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Publication Date

1989

A1458
no. 89-25
1989

✓ 11/30/89

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TOP BUREAUCRATS AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENCE
IN REAGAN'S EXECUTIVE BRANCH

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Prepared for delivery at the 1989 Annual Meeting of
the American Political Science Association, The Atlanta
Hilton, August 31 through September 3, 1989. Copyright
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One of the most important developments in the conduct of the presidency in recent years has been the increased use of the administrative tools of office. With presidential-legislative stalemate routine and bureaucratic performance widely seen as critical to presidential success, gaining control of the administrative apparatus has been a top priority of presidents as diverse as Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan. Each of these presidents, with varying degrees of success, attempted to centralize policy and implementation decisions in the Executive Office of the President and to politicize the agencies and bureaus of the executive branch by placing political appointees in many top leadership positions (Nathan, 1975; 1983; Sundquist, 1979; Newland, 1983).

Prior to 1980 and the election of Ronald Reagan, the conventional wisdom had it that presidents and their political appointees could expect only limited success in their attempts at influencing decision-making in the executive branch. This view was based on the following observations: Presidents have neither the time nor the resources to intervene personally in the thousands of policy decisions made by the various bureaucratic organizations and therefore must delegate a great deal of administrative authority to political executives; political appointees, who on average remain in office only 22 months, are either ill-prepared to act as the president's agents or are captured by the bureaucratic interests they were sent to manage; and, senior level bureaucrats are extremely influential in their narrow policy domains owing to specialized expertise and the ties that develop between them and important members of Congress.

The view that hierarchical control of federal bureaucracies is difficult if not impossible has been called into question by the apparent success of the Reagan team in reducing administrative discretion in some of the agencies of the federal government (Barnett, 1982; Goldenberg, 1984; Wholey, 1984; Lynn, 1984; Rubin, 1985; Huddleston, 1987). Immediately after taking office, Reagan and his inner circle of top White House aides embarked on an ambitious and energetic program designed to seize control of policy-making and implementation in the executive branch. Budget and regulatory clearance power was centralized within the Executive Office of the President; key administrative positions in the departments and agencies were staffed with loyal appointees who were philosophically unsympathetic to most forms of government activism; and, political executives were encouraged to exclude career professionals from important policy-making duties and responsibilities (Newland, 1983; Moe, 1985; Levine and Benda, 1987).

While the elements of Reagan's administrative strategy have been well-documented, the effects on the distribution of policy-making

influence in the agencies and bureaus of the executive branch and on the actual roles played by career executives in the decision-making process have not been. These are important issues because a lack of policy-making responsibility and poor relations with political appointees are important causes of low morale and dissatisfaction with government service among senior career executives, and where this occurs it (1) causes policies to be formulated and implemented without the appropriate contribution of career officials and (2) endangers the long-term ability of the federal government to recruit and retain high quality senior executives.

In addition to having an adverse effect on the health of the higher civil service, a transfer of influence in the direction of political appointees challenges many of the prevailing theories of presidential-bureaucratic relations. Typically, these theories emphasize the influence exercised by policy-makers from outside the executive branch--primarily key members of Congress and representatives of interest groups--at the expense of hierarchical control by agents of the president. If the Reagan appointees were successful in reducing the administrative discretion of top bureaucrats, as many observers seem to believe, then our understanding of the dynamics of policy-making in the executive branch needs to be re-examined.

This paper takes a step toward testing the proposition that career executives were excluded from important decision-making responsibilities and that influence shifted in the direction of political appointees during the Reagan administration. It examines who, in the judgment of top level career bureaucrats, influenced important policy decisions made in some of the agencies of the federal government. The central questions addressed are: How much influence did career executives believe they had in making important policy and management decisions in their agencies? In the view of career executives, what was the power-position of key political appointees? How was influence over agency decisions distributed among other important policy-makers such as the members of Congress and congressional staff, interest group representatives, and presidential staff agencies? Which actors did career executives believe had too much influence and which had too little?

Data was collected using a mail-out survey that was administered to career executives in six agencies during the last half of 1987. Since it is unlikely that the Reagan administrative strategy affected all agencies equally, the organizations were selected in order to test the idea that the policy-making roles of career executives and political appointees vary with important features of the organizational context. I argue that two characteristics of the agency context are important determinants of policy-making roles of career and political executives and the distribution of influence in agency decision-making: (1) the extent to which the career executives in the organization possess specialized expertise, and (2) the extent to which there is political conflict in the organization's task environment.

Briefly stated, the hypothesis is that in agencies where career executives have high levels of expertise and political conflict is relatively low, top bureaucrats will play a significant role in policy-making and political executives will be less influential. Conversely, when expertise is low and the level of political conflict relatively high, career executives are likely to have much less influence and political executives will be in a more commanding position. Agencies with a third combination of attributes--high expertise and high conflict--are also examined. In organizations of this type, influence over important agency decisions is likely to be widely shared among many policy actors, including career executives.

This rest of this paper proceeds as follows: The next section looks at some of the indicators that problems exist in the higher civil service and advances the argument that a significant cause of the difficulties is the exclusion of career executives from the policy-making process. Since the idea that political executives may exercise more influence than top bureaucrats is a novel one, a discussion of the traditional case against top-down control in the executive branch follows. Given the diversity of the organizations that make up the federal bureaucracy, it is suggested that a more valid approach to studying the distribution of influence in the executive branch involves focussing on organizational context as a critical variable. I briefly develop the theory of organizational context and use it to make distinctions between the agencies selected for this study. Finally, the responses of the career executives in the agencies are presented and discussed.

PROBLEMS IN THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE AND THE POLITICIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The Senior Executive Service (SES) was conceived by its architects as the centerpiece of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (CSRA). The act in general and its SES provisions in particular, sought to improve the quality of the federal service and achieve improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of government operations. With roughly 7,000 members, the SES was to be an elite service, composed of the best federal managers--a reservoir of talent to be used by any president regardless of party. Through membership in the SES, top bureaucrats were to gain increased job satisfaction, with new opportunities to move up the promotional ladder and gain salary bonuses based on performance (Buchanan, 1981; Huddleston, 1981-82; 1987; Ingraham and Colby, 1982). At the same time, by abolishing many of the rigidities of the traditional civil service system, the SES was to provide political appointees with the flexibility they needed to manage their immediate subordinates in the career service. Thus, the SES was designed to increase managerial flexibility for and responsiveness to political appointees while at the same time provide clear incentives to career managers which would enhance

individual and agency performance.

A little more than ten years have now passed since the SES was established, but the comprehensive changes mandated by civil service reform in the terms and conditions of employment in the senior civil service have been implemented without notable improvement in the morale, competence, or retention of senior personnel. A sampling of the evidence shows that there are a number of signs of discontent in the ranks of career members of the SES.

(1) Current executives do not recommend public sector employment to individuals just beginning a career. The U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) surveyed all career members of the SES who left the service in fiscal year 1985. In response to the question, "Overall, would you advise someone beginning a career to go into the public or private sector?," only 16% advised the public sector while 63% recommended the private sector (USGAO, 1987a). By comparison, in 1978, 81% of the supergrade employees (the pre-SES designation for top bureaucrats) agreed that they would be pleased if their son or daughter chose the federal service for their career (Lynn and Vaden, 1980).

(2) The group of mid-level managers that provide the main source of future executives do not aspire to the SES. When employees in grade 13 through 15 were asked if they would join the SES, only 45% said they would join if offered the chance while 40% said they would not (MSPB, 1984; Schmitt, et al., 1987).

(3) A sizeable proportion of career executives plan to leave government service before they are eligible for retirement or soon thereafter. In 1987, the GAO asked a random sample of career executives what their future plans were with respect to government employment. Over 60% said they planned to leave either before they were eligible for retirement (10.6%) or within the first six months of eligibility (53.1%). In the same survey, executives were asked, "If a desirable full-time position outside the federal government is offered to you within the next twelve months, how likely or unlikely is it that you would accept it?" Nearly 53% responded that it was likely or very likely that they would take the new job (USGAO, 1988).

(4) Morale among career executives is low. In a survey administered by the Senior Executive Association in 1983, career executives were asked to what extent low morale in their agency was a cause of concern. Over half (54.7%) responded that low morale concerned them to a very great extent (SEA, 1983). More recently, the Federal Executive Institute asked senior managers in its membership about morale in their agencies during 1985 and 1986. Fifty-six percent rated agency morale as below average in 1986--12 percentage points worse than in 1985.

Only about one in five rated morale as above average and only one percent rated morale at the highest level (FEIAA, 1987). Other studies have also found that morale is low among senior executives (Ban, 1987; Clark and Wachtel, 1987).

(5) Turnover is a problem. Over 4,300 career and non-career members of the SES left the government service between July 1979, when the SES was established, and December 1984. More than 2,600 of these individuals--representing over 40% of those who originally converted to the SES--were career executives. An additional 300 members retreated to GS-15 positions during this period (GAO, 1984). The average yearly separation rate among career members of the SES was 13.3% between 1980 and 1986, with a high of 20% in 1981 (Benda and Levine, 1988).

A serious problem of recruitment and retention seems to have developed in which the federal government can no longer count on attracting its share of the best of each generation which enters the labor force with public-sector or policy related interests, or keeping its most valued senior people on past their earliest opportunity to retire on favorable terms. In addition, for those who remain in the service, dissatisfaction with current arrangements has reached the crisis stage. These developments have led close observers of the executive branch to question the long-term institutional health of the higher civil service and to search for the causes of the problem (Sundquist, 1980; Levine and Kleeman, 1986; Levine, 1988).

One explanation for these problems which has generated quite a lot of heat but not much light is that the executive branch under Ronald Reagan was unduly politicized. If politicization is measured by violations of the CSRA mandated ceilings on the number of political appointees in the SES or by punitive personnel movements (as narrowly defined in the law), then these fears appear to be groundless. The GAO and the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) have closely monitored these aspects of the SES and have been unable to document any pattern of abuse (Huddleston, 1987). If, however, we broaden the definition of politicization to include the exclusion of career bureaucrats from policy deliberations and a reduction in their policy-making responsibilities, there appears to more cause for concern. Frederick Mosher, a distinguished observer of the civil service, assessed the effect of the Reagan presidency on career executives this way: "the administrations failure to seek and consider or even listen to experienced and knowledgeable civil servants has been a principal source of malaise and disaffection in and of separation from public service in recent years (Mosher, 1984, p.46)." In a similar vein, Norton Long noted that an unhappy consequence of the expansion of the political sector in the executive branch "is the increased turnover among senior civil servants deprived of opportunities for advancement to significant policy roles and a serious impairment of a sense of responsibility for the enterprise for those who remain (Long, 1981, p.306)."

These views were echoed in a report produced for hearings conducted before the House Subcommittee on the Civil Service in 1984. Based on interviews with 60 career executives, the report concluded that "the evidence suggests that overt efforts to politicize the SES have been relatively limited. A more subtle form of politicization appears, however, to more frequent. This is the tendency of some political appointees to circumvent career executives--to either ignore them or reassign them to make-work positions--rather than to work with them and use them as a resource (U.S. House of Representatives, 1984, p. 195.)"

One of the major reasons many career executives are leaving government service at what should be the peak of their careers is dissatisfaction with their relationships with political superiors. A survey conducted by Government Executive magazine of career executives who had recently separated from the SES found that the most frequent complaints involved the increased politicization of the day-to-day business of government and a lack of substantive work for career executives (Linsley, 1987). A GAO report on why career members leave the SES supports this conclusion. This study reports the results of a questionnaire that was sent to every career member of the SES who separated in fiscal year 1985 (the number who left the service, 615, was roughly 10% of the total number of career SES that year). Respondents were given a list of fifty-five specific reasons for leaving the SES and were asked to indicate on a scale--ranging from little or no importance to very great importance--the influence of each in their personal decision to leave the SES. The top reason for leaving according to this group was dissatisfaction with top management (47% answering great or very great importance). Second was dissatisfaction with political appointees (43%). Also in the top ten reasons were dissatisfaction with agency management practices (35%) and too much political interference (35%) (USGAO, 1987a). Significantly, only 22% responded that "salary not adequate" was of great or very great importance while 64% said it was of some, little or no importance or that it was not applicable to their decision (USGAO, 1987b).

It seems that in avoiding the monopoly of influence that civil servants in most Western European democracies exercise over planning and policy advice, the U.S. may have gone too far in excluding senior civil servants from critical decision-making processes and in depriving them of an appropriate degree of access to policy-makers (Polsby, 1988). In some quarters it is feared that the career SES is destined to become a new class of middle-level managers with executive responsibilities concentrated among political appointees. But the idea that political executives may exercise more influence than career bureaucrats requires further discussion because it challenges the traditional view that political appointees are weak in the face of bureaucratic power.

THE TRADITIONAL CASE AGAINST TOP-DOWN CONTROL

The classic model of power relations in the executive branch in both democratic and administrative theory prescribe a relatively narrow role for top civil servants. This model, called "overhead democracy" or the "hierarchical ideal," is based on a strict demarcation between politics and administration. In this view,

...democratic control should run through a single line from the representatives of the people to all those who exercise power in the name of the government. The line runs from the people to their representatives in the presidency and congress, and from there to the president as chief executive, then to the departments, then to the bureaus, then to the lesser units, and so on to the finger tips of administration (Redford, 1969, pp. 70-71).

As many observers of American politics have pointed out, the idea that the chief executive enters office and promotes his measures through a band of loyal supporters in the executive branch, while attractive as a normative theory, depends on a tenuous chain of political events. Not only does it assume that the chief executive's policies and programs are understood and accepted by the teams of officials in position to control government actions, but also that there will be faithful implementation of promised policies by responsive bureaucrats. Further complications are introduced by the separation of powers and the frequent clashes and deadlocks that occur between the president and congress. This encourages a competition between the two branches for control of the operating agencies of the executive branch.

The model of overhead democracy has been challenged by several generations of scholars who have compared the empirical workings of the executive branch with the normative theory. Most of these studies have stressed the ability of bureaucratic organizations--and by implication, top level bureaucrats--to act outside the hierarchical channels of power. The basis for this view is that (1) senior bureaucrats possess important resources which they can use to resist top-down initiatives and (2) political executives are in a weak position to challenge these bureaucratic resources.

The first assertion focuses on key attributes that senior level bureaucrats bring to the political arena. Chief among these are expertise and tenure in position. Expertise may be based on extensive training in a technically specialized field or it may be the product of years of experience working in the same organization on the same program or types of programs. Typically, the expertise of career executives is based on both. Some agencies, dominated by experts from the same professional group, may become virtually self-directing with bureaucrats exercising a great deal of power in making policy decisions within their domains (Rourke, 1980).

In many countries, the assets of expertise in the technicalities of policy-making and continuity in office are exclusively in the hands of bureaucrats. But in the American political system, legislators and congressional staffs also specialize in certain policy areas and often enjoy long tenure in office. These characteristics of the legislative role help offset the formal professional qualifications that bureaucrats bring to the policy process and encourage a certain amount of coordination between members of Congress and bureaucrats.

Along with expertise and tenure, another important bureaucratic resource is the relationships top civil servants forge with key actors in their policy environments. Policy-making in the executive branch is segmented into numerous subgovernments or "whirlpools" of activity (Griffith, 1939; Cater, 1964). In their simplest configuration, these subgovernments take the form of "iron triangles." Alliances develop among bureaucratic professionals in the executive branch, key members of congress on relevant committees and subcommittees, and representatives of interest groups. Each of the participants has a resource or resources considered valuable by other actors in the relationship. The exchange of benefits which enable these subgovernments to maintain their existence are reinforced by two conditions: (1) they take place within the confines of rather narrowly defined policy areas and (2) by virtue of the long tenure of bureaucrats, legislators, and lobbyists compared to the president and his appointees.

It should be emphasized that the development of these relationships with actors outside of the executive branch does not mean that bureaucrats act independently of popular control. Instead, when this occurs, "horizontal" control by elements in the Congress is substituted for hierarchical control by political executives. This view has a long and impressive pedigree. David Truman, in a chapter appropriately entitled "The Ordeal of the Executive," spoke of "formal, 'vertical' responsibility to the president and actual, 'horizontal' control by elements in congress (Truman, 1971, p.410)." Herbert Kaufman, reviewing the classic studies of Arthur Maass (1951) and J. Leiper Freeman (1965), along with findings from his own study of six federal bureau chiefs during the Carter administration, reaffirms what he sees as the "preeminence" of Congress in controlling the agencies of the executive branch. In discussing the independence of bureau chiefs from executive control, Kaufman notes that, "the power of Congress was the predominant factor in their situation (Kaufman, 1981, p.163)." He goes on to state that "the influence of other groups on the administrators derived from the central position of Congress in the system (p.163)" and that "no other external group or institution enjoyed so commanding a position as Congress (p.165)."

The view that policy-making in the executive branch is dominated by relatively closed subgovernments comprised of a limited set of actors who

are in general agreement as to the appropriate course of action has recently been challenged as it became apparent that some policy arenas do not conform to this model. Some observers have now spotted fluid new "issue networks" made up of technical specialists (both inside and outside of government), journalists, administrators, and political entrepreneurs. As Heclo has pointed out,

Based largely on early studies of agriculture, water, and public works policies, the iron triangle concept is not so much wrong as it is disastrously incomplete...the conventional view is especially inappropriate for understanding changes in politics and administration during recent years...Looking for closed triangles of control, we tend to miss the fairly open networks of people that increasingly impinge on government (Heclo, 1978, p.88).

Since this "kaleidoscopic" new system of issue networks lacks the structure and internal homogeneity of the old-style subgovernments, Heclo believes it serves to "complicate calculations, decrease predictability and impose considerable strains on those charged with government leadership (p. 94-105)." In fact, presidents and top political executives may find themselves more frustrated by a fluid, permeable system prone to surprising shifts in policy, than by a decentralized system of entrenched special interests.

Compared to top bureaucrats, political appointees generally occupy a much more precarious power position. Heclo observed that, "would-be leaders among political executives are in a particularly weak political position in relation to each other and to career bureaucrats (Heclo, 1977, p.395). Kaufman refers to political appointees as the "missing links" of federal policy-making (Kaufman, 1981a, p.184).

The primary reason that political executives are notoriously weak is their transience. While some may have government experience prior to their appointment, political executives are not likely to be in any position for very long. The average length of service for all senior appointees during the first four years of the Reagan administration was two years. This compares with 2.8 years for Lyndon Johnson's appointees, 2.6 years for Richard Nixon's, and 2.5 years for Jimmy Carter's (Brauer, 1987). A Brookings Institution study conducted in mid-1960s found that assistant secretaries in the period from 1933-1960 on average served 2.7 years in their position (Stanley, Mann, and Doig, 1967). Since 1960, the average undersecretary or assistant secretary has remained in his or her job for 22 months (Heclo, 1977b, p.103). Compared to top bureaucrats and legislators, most political executives are not on the scene long enough to learn the ins-and-outs of their policy area nor can they develop long-term relationships with other important policy actors.

In addition to low levels of experience, political executives also

occupy a somewhat ambiguous position in the chain of command. In the first place, top appointees are often caught between the competing demands of departmental or agency management and the president's programs. Richard Fenno, in his study of cabinet secretaries, noted that "if he wishes to help the President by rendering him good departmental administration, he must focus his energies downward into the department. But as he provides this kind of...assistance...he cannot lift his head long enough to look at things from a government-wide, i.e., presidential, standpoint (Fenno, 1959, p.239)." The need to look both up and down the hierarchical chain of command also applies to political executives in positions below that of the cabinet secretary. This has likely become more of a problem as the presidential bureaucracy above the appointees has grown and as departmental jurisdictions below them have multiplied and become more entangled.

Second, political executives often have an inadequate base of political power. Even though they are appointed to office by the President or his agents, most have, at best, tenuous links to the chief executive. Because of the high priority placed on national policy issues and other demands on their time, presidents cannot attend to every detail of administration. This inattention breeds a feeling of isolation among political executives. And with good reason:

The glare of White House attention may occasionally sweep across their agencies' activities, but for most political executives the President's traditional handshake and photograph will be his way of saying both hello and good-bye. In the constitutional structure and in the public eye, they are distinctly secondary figures to the single chief executive yet the President's limited time, interests, and fighting power will make him utterly dependent on them for most of what is done by the executive branch. That they exist in such a twilight zone of political leadership is the first and primary fact of life shared by political appointees (Heclo, 1977b, p.88).

Finally, it is difficult to foster a sense of teamwork among political executives. Aside from their broad programmatic links to the President, there are very few incentives for political executives to coordinate their actions across organizational boundaries.

Despite their inexperience, ambiguous positions, divided loyalties, and lack of teamwork, political executives are not entirely powerless. Although career executives appear to have distinct advantages in the working relationship, including continuity in office and greater familiarity with the work of the agency, political executives preside over a hierarchic system in which their office is a primary source of legitimate authority. Through their appointments by elected officials, political executives are symbols of public control over the governmental process. In addition, when the conditions are right, for example when the

president decides to focus his considerable powers on an issue of great concern to him or when it is clear to those involved that the President has made an issue a high priority, then the ability of political executives to influence decision-making increases markedly (Neustadt, 1980; Randall, 1979). In the past, however, these opportunities for executive control appear to be exceptions, not the rule.

A more realistic view of the distribution of influence between political and career executives takes into account the differences which exist between the various organizations that make up the executive branch. The federal government is not a single organization, not a single bureaucracy, but a cluster of organizational cultures and sub-cultures (Seidman and Gilmour, 1986). While they may share common administrative systems, many of them are more distinct than alike. It is quite likely that the policy-making roles of career and political executives, along with the roles of other key policy-makers, are influenced by the organizational contexts in which they work.

VARIATION IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENCE: THE EFFECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

One of the most important factors that shapes the administrative behavior of top bureaucrats in the United States is the organizational setting in which they work. This view is codified in Rufus Miles' Law: Where you stand depends on where you sit. One reason for the importance of organizational context is the vastness of the bureaucratic enterprise and the consequent need to specialize. The federal administrative apparatus is made up of hundreds of organizations and their subunits which divides administrative responsibilities into narrow program jurisdictions. As a consequence, agencies and bureaus develop distinct and sometimes unique personalities.

The division of labor in the executive branch also encourages technical specialization and the development of professional values. Unlike, for example, in Great Britain, where top civil servants are trained to be generalist administrators, senior executives in the U.S. tend to be schooled in more narrowly defined specialties. The strong espousal of technical values and organizational loyalties by career bureaucrats is reinforced by the traditional path to executive positions: start at the bottom and work your way up the organizational ladder. The vast majority of top bureaucrats remain in the same agency their entire careers. As a result, many career executives develop narrow organizational loyalties layered over their professional identifications.

Meir and Nigro, among others, have offered empirical evidence demonstrating the importance of organizational context in explaining

executive behavior. In a study of policy preferences of federal executives, they found that agency affiliation is much more likely to predict attitudes and policy preferences than are other factors such as social origins. On most issues, they conclude, knowing an executive's current agency affiliation is far more important than knowledge of his or her demographic origins (Meir and Nigro, 1976). Other studies by Rothman and Lichter (1983), Aberbach and Rockman (1976), Ban (1987), and Wynia (1972), have also found a strong relationship between agency context and the attitudes held by career executives.

Given the importance of the organizational setting in administrative behavior in the U.S., it is reasonable to expect that the policy-making roles of top bureaucrats and the distribution of influence in agency decision-making will be, to a large extent, determined by the characteristics of the organizational context. Thus, agencies and bureaus which share important characteristics should exhibit similar patterns of influence. In some agencies, career executives will have substantial influence in making important agency decisions, while in others they will have relatively little. This is not to say that organizational context is the only factor shaping the distribution of influence in the executive branch. Other variables such as the visibility of the decision or the priority placed on an issue by the president, cabinet members, or members of Congress may intervene and disrupt the "usual" distribution of power in decision-making. In addition, the organizational context is subject to changes over time owing to changes in political relationships, advances in technology, and similar alterations in the organization's internal or external environment.

Two theories that seek to explain differences in the distribution of influence in executive branch policy-making dominate the literature on the federal bureaucracy. Randall Ripley and Grace Franklin, basing their work on Lowi's distinction between distributive, redistributive, and regulatory policies, have theorized that important differences exist in the patterns of influence in different policy arenas. For example, in distributive policy environments it is expected that top bureaucrats, members of congress, and representatives of interest groups exercise the most influence. This is the classic iron triangle configuration. In redistributive policy arenas, influence is much less concentrated and career executives have limited discretion. Although there are certain difficulties with applying Lowi's typology to individual agencies, it does introduce the idea that patterns of influence vary in a systematic way (Ripley and Franklin, 1980; 1986; Meir, 1980; Hartman, 1975).

In his theory of bureaucratic power, Francis Rourke argues that expertise and political support by clientele groups are the two main determinants of agency power (Rourke, 1984). When an agency or bureau enjoys a high level of expertise (particularly if the technical skill is highly esoteric and the results tangible) or a high level of political support from its client groups (particularly if the groups are well-

organized and have access to important resources), it will be in a strong power position. In cases where both expertise and political support are high, an agency may be virtually autonomous. In an empirical test of Rourke's theory, Kenneth Meir has found that expertise and political support are strongly related to agency autonomy (Meir, 1980).

Borrowing liberally from Rourke, I argue that two important variables account for differences in organizational context and predict the amount of influence exercised by career bureaucrats and other officials in the agency's decision-making environment: (1) the extent to which the career executives in the organization possess specialized expertise and (2) the extent to which there is political conflict in the organization's policy-making environment.¹ In some agencies, the levels of expertise and political conflict are interconnected in the sense that expertise can lead to low conflict. High levels of expertise can sometimes, but not always, lead to effective organizational performance. Effective performance, in turn, decreases the chance that disagreements over basic policy goals will occur which reduces the level of political conflict.

Expertise is an important variable because it is the primary resource that bureaucrats bring to the policy arena in all political systems (Weber, 1978). This is particularly true of the federal bureaucracy in the U.S. Lacking specific constitutional authority or a long institutional history, knowledge of how and why policies operate as they do has been the primary route by which contributions to policy-making by bureaucrats have been legitimized (Heclo, 1986). When expertise is highly developed or if a monopoly on relevant information exists, bureaucrats may claim a central role in policy deliberations. When expertise is not highly developed or if it is widely shared, competition may result among policy-makers and claims of bureaucratic knowledge will carry less weight.

Some senior executives possess highly specialized or technical knowledge developed through advanced training and lengthy experience, while others are trained in specialties where expertise is not as developed. Many occupational groups claim professional status and a high degree of expertise, but it is clear that some (e.g., the physical and biological sciences, engineering, medicine) are more professionalized than others (e.g., personnel management, the social sciences, general administration). As Rourke pointed out,

All administrative agencies have some expertise in the functions they perform, but not all bureaucratic skills exact equal deference from the community. In some areas the notion of expertise is lightly regarded. Fields like education and diplomacy have many self-styled 'experts' but very little of what an outsider would necessarily accept as expertise (Rourke, 1984, p.92).

Several variables are important in determining the level of expertise of the career executives in a given agency or bureau. The combination of variables that yield the highest levels of expertise would include a high percentage of experts from the same profession that is held in high esteem, using techniques that laypeople cannot easily understand, and who produce tangible results (Rourke, 1984). The production of tangible results is a very important component of expertise. It is much easier to forge agreement on cause-effect relationships when it is possible to measure and evaluate the final product. Therefore, expertise will be more developed in agencies where the primary mission involves the delivery of relatively tangible goods or services.

The second important determinant of organizational context is the level of political conflict in the agency's environment.² Organizations in the executive branch are embedded in subgovernments organized around specific policy areas. These subgovernments vary in the way they are structured and in the stability of the relationships among the participants. They may have few or many participants; the policy actors may be more or less interdependent; access to decision-making may be relatively closed or open; core decisions may be routine or complex (deHaven-Smith and Van Horn, 1984; King and Shannon, 1986; Wilsford, 1984). For purposes of this discussion, the most important characteristic of the subgovernment is the extent to which there is agreement or disagreement concerning fundamental policy goals. When members of a subgovernment are in general agreement on the direction a given set of policies should take, the level of political conflict can be defined as low. When disagreement over policy goals exists, competition and conflict result.

There will usually be some level of disagreement among participants in a policy subgovernment. However, when these disagreements reach the level where existing operating procedures are challenged or even the appropriateness of government action in an area is called into question, the organizational environment may become inhospitable to bureaucratic-style decision-making. Bureaucratic organizations are best suited to conditions of certainty where both the means and ends of policy-making are specified. Generally speaking, bureaucrats are more effective in environments characterized by low levels of conflict. When political conflict is introduced, bureaucrats, particularly if they do not have high levels of expertise, may find themselves in a competitive situation where they do not have adequate resources to press their claims.

By combining these two variables we can construct a typology of organizational contexts (see figure I). In the upper left corner of the figure are organizations where the expertise of career executives is high the level of political conflict in the agency environment is low. Under these circumstances, the environment of decision-making will be most conducive to bureaucratic-style policy-making. Career executives are likely to be quite influential in agencies of this type. We should also

expect influence to be relatively concentrated among top agency officials and structured in a hierarchical manner. Relationships between career executives and political appointees will be relatively stable in agencies of this type.

[Figure I about here]

In the upper right hand corner of the figure are agencies in which the expertise of career executives and political conflict are both high. Agencies of this type are often in a state of transition. At a previous point in time, when policy goals were in less dispute, career executives may have had a great deal of administrative discretion. As fundamental policy goals are called into question, political executives and others in the agency environment move to alter existing policy arrangements. Career executives will find it difficult to adapt to new organizational arrangements and will resist what they perceive to be the violation of professional norms. In these agencies career executives will still have substantial influence based on their expertise and, in some cases, a tradition of agency autonomy. But political appointees and others key policy actors will compete with the career staff for policy-making influence. Influence over important agency decisions is likely to be distributed among a number of policy-makers from both inside the agency, from the department level, and from elements in the Congress. Relationships between career and political executives are likely to be strained in organizations of this type.

In the lower right hand corner of the figure are organizations with the combination of low levels of expertise by career executives and high levels of political conflict. In many respects, agencies of this type provide the most interesting cases because they deviate from our notion of what decision-making in bureaucratic organizations is supposed to look like. Pure bureaucracies are based on specified goals and a highly developed understanding of how to reach them. By contrast, when knowledge of cause and effect is limited and goals are in dispute, an organization will be forced to contend with a great deal of uncertainty. When expertise is widely shared (in other words, no one can claim a monopoly on the "truth"), and goals are in conflict, agencies are good candidates for takeover by political executives. In the absence of a shared base of knowledge, career executives will have relatively little influence.

Finally, in the lower left hand corner are organizations where career executives have low levels of expertise and political conflict is low. Agencies of this type are extremely rare because low levels of expertise almost ensures that political conflict will be high. One type of organization in the executive branch which may fit this category are the offices of the cabinet secretariat--staff organizations like the office of personnel or the office of planning and budgeting which provide administrative support functions for the entire department. Although expertise in these areas of administration is not as developed as in some of the line agencies the shared goal of maintaining the department's

FIGURE I

FRAMEWORK OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

infrastructure keeps political conflict at a relatively low level. Relations between career and political executives in these offices are characterized by negotiation and compromise. Since the focus of this paper is on agencies with distinct operating boundaries, organizational subunits of this type will not be discussed further in this paper.

THE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STUDY

Six organizations were selected to test how organizational context affects the views of career executives on the distribution of influence in their agency. Four of the organizations are subunits of cabinet level departments--the Forest Service (Department of Agriculture), the National Park Service and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) (Department of Interior), and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) (Department of Transportation). The other two organizations in the study are the Departments of Education and Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Due to their small size, the concentration of personnel in the Washington, D.C. headquarters, and the lack of independently based subunits with well-developed boundaries, these two departments are more like agencies or bureaus than other cabinet level organizations.³ These agencies were selected primarily on the basis of two criteria: (1) because they each have well-defined organizational boundaries and (2) because they offer different combinations of the two characteristics I use to define organizational context.

The Forest Service (created in 1881 as the Division of Forestry) and the USGS (1879) are characterized by high expertise among the career executives and relatively low levels of political conflict. In each of these agencies the ranks of the career executives are dominated by professionals from the same occupational group (foresters in the Forest Service and geologists in the USGS) that enjoy relatively high prestige in the community at large. The expertise acquired through formal training is enhanced by long histories of professional and independent conduct on the part of their organizations. In addition, both of these agencies engage in activities with relatively tangible products.

Political conflict surrounding these agencies is generally quite low. The Forest Service has traditionally enjoyed strong support from client groups and has an enviable public image which helps to suppress political interference. Since the USGS engages in many highly technical projects that have widespread public and congressional support, they are also relatively insulated from the political pulling and hauling that effects many agencies. Another factor in keeping political conflict to a minimum is the demonstrated effectiveness of these organizations in reaching their stated goals. Each of these agencies have reputations in the Washington community for doing highly competent work.

A rough indicator of the level of political conflict in an agency is the number of political appointees assigned to work there. Since a ceiling exists on the number of noncareer SES appointments at both the agency level (no more than 25% of the SES members in any agency may be noncareer appointments) and within the service as a whole (no more than 10% of all SES members government-wide may be noncareer), political appointees are a scarce resource which president's must use judiciously. We would expect noncareer appointments to be concentrated in agencies where presidential priorities are the highest and where they are most likely to make a difference. Significantly, there were no political appointees working in the Forest Service or the USGS at the time of the study (see table 1 for a breakdown of political and career executives in each of the agencies). The director of the USGS is technically a political appointment, but the post was filled by a long-time career professional at the time of the study.

[Table 1 about here]

The FAA and Park Service also have highly professionalized career executives but during the Reagan administration each has been subject to intense political pressures. At the FAA (created in its present form in 1966), expertise is based on training in specialized fields (approximately one-third of the career executives have an engineering background) and on the long experience that most executives have in the aviation area (many began their careers in the military). In the Park Service (1916), expertise is based less on technical training, although many executives have backgrounds in the natural sciences and park management, than it is on intensive socialization and bottom-up career paths. Its personnel are generally dedicated and have a esprit de corps similar to that of the military. The personnel of both are often transferred from one assignment to another, both are stationed at some kind of reservation, and most wear a uniform.

Political conflict in both of these agencies has been intense during the 1980s. The FAA has struggled to deal with the effects of the deregulation of the airline industry, the competing claims made by the commercial and general aviation communities, questions over air safety, and the dismissal of most of its air traffic controllers after the disastrous PATCO strike in 1981. More recently there have been calls for the reorganization of the FAA, removing it from the Department of Transportation and making it an independent agency once again. Despite the conflict surrounding the FAA, only 5% of the executives are noncareer appointees (see table 1). This may reflect the fact that the flying public would not tolerate the overt politicization of air safety.

The Park Service has always had to deal with the issue of preservation vs. use of the national park system, but during the Reagan administration this debate reached the boiling point. Consistent with the free-market orientation of the Reagan program, top appointees at the Department of Interior, led by Secretary James Watt, pushed for the

TABLE 1

BREAKDOWN OF POLITICAL AND CAREER EXECUTIVES, BY AGENCY
(as of March 31, 1987)

	<u>Executive Schedule*</u>	<u>Noncareer SES</u>	<u>Career SES</u>	<u>Total Executives</u>	<u>Percent of total that are noncareer</u>
Forest Service	0	0	50	50	0%
USGS	1	0	44	45	2%
FAA	1	6	132	139	5%
Park Service	0	2	17	19	11%
Education	11	21	40	72	44%
HUD	9	21	60	90	33%

* The Executive Schedule includes top government positions whose incumbents are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the President or agency head, usually subject to Senate confirmation.

Source: Office of Personnel Management, EPMD Report number 35,
March 31, 1987

commercial development of selected parts of the park system against the opposition of the director, William Penn Mott (a political appointee), and the career staff. The debate over expert vs. political control of the Park Service also intensified during Reagan's term in office (Freemuth, 1989). Political appointees make up 11% of the total number of executives at the Park Service.

Finally, the Departments of Education and HUD are characterized by low levels of expertise and high political conflict. Each of these organizations faced the ultimate organizational crisis during the 1980s: the possibility of extinction. Soon after his election, Ronald Reagan proposed the abolishment of the Department of Education. Although the department was not eliminated, the budget was reduced from \$17 million in 1981 to \$14.5 million in 1983. It was not until 1987 that the departmental budget reached its 1981 level. The current problems at the Department of Education (originally created in 1867, its name has undergone numerous changes from department to office to bureau to office and to department once again in 1979) are compounded by the fact that throughout its more than a century of existence a debate has raged over the proper role of the federal government in education and which agencies would be involved. The Defense, Interior, Labor, and Agriculture departments also receive education related assignments. As Rufus Miles pointed out, "It is evident that it is not easy to answer the question as to who makes education policy. In any list of prime examples of pluralistic decision-making in a pluralistic society, education policy must surely be close to the top (Miles, 1972, p.166)."

Although it was never suggested that HUD be eliminated, the department was a highly visible target of the Reagan administration. HUD's total budget remained nearly flat during the 1980s and it suffered through a drastic cutback in personnel levels (from 16,000 to 11,000). In addition, the department was widely seen as a political "dumping ground" for administrative loyalists (Kurtz, 1989). Conflict over the role of HUD in national housing policy also has historical roots. As one observer noted,

[HUD] was established in order to elevate a black to the Cabinet. It was invigorated by programs to calm the black protest from the ghetto. It was dismantled by an ideological opponent, as part of Nixon's overall scheme to diminish the federal government. It was half-heartedly revived by President Carter, who wanted credit with his liberal constituency at little cost. And it was gutted by the Reagan administration intent on reducing government expenditures (Whithnah, 1983, p.127).

It is significant that these organizations have very high ratios of noncareer to career executives. At HUD, fully one-third of the executives on board at the time of the study were political appointees, while at Education 44% of the executives were noncareer (see table 1).

Without denigrating their personnel, it is clear that expertise in these organizations is relatively less developed than in some other agencies. Education and housing policy are highly complex areas of government activity where there is little understanding by policy analysts of the effects of government action. There is much disagreement among the so-called experts in these areas over such fundamental issues as what the appropriate federal role should be and what means should be used to reach stated objectives. Lacking a sophisticated body of shared knowledge, politics often overwhelms technical considerations. Complicating matters is the fact that nearly every governmental entity in the U.S. has a stake in the activities in these policy areas. Consequently the subgovernments in these areas are quite crowded with many actors (state and local governments, the private sector, academia, et al.) vying for attention. The combination of conflict over goals, disagreement regarding techniques, and many participants practically ensures a great deal of political maneuvering.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was gathered using a mail-out survey instrument. The survey was sent to all career members of the SES in the organizations (with the exception of the FAA) as of March 31, 1987. Because of the large number of career executives in the FAA (132 as of March 31, 1987), a random sample was selected which included 75% of the top bureaucrats in the agency. The margin of sampling error in responses from the FAA is plus or minus three-percent. There is, of course, no sampling error in the responses from the other organizations. The number of career executives and the response rate for each agency are shown in table 2. The overall response rate for all agencies was 79%.

[Table 2 about here]

The career executives were provided with a list 13 individuals and groups (including the career executives themselves) that might be expected to influence important policy decisions made in their agency. Three sets of officials work within the agency* (agency director, career executives, noncareer executives); four work at the department level (the cabinet

*Since neither the Department of Education nor HUD has distinct operating agencies under its auspices, the respondents in these organizations were asked to judge the influence of the office director and noncareer executives in their office in place of agency director and noncareer executives in the agency.

TABLE 2

RESPONSES TO SURVEY, BY AGENCY

	<u>Total Career Executives</u>	<u>Total Surveyed</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Response Rate</u>
Forest Service	50	50	48	96%
USGS	44	44	40	91%
FAA	132	98	70	71%
Park Service	17	17	15	88%
Education	40	40	24	60%
HUD	60	60	48	80%
Totals	<hr/> 343	<hr/> 309	<hr/> 245	<hr/> 79%

secretary, the deputy, under or assistant secretary who oversees the agency--henceforth identified as the subcabinet secretary, the staff of the cabinet secretary, and the staff of the subcabinet secretary); two are from the legislative branch (members of Congress and congressional committee staff); two are from the presidential branch (White House Staff and OMB staff); and two are extra-governmental actors (interest groups and public interest groups).

Using a five point scale (1=little or no influence and 5=very large influence), the career executives were asked to rate (1) the amount of influence they believe each individual or group actually has on important decisions made in their agency (perceived influence), and (2) the amount of influence they believe each individual or group should have (preferred influence).⁴ By computing the difference between perceived and preferred influence we can see who career executives believe has too much influence and who, in their estimation, has too little. A discrepancy scale of this type allows us to assess the extent to which career executives believe the distribution of influence in their agencies approaches equilibrium (very little discrepancy), or deviates in one direction or the other (very high discrepancy either plus or minus). This will provide a clue to the stability, or lack thereof, of the relationships between career executives and other important officials in the decision-making environment.

Three sets of questions will be most important to focus on in the following discussion:

(1) How much influence do career executives believe they have when important policy decisions are made in their agency?

(2) In the judgement of the top bureaucrats, how is influence distributed among the other policy-makers in the agency environment? Do political appointees in the agency or at the department level have a great deal of influence? What is perceived level of influence of members of Congress and committee staff? Of interest groups? Of White House staff?

(3) How would career executives prefer influence to be distributed in their agency? Who do they think has too much influence and who has too little?

For each set of questions we will be interested in the effect that organizational context has on the distribution of influence.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Perceived Distribution of Influence

Table 3 shows the perceived distribution of influence in each of the organizations in the study. In each case, the mean response is reported.

[Table 3 about here]

As predicted, the career executives in the Forest Service and USGS believe that they have substantial influence (3.94 and 3.70 respectively) when important policy decisions are made in their agency. At the Forest Service, only the agency director (4.62) and subcabinet secretary at the department level (4.13) are thought to have more influence than the career staff. At the USGS, only the agency director (4.40), the cabinet secretary (3.92), and the subcabinet secretary (3.87) are believed to exercise greater influence. Although career executives in these organizations believe that influence is mainly exercised by top agency and department officials, they also believe that other policy actors have significant levels of influence. In the Forest Service, members of Congress (3.76), the cabinet secretary (3.64), congressional committee staff and OMB staff (both 3.52), are each perceived to have moderate to substantial influence. In the USGS, the OMB staff (3.58), the cabinet secretary staff (3.56), members of Congress (3.42), and the subcabinet secretary staff (3.40), fall into this category. Evidently, in the judgement of the career executives, these agencies are subject to significant levels of influence coming from outside the agency proper. This is something of a surprise given the reputation these agencies have for independent action.

Career executives in the FAA and Park Service also believe that they have between moderate and substantial levels of influence (3.64 and 3.73 respectively). The difference between these agencies and the Forest Service and the USGS is that many other officials are thought to exercise a great deal of influence. In the FAA, the cabinet secretary (4.67), the cabinet secretary's staff (4.28), the subcabinet secretary (4.28), and the agency director (4.24) are perceived to have a great deal of influence. In addition, members of Congress (3.90), the subcabinet secretary's staff (3.81), the OMB staff (3.76), and the noncareer executives in the agency (3.72) also exercise more influence than do the career executives.

A similar pattern is evident in the Park Service. The agency director (4.53), the cabinet secretary (4.36), the subcabinet secretary (4.14), members of Congress (4.07), and the subcabinet secretary's staff (4.00) are each judged to be very influential. The noncareer executives in the agency (3.92) and congressional committee staff (3.79) are also perceived to have more influence than the career executives with the cabinet secretary's staff close behind (3.71). Compared to the Forest Service and the USGS where high levels of influence is concentrated among the top agency and department officials, the career executives in the FAA

TABLE 3

PERCEIVED DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENCE, BY AGENCY

FOREST SERVICE

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
agency director	4.62	47	.739
subcabinet secretary	4.13	47	.969
career executives	3.94	47	.763
members of congress	3.76	46	.923
cabinet secretary	3.64	45	1.264
congressional committee staff	3.52	44	1.131
OMB staff	3.52	46	1.188
interest groups	3.27	45	.915
public interest groups	3.20	45	.944
subcabinet secretary staff	3.18	44	.786
cabinet secretary staff	2.92	37	1.010
White House staff	2.31	36	1.305

UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
agency director	4.40	40	1.008
cabinet secretary	3.92	36	1.556
subcabinet secretary	3.87	37	1.316
career executives	3.70	40	.853
OMB staff	3.58	33	1.480
cabinet secretary staff	3.56	32	1.501
members of congress	3.42	36	1.461
subcabinet secretary staff	3.40	37	1.175
congressional committee staff	3.03	38	1.384
White House staff	2.44	23	1.727
interest groups	2.27	37	1.217
public interest groups	2.09	35	1.147

TABLE 3
(continued)

PERCEIVED DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENCE, BY AGENCY

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
cabinet secretary	4.67	66	.865
cabinet secretary staff	4.28	68	1.049
subcabinet secretary	4.28	69	1.162
agency director	4.24	70	.939
members of congress	3.90	69	1.126
subcabinet secretary staff	3.81	67	1.171
OMB staff	3.76	66	1.164
noncareer executives in agency	3.72	64	1.133
career executives	3.64	70	.885
congressional committee staff	3.49	67	1.092
interest groups	3.09	68	1.047
public interest groups	2.85	66	1.085
White House staff	2.56	50	1.343

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
agency director	4.53	15	.990
cabinet secretary	4.36	14	.745
subcabinet secretary	4.14	14	.770
members of congress	4.07	15	.884
subcabinet secretary staff	4.00	13	.816
noncareer executives in agency	3.92	13	1.038
congressional committee staff	3.79	14	1.051
career executives	3.73	15	.799
cabinet secretary staff	3.71	14	1.267
interest groups	3.47	15	1.060
public interest groups	3.27	15	.961
OMB staff	3.23	13	1.301
White House staff	2.54	13	1.391

TABLE 3
(continued)

PERCEIVED DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENCE, BY AGENCY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
cabinet secretary	4.09	23	1.411
office director	4.00	22	1.272
subcabinet secretary	4.00	22	1.195
cabinet secretary staff	3.82	22	1.296
subcabinet secretary staff	3.41	22	1.297
noncareer executives in office	3.26	23	1.389
OMB staff	3.19	21	1.365
members of congress	2.96	22	1.362
congressional committee staff	2.76	21	1.179
White House staff	2.72	18	1.447
career executives	2.68	22	1.129
interest groups	2.41	22	1.141
public interest groups	2.24	21	1.091

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>
office director	4.09	45	1.062
subcabinet secretary	3.91	45	1.083
OMB staff	3.82	45	1.353
cabinet secretary staff	3.64	42	1.376
noncareer executives in office	3.48	46	1.457
cabinet secretary	3.46	44	1.284
members of congress	3.19	43	1.277
career executives	3.04	47	1.197
congressional committee staff	3.00	41	1.342
subcabinet secretary staff	2.93	44	1.319
interest groups	2.72	43	1.297
White House staff	2.47	38	1.224
public interest groups	2.37	43	1.176

and the Park Service see their agencies as being highly permeable. Executives in the agency, both career and noncareer, top officials and their staff at the department level, and representatives in Congress are all thought to play a large role in the decision-making processes in these agencies.

Compared to the other agencies in the study, the career executives at the Department of Education and HUD believe that they have relatively little influence in the major decisions made in their organizations. The top bureaucrats in these departments believe they have, at best, moderate influence (2.68 at Education and 3.04 at HUD). In Education, only the representatives of interest groups (2.41) and public interest groups (2.24) are perceived to have less influence than the career executives! Department officials occupy the top six positions on the perceived influence scale in Education. The cabinet secretary (4.09), the office director (4.00), and the subcabinet secretary (4.00), are most influential followed by the staffs of the cabinet secretary (3.82) and the subcabinet secretary (3.41), and the noncareer executives in the office (3.26). Only the OMB staff (3.19) among the policy-makers from outside the department are perceived to have even a moderate level of influence. Significantly, members of Congress (2.96) and congressional committee staff (2.76) were not thought to be very influential.

The pattern of department-centered influence is also exhibited at HUD with one notable exception--the OMB staff (3.82) is perceived to have more influence than all others except the office director (4.09) and the subcabinet secretary (3.91). In the moderate range of influence are the cabinet secretary staff (3.64) and the noncareer executives in the office (3.48). In a significant departure from the other organizations in the study, career executives at HUD believe that the cabinet secretary exercised relatively little influence (3.46). This finding confirms the widely held view that "silent" Samuel Pierce, the only cabinet secretary to remain in office during both of Reagan's terms, did not play a central role in decision-making. As was the case in Education, members of Congress (3.19) and congressional committee staff (3.00) were judged to be relatively uninfluential.

In reviewing the perceived distribution of influence in these agencies, several interesting points emerge. First, it is apparent that the amount of influence that career executives believe they have varies considerably. In organizations where the expertise of the career executives is high and the level of political conflict is low, top bureaucrats believe they exercise much more influence than when the opposite conditions apply. In agencies where expertise and conflict are both high, senior executives also believe they have substantial influence, but they think that many others do as well.

Second, career executives perceive influence to be more

hierarchically structured than theories of executive branch decision-making would lead us to expect. Top officials in the agency or office (director) and at the department level (cabinet and subcabinet secretaries) are consistently judged to have the most influence over agency decision-making. While we might expect the agency directors to exercise considerable influence, the extent to which department officials are thought to be involved in agency decision-making is surprising in light of the conventional wisdom that agencies and bureaus are frequently out of department control. This is true even in the Forest Service and the USGS that have developed reputations as organizations which have considerable administrative discretion.

Third, if we are surprised that department level officials exercise more influence than previously thought, it is also surprising that members of Congress, congressional committee staff, and pressure groups are, for the most part, perceived to have much less influence. In the past, most studies of executive branch decision-making have stressed the horizontal relationships which develop between top bureaucrats, key members of Congress, and interest groups. Indeed, this is the principal reason that hierarchical control of the bureaucracy is thought to be so difficult. In the agencies in this study, members of Congress exercise substantial influence only in the FAA and the Park Service--two agencies which have drawn a good deal of attention in the past decade. Based on the perceptions of the top bureaucrats in the agencies covered by this study, we may need to rethink the dynamics of policy-making in the executive branch.

Finally, there is variation in the extent to which high levels of influence is concentrated in the hands of a few department and agency officials or widely dispersed among many actors representing the different branches of government. The decision-making arenas in the FAA and the Park Service, in the estimation of top bureaucrats, are very crowded with many different players having large amounts of influence. By contrast, influence in the Departments of Education and HUD is more concentrated among top political appointees.

Preferred Distribution of Influence

The perceived distribution of influence is only part of the story. How would career executives prefer influence to be distributed in their agency? Who, in their judgment, has more influence than they should and who has less? By comparing the perceived level of influence for each potential decision-maker with the preferred level we can get an idea of how career executives view the policy-making contributions of other key actors. If, for example, career executives believe that political appointees have much more influence than they should, then we would expect relations between them to be strained. Table 4 shows the preferred level of influence for each potential decision-maker in the six agencies under scrutiny. In addition, the difference between perceived and preferred

levels of influence is also shown. Influence debits (denoted by -) are assigned to officials that career executives believe have less influence than they ought to have. Influence credits (+) are given to those officials that have more influence than they should.

[Table 4 about here]

Top bureaucrats in the Forest Service and the USGS have similar views regarding the preferred distribution of influence in their agencies. The career executives agree on the top five officials that they believe ought to exercise the most influence over agency decision-making. At the top of both lists, and separated from the others by a wide margin, is the agency director (4.83 in the Forest Service and 4.59 in the USGS). This is not surprising given the fact that the directors of both agencies came up through the career ranks themselves. The next four are, in order, the career executives (4.21 and 4.08), the cabinet secretary (3.94 and 3.70), the subcabinet secretary (3.89 and 3.56), and members of Congress (3.34 and 3.08). It is significant that the preferred levels of influence for members of Congress are separated from the others, all of whom are agency or department officials, by a wide margin. Evidently, there is a strong preference in these agencies for top-down, hierarchical channels of influence. The fact that there is a wide separation between the top four and the others indicates that the career executives would prefer the decision-making arena to be relatively uncrowded.

Comparing perceived and preferred influence in these agencies we find that, for the most part, the discrepancy scores are low. Top bureaucrats in the Forest Service believe that the career staff (-0.27), the cabinet secretary (-0.30), and the agency director (-0.21) have less influence than they should. All other decision-makers are thought to have more influence than they should but, with a few exceptions, the discrepancy scores are relatively low. Only congressional committee staff (+0.88), interest groups (+0.75), and the OMB staff (+0.71) are judged to have far more influence than the career executives would prefer.

We find a similar pattern at the USGS. The career executives (-0.38) and the agency director (-0.19) are thought to be under-powered. Those decision-makers believed to have too much influence include the OMB staff (+0.75) and the staffs of the subcabinet and cabinet secretaries (+0.60 and +0.56). Like the Forest Service, most of the potential policy-makers in positions to influence decisions at the USGS are judged to have about the right amount of influence. Overall, the relationship between top bureaucrats and others in their decision-making environment appear to be relatively stable.

Like their counter-parts in the Forest Service and the USGS, the career executives in the FAA and the Park Service would prefer that most influence be exercised by agency and department officials. The agency director, the career executives, and the cabinet secretary top both lists

TABLE 4 PREFERRED DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENCE AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
PERCEIVED AND PREFERRED INFLUENCE, BY AGENCY

FOREST SERVICE

Preferred Influence

<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>		<u>Difference between Perceived and Preferred Influence</u>
4.83	(47)	.433	agency director	-0.21
4.21	(47)	.763	career executives	-0.27
3.94	(47)	1.169	cabinet secretary	-0.30
3.89	(47)	1.026	subcabinet secretary	+0.24
3.34	(47)	1.069	members of congress	+0.42
2.81	(47)	1.056	OMB staff	+0.71
2.78	(46)	.964	subcabinet secretary staff	+0.40
2.76	(46)	.933	public interest groups	+0.44
2.73	(41)	1.073	cabinet secretary staff	+0.19
2.64	(45)	1.246	congressional committee staff	+0.88
2.52	(46)	.960	interest groups	+0.75
2.27	(41)	1.184	White House staff	+0.04

UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Preferred Influence

<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>		<u>Difference between Perceived and Preferred Influence</u>
4.59	(39)	.910	agency director	-0.19
4.08	(40)	.656	career executives	-0.38
3.70	(37)	1.596	cabinet secretary	+0.22
3.56	(39)	1.314	subcabinet secretary	+0.31
3.08	(38)	1.583	members of congress	+0.34
3.00	(35)	1.495	cabinet secretary staff	+0.56
2.83	(35)	1.317	OMB staff	+0.75
2.80	(39)	1.218	subcabinet secretary staff	+0.60
2.71	(39)	1.293	congressional committee staff	+0.32
2.23	(26)	1.531	White House staff	+0.21
2.03	(39)	1.088	interest groups	+0.24
1.97	(37)	1.040	public interest groups	+0.12

Note: In the last column, + denotes decision-makers who are perceived to have more influence than preferred; - denotes decision-makers who are perceived to have less influence than preferred.

TABLE 4 PREFERRED DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENCE AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
(continued) PERCEIVED AND PREFERRED INFLUENCE, BY AGENCY

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Preferred Influence

<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>		<u>Difference between Perceived and Preferred Influence</u>
4.69	(70)	.671	agency director	-0.45
4.14	(70)	.856	career executives	-0.50
3.65	(68)	1.143	cabinet secretary	+1.02
3.29	(63)	1.038	noncareer executives in agency	+0.43
3.07	(69)	1.089	subcabinet secretary	+1.21
2.77	(69)	1.045	members of congress	+1.13
2.63	(68)	1.021	cabinet secretary staff	+1.65
2.42	(69)	.898	interest groups	+0.67
2.37	(68)	1.021	subcabinet secretary staff	+1.44
2.32	(68)	.818	OMB staff	+1.44
2.29	(68)	.830	public interest groups	+0.56
2.21	(68)	.890	congressional committee staff	+1.28
2.18	(56)	1.081	White House staff	+0.38

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Preferred Influence

<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>		<u>Difference between Perceived and Preferred Influence</u>
4.93	(15)	.258	agency director	-0.40
4.07	(15)	.594	career executives	-0.34
4.00	(14)	1.038	cabinet secretary	+0.36
3.27	(15)	1.100	members of congress	+0.80
3.14	(14)	.949	subcabinet secretary	+1.00
2.80	(15)	.862	public interest groups	+0.47
2.71	(14)	.994	cabinet secretary staff	+1.00
2.69	(13)	.751	noncareer executives in agency	+1.23
2.64	(14)	.842	congressional committee staff	+1.15
2.40	(15)	.862	interest groups	+1.07
2.39	(13)	1.044	OMB staff	+0.84
2.23	(13)	.725	subcabinet secretary staff	+1.77
2.08	(13)	1.115	White House staff	+0.46

Note: In the last column, + denotes decision-makers who are perceived to have more influence than preferred; - denotes decision-makers who are perceived to have less influence than preferred.

TABLE 4 PREFERRED DISTRIBUTION OF INFLUENCE AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
(continued) PERCEIVED AND PREFERRED INFLUENCE, BY AGENCY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Preferred Influence

<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>		<u>Difference between Perceived and Preferred Influence</u>
4.50	(22)	.913	cabinet secretary	-0.41
4.44	(22)	.788	subcabinet secretary	-0.44
4.41	(22)	.959	office director	-0.41
3.96	(22)	.899	career executives	-1.28
3.73	(22)	1.077	cabinet secretary staff	+0.09
3.48	(23)	1.275	subcabinet secretary staff	+0.07
3.26	(23)	.915	noncareer executives in office	0.00
2.91	(23)	1.276	members of congress	+0.05
2.74	(23)	1.054	OMB staff	+0.45
2.59	(22)	1.098	congressional committee staff	+0.17
2.57	(21)	1.248	White House staff	+0.15
2.36	(22)	.848	interest groups	+0.05
2.27	(22)	.935	public interest groups	-0.03

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Preferred Influence

<u>Mean</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>		<u>Difference between Perceived and Preferred Influence</u>
4.50	(46)	1.070	cabinet secretary	-1.04
4.44	(45)	.841	office director	-0.41
4.35	(46)	.822	subcabinet secretary	-0.44
3.77	(47)	.840	career executives	-0.73
3.13	(46)	1.024	noncareer executives in office	+0.35
2.88	(42)	.993	cabinet secretary staff	+0.76
2.76	(45)	.981	subcabinet secretary staff	+0.17
2.64	(44)	.942	members of congress	+0.55
2.63	(46)	.928	OMB staff	+1.19
2.51	(45)	1.036	interest groups	+0.21
2.32	(41)	1.035	White House staff	+0.15
2.31	(45)	.821	public interest groups	+0.06
2.28	(43)	.908	congressional committee staff	+0.72

Note: In the last column, + denotes decision-makers who are perceived to have more influence than preferred; - denotes decision-makers who are perceived to have less influence than preferred.

of preferred policy-makers. Also like the two agencies discussed above, there is wide separation between the top group and all of the others. This indicates that career executives in the FAA and the Park Service also prefer a simpler chain of command with fewer officials exercising influence over agency decisions. This becomes more apparent when comparing perceived and preferred influence in these two agencies.

In contrast to the responses from the Forest Service and the USGS, top bureaucrats in the FAA and the Park Service believe that virtually every decision-maker has far too much influence. In the FAA, seven out of the thirteen policy actors have discrepancy scores exceeding +1.00! Those thought to have too much influence are the staffs of the cabinet secretary (+1.65) and the subcabinet secretary (+1.44), the OMB staff (+1.44), congressional committee staff (+1.28), the subcabinet secretary (+1.21), members of Congress (+1.21), and the cabinet secretary (+1.02). Representatives of interest groups (+0.67) and public interest groups (+0.56) are also judged to have relatively large discrepancies between perceived and preferred influence. Only the agency director (-0.45) and the career executives (-0.50) have influence debits.

The responses from the Park Service paint a similar picture. Six of the potential decision-makers have very large discrepancy scores: the staff of the subcabinet secretary (+1.77), the noncareer executives in the agency (+1.23), interest group representatives (+1.07), the subcabinet secretary (+1.00), and the staff of the cabinet secretary (+1.00). The OMB staff (+0.84) and members of Congress (+0.80) also are believed to have too much influence. Again like the FAA, only the agency director (-0.40) and the career executives (-0.34) have less influence than preferred.

The career executives in the FAA and the Park Service evidently believe that (1) many policy-makers are involved in making important decisions in their agency and (2) wish the circumstances were otherwise. These responses are predictable given what we know about the context of these organizations. The career executives, expecting a certain level of administrative discretion based on their expertise, have seen their agencies become highly permeable to outside forces. As political conflict increased, officials from the department level, the legislative and presidential branches, and interest groups attempted to influence agency policies. The conventional view of executive branch decision-making arrangements would lead us to expect the career executives to resent the exercise of hierarchical power by department officials or by the inclusion of OMB in the decision-making loop. However, it is surprising that career executives believe that members of Congress and their committee staffs--usually thought of as allies in resisting presidential initiatives--also have far too much influence. It seems that top bureaucrats in these agencies are no more comfortable with intrusions into agency decision-making by members of Congress than by department or White House representatives.

The career executives in the Departments of Education and HUD, like the other agencies in the study, express a preference for decision-making by top office and departmental officials. In these organizations the cabinet secretary (4.50 in both), the office director (4.41 in Education and 4.44 in HUD), and the subcabinet secretary (4.44 in Education and 4.35 in HUD) top the list of preferred decision-makers. The career executives rank themselves fourth (3.96 in Education and 3.77 in HUD). The preference for department-centered decision-making is particularly pronounced in these organizations. In both cases, the top seven preferred policy-makers work within the department. Members of Congress and other external actors are all far down the list.

An interesting thing happens when we compare perceived and preferred levels of influence in Education and HUD. In contrast to the FAA and the Park Service where the career executives prefer that nearly all would-be policy-makers have less influence, top bureaucrats in these departments actually would prefer that other key actors have more influence than they do. In the Department of Education, the career executives (-1.28), the subcabinet secretary (-0.44), the cabinet secretary (-0.41), the office director (-0.41), and public interest groups (-0.03) are each judged to have too little influence. Only the OMB staff (+0.45) is thought to have significantly more influence than they should and, compared to the other organizations in the study, the discrepancy is relatively low.

The responses of the career executives at HUD are similar to those at Education in that they would prefer some key department officials to have more influence than they do, but they also believe that some several policy-makers have too much influence. The cabinet secretary (-1.04), the career executives (-0.73), the subcabinet secretary (-0.44), and the office director (-0.41) each have less influence than desired. Unlike Education, some actors are perceived to have far too much influence. The OMB staff (+0.76), the cabinet secretary's staff (+0.76), congressional committee staff (+0.72), and members of Congress (+0.55) each have significant influence credits.

One explanation for the large number of officials judged to have too little influence in these departments can be traced to the characteristics of the organizational context. The combination of relatively low expertise on the part of career executives and high political conflict in the agency environment seems to lead top bureaucrats to search for more guidance, not less. In the absence of agreement on either means or ends, the organizational environment in these departments is characterized by uncertainty. Under these conditions, career executives are not interested in excluding other policy-makers. Indeed, they apparently would prefer political executives to exercise more influence.

SUMMARY

We began by posing three sets of questions to frame the presentation of the survey results. We are now in a position to return to these questions and to offer some tentative answers.

How much influence do career executives believe they have when important policy decisions are made in their agency?

As the theory of organizational context predicts, the amount of influence that career executives believe they have varies quite widely. When expertise is high and political conflict is low, as we saw in the cases of the Forest Service and the USGS, career executives believe they have substantial influence in agency decision-making. In these organizations only the agency director and the top departmental officials are judged to be more influential than the career staff. When expertise and political conflict are both high, career executives also think that they have a relatively high level of influence. However, in contrast to the previous cases, other policy actors exercise even more influence than do the career executives. In absolute terms, the top bureaucrats in the FAA and the Park Service believe they have roughly the same level of influence as those in the Forest Service and the USGS. The difference is that agency and department level appointees, members of Congress and congressional staff, and, in the case of the FAA, the OMB staff, all have more influence than do the top bureaucrats. Finally, in organizations where expertise is low and political conflict high, career executives believe they have very little influence. In the Departments of Education and HUD, the career staff place themselves near the bottom of the influence scale.

How is influence distributed among the other policy-makers in the agency environment?

In the judgement of the career executives surveyed for this study, political executives at the agency and department levels are perceived to exercise the most influence over important agency policy decisions. In four of the six agencies (the Forest Service, the USGS, the Park Service, the Department of Education), the agency or office director, the subcabinet secretary, and the cabinet secretary are thought to be the most influential policy-makers. If we compute the average amount of perceived influence for each of the potential policy-makers in all of the organizations (table 5), these three officials are believed to be the most influential by a wide margin. Next in terms of perceived influence is the cabinet secretary's staff (typically made up of noncareer SES appointees and Schedule C personnel who also serve at the discretion of the cabinet secretary) and the noncareer executives who work within the agency. Although there is some variation in the actual rankings between agencies,

it is generally true that political executives appear to have a great deal of influence in these organizations.

The influence of the members of Congress is much more dependent on the organization under consideration. Congressional representatives are perceived to have a great deal of influence in the FAA and the Park Service, moderate levels of influence in the Forest Service and the USGS, and low levels of influence in the Departments of Education and HUD. Even when they are thought to have substantial influence, however, members of Congress place no higher than fourth in perceived influence in any given agency. In each of the organizations, political executives place higher than representatives in Congress.

The influence of the OMB staff varies widely. At HUD, only the office director and subcabinet secretary are judged to be more influential than the OMB staff, while at the Park Service, only the White House staff is thought to exercise less influence. In each of the other organizations, the OMB staff has moderate to high levels of influence. As we have seen, even when the OMB staff is thought to exercise fairly low levels of influence, career executives think it is too much.

Interest groups, public interest groups, and the White House staff are perceived to have low to moderate influence in agency decision-making. It is likely that the White House staff expends most of its managerial energy by focusing on the "big picture"--serving presidential needs and coordinating the policy agenda for political executives at the department level. We might explain the low rankings of pressure groups in two ways. One, is that representatives of interest groups are more likely to exercise their influence through members of Congress, not through direct participation in agency decision-making. The other explanation is that interest group representatives by-pass the career staff and take their cases directly to political appointees.

How would career executives prefer influence to be distributed? Who is thought to have too much influence and who has too little?

Looking at how career executives would prefer influence to be distributed in their agencies several important patterns emerge. The most important is the apparent belief in "overhead democracy." In each of the agencies in the study, top bureaucrats express a preference for substantial influence being exercised by the agency or office director and, in most cases, the cabinet secretary. With the exceptions of the FAA and the Park Service, the subcabinet secretary is included in this group. Career executives would also prefer a substantial level of influence for themselves. In four of the agencies (Forest Service, USGS, FAA, and Park Service), career executives rank themselves second in preferred influence. In the other two (Education and HUD), careerists place themselves fourth.

The desire for executive centered government apparently does not extend to the staffs of the department secretaries.

Two rules seem to be in operation: (1) The closer to the agency that decisions are made, the better career executives like it. Even when the agency or office director is a political appointee, career executives prefer that he or she have a great deal of influence. It is an open question whether this means that the career executives have "captured" the political appointee or if it is the other way around. (2) Career executives believe that top departmental officials who hold legitimate positions in the chain of command should also influence agency decisions. These findings provide support for the recent findings of Cheryl Miller who conducted a similar study of state level career executives (Miller, 1987). In a test of the proposition that bureaucrats are policy-aggrandizers who are resistant to the participation of other actors in their domain, she found that administrators, in some cases, want more policy participation by key officials, not less.

The respondents uniformly believe that the career executives and the agency or office director have too little influence, although the magnitude of the discrepancy between perceived and preferred influence varies greatly by organization. Career executives at the Forest Service and USGS believe that they are only slightly under-powered, while those at the Departments of Education and HUD desire much more influence than they have. With the exception of the OMB staff, which is believed to have too much influence in all of the organizations in this study (ranging from + 0.45 in Education to +1.44 in the FAA), the power position of the other actors vary widely depending on the organization. For example, while career executives in the FAA believe that the cabinet secretary has far too much influence on agency decisions (+1.02), those in HUD think that the secretary has far too little (-1.04).

CONCLUSIONS

Discussions of the bureaucracy "problem" in the United States have usually rested on the assumption that bureaucrats have too much influence in the political process. As Herbert Kaufman observed, "more and more people are apparently convinced that bureaucracy is whirling out of control and are both infuriated and terrified by the prospect (Kaufman, 1981, p.1)." But, as Francis Rourke recently noted, the "real story of contemporary American bureaucracy is not, as widely expected to be the case, about the emergence of an imperial government of career officials threatening constitutional norms." Instead, he argues, the growth in size and scope of the administrative state

has triggered other changes in the character and operation of the national government, and that many of these changes have worked to

limit the extent to which the expanding scope of bureaucratic activity has actually brought about a commensurate increase in the power of bureaucrats themselves (Rourke, 1987, p.218).

Among these changes, none have been more important in the day-to-day working environment of top bureaucrats than the recent attempts to centralize policy-making in the White House and politicize administrative arrangements in the organizations of the executive branch. Although other presidents have used the administrative tools at their disposal, "Reagan did more than continue a historical trend. In moving ambitiously down the paths of politicization and centralization, he built a set of administrative arrangements that by past standards proved coherent, well-integrated, and eminently workable...(Moe, 1985, p.271)." These trends have almost certainly been fueled by the relatively recent transformation of the office of the presidency into a greatly elaborated, administratively sophisticated cluster of bureaus and offices staffed by political appointees and responsible only to the president (Polsby, 1988). In addition, a change in attitude toward career executives has accompanied these institutional changes. It is now commonplace for political leaders who guide the executive branch to denounce the administrative competence and sometimes the probity of career members of the executive branch. Budgetary and planning functions which were once undertaken cooperatively are now regularly performed in a mode in which the permanent government is treated as an adversary by political executives.

Many of the rewards of government service stem from the involvement of civil servants in the policy process. Such involvement breeds an ethos of public service and allegiance to an agency's mission that contributes to making an organization effective. Without such allegiance employees cannot be expected to do more than simply "go through the motions." When this attitude becomes widespread in an agency, indifference may drive out concern for policy performance. By stressing managerial control over the workforce and discouraging participation, the Reagan administration risked setting off a response by employees that, what-ever its short-term benefits, threatens to compromise the administrative capacity of the federal government in the long-run.

ENDNOTES

1. These variables also have an analogue in organizational theory. In a work published in 1959, James D. Thompson and Arthur Tuden extend Herbert Simon's notion that decisions are divisible into factual and valuational elements by applying it to decisions made in organizational settings. Where Simon develops a psychological model of decision-making, Thompson and Tuden construct a sociological one--that is, a model applicable to collective decision-making. They argue that complex organizational systems are made up of participants who may or may not agree on how to proceed on any given decision. They point out that, "it cannot be taken for granted that causation will be 'known' as soon as a decision issue appear, nor can it be assumed that the organization is certain of its preferences (Thompson and Tuden, 1959, p.197)." Thus, there may be agreement or disagreement regarding both causation (means) or preference orderings (goals). In my framework, the level of expertise is a rough measure of the extent to which there is agreement among decision-makers regarding the means used to reach organizational objectives. The level of political conflict is a measure of the extent to which there is agreement in the policy subsystem regarding the goals themselves.

2. I substitute the level of political conflict for political support by client groups on the grounds that political conflict captures the same idea with somewhat greater generalizability. Executive branch departments and agencies in the U.S. are extraordinarily permeable to outside political forces. The importance of support by client and interest groups is a recognition of this fact. However, it is a mistake to focus only on clients or interest groups as the sole source of political support. In the modern executive branch, support (or lack thereof) may come from both inside and outside of government. In addition, there may be support by one set of interest groups, but not by others. By using the level of political conflict as our variable, we can distinguish between those agencies where there is a general consensus concerning organizational objectives, those where little agreement exists, and those which fall in between.

3. For a brief history of each of these organizations see Whitnah, 1983.

4. The exact wording of the question was as follows: This section contains a list of individuals and groups that may influence the important decisions that are made in your agency or office. Important decisions, in this sense, refers public policy decisions that bear on the delivery of your agency's particular good or service. Using the scale provided, (1) rate the amount of influence you believe each individual or group actually has on decision-making in your agency or office (perceived influence), then (2) rate the amount of influence you believe each individual or group should have (preferred influence).

The scale provided had the following elements:

- 1=Little or no influence
- 2=Some influence
- 3=Moderate influence
- 4=Substantial influence
- 5=Very large influence
- 6=No basis to judge

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