and to confine the Civil Service Commission to quasi-judicial functions and a role as “watchdog” of the merit system. This principle was endorsed recently by the staff of the Temporary (New York) State Commission on Coordination of State Activities, by a minority (comprising 11 members) of the Mayor’s Committee on Management Survey of the City of New York, by the Sixth American
Assembly,13 and, implicitly, by the present administration in Washington, under which the chairman of the Civil Service Commission serves as administrative head of that agency and is located in the executive mansion. A rising chorus of voices has also begun to call for decentralization of authority for personnel management to line departments,14 a position stated with particular clarity and force by Commissioner James K. Pollock of the first Hoover Commission in a minority report on personnel. The establishment of Schedule C in the Federal government service in 1933, rolling back merit system protections from a number of positions of a policy-making and confidential character, despite the partisan components of the impetus behind this move, was in large measure an effort to preserve the power of the President over policy. More recently, the arguments of the second Hoover Commission for extension of civil service protections to the very highest administrative officials (in the form of a "senior civil service") have been sharply questioned.15 Recommendations for an institutionalized corps of political executives have been assailed as likely to weaken the President.16 The premises of the city-manager plan have been described as inapplicable to large cities, and some spirited defenses of elected mayors have appeared.17 And all of these views have been reflected in the kinds of administrative improvements adopted in many jurisdictions in recent years. Other similar defections from the coalition between the neutrality and the leadership camps can be found in current literature and practice, but it is not necessary to labor the point; patently, these straws in the wind are examples of the growing divergence between the two philosophies that makes it increasingly doubtful that their adherents will continue to support the same governmental theories or reforms.

Moreover, the philosophical divisions over structural values among the scholars have been intensified by differing political—i.e., program—views. Many of the champions of increased governmental activities, in the realms both of services (welfare, financial, industrial) and economic regulation, tend to rally


16 See the papers (mimeo.) delivered by Harlan Cleveland and Wallace S. Sayre at the Conference on the Political Executive, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton, New Jersey, March, 1956.

behind chief executives and especially behind the President. The reason is fairly obvious: Demands for expansion of government service and regulation originate frequently (though not exclusively) in urban areas, and urban areas have their greatest political effect on the election of chief executives and their smallest impact on the state legislatures and Congress, where they are substantially underrepresented. So executives tend generally to be more sympathetic to those demands than do the legislators, and those who favor an expanding role for government look to elected executives, as a rule, when they want to impress their preferences on governmental policy. Quite apart, then, from the concern about the organizational problems created by fragmentation of government, there are considerations of political preference and strategy that generate support for executive leadership.

By the same token, there are issues of political attitudes and tactics that engender enthusiasm for legislative bodies regardless of questions of representativeness. Legislatures, because of the composition and the sources of their political strength, offer the greatest leverage to those who resist the growth of governmental activities—or, more accurately, who oppose those governmental activities sought by urban populations. Not, then, because legislatures are more representative, but because this is where the backers of a particular political attitude can exert their greatest political strength, many individuals recommend in their proposals for governmental reform that these bodies be strengthened both relatively and absolutely.

Finally, it might be inferred that some reformers distrust all politicians and electorates and pin their hopes on the expertise and efficiency of a professionalized bureaucracy. They seem to be moved not merely by a concern for governmental structure but by political values that include an implicit contempt for what we ordinarily understand to be the democratic process and an explicit respect for an aristocracy of talent that borders on a latter-day faith in technocracy.20

So the tendencies toward division reinforce each other, and there are no visible factors thrusting toward alliances like that fortuitous one developed by a peculiar conjunction of circumstances during the infancy of public administration as an academic and occupational specialty. As a result, the language of public administration is likely to become increasingly strategic and tactical in tone rather than "scientific." Just as the naked power issues of the legislatively oriented groups came to the surface in the recent efforts to weaken the Presidency—viz., the Twenty-Second Amendment, which reduces the leadership potential of a President in his second term; the efforts to strip away Presidential reorganization authority in 1953; the fight over the proposed Bricker Amendment; the continuing efforts to revamp the Electoral College in

20 There would seem to be an emergent split within this group. Some backers of a professionalized public service are apparently thinking in terms of a corps of administrative generalists to occupy the top levels of administrative agencies regardless of agency subject matter. Others seem to conceive of an administrative elite of occupational specialists—engineers, lawyers, doctors, social workers, foresters, etc.
such a way as to reduce the political effectiveness of the urban-labor-liberal
entente that has been partly responsible for the aggressive and expansive use
of Presidential power—so too, many of the reorganization issues will be
discussed in power terms in the future as the public administration groups
aligned with the executive and with the bureaucracy, respectively, pull apart.
The question that will be asked about suggested reorganizations is not, “What,
according to the canons of management science, is the best organization?”
but, “What will be the effect of this measure on the institution we support?”
The differences in the answers will sharpen the theoretical distinctions between
the wings of the public administration group and hasten estrangement of the
factions.\textsuperscript{21}

To many students of public administration trained in the 'twenties, 'thirties,
and 'forties, the new atmosphere will be a strange and perhaps a bewildering
one, fraught with hostilities. To students trained in the 'sixties, the literature
of the earlier period, with its “principles,” may seem quaint and even naïve.
Political scientists of the remoter future, looking back, may well conclude that
it is not easy to bridge the gap between a generation seeking to encourage the
growth of a professional bureaucracy and a generation in turmoil over how to
control it.

\textsuperscript{21} One may even hazard the guess that the American Society for Public Administration
will remain firmly in the hands of the neutral competence group while the executive leadership school in public administration looks more and more to the American Political Science Association as its forum.