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THE HIGHER CIVIL SERVICE AND BUREAUCRACY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

to the faculty of the department of

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

at

St. John's University
New York

by

LUSANI T. MADZIVHANDILA



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ABSTRACT

THE HIGHER CIVIL SERVICE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

This thesis is a comparative study of the higher civil service and bureaucracy of Great Britain and the United States. The study analyzes the political framework of the British and the United States systems of governance, examples of administrative reforms in the two systems, and the impact of education, socialization, recruitment, and civil servants as policy-makers.

The methodology used in this study involves longitudinal as well as cross-national comparison. In dealing with differences between Great Britain and the United States, the study concentrates on the antecedent variables (constitution, political framework, cultural and administrative reform), intermediate variables (education, socialization and recruitment procedures), and the dependant variables (status of senior civil servants as policy-makers).

In the first part of the study, the constitutional allocations of political power, history and the political system in which the higher civil service and bureaucracy operate are analyzed. The purpose here is to show that the bureaucracy and the civil service do not exist in a vacuum, they are influenced by constitutional, political and cultural constraints.

The second part of the thesis deals with the education, socialization and the recruitment of the higher civil servants of Great Britain and the United States. This section points to the

disproportionate representation of educated, high-status officials at the top of the political and administrative hierarchy of both countries. In Britain, however, there are social traditions built into the education system. The education and recruitment process concentrates on a general approach. In the United States, on the other hand, the specialist tradition dominates the civil service. Thus, United States higher civil servants are essentially specialists.

The third part of the study analyzes the impact of education, socialization and recruitment processes on the role and performance of senior civil servants as policy-makers, in both societies.

It is evident that civil servants are involved in the process of policy-making and, therefore, have a political role. This is due to the intricacies of bureaucracy and the fact that civil servants relative permanency, experience and expertise gives them a vast amount of knowledge that is relevant to policy-making.

The conclusions suggest that the generalist approach applied in Great Britain hampers the capability of senior civil servants when it comes to negotiating with interest groups involved in policy-making. A specialist approach applied in the United States should be followed.

CHAPTER 1

1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study.

This thesis explores the basic differences between the civil service and bureaucracy of Great Britain and the United States. These differences are a consequence of differences in the constitutional (absent in Britain), political, economic, and cultural environments of these two national states.

The civil service is defined in this thesis as a professional body of individuals employed by the state in an administrative capacity. Bureaucracy is defined in many ways. For example, most social scientists define bureaucracy in a way intended to identify a phenomenon associated with large-scale, complex organizations without any connotation of approval or disapproval.¹ Another tendency has been to define bureaucracy in terms of behavioral characteristics, or to add these to structural characteristics, the result being a pattern of behavior presumed to be bureaucratic.²

Another definition of bureaucratic behavior has been suggested by Peter Blau, who defines bureaucracy in terms of achievement of purpose, as "organization that maximizes efficiency in administration or an institutionalized method of organized social

¹ Ferrel Heady, Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective, 4th ed. (New York: Marcell Dekker, Inc., 1991), 69-70.

² Carl Joachim Friedrich, Man and His Government, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 471.

conduct in the interests of administrative efficiency."³ Perhaps the most often cited definition of bureaucracy is the one suggested by Max Weber. He identified the following key elements of bureaucracy:

- (1) a well-defined hierarchy of authority;
- (2) a division of labor based on functional specialization;
- (3) a system of rules covering the rights and duties of positional incumbents;
- (4) a system of procedures for dealing with work situation;
- (5) impersonality of interpersonal relationships; and
- (6) selection for employment and promotion based on technical competence.⁴

Another approach (first attempted by Karl Marx) tries to examine the relationship of the administrative and managerial apparatus within the specific social context in which it arose and to define that relationship in terms of a larger conceptual framework.⁵

In common parlance, the term implies the insolence of office, administrative delays and red tape and the fear of making decisions. As Ferrel Heady asserts, "it has often been attacked as contrived, ambiguous, and troublesome."⁶

³ Peter M. Blau, Bureaucracy in Modern Society, (New York: Random House, 1956), 60.

⁴ Richard H. Hall, "Intraorganizational Structural Variations: Application of the Bureaucratic Model," Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 7. No.3. 1962, 3-4, as cited in Ferrel Heady, Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective, 4th. ed., New York: Marcell Dekker, Inc., 1991, 69.

⁵ Andras Hagedus, Socialism and Bureaucracy, (New York: St Marini's Press, 1976), 9.

⁶ Ferrel Heady, Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective, 4th ed., (New York: Marcell Dekker, Inc., 1991), 68.

Any study of the civil service and bureaucracy requires an understanding of environmental sectors within which the systems operate. The administrative states of different countries, such as Britain and the United States, cannot exist and operate entirely apart from the society which they subject to their authority, for some relationship exists between them and their social milieu. The government affects the society, and the history, values, attitudes, and beliefs of the people condition the expectations and demands they make upon their government. The social framework also influences what the government can do, and often constrain what society will consent or acquiesce to.

It is quiet obvious that any study of bureaucracy and civil service inevitably leads to the analysis of social, economic, and political factors. For example, the large size of the United States makes essential some form of decentralized government from one point by a single jurisdiction. American federalism is a direct result of an effort to organize a general government for dealing with common matters of national concern while leaving particular matters of diverse natures to the attention of localized authorities more directly in contact with them. The natural influence on the American political system can be described as below.

Most of the basic liberal principles of the American governmental system are derived from Locke's formulation and from the central core of underlying consensus on which the entire system is built. Locke and the Declaration of Independence embrace

those facets of American political culture often referred to as equality, individualism, natural laws, natural rights, popular sovereignty, government of delegated powers, doctrine of consent, and ascendancy of legislative over executive power, separated powers.⁷ Popular sovereignty was recognized by providing for periodic direct elections of representatives, but fear of majority tyranny resulted in an indirect system for selecting presidents. To prevent abuse of power, the framers provided not only specific limitations but also a partial overlapping of separated powers so authority could be used to check authority within the tripartite division among the legislative, executive and judicial branches.

Individualism permeates the American conception of political, as well as of economic man. According to that ideal, each political participant seeks all possible alternatives, identifies probable consequences of each, rationally evaluates the general good, and opts for the alternative policy that most closely approximates realization of the desired end.

Another aspect of American culture is that a sense of social equity of each person is deeply ingrained in the cultural ethic. Rooted in John Locke's legacy to American political culture, reinforced by the Protestant Ethic, the emphasis is on the equal worth of every individual in the eyes of God and the possibility, equally open to everyone, to attain salvation. The ideal is further strengthened by the abundance of opportunity for individual

⁷ Stephen T. Early, Jr. and Barbara B. Knight, Responsible Government: American and British, (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1981), 14-15.

material betterment. Constitutionally, the idea of social equity guarantee that no person shall be denied life, liberty, or property without due process of law or be denied the equal protection of equal laws. Equality before the law means at least that the law ought not advantage or disadvantage anyone by virtue of capricious, arbitrary, or whimsical substance or application.⁸

Britain in contrast to the large expanse of the United States is a small entity whose people are characterized by a high degree of political integration. A sense of social inequality is deeply rooted in British political character.⁹ Government historically has been in the hands of a few persons drawn from a small segment of society- "the rich, the wise, and the well-born."¹⁰ Popular sovereignty has never been a fundamental principle of the British constitution, as it is often cited to be of the American. The franchise in England was tightly restricted and extension to the masses of voters came slowly. Four hundred and two years passed between the suffrage act of 1430 enfranchising "forty shilling freeholders" (owners of real property having the then substantial rental value of forty shillings per year) and that of 1832, which was not enacted to promote democracy in England but was pragmatic

⁸ Ibid., 13-15.

⁹ Richard Rose, Politics in England, (Boston: Little Brown, 1964), 38.

¹⁰ Stephen T. Early, Jr. and Barbara B. Knight, Responsible Government: American and British, (Chicago, Illinois: Nelson-Hall, Publishers, 1981), 25.

response to shifted political power.¹¹

The basis of inequality in Britain is the attitude of deference to one's betters that is widely held among its middle - class and lower-class members. Whereas an American would probably automatically bridle at the suggestions that his opinion were not worth as much as the next person's, many Englishmen accept without resentment the premise that some members of society are superior to many others. British decision makers are not expected to be backslapping men of the people, but individuals recognized as possessing outstanding qualities of maturity, judgement, and responsibility that place them above the common man.

To fully understand the British political culture one must understand the social class and its education system. In Britain, the medieval nobility still exist. While Britain's aristocracy is small numerically, it still retains its glamour, prestige and, through the House of Lords, some remnants of its political power. The class structure descends from this narrow, aristocratic social elites to the much larger middle and working classes. In the past, the hierarchy was rigid and exploitative as the upper class profited from the labor of the underpaid working-class. In the last half of the nineteenth century, the class system seemed ripe for a revolt by oppressed working class. Karl Marx sought a scientific explanation of the "passion of the capital for an unlimited and reckless extension of the working day" that held children and

¹¹ Ibid.

adults in virtual bondage to their employers.¹² The exploitative relations between classes appeared to be a situation where one class could better itself only through decreasing the benefits of other classes. Given this background, it was logical for Marx to call for the workers to rise up, throw their chains, and destroy the oppressing class. Simply stated, the British society is a differentially oriented society in which the mass of people generally concede that a small group has a legitimate superior claim to hold important public office and to make decisions affecting the society. Deference translates into the idea that the small segment of society advantaged by money, influence, education, status, culture, and family heritage ought to govern. That idea can be said to be widely accepted by persons of a conservative persuasion.

The English social structure is tied to and in large measure maintained by the British educational system. Richard Rose asserts that the educational system has always stressed inequality of intellect, opportunity, and social status.¹³ Higher education is dominated by Oxford and Cambridge. Graduates of these two universities account for the most prominent politicians and nearly all the senior civil servants.

Both the British and the United States governments are constitutional governments. According to J.A.Corry and Henry J

¹² Karl Marx, Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, (New York: Random House, 1906), 326.

¹³ Richard Rose, Politics in England, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964), 153-158.

Abraham, "a constitution is that body of fundamental law, the plan of government, which defines the basic institutions of government, sets forth their functions and interrelationships, and establishes the basic relationships between the government and its citizens."¹⁴

However, unlike the United States, Britain lacks a written constitution that systematically outlines government procedures and institutions. The British constitution is made up of a series of customs, traditions, historical documents, and acts of Parliament that have been codified or assembled in a single document.¹⁵ Among the "main principles"¹⁶ of the British constitution four are the following:

- a). **Constitutional Monarchy:** The struggle between Parliament and the crown for political supremacy in the mid-seventeen century was resolved in favor of Parliament. This same evolution process democratized the constitutional monarchy through the competitive election of members of the Commons by universal suffrage.
- b). **Parliament:** Parliamentary sovereignty means that an act of Parliament is not constrained by any higher law. The courts may interpret the statute, but they may not overturn it. Technical speaking, Parliament refers to three distinct elements: the monarch, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. Together they exercise sovereign legislative power with the Queen affixing the Royal Assent of Parliament.
- c). **Unitary State:** The British government is highly

¹⁴ J.A. Corry and Henry J. Abraham, Elements of Democratic Government, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 40.

¹⁵ Richard Rose, Politics in England, 4th ed., (Boston: Little, Brown, 1986), 181

¹⁶ Roy C. Macridis, ed., Modern Political Systems: Europe, 7th ed., (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1990), 11-14, See also, Rolf H. W. Theen and Frank L. Wilson, 2nd ed., Comparative Politics: An Introduction to Seven Countries, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1992), 52-65.

centralized in that the national government has all power and has discretion to grant or withdraw prerogatives and power to local authorities.

d). **The flexible constitution:** In large part the flexibility arises from the absence of a constitution that is written and thus difficult to amend. Above all, it arises from the supremacy of statute law.¹⁷

In comparing the public services of these two countries, the United States administrative state tends to be more controversial, and more subject to criticisms and challenges. According to George Gordon, a frequent response to any mention of "the bureaucracy" in the U.S. is negative; bureaucrats are unpopular with many of those they serve. Bureaucracy has become a favorite scapegoat for many of society's current ills. There are several reasons for this: government agencies are clearly influential; Americans do not elect their bureaucrats (in any but a handful of cases); and they are convenient, increasingly visible, targets. Politics is widely assumed to require politicians to engage in dishonest, demeaning, selfish, self-serving, degrading, and shameful activities that nice people will not undertake. Partisan politics have widespread reputation among Americans of being a haven for unscrupulous individuals; persons who are pillars of the community, at least in their own eyes, often dislike becoming involved in any activity so widely held in disrepute.¹⁸ For example, Americans hear a great deal about the growing power of the bureaucracy and bureaucrats,

¹⁷ Ivor Jennings, Parliament, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 2-3.

¹⁸ Stephen T. Early, Jr. and Barbara B. Knight, Responsible Government: American and British, (Chicago, Illinois: Nelson-Hall Inc., Publishers, 1981), 17.

and arbitrary nature of many decisions, lack of accountability, impersonal treatment, and cases of simple incompetence.

This is reflective of the political culture. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba define political culture as 'the frequency of different kinds of cognitive, effective, and evaluative orientations toward the political system in general; its input and output aspects, and as political actors'.¹⁹ Simply put, in the United States, there is a tendency to look down on government. There is a tendency to mistrust government. As a result, Americans want to weaken the government.

In contrast to the United States, the British bureaucracy is larger. It comprises more agencies, more departments, and a larger portion of the work force. The administrative state can be said to be more legitimate and tends to be highly accepted. The British generally regard government as a positive agency, an instrument for enhancing the public good by collectively mobilizing societal resources for cooperative action. British decision makers are, of course, subject to the rule of law applied through administrative tribunals and regular common law courts, and they are held regularly accountable through a system of electoral control. They expect the government to rule, and they recognize that governance necessarily means constraint, rules, regulations, and taxation, but as long as government discharges its responsibilities in an orderly and legitimate manner according to public

¹⁹ Gabriel Almond, and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 16.

expectations and established norms, the British citizenry is generally willing to let it cope with the daily chores of administration free from parliamentary intrusion.²⁰

In summary, the British civil servants are relatively elitist, secretive, and conservative. The American bureaucrats are portrayed as relatively representative, innovative, and energetic.

In spite of all differences, it can be concluded that the British and American people share stable democracy, common cultural heritage, legal tradition, and devotion to constitutional government and political liberalism. There is a common political culture, however, only at the level of principles and values. At the level of specific institutions, attitudes, and practices, there are many divergent aspects in the two political traditions attributable to differences of geographical position, size, social structures and characteristics, values, and economic and political history. Both political cultures are considered to be highly integrated, which, according to Walter A. Rosenbaum, means that they exhibit the following features:

1. Possession of a strong national government supported by general agreement that is entitled to receive its citizens primary loyalty, albeit active local governments and associated loyalties are present;
2. General agreement about the legitimacy of governmental institutions, their structures and modes of operations, limits of authority, methods for choosing governors, and methods of enforcing accountability, and other fundamental norms of the system;
3. Existence of a high level of mutual trust between competing interests, agreement on legitimate methods of

²⁰ Stephen T. Early, Jr. and Barbara, B. Knight, Responsible Government: American and British, (Chicago, Illinois: Nelson-hall, Inc., 1981), 35-36,

- conflict resolution, and sustained ability to govern society unmarked by major outbreaks of lawlessness;
4. Diffusion of political power among a wide diversity of centers that attain temporary dominance by constructing alliance of support based on compromise, persuasion, and bargaining in an atmosphere mostly free of sharp antagonisms and deeply rooted fears;
 5. Strong allegiance to and trust in the system undiluted by a significant measure of apathy toward or alienation from the constitutional regime.²¹

1.2. Importance of the Study.

The perceived inadequacies of many bureaucracies have spawned debates amongst politicians and academics in the United States, Britain and many other parts of the world. Indeed, such concerns have led directly to an attempt to rationalize government agencies. My major concern in this study is the role played by the civil service in this ever changing environment.

In addition to knowing the history of reforms of public bureaucracies in a number of countries, knowledge of the relative size of the public sector is important for assessing the administrative capacity of government and for understanding the relationship between state and society, especially in a period of concern about big and small government. If we turn to the question of the nature of government personnel, we find that "representative bureaucracy"²² has a long and honorable history in the study of

²¹ Walter A. Rosenbaum, Political Culture, (New York: Praeger, 1975), 52.

²² A. Gboyega, "The Federal Character; or, the Attempt to Create Representative Bureaucracies in Nigeria." International Review of Administrative Sciences, vol. 50. (1984), 12-24, as cited in B. Guy, Peters, Comparing Public Bureaucracies: Problems of Theory and Method, Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1988, 34.

public bureaucracies. In general, the literature around this concept has examined the social backgrounds, social class, education, gender, and race of civil servants and other elites. The vast majority of this literature has concentrated on recruitment for senior civil servants, decision making posts in the civil service and has found that the posts are filled primarily by well-educated males from middle-class society. Finally, when the relative size of public bureaucracies in a number of countries is known, and knowledge of the number and patterns of recruitment are well documented, we can gain some insight into the place of senior public servants in society and in their claims to be an elite body.

One question which comes to mind is "why compare?" Greek philosophy suggest the value of making comparisons. "An age-old idea of philosophers is that knowledge of the self is gained through knowledge of others."²³ Dogan and Pelassy, make this point very clearly:

Let us imagine a country encircled for centuries by an unbreakable wall which of its inhabitants would be in a position to describe such a confined nation? What could be the reference point; how could one measure what is perceived; moreover, what could be perceived?... the observer could be incapable of understanding most of the fundamental and pertinent traits of the environment. With what rigidity are social groups constituted, what features characterize the mentality of the populace, to what degree is power centralized? The simple formulation of these questions presupposes comparison; denied the possibility of looking beyond his or her own world, the analyst is virtually blind.²⁴

²³ Mattei Dogan and Dominique Pelassy, How to Compare Nations: Strategies in Comparative Politics, (Chatham; New Jersey: Chatham House, 1984), 5.

²⁴ Ibid.

The importance of comparison is that it is a universal method in social sciences. It helps separate the accidental from the inevitable, the occasional from the regular. The formal organization is the appropriate unit of analysis for comparative administration. The comparative organizational perspective can build on a strong foundation of theoretical and applied knowledge about organizations, their structures, behavior, performance, and may help scholars of comparative administration to arrive at some useful theoretical generalizations.

1.3. Methodology.

The study will be inductive in nature. The issues to be examined in this thesis are the impact of constitutional constraints, political factors, and the politics of administrative reform on the recruitment of higher civil servants in Britain and the United States. Further, the thesis examines the role of higher civil servants in policy-making in these two countries.

The study involves longitudinal as well as cross-national comparisons. Great Britain and the United States are chosen because they constitute a quasi-universe of immense significance: large social systems in which industrialization has taken place.

In dealing with the experiences involving these two large societies, the purposes of analysis are best served by a sharply defined focus. Thus I concentrate on the impact of antecedent and intermediate variables on a dependant variable. I examine each of these briefly.

The antecedent variables are constitution, political, cultural factors and administrative reform. The American system is characterized by power dispersed among three, presumably equal, yet separate, components: executive, legislative, and judiciary. This was designed in order to minimize the government's power by a system of constitutionally checks and balances. Each element's 'normal' sphere of authority was set down as precisely as possible, and the Bill of Rights was added to further limit the parameters of governmental discretion. The British bureaucracy operates in a unitary and parliamentary system. The British system is based on the principles of impartiality and anonymity. Further, the role of British and the United States civil servants in the dynamics of the administrative process is examined.

The intermediate variables are education, socialization and recruitment processes. The greatest contrast in terms of a career bureaucracy is that which emerges from the comparison between the civil services of the United States and Britain. The British civil service conforms closely to the Weberian ideal type; the United States has a career civil service alongside a non-career system, in which the higher levels of government organizations are staffed by political executives who are nominated by the president. Their educational backgrounds suggests an American Bureaucracy run mainly by people from the social, technical, and hard sciences compared with British elite framed in humanities and has long been seen as the basis for the 'generalist' administrator. Because the British civil servant lacks specialized skills and need decades to reach

the highest posts, role socialization into Whitehall by senior servants is important.

The dependant variable is status of senior civil servants in policy-making. The intermediary layer of career senior officials and political appointees varies in number and location from one country to another. The American Presidential system, as opposed to the British Parliamentary system, has an unusually large number of political appointees distributed over a wide range of higher administrative offices, with distinctive lines between them and career civil servants. For example, 'American presidents have nearly a hundred times more appointments to fill than do British prime ministers.'²⁵ American career officials, when viewed comparatively with British higher civil servants, tend to be more exposed to public view, more restricted as to the range of their participation, and subject to effective control by their hierarchical superiors. The thrust of decision-making in Britain is in the hands of Ministers, their senior officials, resulting in government according to a system which may be called 'elite accommodation'.²⁶ (Elite accommodation refers to the process whereby governmental policy is worked out through sustained negotiation and consulting among members of the political elite, defined throughout to include legislators, senior bureaucrats, and

²⁵ George Berkeley and John Rouse. The Craft of Public Administration, 5th. ed., (Dubuque, IA: Wm C. Brown Publishers, 1991), 112

²⁶ For the theoretical bases of accommodation theory, see Arend Lijphart, The Politics of Accommodation, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

the directors of interest groups).²⁷ That is, the British culture is characterized as being "quasi-participative" in terms of the limited extent of access and influence over governmental policy displaced by the so-called average man. In general it can be said that the British government is a system on which an ordinary citizen "gives full power of attorney to a small committee each four years or so, well knowing that virtually nothing he can do in the interval will have much effect on the group to whom he has given his blanket check."²⁸

1.4. Organization of the Study.

Chapter two examines the overall constitutional, political and administrative framework constraining the bureaucracy and the higher civil service in Britain and the United States. The issues of constitutional constraints, political and cultural factors are discussed. It is the purpose of this chapter to elucidate some of the social factors which enhance or diminish the chance of both British and American administrators being neutral administrators. The United States and British civil service administrative reforms were set in motion by multiple forces and events: political and social pressures, public opinion, interest groups, legislators, and heads of departments were important actors in the reforms.

²⁷ Robert Presthus, Elite in the Policy Process, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 3.

²⁸ Ibid., 4-7.

Chapter three reviews education, socialization, and recruitment processes. The social background of British administrative elite has in the past shown very little diversity. The administrative class came from upper-class graduates from Cambridge and Oxford. The British civil service recruits candidates with general capacity to serve on a career basis. The American federal service inducts large numbers of university-trained specialists. In examining the recruitment process, I begin with general concerns, such as the issue of being able to identify the number of public employees, and then address the factors of the criteria for selection and advancement of higher civil servants, and the issue of whether they are generalists or specialists.

Chapter four examines the relationship between political and career officials, the role of top civil servants and the issue of bureaucrats as policy-makers. In Britain there has long been considerable debate on the issue of whether top civil servants have come to dominate policy-making or at least exercise a good deal more influence than other actors in the policy-making process, including ministers. On the other hand, the dividing line between politics or policy-making and administration is a matter of continuing controversy in the United States. The result is wide spread disagreement as to the proper role of bureaucrats in the formulation of policy-making. The way in which they participate in policy-making as their counterparts in Britain differs. As James Fesler points out, "partisanship as a cohesive force has been replaced by the "politics of policy," which for some political

appointees means a commitment to support presidential policies, whether they comport with the president's strategic emphases."²⁹

In the last chapter prime aspects of the British and the U.S. bureaucracy and higher civil service are summarized and conclusions drawn from these will be presented.



²⁹ James Fesler, *Politics, Policy, and Bureaucracy at the Top*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 46 (March 1983), 32.

CHAPTER 2

2.0. CONSTITUTIONAL, POLITICAL FRAMEWORK AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

2.1. INTRODUCTION.

It has already been established that the bureaucracy and the Civil Service do not exist in a vacuum. They are powerfully influenced by the constitutional allocations of political power, history and the political system in which they operate.

In Great Britain and the United States, as in other countries, the bureaucracy and the civil service must conform to the requirements of the existing regimes. It can, therefore, be said that in both these countries the administrative institutions and processes are shaped by the development of liberal democratic ideology.

The origins of the British bureaucracy's constitutional relationships with other political institutions lie in the notion of permanency of the Civil Service, whereas the American political framework has three dominant features, namely: constitutionalism, federalism, and presidentialism. The civil service of Great Britain and the United States has been repeatedly condemned and reformed. In both countries, reform movements have resulted in the creation of civil service and marked the beginning of a long history of reform.

2.2. Constitutional, Political and Administrative Reform.

When comparing Great Britain and the United States, it is important to state that the British public bureaucracy operates in a unitary and parliamentary system and the British constitution is unwritten. Comparing the written American and unwritten British constitution emphasizes how few constraints are placed on government by an unwritten constitution. The United States Constitution gives the Supreme Court the final power to decide what the government may do or may not do. By contrast, Parliament, where the government of the day commands a majority of votes, is the final authority in Britain. The unwritten constitution of Britain is a jumble of acts of Parliament, judicial pronouncements, customs, and conventions about the rules of the political game. The vagueness of the constitution makes it flexible, but it also gives few ironclad guarantees to citizens in the way that the American Bill of Rights does. In the words of J.A.G. Griffith, "The Constitution is what happens."¹

Simply put, there is no fundamental law of the constitution and there has been no attempt to codify the various rules and conventions that make up the constitution in Great Britain. The sources of modern constitutional practice are thus numerous and varied. The constitution has some written aspects, just as the

¹ Cited from Gabriel A. Almond and Bingham G. Powell, JR., eds., Comparative Politics Today: A World View, 5th ed. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), 140-141.

written constitution of the United States has been modified by some unwritten conventions, but the parts of the British constitution that are written, such as Acts of Parliament relating to constitutional machinery, do not require any special legislative process for enactment.² The Parliament Acts of 1911 and 1949 and constitutional documents such as Magna Carta, 1215,³ are all examples of legislation that creates or modifies some aspects of the constitution. As noted above, the main legal feature of the constitution is the unitary nature of government, that is, there is only one sovereign body in the state. The central government, taking its authority from Parliament, is constitutionally supreme and local government is merely an agent for the central government.

The British notion of state involves a belief in the existence of some kind of superior entity which is large and separate from the actual existing community. It is enduring, permanent and more important than day-to-day existence. At the same time, however, in practical terms a government's power is restricted by numerous factors. Government aims are limited by what is administratively possible and policies that are worked out in opposition often turn out to be administratively impractical when the party comes to power. Government is also limited in what it can achieve by the threat of the rebellion or public non-cooperation. If government wishes to win the next general election, it cannot afford to ignore

² R.M. Punnet, British Government and Politics, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968), 160

³ Ibid.

entirely in the years before the election the opinions expressed by pressure groups, the press and all other outlets for public attitudes.

To quote examples of widely unpopular actions that governments could take, or have taken in the past, detracts from the essential fact that, in the main, governments do not abuse the wide constitutional powers that they do possess. The essential features of the British political culture are those of cooperation and trust on the part of governments. British elites are not limited in the scope of their activities by written constitutional checks and balances but rather by various practical considerations, by the nature of British society, and by an unwritten code of behavior. It has been said of the British constitution that it is 'no more than the current notion of politicians about proper conduct.'⁴

On the other hand, the American political system is characterized by three predominant characteristics or features, namely: constitutionalism (a written constitutional document conferring and limiting governmental powers), federalism (a division of functions constitutionally between central government and a number of constitutional units in the federal system) and presidential (an elected chief executive heading the executive branch within a constitutional tripartite separation of powers which also includes legislative and judicial branches).⁵ In

⁴ D.E. Butler, The Study of Political Behavior, (London: MacMillan, 1959), 17.

⁵ Heady Ferrel, Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective, 4th edition. (New York: Marcell Dekker, Inc., 1988).

addition to this multiple fragmentation of powers, the Bill of Rights, the first amendments of the Constitution, established broad areas of protection for individual liberties against encroachment by official government actions.

Americans think about temporary, immediate, day-to-day issues when they think politically. In the United States the weakness of the administrative state is largely a result of American hostility toward the idea of government. This negative view is an integral, inherent part of United States tradition and of American culture. It is imprinted in most institutions. Government is viewed as a threatening institution which must be restricted so as not to be tyrannical.⁶ For example, the conservatives' attack on bureaucracy has usually been based on the classical economic theory of market supremacy. They argue that big government is a strain on the free market system, that government limits the freedom of choice, that the bureaucracy is a major source of economic problems, and that it endangers democracy.⁷ The liberal reaction to the administrative state has been mainly based on a concern for representative democracy. Liberals, unlike conservatives, recognize the need for the administrative or welfare state and focus on political and

⁶ Greenberg Hartz and D.H. Rosenbloom, "The Concept of Liberal Polity," in Rosenbloom, D.H., ed., Classic Readings in American Politics, (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986), 15-21.

⁷ D. Boaz and E.H. Crane, eds., Beyond the Status Quo: Policy Proposals for America, (Washington, DC.: Cato Institute, 1985).

socio-economic criticisms.⁸ Finally, the Marxist reaction rests on the argument that in advanced capitalist America, the administrative state is a strong instrument serving the ruling class, and that the role of bureaucracy and state in society is determined by the economic requirements of capital accumulation. In Reinhard Bendix words, "the recruitment of administrative personnel and the policies which it executes are both part of the political struggle, whose outcome is determined by the secular changes in the capitalist system of production."⁹ Marxists attack the bureaucracy for its working-class oppression and parasitic nature.

Those who framed the American constitution sought generally to place limits on what government is able to do without limiting its essential ability to govern. Government power and authority in America are highly fragmented and scattered. The framers of the constitution did all they could, therefore, to see to it that power was divided among three branches of government legislative, executive, and judicial. Constitutionally, Congress must enact all legislation. The president may sign or veto, and congress may override the president's veto. According to the separation of powers, Congress composed of both a Senate and a House of

⁸ Norman Fainstein and S.B.Fainstein " The political economy of American bureaucracy," in Fisher F, and Sirianni C, eds., Critical Studies in Organization and Bureaucracy, (Philadelphia: temple University Press, 1984), 180 and 311.

⁹ Reinhard Bendix, Higher Civil Servants in American Society: A Study of the Social Origins, the Careers, and the Power-Position of Higher Federal Administration, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1949), 5.

Representatives must agree on legislation before it can be enacted.¹⁰ By way of contrast, political power in the British government rests in a prime minister and a cabinet responsible to a majority in the House of Commons, meaning a connection and not a separation of powers. Of course, the British Parliament must formally enact legislation, but such legislation generally originates in the cabinet.

It is important to note that the United States has defined itself as a "liberal democracy," and economically as a capitalist system.¹¹ Popular sovereignty is central to this notion of liberal democracy. Popular sovereignty government by the ultimate consent of the governed- implies some degree of popular participation in voting and other political endeavors, although this does not necessarily mean mass or universal political involvement.

Further, two related concepts widely reflected in American society are individualism and pluralism.¹² Individualism implies the right to participate meaningfully in the political process. Pluralism on the other hand, stresses the appropriateness of group organization as a means of securing protection for broad group interest in society.

¹⁰ George, J. Gordon. Public Administration in America, 3d ed., (New York: St Martin's Press, Inc., 1986), 39-40.

¹¹ Page S. Richard, "The Ideological-Philosophical Setting of American Public Administration," in Public Administration in Time of Turbulence, ed. Dwight Waldo, (Scranton: Chandler Publishing Co., 1971), 59-73.

¹² Ibid., 61.

As Page has put it:

Pluralism, as a theory and practice, assumes that groups are good; that citizens have the right to advance their interests; that groups with differing interests will bargain and compete; and that the result of bargaining and competition among group interests is the interest of the whole community or nation—the public interest.¹³

2.2.1. Political Neutrality.

In Britain civil servants owe loyalty to the government of the day, of whatever party, and must therefore steer clear of overt expressions of party political commitment. Civil service is viewed as the performance of a neutral role in providing policy advice to ministers. In short, the civil service is non-political. For example, the Civil Service Commission declares: "Administrative trainees and those in equivalent grades are precluded from engaging in political activities."¹⁴ What this means is that administrative civil servants cannot engage in party politics or public controversies about issues, wherever this might be deemed to impair their usefulness as confidential policy advisors to ministers or to undermine public confidence in their impartiality.

British civil servants are entrusted with much work such as preparing answers to Parliamentary questions or speeches for ministers, which in countries like the United States would be handled by political appointees. Ministers, both Conservatives and Labor, have defended the loyalty of their civil servants

¹³ See Schubert Glendon, The Public Interest, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960).

¹⁴ Civil Service Commission, Appointments in Administration 1981, (London:HMSO,1980), 23.

vigorously. The question of neutrality and the interpretation of civil servants relationship with ministers was summed up by a permanent secretary as follows:

the civil servant advises in the light of his own conception of the national interest, but subordinates his views to those of his ministers and carries out with loyalty and enthusiasm the policies and decisions of his minister whatever his private opinions of them.¹⁵

Resignation is the only legitimate course open to civil servants who experience a crisis of conscience in government service. Higher civil servants are best characterized as impartially neutral. But, in reality, in the case of higher civil servants, this definition of neutrality is both misleading and dangerous. In an age of increasingly polarized party politics, for example, "governments that want to change things do not want to be advised by ideologically innocent fence sitters. New governments do not want to be advised by officials who have risen to the top of the civil service apparently because they have displayed, not just loyalty, but also enthusiasm for the previous government's program."¹⁶ Attacks on the neutrality of the senior British civil service used to come from the left of the Labor Party which was concerned that civil servants because of their disproportionately middle-class, public school and Oxbridge backgrounds would be instinctively conservative in their attitudes. In the 1980s the neutrality of the civil service has been attacked vigorously by

¹⁵ R. Norton-Taylor, "In Search of a Civil Service Code of Conduct," in The Guardian, (12, October, 1984).

¹⁶ Drewery Gavin, The Civil Service Today, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 215-216.

Conservatives who believed that the civil service constitutes a barrier to Thatcherian revolution in attitudes and in the role of government.¹⁷ She went to an extent of reducing the number of civil service from over "730,000 in 1979 to just over 600,000 in 1987."¹⁸

However, in return for neutrality, civil servants are prohibited from identifying which officials were instrumental in developing a particular public policy. The Official Secrets Act of 1911 is the statutory basis protecting civil servants. It requires every civil servant to pledge: "not to divulge any information gained by one as a result of any appointment to any unauthorized person either orally or in writing, without previous official sanction in writing. The effect is that written memoranda are relatively rarely leaked. Even a directive on open government from the prime minister's private secretary can be classified confidential."¹⁹

In the case of the United States, it was assumed traditionally that the bureaucracy would be a neutral, professional, competent structure staffed by specialists in both general administrative processes and their respective policy areas. Ingraham and Ban reject the neutral competence model of classical bureaucracy

¹⁷ Ian Budge, David McKay, Rod Rhodes, David Robertson, David Sanders, Martin Slater, Graham Wilson, The Changing British Political System Into the 1990s, (London: Longman, 1988), 33.

¹⁸ R.C. Macridis, Modern Political Systems: Europe, (New York: Marcell Dekker, 1990), 52.

¹⁹ Peter Hennessy, "Secrecy Shrouds No. 10 directive on Open Government," The Times, 27 November 1979.

because it suggest different expectations of and by political executive and career managers, different working relationships, and different policy outcomes.²⁰ The latest reforms, that is, the liberalization of the 1939 Hatch Act allow most Federal workers to participate in a wide range of off-duty partisan political activities. However, the "Democrats got the bill to a vote only after agreeing to exclude about 9,000 top-ranking civil servants and 36,000 intelligence and investigative employees of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence and other agencies."²¹

The United States Government is a highly politicized structure in which its senior officers are personal appointees of the President who will resign as soon as the chief executive leaves office. The politicization of bureaucracy is justified on two grounds: one, that it contributed to the viability of political parties, and two, that rotation in office could protect against abuses by long-term office holders without having adverse performance on their duties.

²⁰ Ingraham P.W. and Ban C, "Politics and Merit: Can they meet in Public Service Model?" Review of Public Personnel Administration, Vol 8, No. 2, Summer, (1988): 1-19.

²¹ Clymer Adam, "Senate Votes to allow Civil Servants to Engage in Much Political Activity," New York Times, July 21 1993.

2.3. The Politics of Administrative Reform.

2.3.1. The Fulton Reforms 1968 and British Civil Servants.

It is important to note that the foundations of the higher civil service in Britain were laid in 1854 by the Northcote-Trevelyan Commission, which recommended the creation of a civil service recruited and promoted on the basis of merit rather than nepotism or party connections.²² The commission endorsed a division of labor along Platonic lines between a small intellectual elite, recruited in youth on the basis of general intelligence and a mass of clerical and mechanical officials. The result is a civil service that applies uniform procedures across the whole range of home ministries but, within each ministry, is highly stratified.

In Britain the debate on the civil service included charges of inefficiency and excessive power. Much of that debate has revolved around a set of concerns relating to the lack of skills of administrators, their character, the class structure of the service, the bureaucracy's lack of political responsiveness and the nature of the relationship between elected ministers and non-elected civil servants. In brief, there is growing political and academic concern about the civil service being imbued with generalists and conservative traditions.²³

²² See Richard Rose, "The Political Status of Higher Civil Servants in Britain," in Bureaucracy and Policy Making, ed. by Ezra N. Suleiman, (London: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Ltd. 1984), 137.

²³ Ibid.

The rejection of formal training had advocates among civil servants, such as C. H. Sisson:

The British administrator travelling abroad is shocked to discover that many countries are administered by men who read books about public administration. This, in British view, is not only surprising but a very unfortunate state of affairs, and goes some way to explain the disabilities under which foreigners, in the manner of government, notoriously suffer...Such people are committing the crime of learning from books something that one just does.²⁴

Many top civil servants in the early 1960s were taking the unusual step of publicly chastising the civil service and calling for change. For example, R.G.S. Brown,²⁵ a Principal in the Administrative Class, called upon his peers to develop a better problem-solving attitude by recruiting more specialists, training administrators in the use of management techniques and in their substantive areas, and breaking down the barriers in communication between administrators and experts.

Civil service staff associations, particularly, the Professional, Executive, and Clerical Classes, were also generating pressures for reform. In testimony to the Fulton Committee, for example, the Institution of Professional Civil Servants (IPCS)

²⁴ C. H. Sisson, The Spirit of British Administration, (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), as cited in Ezra N. Suleiman, Bureaucrats and Policy Making: A Comparative Overview, New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1984, 146.

²⁵ R.G.S. Brown, "Organization Theory and Civil Service Reform," Public Administration, Vol. 43, 1965: 325-335, as cited in David L. Dillman, "The Politics of Administrative Reform: Public Bureaucracies as Agents of Change in Great Britain and the United States," Farazmand Ali, ed., Handbook of Comparative and Development Public Administration, new York: Marcell Dekker, Inc., 1991.

complained that "management and administration at the higher levels are still almost exclusively the monopoly of the Administrative Class" and called for the abolition of class divisions.²⁶

In response to all this, The Fulton Committee, concluded:

The Home Civil Service today is still fundamentally the product of the nineteenth century philosophy of the Northcote-Trevelyan Report. The tasks it faces are those of the second half of the twentieth century. This is what we have found; it is what we seek to remedy.²⁷

As a result, the Fulton Committee had to come up with proposals relating to direct-entry recruitment and post-entry training that represented fundamental change. To address the problems attributed to the civil service, the Fulton Committee made one hundred and fifty eight recommendations.

Some of the recommendations were that the administrative class recruits should have a "relevant" education identified as in the "social studies, the mathematical and physical sciences, the biological sciences or in the applied and engineering sciences."²⁸

Furthermore, some simplification of the grading structure which took place was the combination of the main 'generalists' classes (clerical, executive and administrative) into one class. The Fulton Committee recommended greater specialization and

²⁶ Fulton Committee Report, Committee on the Civil Service, The Civil Service Cmnd. 3638, vols.1-5, (Great Britain, 1968).

²⁷ Ibid., vol.1. no.9.

²⁸ Ibid.

management techniques.²⁹

The Fulton committee also reported that although the Treasury had held joint responsibility for public expenditure and civil service management, this arrangement had tended to act to the detriment of the development of the managerial skills and processes of the Civil Service, for investment here was likely to suffer when set against the resource claims of policy work. The Committee, therefore, recommended the establishment of a department separate from the Treasury which would have responsibility for all aspects of pay, manpower, personnel and Civil Service management.

Significantly, many of the Committee's recommendations "merely confirmed developments which were going ahead in the Civil Service quite independently of the Fulton enquiry."³⁰ For example, the Treasury had already embarked upon several reorganizations in the early 1960s. In 1963 a Center for Administrative Studies was established, which, among other activities, started a short course on economics for assistant principals. Even the proposals for one class was first considered within the service (in 1943), long before it was publicly discussed. It is clear that senior civil servants provided not only guidance but, in certain specifics, the

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Adapted from: David L. Dillman. "The Politics of Administrative Reform: Public Bureaucracies as Agents of Change in Great Britain and the United States," in Ali Farazmand, ed., Handbook of Comparative and Development Public Administration, New York: Marcell Dekker, Inc., 1991, 546.

stimulus for reform.³¹

The civil service was re-examined by the General Sub-committee of the House of Commons Expenditure Committee in 1976, which found that many of Fulton's proposals had been watered down or abandoned. Some critics have argued that this was inevitable, given that the task of implementing the Report was entrusted to the civil service itself. It has been argued that the civil service sabotaged the Fulton reforms. For example, in a 1980 version of this critique, Hunt and Kellner³² claimed that Administrative Class civil servants used their power to block the key Fulton proposals. The new Civil Service Department, they argued, was staffed by the same Treasury amateurs who always had been responsible for the civil service. Likewise, the abolition of classes was accepted in principle, but the civil service mandarins cleverly maintained a de facto class structure (i.e., clerical, executive and administrative) that preserved their power. Increased selection of late entrants, specialists at higher levels was proclaimed a fact by the career officials without substantive change. According to Hunt, the old Administrative Class simply carried out those proposals that it wanted and ignored the others. Thus, it may be argued that Fulton's proposals were never implemented in full.

³¹ R.A. Chapman, and J.R. Greenway, The Dynamics of Administrative Reform, (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 161.

³² P. Kellner, and L. Hunt Crowthner-Hunt, The Civil Servants, Macdonald General Books, (London, 1980).

2.3.2. The American Civil Servants: The Pendleton Act and the Civil Service Reform Act of 1979 (CSRA).

Central to the United States civil service bureaucracy reform was the Pendleton Act. Before the Pendleton Bill was signed, there was the spoils or patronage system.

2.3.2.1 Patronage System.

The spoils system is well known as the legacy of Andrew Jackson in 1828. The federal service before Jackson's administration was a stable, long tenured corps of faithful decidedly elites in character and markedly barren of corruption. Jackson for the most part continued with this tradition in practice. The changes that Jackson made in the civil service were to see the civil service more representative of its national constituency, as well as those of a party leader anxious to pay off political debts.³³

Simply stated, the most characteristic feature of the Civil Service system was appointments to government positions "as a reward for party service" along with favoritism. As a result, patronage systems' judgements are based on ascriptive criteria, that is, on attributes or characteristics of the individual other than his or her skills and knowledge. Advocates of the patronage system such as Andrew Jackson, believed that the system would take government out of the hands of the elite and make it accountable to

³³ Sidney H. Aronson, Status and Kinship in the Higher Civil Service, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), 20-22, chapter 1 & chapter 8.

the people because a change of elected leaders could result in a complete replacement of administrative staff, who would have insufficient time to entrench their power.³⁴

Between 1829 and 1865, the main problems with the spoils system were becoming more and more crystallized. For example, patronage increases chances for corruption with the knowledge and consent of public managers. Business people who wish to acquire government contracts can do so through participation in the political process. Politicians, in turn, intervened in the administrative process on behalf of the contractors. White described this condition by saying that the "public service came to mean party service." White further states that the general public was so greatly detached from the government's affairs that:

The burden of party affairs therefore fell wholly upon the shoulders of professional politicians who labored in party vineyards in season and out and, reasonably enough, demand their due reward for such efforts. This took the form at one time or another of straight-out embezzlement, bribery, payroll padding, contract graft, and position graft.³⁵

2.3.2.2. The Pendleton Act

A rising tide of political protest against the spoils system began to make itself felt during the 1870s. Legislators mobilized to change it. The bill that eventually resulted in the Civil Service Act of 1883, calling for a merit system of personnel

³⁴ Ronald D. Sylvia, Public Personnel Administration, (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994), 4.

³⁵ Glehn Stahl, Public Personnel Administration, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1962), 32-33.

management in the federal government, was introduced by Senator Pendleton.³⁶ The Pendleton Act established several major features. First, the act provided for open, competitive examinations designed to measure an applicant's ability to do the job. Loyalty to a particular party or political official was no longer sufficient to obtain a position. Second, the Act provided for a neutral service prohibiting removal for partisan reasons. Third, the Act established an independent, bipartisan commission, composed of three members appointed by the president, to oversee the implementation and administration of the Act; no more than two commission members could be from the same party.³⁷

In principle, the Pendleton Act was of great importance and it represented a landmark in the United States. The Pendleton Act founded upon the British system precedent providing for recruitment by competitive examinations, security of tenure and political neutrality protected employees against political pressures. However, in no sense could the outcome be regarded as mere transplantation of a system from one country to another. Important amendments were made with the object of adapting the operation of the British principles to the needs and outlook of the United States. In contrast to Britain, two of these amendments were the following. One, while the British favored the academic

³⁶ Lewis Mayer, The Federal Service: A study of the System of Personnel Administration of the United States Government, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1922), 43-47.

³⁷ Perry Moore, Public Personnel Management-A Contingency Approach, (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1985), 35.

examinations, the Pendleton Act called upon the Civil Service Commission to devise more practical tests. Two, the British favored recruitment at the bottom of the class ladders with promotion by selection from within the service; the American service did not refrain from seeking new talents from outside at whatever level they are needed.³⁸

The Pendleton Act was hardly a total victory for the reformers. Actually the reformers were not at all anxious for near universal merit coverage. They recognized the problems of creating the appropriate administrative machinery and were concerned that the reform program would be overburdened and subject to failure if complete reform was attempted all at once. The Pendleton Act did not cover all civil servants. Only 10 percent of federal employees were affected. The initial impact was mainly upon clerical positions. However, the Act provided that presidents could include additional positions within the merit system. Today virtually all are covered by one or another government merit system of recruitment and promotion.³⁹

³⁸ See Hazhin Khosrow, Unpublished dissertation, : Civil Service and Bureaucracy in the Two Political Poles and in a Developing Nation in the Middle, (A Comparative Study of Civil Service and Bureaucracy in the United States of America, the Soviet Union, and the Iranian Civil Service Reform) (Claremont, January 1978), 25-27.

³⁹ Ronald D. Sylvia, Public Personnel Administration, (California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994), 6.

2.3.2.3. Merit System

The most important characteristic of the public service in the United States is the merit system. The principle emphasizes that people are hired, promoted, rewarded on the basis of their performance, rather than because of their political ties, race, sex or age. According to Glehn Stahl merit system is defined as follows:

In its broadest sense a Merit System in modern government means a personnel system in which comparative merit or achievement governs each individual's selection and progress in the service and in which the conditions and rewards of performance contribute to the competency and continuity of the service.⁴⁰

The most obvious advantage of a merit system is its ability to bring into the public service individuals who are considered competent (by management's standards) to perform the tasks required in a given position. Doing a job well is a strong value in both private and public sectors, and it is the root of the value system favoring merit. The merit concept is built around the use of achievement-oriented criteria—that is, making personnel judgements based on the individual's demonstrated, job related competence. The United States Civil Service Commission under the provision of the merit system declared that it will strictly adhere to the basic principles of "open competition" in its recruitment efforts except of course, in the cases where jobs are classified as "excepted positions" which constitute "about 15 percent of all the Federal

⁴⁰ Glehn Stahl, Public Personnel Administration, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), 28-29.

positions."⁴¹ The basic elements of "open competition," are: (1) adequate publicity, (2) opportunity to apply, (3) realistic standards, (4) absence of discrimination, (5) ranking on the basis of ability, and (6) knowledge of results.⁴²

On closer inspection, the merit systems do not solve every problem of the civil service. Major criticisms include first, the change of overprotecting public employees, resulting in poor performance and low productivity. In recent years, fewer than 300 federal employees of nearly 3 million total were dismissed for inefficiency or incompetence. This extraordinarily small number is a result of several actions that insulate employees from dismissal. One, the Lloyd -LaFollet Act of 1912 states that civil servants cannot be removed until they are given reasons for dismissal and an opportunity to answer the charges. Two, the 1939 and 1948 Hatch Acts prevent the dismissal of any employee for political reasons. Three, the courts have bestowed on public employees considerable due-process rights regarding dismissal.⁴³

Second, the change of involvement of too many groups in public personnel policy-making. Before 1978, federal personnel policy was controlled by the president, Congress, the courts, the Civil Service Commission, the various departments and agencies. With so

⁴¹ U. S. Civil Service Commission, An Introduction to the Federal Personnel System, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969), 12.

⁴² Glehn G. Stahl, Public Personnel Administration, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962).

⁴³ Jay M. Shafritz, Public Personnel Management: The Heritage of Civil Service Reform, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 12.

many participants, the federal merit system was often overloaded with contradictory rules and regulations.⁴⁴

2.3.2.4 The American Civil Servants and the Civil Service Reform Act of 1979.(CSRA)

Since each postwar president has believed that bureaucratic power constitutes a threat to his political goals, President Carter's purposes in pushing civil service reform legislation were to increase government productivity and to assert political leadership over a bureaucracy believed to be characterized by "neutral protectionism" and "legalistic complexity". A new effort was begun to alter merit practices.

The principal targets of the Carter reforms were numerous; each had evolved over long periods of time, and solving them posed political as well as managerial challenges. One of the most important was the evolution of the merit system from a protection against blatant political manipulation to a system that provided what may be called excessive job security for employees, made possible virtually automatic salary increases (deserved or not), and made it very difficult for responsible managers to dismiss unproductive employees.

The Civil Service Reform Act, enacted in October 1978 and

⁴⁴ Ibid.

effective January 1, 1979, did the following:⁴⁵

1. Created the office of Personnel Management and the Merit Systems Protection Board, replacing the Civil Service Commission;
2. Delegated personnel management authority to agencies, notably regarding performance appraisal;
3. Streamlined the process used to discharge employees;
4. Strengthened procedures to protect Whistle-blowers;
5. Established a comprehensive statutory framework for conducting labor management relations;
6. Authorized a merit pay system for middle-level supervisors, based on performance rather than longevity;
7. Established a Senior Executive Service (SES) for top-level career decision makers;
8. Required that objective, job related, measurable performance evaluation appraisal be developed for members of the SES; and
9. Enacted both a set of explicit merit principles and a statement of prohibited personnel practices.

In summary, the CSRA resulted in a major restructuring of the civil service system. It generated greater flexibility, increased protection of individual employee rights, and increased protection from political abuse.

Unlike the Pendleton Act of 1883, which was devoted almost entirely to eliminating patronage practices, the CSRA incorporated a wide variety of objectives. In addition, many of the objectives were interrelated. For example, the design of the SES included the following expectations: (1) SES members (drawn primarily from the "supergrades," that is, GS-16 through 18)⁴⁶ would be able to work more closely and harmoniously with political appointees, at the

⁴⁵ This overview of the CSRA is adapted from James S. Browman, "Introduction," in James S. Browman, ed., "Symposium on Civil Service Reform," Review of Public Personnel Administration, Vol 2 (Summer 1982), 1-3. See also Felix A. Nigro, "The Politics of Civil Service Reform;" Southern Review of Public Administration, Vol.3 (September 1979), 196-239.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

interface between the political head of the agency and the career people; (2) the responsiveness of the senior career officials to presidential policy leadership would thus be enhanced; (3) incentives would be developed for greater productivity on the part of senior executives; (4) financial bonuses and greater acknowledgement of careerists policy advisory roles -would serve as those incentives; (5) job performance of senior civil servants could be appraised more systematically; and (6) based on those appraisals, decisions about awarding bonuses could be made fairly and objectively.⁴⁷

Developments since 1981 can be categorized under the heading of politics and performance appraisal. The politics of civil service reforms has affected virtually every aspect of the changes of the past decade, but with particularly significant impacts in certain areas. One example is the SES, designed initially as a "meeting ground" for political and career executives. The CSRA specified that some 10 percent of SES members would be "noncareer" appointments. Since 1981, the percentage has been higher than that, and these political executives have been concentrated at the top of the hierarchy where they can exercise considerable authority over the careerists.

The career executives, having sacrificed job security in order to do more meaningful work and possibly earn SES bonuses, have

⁴⁷ Testimony of Rep. Patricia Schroeder, Hearings on The Senior Executive Service, p.134, and Testimony of Alan K. Campbell, Hearings on The Senior Executive Service, p.314. Cited from Gordon G.J.

raised objections to what they see as politically motivated decisions which, in their view, adversely affect them and the programs they manage. Compounding this situation is the exodus of so many career executives, thus increasing the relative proportion of more explicitly "political" managers in top level positions. Simply put, the principal apprehension expressed by executives about CSRA was fear of politicization. Many of them saw the reforms as a return to the spoils system. They believed that it will be easier to move "politically inspired" appointees to the upper levels of SES by bringing them in at a lower rank and then moving them rapidly, using the authority that political appointees have in the new flexible system. They saw the increased managerial controls as a vehicle for more partisan control. They feared that bonuses will be used to reward favorites.⁴⁸ Some did not believe that political appointees will have the experience or judgement to make objective and professional performance evaluation. Under CSRA, political appointees may reassign career executives 120 days after resuming office. As Bernard Rosen, the former executive director of the U.S. Civil Service Commission, has pointed out, a political appointee "can not only reduce the pay of career executives who report to him, but he can banish them pragmatically and even geographically."⁴⁹ Furthermore, relations between career and

⁴⁸ R.E. Vaden, "Bureaucratic Response to Civil Service Reform," Public Administration Review, (39, July/August, 1979), 333-343.

⁴⁹ Bernard Rosen, "Uncertainty in the Senior Executive Service." Public Administration Review, (41, March/April, 1981), 203-207.

political people have deteriorated within this atmosphere of frustration and dissatisfaction.⁵⁰

Another dimension of politics has been the perception that Ronald Reagan has been more interested in his own versions of patronage than in civil service reform. According to Bernard Rosen:

In the Reagan years...the administration's interest in reducing government spending led the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) director to take the initiative in cutting the OPM staff far below the minimum required to carry out the law, and as in the previous administration,...a tolerance for patronage has outweighed the requirements for appointments based on merit.⁵¹

Critics typically point to the failure or the character of administrative reforms as evidence of a hostile bureaucracy out to sabotage reform efforts. Yet, according to Ingraham, although the record of the CSRA to date indicates that "it has not achieved most of what it apparently intended to do," clearly the reasons of this policy failure are many and complex. They include the changing political environment and presidential priorities through the 1980s, and the failure to resolve inconsistencies and to define new roles.

Another major element of the CSRA is a new performance evaluation system. Because responsibility for performance appraisals was decentralized from OPM to individual agencies, it was very difficult to generalize about the ways these new systems

⁵⁰ Testimony of Rep. Patricia Schroeder, p. 373. Cited from George J. Gordon, Public Administration in America, 1986.

⁵¹ Bernard Rosen, "Effective Continuity of U.S. Government Operations in Jeopardy," Public Administration Review, Vol 45 (September/October 1983), 389-392.

have operated. However, some observations are both possible and appropriate. First, in many cases the appraisal procedures may have been put in place too quickly, and often without sufficient consultation with affected employees. As a result, most supervisors gave all subordinates a satisfactory or outstanding rating, and few personnel actions used performance evaluations.⁵² Second, to the extent that the new performance appraisal systems were to serve as the basis for personnel judgements including salary increases and bonus rewards, external constraints made it more difficult for them to do so. In particular, the pay cap set on executives salaries was just \$50,000 during the Carter years. This pay ceiling undermined the linkage between performance evaluation and rewards. For example, numerous studies on this subject appeared in the early 1980's; one suggested, for example, that attributes such as loyalty and commitment to the organization- rather than objectively measured performance quality- can have important impacts on superiors' perceptions of their subordinates' work.⁵³

2.5. Summary of Issues.

The initial parts of this chapter focused on the constitution and the political issues which affect the bureaucracy and the

⁵² George J. Gordon, Public Administration in America, 1986, 334.

⁵³ Testimony of Dwight A. Ink, Hearings on The Senior Executive Service, (February 28, 1984), 159

Higher Civil Service of both Britain and the United States. The key issues may be highlighted by comparing the two countries. The British bureaucracy operates in a unitary and parliamentary system and its constitution is described as unwritten. The U.S. system has three features, namely: a written constitutional document, a federal system, and presidentialism.

The total anonymity of the British bureaucracy contrasts with greater public visibility of civil servants in the United States. Much of the civil service in Britain has been shaped by the Fulton Reforms, whereas the United States has been that of expanding the basic principles of the Pendleton Act and the Civil service Reform Act (CSRA). Most analyses of bureaucracy and civil service reforms focussed on the pressures coming from actors within the bureaucracies- legislatures, interest groups and elected executives.

The logo of the University of the Western Cape, featuring a classical building facade with columns and a pediment.

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CHAPTER 3

3.0. EDUCATION, SOCIALIZATION AND RECRUITMENT OF HIGHER CIVIL SERVANTS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

3.0. INTRODUCTION.

Great Britain and the United States have different educational systems and different socialization processes and procedures for the recruitment, or selection, of political and administrative office-holders. These differences are a consequence of social traditions built into the British education system and a reliance on the generalist approach rather than specialist approach employed in the United States.

In the United States, the recruitment system has two paths to higher office within the executive departments and agencies: a career and a political path. In Britain, the traditional principle of recruitment to the higher levels of the civil service has been to deny politicians the privilege of deciding who occupies a senior post.

On the other hand, in both countries, although political and administrative positions are formally open to any candidate with sufficient talent, political recruits, like political participants, tend to be people of middle-or upper-class background.

3.1. Educational and Social Background.

The question of educational background is clearly linked to the issue of generalists versus specialists. The British government selects top civil servants on the basis of general abilities and on performance in post secondary education. Despite the increasing technological content of government work and the discredited tradition of the talented amateur by the Fulton Report (1968), the British government persists with the policy.¹

On the other hand, the United States higher civil servants are recruited on the basis of specialized educational qualifications. The educational backgrounds of top civil servants in the two countries can be ascertained from data presented in Table 3.1. (See Appendix).

Based on the Table 3.1, the United States shows a strong bias towards the natural sciences among its top civil servants and to the social sciences among its political executives. In Britain, on the other hand, a humanities background has long been seen as the basis for the generalist administrator and the number of senior civil servants without a university degree is substantially higher, at 16 percent. The most striking feature in both countries, however, is the importance of a university degree. It is the importance of university education and the bias within the educational systems of each country in favor of high status social groups, which serves to make the higher civil service of each

¹ John Garret, Managing the Civil Service, (London: Heinemann, 1980).

country "socially unrepresentative" a theme taken up in many studies.² In general, this literature has focused on the social background, social class, education, race, language, and gender. The vast majority of these authors have concentrated on the recruitment for senior, decision making posts in the civil service rather than on recruitment for the entire civil service. As Table 3.1 suggests, the research has tended to find that the senior posts are filled primarily by well educated males from middle-class backgrounds and from the dominant social groupings in the society.

The educational attainment of the United States cabinet officers starkly reveals their position as a socially privileged group. Fully 80.8 percent of the secretaries had at least some college education, and 34 percent earned advanced degrees.³ Table 3.2 indicates that the more prestigious and well-known colleges are well represented. Looking at the prestige of the colleges it is important because it provides a clue to the social class from which the secretary came.⁴ Table 3.2. (See Appendix) lists most

² The Study of "representative bureaucracy" for example has a long and honorable history in the study of public bureaucracies. See, Gboyega, A. The Federal Characteristic; or, the Attempt to Create Representative Bureaucracies in Nigeria. International Review of Administrative Sciences, 50, 17-24, (1984), as cited in B. Guy Peters, Comparing Public Bureaucracies: Problems of Theory and Method, Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1988, 34.

³ Kenneth Prewitt and William McAllister, "Changes in the American Executive Elite, 1930-1970." In H. Eulau and M. Czudnowski, eds., Elite Recruitment in Democratic Politics, (New York: Sage publication, 1976), 105-132

⁴ Ibid.

frequently attended colleges. Looking just at the Big Three Harvard, Yale, and Princeton-nearly one-fifth of all secretaries and one-quarter of those with only undergraduate degrees attended these three schools. Graduate education shows similar tendencies-27.5 percent of those who earned advanced degrees went to Harvard or Yale.

The hierarchical positions, social origins, and social distance within administration is intimately related to administrative roles and process of socialization by which expectations defining these roles are established. Great Britain, for example, encourages the self-perpetuation of a social elite through their emphasis on social education and leadership training.

At this point, however, a definition which expresses the general linkage aspect of socialization is worth quoting. According to Orville Brim, socialization is:

a process of learning through which an individual is prepared, with varying degrees of success, to meet the requirements laid down by other members of society for his behavior in a variety of situations. These requirements are always attached to one or another of the recognized positions or statuses in this society...The behavior required of a person in a given position or status is considered to be his prescribed role, and the requirements themselves can be called role prescriptions...If socialization is role learning, it follows that socialization occurs throughout an individual's life.⁵

If this description is valid, we can establish a preliminary understanding of the process by which a system recruits its senior

⁵ Orville G. Brim, "Personality Development as Role-Learning," in Iran Iscoe and Harold W. Stevenson eds., Personality Development in Children, (Austin, 1960), 128.

administrators.

There is in the literature an assumed connection between social backgrounds of civil servants and their behavior in government. Such a perspective originally motivated Kingsley,⁶ who feared that a British civil service recruited almost exclusively from middle and upper classes, the Claredon Schools, and Oxbridge, would find it difficult to implement the socialist program of a Labor government in postwar Britain. The linkages of social class with education and of education with the British and most Western Europe (France and Germany) public services are reflected in the structure of the public services. Most of them are grounded in certain fundamental premises or traditions:

- (a) that the top policy-level posts, though variously defined, should be filled by politically appointed and politically responsive officers;
- (b) that the remainder of the public service (except at the custodial, messengerial level) should be career personnel, selected and appointed upon completion of their education with expectation of continuing employment in their working life in the civil service and, frequently, in the agency or ministry in which they are initially appointed;
- (c) that the career service personnel should be categorized in four basic classes , roughly matched with four levels of job responsibility on the one hand and with classes or strata of the society, existing now or at some time in the past, on the other;
- (d) that the basic criterion, the minimum qualification, for entry into each class should be the level of educational attainment, though not necessarily the field of educational specialization;
- (e) that the level of educational attainment is roughly related to the social class in the society.

⁶ J.D. Kingsley, Representative Bureaucracy, (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Antioch Press), 1944.

⁷ Frederick C. Mosher, Democracy and the Public Service, (New York: London: Oxford University Press, Inc. 1968), 27-28.

3.2. Public Employment: General Observations.

Equally important to the concept of bureaucracy is the issue of public employment. Public employment is a basic resource of government because most policy outputs involve the skilled services of public employees. Public employees are an active element of the dynamics of government. Public employees collectively constitute pressure groups that can be a cause as well as a consequences of the growth of government.

The size of the civil service at any given time is a function of (among other things) the scale of government activity and the latter, in turn, is a function of (among other things) varying fashions in political philosophy- often summed up in beguiling but ambiguous expressions like 'laissez-faire', 'interventionism' and 'collectivism'. And these, in turn, are responses to social, economic, industrial and constitutional developments, all of which are, of course, interrelated.

Civil servants in Britain are divided into a variety of groups unequal in size and political significance. The largest group, about 200,000, consists of clerical staff of bureaucracy. The job of delivering services to the general public is left to local government, the National Health Service, and public corporations such as the Post Office.⁸ The most important group of civil servants is the few hundred people in the open class who advise

⁸ Gabriel A. Almond and Bingham G. Powell, J.R, Comparative Politics Today, 146.

ministers and oversee the work of departments.

In the United States, the existence of a federal system of government complicates the measurement of public employment. In the American federal system, levels of government are relatively autonomous in their personnel practices, but the federal government does influence levels of public employment through grants.⁹

The number and characteristics of top-level executives in the federal civil service is a complicated picture. As Table 3.3 (See Appendix) indicates, in 1979 there were approximately 8,400 senior-level managers or executives in the service who were responsible for the management of over 2 million personnel. In addition to the 8,400 managers, there were around 400 cabinet secretaries, assistant secretaries, and similar high-level appointees, who require confirmation by the United States Senate.

The 8,400 senior personnel were divided into three groups. The largest with over 4,100 numbers is composed of career civil servants, appointed on the basis of open competition without presidential participation. This corps of career managers, with many years of experience in government, is the main, continuing support system for federal management. The second largest group of executives (3,724) are differentiated from the first group mainly in the manner of selection. They are specialists needed for top-level jobs. like the National Bureau of Standards. Finally, the

⁹ Wallace E. Oates, "Towards a Predictive Theory of Intergovernmental Grants," in Wallace E. Oates, ed., Studies in Fiscal Federalism, Brookfield, Vermont: Edward Elgar Publishing Company, 1991, 157-165.

third group includes 500 executives. These are managers, some of whom are appointed by the president, others by cabinet officials,. These group does not hold cabinet rank, and its appointments do not require senate confirmation.¹⁰

◊ 3.3. Criteria for Selection.

The recruitment of higher civil servants in Britain is from within the civil service and it occurs without any specific qualifications. Civil servants are meant to be the "best and the brightest"; this usually means getting a very good degree in medieval or modern history at Oxford or Cambridge.

Although the Fulton Committee on the Civil Service recommended that recruits should have "relevant" specialist knowledge and that the class structure should be replaced by a unified grading structure covering the entire civil service, its members could not decide what kind of knowledge was relevant to the work of government.¹¹ (The idea of a single, unified grading structure has also been abandoned. British civil servants are recruited through a system of open competition organized by the Civil Service Commission). These posts are sufficiently important, sensitive, and senior so that they will not be offered to junior staff, to outsiders, or to persons who in any way have "unknown qualities." The opportunity to join the higher civil service is not distributed randomly among public employees. Instead, it is almost exclusively

¹⁰ Lee A. Fritschler and Bernard H. Ross, Executive's Guide to Government: How Washington Works, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers, Inc., 1980), 29-31.

¹¹ See Fulton Committee, Report, Vol. 1, pp.27ff.

confined to members of what was formerly called the administrative class and now consists of leading positions in the administrative group, henceforth, called by the traditional, very selective term, the administrative class. To become a higher civil servant, an individual must have joined the administrative ranks upward of twenty years previously, and proven his suitability for such a role to senior civil servants who are effective "gatekeepers" for entry to the higher civil service.¹²

Based on previous discussion it can be said that the dominant model of recruitment for British administrative elites is one of ascription. In effect, this means upper-class boys are the main source of recruits. Because bright civil service entrants lack specialized skills and need decades to reach the highest posts, role socialization into Whitehall by senior civil servants is especially important. However, following some changes made by the Fulton Committee, the previous executive and clerical officers had a chance to take the Administrative Trainee Examination (ATM), which is a gateway for senior officers. This ATM is a promotion examination for the internal applicants, while it is an entrance examination for external applicants. They are tested for their ability to summarize lengthy prose papers, to resolve a problem by fitting specific facts to general regulations, to draw inferences from a simple table of social statistics, and to perform in group discussions of problems of government.

¹² Ezra N. Suleiman, Bureaucrats and Policy Making: A Comparative Overview, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1984), 144.

The administrative trainee candidates apply for departments of their choice. Depending on their personal qualities, performance in interviews, individual preferences, and the positions available, they will be assigned to a particular department. The rules and conditions that govern civil service careers are laid down centrally, but the actual administrative implementation is delegated to individual departments. The Management and Personnel Office (MPO), headed by a senior minister who reports to the prime minister, acts as civil service "management" in dealings with civil service staff. Since a disproportionate number of entrants to the higher civil service come from middle class backgrounds and have been to public schools and Oxford, some would argue that the educational system is discriminatory, sifting out people from a different class background before they can acquire the qualifications needed by a merit system of appointment and discouraging non-Oxford graduates from applying.¹³ Others would argue that this is another form to maintain the status quo. Although, at a later stage there had been a steady increase in the proportion of recruits educated at state schools, their social backgrounds had not altered significantly and the proportion from Oxford and Cambridge had also remained static, despite declining shares of these two universities in the annual output of graduates. Such narrow recruitment was considered to be harmful because it meant that most senior officials were very much out of touch with

¹³ Brian Smith, "The United Kingdom," in Rowat Camero, Donald, ed., Public Administration in Developed Democracies: A Comparative Study, New York: Marcell Dekker, 1988, 74

the community.¹⁴ It was also considered to be unfair in that the statistics suggested that there was a bias towards candidates with certain kinds of background.

The Thatcher era altered the career expectations of higher civil servants because she had a very different view of their work than that of her predecessors. Higher civil servants were expected to become managers of other civil servants, increasing efficiency of government programs to help cut public expenditure. Further, as a surprising discovery, Mrs Thatcher preferred 'people who were frequently from modest backgrounds and may not even have been at university' and she further indicated, 'did not speak with Oxford accents, had not got what people call the right connections'.¹⁵

American administrative elites are drawn disproportionately from people in the middle and upper ranges of wealth and status. However, it can be said that the basis of choosing civil servants in the United States before as already indicated in terms of reforms, has not remained constant, with the main transition occurring when the spoils system was replaced by the merit system. Comparatively speaking, the British emphasis has been on career staffing in some form, with individuals customarily entering the service at an early age and remaining throughout their career until retirement. In the United States, the orientation has been toward

¹⁴ Frederick F. Ridley, Government and Administration in Western Europe, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 40-41

¹⁵ D. Kavanagh, Thatcherism and British Politics, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 291; speech by Margaret Thatcher on 23 November 1985, quoted by Kavanagh.

short-term or program staffing. This is justified on the grounds that rotation in office could protect against abuses by long-term office holders without adversely affecting performance of duties.

As compared to the British system the approach has been to emphasize the position held and the requirements for satisfactory performance of the duties connected with it, rather than assessment of individual potential for placement in an appropriate rank category. As a result, there has been no clear-cut grouping equivalent to the British administrative class. In the American system of grades reflecting levels of responsibilities in the system, the top three "supergrades" were considered to constitute the elite of the civil service prior to the 1978 reforms. In contrast to the "professional amateurs" of the British administrative elite, the occupants of these posts were experts in a professional specialty.¹⁶ The selection process to guarantee the merit system is governed by the Office of Personnel Management and the Merit Systems Protection Board. Entry to most levels within the career grades of the civil service is by competitive examination which, like those of the British Civil Service Commission are largely geared to ascertaining the technical competence rather than academic brilliance of recruits, and will concentrate on the issues such as literacy, numerical skills and ability to comprehend written materials.

¹⁶ Ferrel Heady, Public Administration: A Comparative Perspective, 4th ed. (New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc., 1991) 234.

Generally speaking, the specific process of selection in Britain and the United States is basically the same. They both apply the centralized placement system. According to Guy Peters,

in the centralized pattern of recruitment there is a centralized civil service organization that is responsible for advertising new positions, testing applicants, and selecting some smaller set of applicants for final examination by the agency seeking the employee. The usual procedure is that the agency notifies the personnel organization of the position, a competitive examination is held, and then the agency seeking the person is sent a list of three or more names from which to select the new employee. The selection may be made on the basis of personal interviews or simply by taking the individual with the highest score on the examination or by any other rational or irrational criteria. Competitive tests are used to fill the position; these tests are centrally administered to prevent bias, and the hiring organization accepts only those deemed qualified on the basis of examination.¹⁷

Over the years, the American hesitation about career staffing has persisted, but recent decades have brought renewed debate as to the relative advantages of the careerist and political appointees. The career officials Senior Executive Service (SES) are selected on the basis of demonstrated competence during their careers rather than their suitability for particular positions. They consist of several thousand high-level civil servants with established records of exceptional performance. According to Herbert Kaufman, this reflects the quest for American personnel selection and advancement practices; the desire for a public service that is competent and has a strong executive leadership; and the belief in

¹⁷ B. Guy Peters, The Politics of Bureaucracy, 3rd. ed. (New York: Longman, 1989), 83-84.

representativeness in governmental institutions.¹⁸ A key element in the SES is its emphasis on performance and on rewards of good work. When executives enter the SES, they serve a one-year probationary period, during which they can be dismissed from the SES at any time for unsatisfactory performance. Efforts by chief executives to assure a more responsive higher civil service have been directed toward expansion of the middle layer of political appointees at the expense of civil servants recruited by competitive examination.

In as far as the political appointments are concerned, the President will normally have personal direction over the appointment of his senior aides in the White House and the most senior positions within the departments and important agencies. Comparatively speaking, in making his cabinet selections, the president is less constrained by his party than is the case in Britain. Unlike the prime minister, the president need not confine his selections to members of the legislature. The president often turns to state-level offices, and to industry, labor, or academia for cabinet appointees. He may even select members of the opposition political party, something a prime minister never does unless a coalition cabinet has to be formed. The President is also formally responsible for the appointment to many of the posts at the level of the bureau chiefs or their equivalent. However, on occasions nominations to the lower-level political positions are

¹⁸ Herbert Kaufman, "Administrative Decentralization and Political Power," Public Administration Review, 29 (January/February, 1969), 3-5.

recruited as individuals personally known to senior departmental politicians but many names are put forward by congressmen or interest groups. State party officials will also recommend hardworking colleagues as political appointees. Whatever the method of selection of political appointees they are invariably culled from elite backgrounds. In most cases white, male, with a college degree.¹⁹ However, looking at President Clinton's administration, there are more minorities and women appointed to cabinet-level positions. But most of them are drawn from among the privileged, best -educated, well-connected, upper-and upper-middle -class segments of America.²⁰

There are both formal and informal aspects of Congress' role in the appointment of cabinet officers. The formal aspect of the relationship derives from the constitutional requirement of Senate confirmation of the president's nominee for the cabinet post by a margin of two-thirds plus one. Also, formal hearings of the relationship can be seen in the need to hold confirmation hearings. The informal aspect of the cabinet-Congress relationship in the appointment process grows out of the formal. First, there is a general norm that the president should get the cabinet that he wants. However, that norm, as Mackenzie argues, is not " a

¹⁹ J.E. Kingdom, The Civil Service in Liberal Democracies: An Introductory Survey, (London: Routledge, 1990), 172-173.

²⁰ Thomas R. Dye, "The Friends of Bill and Hillary," in Political Science And Politics, (Vol XXVI, No. 4, New Hampshire Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, December 1993), 693.

sacrosanct".²¹

3.4. Mobility And Promotion.

The most important factor to the recruitment process and retention of high civil servants is the criteria used in assessment for promotion. Basically there are two ideal types of career patterns, the guild system and the entrepreneurial system.

The guild system requires long apprenticeship within a single institution as a prerequisite for admission to the elite, whereas the entrepreneurial system is characterized by a high degree of lateral entry into the elite from outside careers and institutions.²² In brief, guild systems maximize internal integration within the elite, whereas entrepreneurial systems maximize integration of the elite and other parts of society.

The entrepreneurial system is more prevalent in the U.S., described by Hugh Heclo as the "government of strangers".²³ There is a great deal of movement back and forth between the public and private sector, with most people staying in government only a few years.

In the United States federal civil service, the value of specialists to single organizations or to narrow professional perspectives has been traditionally defended. The proposal to

²¹ Calvin G. Mackenzie, The Politics of Presidential Appointments, New York: Free Press, 1981, 169.

²² Joel D. Aberbach, Robert D. Putnam, and Bert A. Rockman, Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), 67.

²³ Hugh Heclo, A Government of Strangers, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1977).

create a generalist administrator with mobility obligations between departments has been defeated through the strong opposition that mobility threatens the functional or organizational specialists. However, the creation of the SES was based on the ideal of the mobile administrative generalist instead of functional specialist. Despite the greater flexibility of promotion based on inter-organizational mobility, we need to pay attention to the view that SES needs to abandon the concept of the all-purpose generalist administrator. According to one observation from a practitioner, a government manager cannot move readily from Defense to Interior. He insists that personnel officers need to identify functional areas within government that are similar enough to require common training and to afford interagency mobility.²⁴ The American "public careerist" displays mobility, but the process is marked by happenstance, the constraints of conflict-of-interest laws, personal hardships, and jarring discontinuity in policy. Meaning that there is no orderly career progression for higher civil servants.

In Great Britain, except for a very few officials who reach the highest career rank of permanent secretary, careers are made within a single department. The bias of promotion is serious in departments and agencies. Promotion depends on performance in the requisite range of jobs; it does not depend on having or acquiring

²⁴ R.E. Miles, "Rethinking Some Premises of the Senior Executive Service, : in Improving the Accountability and Performance of Government, B.S. Smith and Carrol J. eds., (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982), 42-45.

specific qualifications, nor on completing prescribed training. Promotion rates are partly influenced by the annual staff reports made on all civil servants. These are written by a civil servant's immediate superiors, whose own superior checks, countersigns, and comments on them. Procedures for promotions within the open structure are neither codified nor published; broadly, nominations from the MPO and the department concerned are discussed in an interdepartmental committee of permanent secretaries, whose recommendations are approved by the prime minister.²⁵ In practice most open structured posts below permanent secretary are filled from within the department in question. Permanent secretary posts are the exception. Appointments here are made after discussion in the interdepartmental committee, but also after consultation between the head of the civil service and ministerial head of the department. The prime minister is also consulted. Frederick Ridley summarizes the subsequent procedures as follows:

The head of the civil service then advises the prime minister who is responsible for appointments at this level, but, until the present [1979 Conservative] government, it has been a convention that this advice is followed. The process is harder to pin down as regards Permanent Secretary appointments. The head of the service make suggestions to the prime minister on the basis of his own knowledge and consultations with the committees and ministers concerned.²⁶

²⁵ William Plowden, "The Higher Civil Service of Britain", in Bruce L. Smith, ed., The Higher Civil Service in Europe and Canada: Lessons for the United States, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1984), 21-24.

²⁶ Frederick F. Ridley, "Career service: A Comparative perspective on civil service promotion," Public Administration, 62 (2) (1980), 188.

The development of the Senior Professional Administration Training Scheme (SPATS) in the British system is very suggestive. The main purpose of SPATS, instituted in 1972, is to provide specialist civil servants who have the potential to reach the more senior posts with an opportunity to broaden their experience in the wider fields of administration and management, and it is designed to make it possible for them to compete for the Open Structure posts (permanent secretary, deputy secretary, under secretary) with the most able members of the administrative group.²⁷ However, the trainee program has failed to produce any substantial results. In the whole of the first three years of its operation it only recruited twenty-five officers, in contrast with the thirty each year envisaged when the scheme was introduced.²⁸

The traditional lack of direct involvement by ministers in the process has been altered somewhat by Conservative Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. Mrs Thatcher has shown a more interventionist approach to top civil service appointments, especially in the case of Peter Middleton, an Under-Secretary in the Treasury, who was promoted, reputedly at her insistence, as of Spring 1983 to the post of Permanent Secretary at the Treasury ahead of others believed to be closer to the front of the line for promotion.²⁹

²⁷ Eleventh report: The Civil service, Vol.II [Part I], London, July, 1977, 16.

²⁸ See The Times, 21 January 1984.

²⁹ See the Economist, 25 December, 1982.

3.5. Specialists and Generalists.

Traditionally studies have distinguished between 'generalists' and 'specialists, with generalists being those who have a general education, usually arts-based, and specialists being trained in the 'hard', natural sciences.³⁰

The center of gravity of the British civil service has always been the generalist administrator, with specialists (such as scientists, lawyers, accountants and economists) playing a supportive and subordinate role. This contrasts with the relative dominance of specialists in the central bureaucracy of the United States, Europe and elsewhere. In Britain the service-wide character of the open structure, as well as the norms of the civil service, militate against specialization. Whereas, in America the fact that the hiring of the official is conducted by the agency itself, characterized by Frederick Ridley³¹ as a 'job' system rather than a 'career' system, as well as the importance of acquiring a reputation in a particular area, mean that 'specialization provides greater promise for advancement than does the generalist role'.³² This was one of the problems encountered in the setting-up in 1978 of the Senior Executive Service which was intended to create a more

³⁰ Frederick F. Ridley, ed., Specialists and Generalists. A Comparative Perspective, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1968).

³¹ Frederick F. Ridley, "Career service: A Comparative Perspective on Civil Service Promotion", Public Administration, 62(2), 1983, 179-196.

³² H. Hecllo, "Issue networks and the executive establishment", in A. King, ed., The New American Political System, (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1978), 95-124.

mobile group of senior executives.

The distinction between these two concepts lies at the point of recruitment. Specialists' posts are filled only by those possessing stipulated academic and/or professional qualifications, and those recruited will be required to exercise their special skills as an integral part of the job to which they had been appointed. A generalist is one whose prior training is not considered relevant to the job he or she is recruited to do. Thus the main (though not the only) consideration in recruiting specialists is whether applicants are of high calibre in their particular field. The philosophy underlying generalist recruitment is that you pick the best people regardless of subject specialization, and then mould them into versatile all-rounders.³³ According to Sir Maurice Dean, specialized examination would

limit most undesirably the free choice of school and university subjects. The right to make a free choice is more valuable than the benefit to be derived from the study of public administration. After all, the main purpose of university training is to acquire mental muscles; I sometimes think that the subject doesn't matter provided it is sufficiently difficult.³⁴

However, as it has developed historically, the "generalist" role identification has certain peculiar characteristics in exactly the opposite direction. The British Administrative Class, while embracing a "generalist myth," has reinterpreted the term to mean avoidance of direction and coordination, particularly in the area

³³ Gavin Drewery and Tony Butcher, The Civil Service Today, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1988), 25-26.

³⁴ Sir Maurice Dean, "The Public servant and the Study of Public Administration," Public Administration, XL 1962, 23

of economic management. Instead, this administrative elite has restricted its activity primarily to formulation of policy or, as the formal definition runs, "policy advice" to ministers.³⁵ In the usual terminology of administrative analysis in other words, this elite has redefined its "generalists" role to mean essentially a staff rather than a line role.

Simply stated, it is widely considered in Britain that specialists are unsuitable for administrative work. Administration is seen as a process of arbitrating between special interests as represented by experts within departments and pressure groups outside. The successful administrator, therefore, needs to be detached from any particular field and through his training experience he/she needs to be able to find a balance between different groups.

In the United States, on the other hand, the higher civil servants have specialist backgrounds. However, the individuals who reach the higher ranks in America are no longer specialists in any meaningful sense of the term. Policy-making inevitably involves the blending of skills and knowledge from a variety of specialized backgrounds. Attacks on the generalists, as in the Fulton report in Great Britain, miss the point as much as do the critical assaults on the alleged narrowness of United States career officials. The point is that higher civil servants, in order to perform the job, will have to become "specialists in generalizations" and approach

³⁵ Roger K. Kelsall, Higher Civil Servants in Britain from 1870 to the Present Day, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1955), 35.

the task from a perspective broader than what is commonly understood as specialization.³⁶

3.6. Summary of Issues.

As stated in the introduction, the education, socialization and recruitment of senior officials differ in Britain and the United States. However, the survey on the composition of elites has shown a disproportionate representation of educated, high-status officials at the top of the political and administrative hierarchy of both countries. In Britain, persons from working-class backgrounds are largely excluded from the elite, in part by social filters built into the educational system, but also by more direct social bias.

The specialist tradition dominates the U.S. civil service. Civil servants are recruited as specialists, and their service on the way up is confined to single bureau or certain department. This is true even though their responsibilities are increasingly of broad policy and administrative character, involving interaction with other political and administrative centers. (Further detailed discussion is in chapter 4). The British administrative service is outstanding for the emphasis placed upon general ability rather than upon specific skills. The generalist principle has been used to justify a remarkable lack of coherence in the management of

³⁶ Bruce L. R. Smith, ed., The Higher Civil Service in Europe and Canada: Lessons for the United States, (Washington, D.C., The Brookings Institution, 1984), 15-16.

civil service careers. Fulton was extremely critical of the generalist tradition:

The ideal administrator is still too often seen as the gifted layman who, moving frequently from job to job within the Service, can take a practical view of any problem, irrespective of its subject matter, in the light of his knowledge and experience of the government machine. ...The cult is obsolete at all levels and in all parts of the service.³⁷

In contrast to Britain, the most distinctive feature of the United States public service has been the high proportion of political appointments and the tradition of specialized recruitment. The promotion of officials 'merit' also varies. Top political executives are not routinely recruited from within the career service.



³⁷ Lord Fulton, chairman, Report of the Committee on the Civil Service, 1966-1968, vol. 1. cmnd. 3638 (HMSO, 1968), paragraph 15.

Chapter 4.

4.0.⁹ THE CIVIL SERVICE AND POLICY-MAKING IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.4.1. INTRODUCTION.

Patterns of policy-making vary considerably from one country to the next, but certain regularities may be observed. First of all, in nearly all political systems, three major participants are involved: political office holders (presidents, prime ministers, and legislators), bureaucrats, and affected interest groups. Political officeholders are usually responsible for the most important policy decisions because they possess the greatest political power and because their political futures may depend on the overall performance of government. Bureaucrats often must interpret policy as they administer it, and they can also influence overall policy decisions by manipulating the kind of information they pass on to political decision makers. Bureaucrats may also participate directly in deliberations about policy. Interest groups serve as sources of information and sometimes directly influence the policy making process, particularly in liberal democratic systems.

In Britain, the process of determining public policy is dominated by the executive. Once the executive has agreed on a measure, the assent of Parliament can usually be ensured. Parliament is essentially a policy-ratifying rather than a policy-making body.

In the United States, by contrast, the executive enjoys no

such dominance. The president cannot proceed on the basis that any proposals he makes can be ensured the assent of Congress. Once enacted, legislative measures can be and occasionally are struck down by the courts as contrary to the provisions of the Constitution. As such, the American political system has been described as a "multiple access"¹ one or it may also be characterized as a "multiple check"² system. For example, congress has negating powers that it is prepared to and not infrequently does use; Parliament has negating powers that it can but hardly ever does use. The executive in Britain can make assumptions about legislative support that few American presidents would dare to make.

This chapter focuses upon the effects of constitutional constraints, socialization process, educational systems and bureaucratic patterns on higher civil servants as policy-making machinery. This analysis is achieved by discussing the role and performance of civil service in policy-making and by making a distinction between political and career executives in Britain and the United States.

¹ Philip Norton, The British Polity, 2nd ed., (New York & London: Longman, 1991), 197.

² Ibid.

4.2. Bureaucratic Expertise in Policy-Making.

As governments become more complex and interdependent, it is inevitable that bureaucrats should be extremely specialized. Simply put, the problem facing government or any group or institution is that the quest for influence in a particular policy area is usually competitive and they are seeking to have their interests adopted as policy. (This will be examined in the discussion of regulatory policy later in this chapter). As George Gordon has noted, chief executives, including president(s) in the United States and minister(s) in Great Britain (own emphasis), must rely on bureaucratic expertise for much of the policy content of policy- especially in highly technical areas -at the same time that they must seek agency compliance in implementing policy as they desire.³ Ira Sharakansky in his study of administrative systems in more-developed countries identified the following characteristics:

* The bureaucracy tends to accept policy directions that come from other branches of government. This reflects task specialization.

* The bureaucracy is considered to be professional, both by its own members and by other participants in the policy process. Professionalization is a sign of specialization among bureaucrats. It reveals itself in the educational requirements used by the bureaucrats when selecting new recruits and also in the acceptance by legislators and by the chief executive of policy information and recommendations provided by the bureaucracy.⁴

Bureaucracies therefore, play an important role in making policy

³ George J. Gordon, Public Administration in America, 3rd ed. (New York: St Martin's Press, Inc., 1986), 99.

⁴ Ira Sharkansky, Public Administration: Policy-Making in Government Agencies, 2nd ed., (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company, 1973), 28.

decisions. For the most powerful and wealthy groups, such as the banking community, administrative agencies provide a direct conduit to government power. Although elected officials have the constitutional authority to make policy, officials in bureaucracies have powerful resources with which to influence policy. The most important is their expertise. Elected officials cannot be well versed in every matter before a legislature. They even have trouble knowing enough about one or two areas of particular concern to them. Moreover, elected officials do not have the time to devote to detailed study of many subjects. Elected officials also have little time or expertise in administrative matters. The implementation of policy is just as important as its enunciation, but that is often left entirely to bureaucracies.⁵

In Britain, although senior civil servants move from one department to another, they will have far more knowledge of policy issues than ministers, who more frequently have even less prior experience. British politicians are uniquely dependent on permanent civil servants. Therefore, the natural authority of the senior administrators is strengthened by their permanence in office compared with the mobility required by the politician's career, especially in central government departmental attitudes and philosophies emerge, and while they change over time as new cohorts of administrators move up through the organization, at any given time they are much more firmly entrenched than any minister or

⁵ David Schuman, Dick W. Olufs III, Public Administration in the United States, (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1988), 48-49.

council committee. Richard Crossman has recorded how difficult it is to prevent ideas being reinterpreted to suit departmental attitudes: "This eternal process goes on. Just as the Cabinet in the form of the Cabinet minutes (i.e., it substitutes what we should have said if we had done as they wished for what we actually did say), so here in my Department the civil servants are always putting in what they think I should have said and not what I actually decided."⁶ Interdepartmental contacts at official levels usually precede and often predetermine inter-ministerial contact, i.e., the Cabinet.⁷

The frequent rotation of ministers means that the average time spent with a department is less than the average time required for a policy to be planned, implemented and assessed. The system "does not enable the political entity anywhere to see objectives through, since the Cabinet and Prime Minister -which exist together more continuously than any individual Minister-do not scan and control the formation of objectives".⁸ It is not surprising, in such circumstances, if ministers find themselves merely reacting to proposals developed and presented by their senior civil servants rather than taking the initiative in policy-making themselves.

Further, another facet of the imbalance between politicians and administrators is the lack of opportunities to prepare for

⁶ Richard Crossman, The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister vol. 1, Minister of Housing 1964-1966, (London, Cape), 249

⁷ Ibid., 90.

⁸ Bruce Heady, British Cabinet Ministers, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1974), 173.

office when in opposition. The official opposition in central government has no access to departments. What research facilities there are in the party organizations are often preoccupied with short term business. A Labor minister who has headed the Transport House Research Department complained in 1966 that: " Ministers may bring with them broad ideas of how future policy should develop. But in the transformation of policy goals into realistic plans, in the execution of those plans and, still more, in policy responses to new unexpected developments, Ministers, are largely, if not wholly, dependent on their official advisers." ⁹

On the other hand, the American politicians also lack information about policy issues. They face the fragmentation of energies, i.e., the diffusion of legislative resources into two houses which in a formal sense duplicate each other's responsibilities, and the diffusion of the member's interests between policy-making and a number of other responsibilities. Further, there is a lack of clarity in legislative mandates to government agencies due to the inability of legislatures to define precisely the specifics required to put desired policy into effect. Bureaucrats therefore, must intervene in general law to enact standards and procedures which are not specified. Allan Lerner and John Wanat concluded:

Legislators, not being technical experts, frequently write laws embodying goals that are exemplary but which lack details. Skeletal legislation, as it is frequently called, is phrased in occasionally grand and, therefore, fuzzy terms. The implementing agency is told by the

⁹ Ibid., 176.

legislature to provide a safe environment for workers, to see that school children are served meals with adequate nutritional content,...to assist the visually impaired, and to maintain adequate income levels.¹⁰

Simply put, if agencies make judgements about legislative intent, which carry with them significant political implications, then bureaucrats obviously command expertise and power.

4.3. The Policy-Making Process: Consensual versus Adversary Politics.

As discussed in chapter three, education and recruitment in Britain and the United States are important elements of socialization. The most important question is, what difference do these factors make for policy-making? The answer is: they help to shape the formulation of policies by top bureaucrats. In both Britain and the United States bureaucracy is staffed with an educational elite. In Britain this elite is produced by emphasizing the importance of "character building, leadership training and social education."¹¹ In contrast, in America there is no clear cut tradition of elite preparation for public office, although the most frequently attended colleges noted in chapter three (Table 3.2) may provide a rough American equivalent to the Oxbridge. Britain's bureaucracy is based upon the concept of the "generalists" rather than relying on specialized technocratic civil servants, as is the case in the United States. With this in mind Jordan, A.G and

¹⁰ Allan W. Lerner and John Wanat, "Fuzziness and Bureaucracy," Public Administration Review, 43 (November/December 1983), 500-509.

¹¹ R.E. Dowse and J. Hughes, "The Family, the School and the Political Socialisation Process", Sociology, 1971), 21-45

Richardson J.J. are correct when they state that "it is no surprise that the British bureaucrats have strong leanings towards consultation."¹² This bias towards the accommodation of groups in policy-making, is an indication that, British civil servants are likely to view the clash of particular groups as a problem.

This willingness of civil servants to consult and negotiate (there being no clear distinction between consultation and negotiation in practice) need not be only based upon good democratic values. C.D. Foster believes that lack of confidence is an important factor in weakening the power of the civil service when faced with powerful outside interests.¹³ Simply put, because British civil servants tend to be relatively weak on expertise, it is not surprising that they are reluctant to develop an authority relationship with outside groups and agencies.¹⁴ The marked preference for a co-operative and consensual relationship is reflected in policy-making procedures, even where the state is supposed to be in a regulatory relationship towards groups. Thus, David Vogel notes that if British and American pollution policies are compared, it is easy to detect a different regulatory style. He suggests that " British regulatory authorities have pursued a consistent policy of close cooperation with industry. They continue

¹² A.G. Jordan, and J.J. Richardson, British Politics and the Policy Process: An Arena Approach, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 171.

¹³ C.D. Foster, Politics, Finance and the Role of Economics, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), 63

¹⁴ See C.C. Hood, The Tools of Government, (London: Macmillan, 1983).

to rely more on persuasion and voluntary agreements and less on legal coercion."¹⁵ The American system is, in contrast, much more adversarial and has created much antagonism on the part of business and much conflict between governments and environmental organizations. Further, the pattern of consultation that in Britain links interest groups and civil servants is expanded in the United States to include congressional committees, producing the "iron triangles" that are at heart of policy-making and policy implementation in many functional sectors of American bureaucracy.¹⁶

• 4.4. The Politics Administration Dichotomy.

Weber's distinction between officials and politicians was not identical to the rather unsatisfactory distinction between policy-making and its execution frequently and more accurately associated with Woodrow Wilson (the sharp distinction between the spheres of politics and administration). Wilson wrote:

Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Administrative questions are not political questions...The field of administration is a field of business. It is removed from the hurry and strife of politics... It is a part of political life only as the methods of the counting-house are a part of the life of society; only as machinery is part of the manufactured

¹⁵ D. Vogel, "Cooperative Regulation: Environmental Protection in Great Britain," Public Interest, No. 72), 88-89, as cited in A.G. Jordan and J.J. Richardson, British Politics and the Policy Process: An Arena Approach, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 169-170.

¹⁶ See: Leiper, J. Freeman, The Political Process, (New York: Random House, 1955).

product.¹⁷

Its essence is further summed up by Sir Humphrey in the fictional television, *Yes Minister*. 'I am merely a civil servant', says Sir Humphrey when verbally attacked by the minister's political adviser; 'I just do as I am instructed by my master' (i.e. the minister).¹⁸ The premise, therefore, is that politicians make policy and officials implement it.

The difficulty here, however, is that it is not particularly clear what constitutes policy and what administration. Another exchange from *Yes Minister* graphically illustrates the point:

Mrs Betty Oldham (M.P. on Select Committee): Look, Sir Humphrey. Whatever we ask the Minister, he says is an administrative question for you. And whatever we ask you, you say is a policy question for the Minister. How do you suggest we find out what's going on? Sir Humphrey Appleby: Yes, I do think there is a real dilemma here, in that while it has been government policy to regard policy as the responsibility of Ministers and administration as the responsibility of officials, questions of administrative policy can cause confusion between the administration of policy and the policy of administration, especially when the responsibility for the administration of the administration conflicts or overlaps with the responsibility for the policy of the administration of policy.¹⁹

Weber recognized officials may adopt policy-making roles when he wrote:

The difference [between politicians and officials] lies only in part in what is expected of each of them. Independence of judgement and the ability to impose one's own ideas are very often expected of officials as well as

¹⁷ Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration," Political Science Quarterly, 2 (June 1887): 209-210, as cited in Peters, The Politics of Bureaucracy

¹⁸ J. Lynn and A. Jay, Yes Minister, Vol.I (London:BBC,1981).

¹⁹ J. Lynn and A. Jay, Yes Minister, Vol.II (London: BBC, 1982).

political leaders. Even the notion that the official spends his time dealing with subordinate matters of routine and leaders do the interesting intellectual jobs is a conceit, and could only be imagined in a country which has no insight into how its public affairs are conducted and its officials work. No, the answer lies in the type of responsibility of each, and it is this which to all intents and purposes shapes the demands placed on each.²⁰

In Britain, it can be argued that the lengthy debates and formal votes of the British House of Commons are usually to legitimize policies decided on in cabinet meetings, party caucuses, or negotiating sessions among government officials and interest group representatives. This does not mean that the parliamentary debates are meaningless: they offer the opposition an opportunity to propose alternative policies; they also help to inform the public on the pros and cons of the governments's proposals; and they may lead to replacements of those proposals.²¹

4.5. Relations between Politicians and Bureaucrats.

The United States presidential system, as compared with British parliamentary system, usually has a large number of political appointees. Before discussing this difference, perhaps it is important to state that constitutionally (as noted in chapter two), the United States government is a system based on separation

²⁰ Max Weber, Gesammelte Politische Schriften, 2nd edn, (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1958), 322-323. Adapted from Edward C. Page, Political Authority and Bureaucratic Power: A Comparative Analysis, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 32.

²¹ David F. Roth, Paul V. Warwick, and David W. Paul, Comparative Politics: Divers States in an Interdependent World, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1989), 306-307.

of powers, meaning that public authority is institutionally fragmented and shared. Samuel Huntington asserted, "America perpetuated a fusion of functions and a division of power, while Britain developed a differentiation of functions and centralization of power."²² Congress, not political executives alone, plays a more powerful and independent role in formulating policy and overseeing its implementation than its counterpart legislature in Britain. Whereas the legislative agenda of the British parliament is typically under the control of the government of the day, "half of the major legislation enacted by congress has been the result of congressional initiative and innovativeness."²³

In the United States political appointees reach farther down into the governmental hierarchy. In the United States the Deputy assistant secretary is frequently a political appointee while his counterpart official in Britain is almost invariably a career civil servant. James W. Fesler clearly examines these differences. According to Fesler the total number of higher positions in the American Executive Branch is about 9,000, with 1,500 of them being political and 7,500 non-political.²⁴

The United States outdoes the British in its provision for

²² Samuel P. Huntington. Political Order in Changing Societies, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 110

²³ Quoted from Joel D. Aberbach, Robert D. Putman and Bert, A. Rockman, Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1981), 22.

²⁴ James W. Fesler, "Politics, Policy, and Bureaucracy at the Top," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 466 (March 1983), 23-24.

change when party control of the executive branch shifts.

In Great Britain there are about 4,000 high-level civil servants and no more than one hundred political appointments to be made with a change in party control.

The civil servants in Britain serve to provide ministers with advice and information to carry out their decisions and to administer the business of government. The relationship between them (Civil servants) and ministers is governed by the convention of individual ministerial responsibility. The minister is answerable to Parliament for his or her department and alone is formally responsible for that department's activities. The civil service of each department (the permanent secretary) is answerable to the minister for the administration of officials within the department and serves usually as the minister's principal adviser. The convention of ministerial responsibility provides a cloak of anonymity to departmental activities. The advice a minister receives from officials and the manner of its formulation and presentation are kept from public gaze.

Ministers do differ in the ways in which they approach their tasks, including relations with top civil servants. Christoph has defined what a "strong" minister is. A strong minister views the role of civil servants as:

largely one of informing the minister fully, analyzing his choices in terms of their technical feasibility, freeing him from trivial paper work, and ensuring that his policies are put into effect swiftly and positively. Because they are left in no doubt over what their minister wants, civil servants act as handmaidens rather

than brakes.²⁵

Reflecting on British policy-making, Richard Rose has noted: "In theory, ministers are meant to communicate the ends of policy to civil servants, who then devise administrative means to carry out wishes of their ministers. In this formulation, the roles of politician and civil servant are separate and complementary. In practice, policy-making usually develops dialectically; both politicians and civil servants review political and administrative implications of a major policy."²⁶

For this reason sensitivity to political interests is a necessary part of the job of a senior civil servant. But the interests to which civil servants are sensitive are generally quite focused, for their world is mostly defined by departmental boundaries. Therefore, the role of a civil servant brings him into frequent contact with his clientele. In Britain for example, "in both the pre-and post-legislative stages civil servants are in steady contact with those pressure groups likely to be affected by proposed changes-obtaining technical information on the anticipated effects of new rules, bargaining from the knowledge of what is apt to be their minister's final position, getting consent in advance whenever possible, satisfying the Britain requirement that consultation with interests precede government action, resting for

²⁵ Bruce W. Headey, "A Typology of Ministers: Implications for Minister-Civil Servant Relationships in Britain," in Dogan Mattei, ed. The Mandarins of Western Europe, (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 1975), 76-79.

²⁶ Richard Rose, The Problem of Party Government, (New York: Free Press, 1974), 418-419.

their minister with temperature of the political water about to be stirred up".²⁷ This description of British civil servants could easily be applied to their counterparts in the United States. Therefore, the political culture of "persuasion" as noted in chapter one is deeply ingrained in both policy-making processes.

What advantages do ministers have over American senior executives? In the first place, ministers enjoy unmatched constitutional legitimacy. There is no doubt that ministers are entitled to make the final decision in a way which civil servants are not. Ministers who know what they want, and who want something which is in fact attainable, can therefore insist on it being done. Civil servants in Britain are trained, to a greater extent than their American counterparts, to obey political masters. The British civil servant has neither the French bureaucrat's confidence in the superiority of his judgement to the politician's nor the American civil servant's belief in the legitimacy of using the legislature (Congress) against the political leadership of the department. This is not to say that the British minister will always be obeyed or that embarrassing facts will not be leaked to the press. It is to say that the British minister is more likely to find that his or her civil servants acknowledge in principle that the minister must be obeyed.²⁸ The relationship between ministers and civil servants

²⁷ James B. Christoph, "High Civil Servants and the Politics of Consensualism in Great Britain" in Dogan Mattei, The Mandarins of Western Europe, (London: Sage Publications, Inc., 1975), 47.

²⁸ Ian Budge and David McKay, The Changing British Political System: Into the 1990s, 2nd. ed. (London: Longman Inc., 1988), 34.

is one of the most crucial aspects of British government. On that relationship depends the ability of voters through their elected government to influence public policy. It is interesting therefore that there is widespread unease about this relationship. For example, Conservative politicians have joined Labour politicians in arguing that the civil service can be a major barrier to policy implementation.²⁹

At this stage the question can be asked. How does the issue of "equality" as part of the American culture and to some extent British culture affect higher civil servants (political officials) as policy-makers? Joel Aberbach and Robert Putman clearly answer this when they indicated that politicians have political antennae that are sensitive to more diffuse sorts of public discontent. Moreover, their more fully developed partisan ideologies mean that their attention is apt to be aroused by discrepancies between social realities and political ideals. They are more likely than bureaucrats to nominate for the public agenda problems that are highlighted by philosophical principles, such as equality or liberty, even though those problems lie beyond the bounds of the current social consensus.³⁰ As Richard Rose (in the case of British party politics) has asserted, "the distinctive claim of parties is to review questions of public choice in the light of more general

²⁹ Ian Budge, David McKay and et.al., The Changing British Political System: Into the 1990s, 2nd. ed. (London: Longman Inc., 1988), 35.

³⁰ Joel D. Aberbach and Robert D. Putman, Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies, 1981, 13.

values and principles".³¹

In a typical American department, the secretary, deputy and under secretaries, assistant and deputy assistant secretaries, administrators of large aggregates, chiefs of several bureaus, and regional directors are replaced by a new set of officials. In the Department of Commerce, ninety three high political incumbents can be displaced; in the Department of Agriculture, sixty five.³²

In the United States, political appointees tend to come from more diverse sources, stay in government for a shorter period of time, and have less previous programmatic or operational familiarity with their areas of responsibility. Therefore, they are unlikely to have prior direct knowledge of the specifics of agency programs or the problems of administering them. Their average tenure (about two years) is so short, and the rate of turnover among them is so high that these political executives as a group have been characterized as participants in "a government of strangers".³³

As discussed in chapter three, the SES have made more substantial career commitment to government service, and much more likely have professional training for the programs administered by

³¹ Richard Rose, "The Variability of Party Government: A Theoretical and Empirical Critique," Political Studies, Vol. 17, (December, 1969), 480.

³² James W. Fesler, "Policy-making at the Top of Bureaucracy," in Francis E. Roucke, ed., Bureaucratic Power in National Policy Making, 4th ed., (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1986), 313-314.

³³ Hugh Heclo, A Government of Strangers: Executive Politics in Washington, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1977).

the agencies to which they are assigned. Further, they have "single-agency" Careers, with almost half remaining in the same agency from the time they have reached middle-grade levels.³⁴ Executive policy-making in the United States is thus a process in which top bureaucrats share power with a variety of presidential appointees. In such an organizational setting, senior career officials can easily find themselves occupying a backseat when major policy decisions are being made. Simply put, the American way of policy-making is also characterized by frequent power struggles among political appointees. White House aides compete with cabinet officials for control over key decisions, and departmental officials in turn vie with one another in this policy-making system.

Seemingly, the differences in background and outlook of the political and career officials are serious issues. Even though attention is being given to ways of achieving smoother cooperation, the situation appears to be deteriorating and may be creating a "government of enemies."³⁵ But one view that most of these political appointees share is a strong distrust of career bureaucrats. Hence, as James Fesler noted, senior career officials in many policy areas are allowed far less input into major decisions than their experience and ability may warrant. This problem was aggravated by a change brought about by passage of the

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Hugh Heclo, "A Government of Enemies?" The Bureaucrat, 13 (Fall 1984), 12-14.

Civil Service Reform Act of 1978: the establishment of the Senior Executive Service, which gives the president greater control over assignments of senior career personnel.³⁶

In practice, the two paths—political and career executives are not so neatly separable with, for example, career officials occupying posts equivalent to those held by political appointees in other agencies. The system is a muddle, as the senior aide to an ex-President quoted by Heclo makes clear: "The whole political-bureaucracy thing is all mixed up. I do not have a strong sense of where the line's drawn."³⁷

Lewis Mainzer sums up the American situation this way: no clear line between career and political executives exists in law, regulations, policy, or tradition...The mixture of career administrators and outsiders in high executive posts which are not sharply differentiated as to their political or administrative character has been our pragmatic solution to the management of political bureaucracy."³⁸ Instead of behind-the-scenes activity protected by a carefully preserved veil of secrecy and anonymity, as in the British practice, the American expectation is that

³⁶ For example, the Reagan administration has made good use of the SES system to strengthen its control over executive policy-making. See Dick Kirschten, "Administration Using Carter-Era Reform to Manipulate the Levers of Government," National Journal 9 (April 1983), 732-736.

³⁷ Hugh Heclo, A Government of Strangers: Executive Politics in Washington, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1977), 34-35.

³⁸ Lewis C. Mainzer, Political Bureaucracy, (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973), 107 & 112.

bureaucratic participation in policy-making will be much more in public view, with the inevitable reactions that follow.

In an American context, beyond ideologies and party affiliations, and often overriding them, is another attitudinal orientation. Most careerists perceive their role as one entailing the obligation to serve loyally the people's choice as president. Because senior careerists have served through several changes in administration, this is a well-internalized commitment. It is qualified, to be sure, by resistance to illegality, a resistance that served the nation in the Watergate era.

How responsive careerists are to presidential policy shifts is a complex product of ideologies, party affiliations, the civil service doctrine of loyalty to the incumbent president, and devotion to particular programs and agencies.

4.6. The Role of Top Civil Servants in Policy-making.

Inherent in British civil servants as discussed in chapter two, is the concept of political neutrality and their sense of maintaining the status quo. This is prominent when it comes to policy-making. Bruce Headey, a close observer of British policy-makers reports that "in the absence of contrary instructions from their political masters, officials normally frame policy programs which fit within the context of the existing objectives pursued by their department. Innovation and radical change are not commonly

the product of proposals generated within the civil service."³⁹

In contrast, American civil servants are responsible for shoring up their own bases of political support. Fragmented accountability forces American bureaucrats to be risk takers and forceful advocates for positions they hold privately. The risks accompanying this style, as Sayre Wallace once noted, are large but so too are the potential gains.⁴⁰ In a political system that rewards entrepreneurs, (i.e., bureaucrats playing an active role in policy-making) neither protected anonymity (as is the case in Britain) nor clearly serving a single master, American civil servants, must find allies where they can.

Weber is frequently interpreted as stating that there is an ideal-type distinction between making policy and carrying it out. Diamant A., for example, argues that one of the major criticisms of Weber's approach is that it claimed that "politicians in parliament and cabinet were to make policy while bureaucrats were to carry out the orders of their political bosses and were never to be entrusted with policy-making functions".⁴¹ Of course, one of the difficulties of this separation between policy-making and carrying out policy is

³⁹ Bruce W. Headey, "A Typology of Ministers: Implications for Minister-Civil Servant Relationships in Britain," in Dogan, The Madarians, 83.

⁴⁰ Sayre Wallace, "Bureaucracies: Some contrasts in Systems," Indian Journal of Public Administration, 10, April-June, 1964), 212-229.

⁴¹ Diamant, A. "The bureaucratic model: Max Weber rejected, rediscovered, reformed", in F.L. Heady and S.L. Stokes eds., Papers in Comparative Public Administration, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan, Institute of Public Administration, 1962), 84-85.

that there is no real definition of what 'policy' is (e.g., it may be, among other things, what government intends or what government actually does) or what making it is.

The notion of 'top-down' policy-making implies that the importance of a decision perfectly correlated to the hierarchical level at which it is taken. Thus we would expect the most important policy decisions to be taken at the apex of a government organization, whether by a politician or official, and those lower down in the hierarchy merely to carry them out. There is overwhelming evidence to suggest that this is not the way in which the government works. Kaufman's study of United States federal bureau chiefs, for example, shows that important policy decisions are taken by relatively junior personnel, frequently without being reviewed by hierarchical superiors:

The Hollywood image of executives firing off critical decisions in machine-gun fashion is far removed from the reality of executive life as I saw it...In all the bureaus, numerous decisions emerged from the interactions of the subordinates at all levels, in the field as well as in headquarters, that would have to be regarded as important by even a stringent definition of significance... Yet only a small fraction of them were issued or even reviewed by the chiefs themselves.⁴²

In the study of the Treasury by Heclo and Wildasvsky, for example, it is the Principal Finance Officer, usually an Under-Secretary or less frequently a Deputy Secretary in a government department, who routinely deals with the Treasury and negotiates for the

⁴² H. Kaufman, The Administrative Behavior of Federal Bureau Chiefs, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1981), 19-20.

department's allocation of funds from the Treasury.⁴³

Simply put, hierarchy does not imply the ability to trace all policy decisions of any importance unambiguously to the top of the organizational pyramid, and Weber's⁴⁴ acknowledgement of the importance of subordinate officials underlines this. Rather, the existence of hierarchy must be interpreted as the ability of a superior organization or an official in a superior position to review the actions of a subordinate and give the subordinate directions. There are different ranks of personnel and superiors have the authority to give directions to their subordinates. There are obviously exceptions to this, as in the case of the United States Cabinet Secretaries whose hierarchical powers over their component bureaus and agencies appear limited, above all by congressional expectations that the Cabinet Secretary will not intervene in their affairs. For example, one Secretary of Agriculture "had his knuckles rapped" by Congress for invoking his statutory authority to approve the loans of the Rural Electrification Administration.⁴⁵

In Britain, top civil servants deny they are politicians because of the partisan connotations of the term. However, their work is political because they are concerned not with management details but with what government ought to do, formulating,

⁴³ Hugh Heclo and Aaron Wildavsky, The Private Government of Public Money, (London: MacMillan, 1981), 118-128.

⁴⁴ Max Weber, Ibid., 322-323.

⁴⁵ H. Seideman, Politics, Position and Power, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 163-164.

reviewing, and advising on broad policies.⁴⁶ An official publication seeking to recruit graduates for the higher civil service declares: "You will be involved from the outset in matters of major policy or resource allocation and, under the guidance of experienced administrators, encouraged to put forward your own constructive ideas and to take responsible decisions."⁴⁷ Civil servants are supposedly not apolitical; they are bipartisan, prepared to work for whichever party is the winner of an election. In the British setting, politics is appropriately defined as the articulation of conflicting views about government policies, and the authoritative resolution of these conflicts.⁴⁸ This therefore emphasizes the substantive importance of policies; politics concerns specific programmatic actions of government. Further, it emphasizes generic properties of the policy process, and the inevitability of conflict about what government should do. Because politics is about policy making and higher civil servants are concerned with policy making, they inevitably have political status.

Who makes the major decisions in British government? A common assumption is that they are taken by the senior members of the

⁴⁶ Richard Rose, "The Political Status of Higher Civil Servants in Britain," in Ezra N. Suleiman, ed., Bureaucrats and Policy Making, (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1984), 138-173.

⁴⁷ Careers in the Civil Service-An Alternative View (London: First Division Association, 1987), 12.

⁴⁸ Ezra N. Suleiman, Bureaucrats and Policy Making: A Comparative Overview, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Ltd. 1984), 138-139.

political party which won the last election. That is the Cabinet. It is assumed that these actors make distinctive contributions to the policy process. Here politicians are the guardians of interests and values, administrators should be the guardians of technical knowledge. This version of the relationship finds an echo in the way that a permanent secretary of the Home Office argued that in his department 'There is a store of wisdom about what the facts are and what the implications are of changes in procedure', although to this he inevitably added a rider, 'Whether that leads inescapably onto a policy I very much doubt'.⁴⁹ It is a skepticism on this latter point that leads some observers like Joel Aberach to the argument that administrators are seen to be both involved in policy-making and concerned with politics. Here Joel Aberach, Robert Putman, contend that:

the real distinction is this: whereas politicians articulate broad, diffuse interests of unorganized individuals, bureaucrats mediate narrow, focussed interests of organized clientele.⁵⁰

4.7. Summary.

The most significant issue in this chapter is that American and British political executives are distinguished from career civil servants. Both political and career executives' role and performance as policy-makers were fully discussed. The

⁴⁹ H. Young and A. Sloman, No Minister, (London: BBC, 1982), 24.

⁵⁰ Joel D. Aberach, Robert D. Putman, and Bert A. Rockman, Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1981), 9.

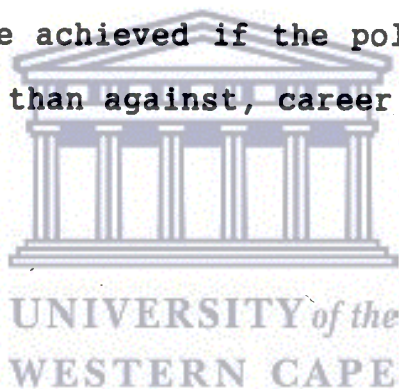
constitutional, political framework, education, socialization and recruitment issues discussed in chapter two and three served as an impetus to the role and performance of higher civil servants in policy making. This discussion has shown a disproportionate representation of educated, middle-class officials at the top positions of policy-making within the bureaucracy. The emphasis of generalists in Britain has shown that lack of specialized knowledge, as is the case in the United States, can weaken the policy-making and implementation capability of civil servants. Further, because of the lack of specialized knowledge, British bureaucrats spend a tremendous amount of time consulting the affected interests groups (with narrowly based interests); this system of policy-making can therefore, be said to be much more likely to produce tinkering than restructuring or introducing radical changes.

In this chapter it is also clear that because of the institutional necessity and perhaps because of the historic absence of socialization as an administrative elite, American higher civil servants when it comes to making policies are more oriented toward advocating functionally specialized and localized claims rather than broad appeals of social doctrines. In sum, American policy-makers focus more readily on the "who gets what" question than on the "why are doing this" question.⁵¹

Practically speaking, both in Britain and the United States,

⁵¹ Charles E. Gilbert, "The Framework of Administrative Responsibility," Journal of Politics, 21 (August 1959), 373-409.

political appointees cannot give precise and complete orders about how their policy decisions must be implemented. They simply do not have time or expertise. Career civil servants, in contrast, have a long term perspective and amass vast experience in the process. They have made their careers managing the details of programs, and may even have helped write the legislation that established them. In conclusion, apparent in this chapter is that the presidential and ministerial control in the U.S. and Britain of the executive branch and the civil service will always be incomplete, in maximizing opportunities for successful policy implementation. However, much might be achieved if the political appointees work together with, rather than against, career executives.



CHAPTER 5

5.0. Conclusions.

At the outset of this study, it was stated that a number of differences exist between the civil service and bureaucracy of Great Britain and the United States. These differences are a consequence of differences in the constitutional, political, economic, and cultural differences between these two national states. This thesis pursued a survey of literature on the constitution, administrative reform, education, socialization, recruitment, and the role of public officials in policy-making of Great Britain and the United States.

This summary recapitulates the major issues and general findings of the study. With regard to the hypothesis that there are differences between Great Britain and the United States civil service systems, the following conclusions and findings can be highlighted.

Chapter two makes it clear that bureaucracy in Great Britain and the United States bureaucracy has been shaped by the development of liberal democratic ideology. However, bureaucracies in both Great Britain and the United States operate within two different types of political systems, namely parliamentary (Great Britain) and presidential systems (United States). The main difference is that the British parliamentary system, guided by an unwritten constitution, embodies a fusion of powers, (i.e., the party that controls a majority of seats in the assembly forms the

government and introduces major policies), whereas the United States presidential system, guided by a written constitution, embodies the separation of powers among three branches of government, executive, legislative and judiciary. All three branches of government are involved in law making.

Another important conclusion from this study is that in comparing Great Britain and the United States bureaucracies, the civil service of Britain has strong features of integrity and political impartiality and its civil servants are relatively secretive and elitist. This elitism is produced by the tradition of elite preparation for public office, for example leadership training and social education. On the other hand, American civil servants are relatively representative and the government is a highly politicized structure in which its senior officers are personal appointees of the President who will resign as soon as the chief executive leaves office.

Important to the foundations of higher civil service in both Great Britain and the United States, is the politics of administrative reform; the Fulton Reforms of 1968 in Britain and The Pendleton Act of 1883 and the Civil Service Reform Act of 1979 (1979) in the United States. Central to the politics of administrative reform in Britain is the abolition of class divisions (clerical, executive and administrative) into one class. In the United States, unlike the Pendleton Act of 1883, which was devoted almost entirely to eliminating patronage practices, the CSRA incorporated a wide variety of objectives. To mention just a

few, the design of the Senior Executive Service for the top level career decision makers, job performance of senior civil servants could be appraised more systematically, and the creation of the office of Personnel Management and the Merit Systems Protection Board were all included within the CSRA.

In order to be able to determine what the bureaucracy is capable of doing, the idea of who the people are, is of utmost importance. Chapter three pointed out that the British bureaucratic system is outstanding for the emphasis placed upon general ability rather than upon specific skills relevant to government (See Table 3.2). The assumption is that general intelligence is all that is required to master the job of setting information and advising ministers. That means that the British system is staffed by generalists. With regard to formulating policies, discussed in chapter four, the reliance on generalists has made civil servants have strong leanings towards consultation with interest groups who are involved in policy-making, not for the sake of democracy, but because of the lack of specialized skills among government bureaucrats.

In the United States, the administrative system emphasizes special skills and high education qualifications. The bureaucracy is staffed with specialists. Simply put, if an individual is seeking a job with the Department of Commerce, he or she might be expected to have training in economics or business administration. As a consequence of that pattern of recruitment, well over "one third of high civil servants in the United States federal

government have professional qualifications of some type."¹ It can then be concluded that senior American civil servants are innovative and energetic when it comes to policy issues. American higher civil servants rely on legal coercion towards interest groups and less on persuasion and voluntary agreements as is the case in Britain.

Chapter four suggested that the politics administration dichotomy has proven to be a myth. Those who have argued for the strict separation of politics from administration have based their reasoning on Woodrow Wilson and Max Weber. According to Wilson, "Administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Administration questions are not political questions."² Weber characterized the contrasting roles of the politician and the bureaucrat as follows: "To take a stand, to be passionate...is the politician's element...indeed, exactly the opposite, principle of responsibility from that of the civil servant. The honor of the civil servant is vested in his ability to execute conscientiously the order of the superior authorities...Without this moral discipline and self-denial in the highest sense, the whole apparatus would fall to pieces."³ Given

¹ Congressional Budget Office, Federal Civilian Employment, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Budget Office), 1980.

² Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration," Political Science Quarterly, June 1887, in Frederick C. Mosher, Basic Literature of American Public Administration, (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981), 1787-1950.

³ Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in From Max Weber, ed. H.H. Garth and C.W. Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 95.

the intricacies of bureaucracy, it can be argued that civil servants' permanency, experience and expertise give them a vast amount of knowledge relevant to policy-making in which ministers and secretaries cannot hope to compete. Civil servants are involved in the process of policy-making and thus have a political role.



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APPENDIX.

TABLE 3.1.

Educational Background of Top Civil Servants (%)

	Britain	United States	
		CS ^a	PE ^b
No University	16	0	3
Law	3	18	28
Humanities (including history)	40	6	7
Social Sciences	12	29	38
Technology and natural Sciences	26	42	10
Unknown	2	5	15
Total	99	100	101

^a CS= US Career civil servants.

^b PE= US Political Executives.

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Source: J.D. Aberbach, R.D. Putman and B.A. Rockman, Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies, (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1981).

TABLE 3.2.
Most Frequently Attended Colleges
(in percentages)

	N	All	BA		N	All	Post-BA
Harvard	37	7.9	10.1	Harvard	36	7.7	22.5
Yale	29	6.2	7.9	Columbia	9	1.9	5.6
Princeton	25	5.3	6.8	Yale	8	1.7	5.0
Michigan	9	1.9	2.5	Texas	6	1.3	3.8
North Carolina	9	1.9	2.5	George-			
Columbia	8	1.7	2.2	Washington	5	1.1	3.1
Pennsylvania	8	1.7	2.2	California,-			
William and Mary	8	1.7	2.2	Berkeley	5	1.1	3.1
Dartmouth	6	1.3	1.6	Michigan	4	.9	2.5
Dickins College	6	1.3	1.6	Cincinnati	4	.9	2.5
Union	5	1.1	1.4	Virginia	4	.9	2.5
Stanford	5	1.1	1.4				
Amherst	4	.9	1.1				
Brown	4	.9	1.1				
West Point	4	.9	1.1				
Chicago	4	.9	1.1				
Virginia	4	.9	1.1				
Cumberland	4	.9	1.1				
California	4	.9	1.1				
(N)		(468)	(367)			(468)	(158)

Source: Jeffrey E. Cohen, The Politics of the U.S. Cabinet: Representation in the Executive Branch, 1789-1984, (Pittsburgh, Pa., University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988), 60.

TABLE 3.3.

Senior -level managers in the U.S. civil service.

Executives	Noncareer		others expected*	Total
	Career appointments	and presidential appointments		
GS-15 properly classifiable at supergrade	400	20	0	420
Supergrade and equivalent	3,750	400	3,700	7,850
Executive level V	25	72	13	110
Executive level IV	2	25	11	38
Total	4,177	517	3,724	8,418

* Positions excepted from competitive selection because they are scientists, engineers, and other highly technical specialists.

Source: U.S. Civil Service Commission, September, 1978.

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