

Politics, Policy, and Organizations

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Frontiers in the Scientific Study of Bureaucracy

Edited by George A. Krause & Kenneth J. Meier

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Preface

The genesis for this volume came from the organized workshop The Scientific Study of Bureaucracy held at the Fifth Public Management Conference, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, December 3–4, 1999. The contents of this volume represent original scholarly essays that enhance our understanding of how bureaucracies function as both organizational entities and also within a larger political system. The common denominator among these essays is a central interest in the functioning of public bureaucracies. This is distinct from research on new institutionalism in political science, whose primary emphasis is on democratic institutions (i.e., chief executive, legislature, and judiciary) and public administration's largely applied and prescriptive nature, which is oriented toward practitioners.

Besides this primary emphasis on bureaucratic organizations from a basic social scientific perspective, the essays are rather diverse in terms of the substantive questions and methodological approaches that are brought to bear by the volume's contributors. Topics ranging from bureaucratic decision making to administrative structure and institutional arrangements are covered by the essays contained in this volume. Methodological tools ranging from formal theory/rational choice deductive analyses to computational modeling and econometric testing of theoretical hypotheses are utilized by the contributors to analyze how public bureaucracies operate in a variety of tasks and settings. The purpose of this breadth is to provide generalizable insights into some of the most important issues confronting students of public bureaucracy within both political science and public administration. At the same time, however, the research questions posed by the contributors are not only timely but

also have their roots in classic scholarship in public administration within political science.

First and foremost, we wish to thank the volume's contributors for providing us with some of their finest original research. We are also extremely grateful to Jeremy Shine and his colleagues at the University of Michigan Press, who have been very supportive of this project and have advocated the publishing of social scientific books and monographs on various political science topics for more than a decade. Professor Krause is ever grateful to his best friend and spouse—LeeAnne Krause—for her patience and support during the process of putting this edited volume together. Professor Meier would also like to thank LeeAnne Krause because she keeps George out of trouble most of the time. Finally, we would like to thank the numerous scholars studying public bureaucracy (both past and present) who have played a large role in developing the contours as to how we think about public bureaucracy. Without their valuable insights, this volume would never have come to fruition.