

when Professor Dror's immense learning and clinical analysis awakened ambition and enthusiasm in this reviewer) the book poses problems. In many places the prose is either exceedingly dense or exceedingly abstract, or both. Consider this sample from the beginning of the chapter discussing 'policy principles for handling adversity': 'to locate policy principles for policy making under adversity, clear distinction between a number of aspects of policies and policy making is necessary. This is not an easy task, policy making being, as expounded several times, an existential part of unfolding societal reality, itself composed of a multitude of overlapping and interacting threads. Imposition of explicated concepts on amorphous reality carries dangers of falsification, even if the concepts are meaningful on a tacit level' (p. 101).

What is more, there does not seem to be a particularly clear line of argument running through the book. Instead each chapter seems to address a different facet of some still only vaguely specified whole, and then ranges vertiginously through ancient history, modern philosophy, the lessons of Vietnam, French economic planning, the introduction of a Gaullist constitution in Sri Lanka, and so on.

In *The Return of the Jedi* 'the force' has both a dark and a light side. The dark side is personified by the now universally familiar figure of Darth Vader. The light side is espoused by the young, well-meaning but ultimately insipid Luke Skywalker. Professor Dror approximates to neither of these stereotypical figures, but the reader gains an uneasy feeling that his preferred solutions incorporate the kind of powerful central mechanisms which the Darth Vaders among us would be delighted to gain control of. Dror does not place much faith in the citizenry: 'to rely on the political sense and good will of populations at large... and their political capacities... contradicts much of what is known and has been experienced historically and is, therefore, somewhere between premature hopes, wishful thinking, and a neomagic belief' (p. 118).

It could just be that Professor Dror has written a very tough and clever book. But, if so, it is also a difficult work, and one which left this reviewer with considerable unease concerning its apparently narrow conceptualization of democratic political activity.

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BUREAUCRACY AND PUBLIC CHOICE

Jan-Eric Lane (ed.)

Sage, 1987. 305pp. £25 (cloth), £9.95 (paper)

Jan-Erik Lane has brought together several excellent essays on the social science of bureaucracy, enough to make the book worth commending to postgraduate students and teachers. Lane sensibly divides the collection into three parts: theoretical explorations, empirical studies and comparative perspectives (a proof-reading error has left Rose's essay in Part II in the Contents, but in Part III in the main text – where Part III is also renamed 'normative considerations'). However, the reader should note that the book's title is a partial misnomer since only five of the twelve essays directly address the public choice theory of bureaucracy (the contributions of Lane, de Bruin, Sørensen, Dunsire and Hood). The other seven essays are a mixed bag: an interesting piece on multi-organizational implementation and design by Chisholm; a useful essay on measuring productivity in bureaucracies by Murray; a clear, empirically informed and orthodox Weberian essay in comparative administrative systems by Page; two vaguer typological essays on the nature of contemporary executives by Rose and Peters; a rather obvious essay by Ståhlberg on Merton's model of bureaucratic dysfunctionality; and a series of disjointed notes from Aaron Wildavsky – replete with his customary vigorous assertion of fallacies, dogmatic one-liners,

oversupply of adjectives and awkward syntax – masquerading under the title of 'A cultural theory of responsibility'.

Given space limitations this review can focus only on the five essays which deal with public choice theory. The theoretical section opens with Lane's own useful introduction to the concept of bureaucracy. Surveying contemporary theories he identifies ten definitional approaches: bureaucracy as rationality, as dysfunctions, as rigidity, as *Beamtenherrschaft*, as chaos, as oversupply, as size maximization, as uncontrol, as private choice, and as waste. In fact these definitional approaches could have been reduced to three: the *public choice* conception of bureaucracy (oversupply, size maximization, uncontrol, private choice, and waste); the orthodox *Weberian* understanding (rationality, dysfunctions, rigidity, and *Beamtenherrschaft*); and the heresies of the *new institutionalism* (chaos).

Most of the second essay, 'Economic theory of bureaucracy and public good allocation', written by de Bruin, is a resumé of the public choice menu. He reviews the limits of neoclassical economics, and its modern successor, the theory of games; the literature on the limitations of voting mechanisms in revealing authentic preferences for public goods; and the problems of pseudo-markets. The essay will be demanding reading for those without a background in economics; and for those with such a background it is hard to see what purpose it serves for the theory of bureaucracy since it does little more than reiterate the by now well known difficulties with preference-revelation and preference-aggregation procedures for decision-making on public goods. For instance, his well-taken point about a core defect in Niskanen's model of bureaucracy (the assumption that the optimal output and price of public good production could be known) was pointed out in some of the earliest reviews of the model. There is a very good point buried in de Bruin's literature review: gathering the information required about people's preferences for public goods is the real bottleneck in trying to make public choice mimic market choice and conform with Paretian-liberal assumptions. However, instead of following up this major defect, which suggests the inapplicability of the public choice paradigm to public sector decision-making (and design), de Bruin ends on the unconvincing note that the answers may be found in 'information theory'.

Sørensen's essay, 'Bureaucratic decision-making and the growth of public expenditure', develops some of the necessary components of a dynamic model of budget-making, which transcends the limitations both of the incrementalist theory pioneered by Wildavsky and the comparative statics of Niskanen's model. Sørensen's model, and evidence, supports the plausible – if unexciting – argument that bureaucrats *may* pursue inflated budgets and that they *may* succeed or fail. It *may* seem obvious, but part of the task of good social science theory is to explain why the obvious is as it is. Unfortunately, in none of the theoretical essays is there a discussion of the merits of some of the alternative maximands suggested by critics of the public choice model of bureaucracy (for example, Dunleavy's instrumental model of 'bureau-shaping' administrators, or Goodin's model of 'mission-committed' bureaucrats).

The two best essays in the book for students and teachers of public administration are in the empirical section, with the contributions from the British Isles' newest guild of professionals, the bureaumetricians, Dunsire and Hood. Dunsire's essay is an excellent summary of the ESRC-sponsored bureaumetrics project at the University of York, and will be ideal for those concerned to appreciate the results of the project without incurring headaches or personal deficit spending. The bureaumetrics project revealed the difficulties faced by the researchers in operationalizing, let alone testing, some of the best-known theories in organizational sociology and public choice. Dunsire gives a sharp and concise account of the predictions which can be extrapolated from certain theories of bureaucracy and the difficulties he and his colleagues had in evaluating their merits in British public administration. The results are worth ruminating upon: the application of contingency theory to central British administration is partially successful and partly refuted; various theories of reorganization are partially confirmed; and the public choice model of bureaucracy, insofar as it is operational at all, is shown to be seriously empirically deficient.

The outcome of the pioneering bureaumatic project resembles Hegel's philosophy: the owl of Minerva has set flight after the illusions of the epoch have wrought their havoc.

Hood's essay on trends in British public administration in the last twenty years, like Dunsire's, usefully integrates theoretical argument with empirical research. He sets himself the task of reviewing the extent to which British administrative trends, unconsciously, or otherwise, have been moving away from the classical Weberian paradigm (of monopolistic, functionally organized, large-scale line bureaucracies delivering services free at the point of consumption) towards the public choice paradigm (of smaller-scale competitive bureaux, operating in overlapping jurisdictions, and charging users; and the privatization of public enterprises). The story, not surprisingly, is a mixed one: privatization has occurred, but not in the manner consonant with public choice prescriptions; user charges have not increased on the scale expected; new forms of para-government have developed, despite attempts at quangocide; and monopoly jurisdictions have remained mostly intact. A sectoral breakdown of policy-areas might have produced a more nuanced picture: for example, have public choice prescriptions been followed, albeit unintentionally, more in social policy and in public enterprise than in the military-industrial complex? Hood's essay is especially interesting because it shows that certain public choice trends in practice preceded the dissemination of the theory; it will be even more intriguing to watch whether the deviation of practice from theory actually increases under a regime publicly sympathetic to the public choice paradigm.

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ADMINISTRATION AS SERVICE – THE PUBLIC AS CLIENT

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
(OECD), Paris, 1987. 136pp. £9.00

The proposition of this OECD report is that 'increasing administrative responsiveness is an essential challenge for advanced industrial democracies'. It recommends the application of 'selective radicalism' to public services across Europe. It foresees change on a scale that will require decades rather than years. Its tone is confident and unpolemical. There is no mention of public vs. private sector nor centre vs. locality. The word 'excellence' does not appear. The report is at pains to warn against slavish imitation of successful business methods in a project about nothing less than the future of democracy.

Addressed to 'policy makers, civil servants, business and the general public' the report continually returns to the impossibility of tackling the problems it describes in isolation from an understanding of 'government structures, politics, the system of democratic decision-making and control, the role of the State in society, and society's values and attitudes to the State.' These preoccupations are supported by practical ideas because '... for the client, policy is what happens at the interface with the administration.' Readers are helped by 'a summary for policy-makers', a précis of the main argument and summaries at the end of each of the five parts of the report. Examples from 17 countries based on interviews with over 500 practitioners are inserted at appropriate points.

There is a growing body of writing and management education aimed at enhancing a public service orientation. This report's European perspective is one of its strengths. Our thinking in the UK is imbued with the determination to 'lift the burden of government' from the 'true' wealth producers. No matter that the media personification of this burden is one-dimensional. The character of Sir Humphrey Appleby is a witty tribute to Weber's belief that 'democracy needs bureaucracy but bureaucracy does not need democracy.'

Throughout this report that lack of mutuality in political-management systems is challenged by an alternative idea.

Bureaucracy *does* need democracy. Kafkaesque bureaucracies are a product of weak political leadership and a dependent citizenry. Just as competition increases choice in the market, politics increases the choices offered through bureaucracies. Those officials who have advocated political involvement at whatever level, street or nation, through representation or participation, have long recognized this. They welcome release from the 'iron cage' of apolitical public institutions. They are not threatened by public protest and they are optimistic about the return of politics to administration. In their efforts to train and develop staff and to change their organizations they will find support and guidance in this report.

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THE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PROCESS: LEARNING BY DOING

David Heald and Richard Rose (eds.)

Public Finance Foundation with Price Waterhouse, 1987. 153pp. £9.95

This is a simulation manual which should be welcomed by public administration teachers in higher education. It is a report on a public expenditure 'game' conducted under the aegis of the Public Finance Foundation at Nuneham Park in 1986. In his introduction Edmund Dell notes the lack of academic studies on how collective decisions on public spending are taken. The PFF therefore decided to 'simulate the Cabinet at work' and 'see whether the simulation could be made sufficiently lifelike to yield useful lessons' (p. 1).

A group of academics, all specialists in their field, played the roles of Cabinet ministers, with Dell in the chair as Prime Minister and Richard Rose and David Heald as 'controllers'. Each minister prepared a brief, submitted to Rose for inclusion in 'the Bid Book', outlining their case for a share of the extra £5 billion above that planned in the 1986 White Paper for each of the three years of the PESC planning cycle. All the PESC furniture is here: 'bilaterals', Cabinet discussion and the 'Star Chamber'. There are useful tables summarizing the bids made, a good variety of different ways of constructing papers for Cabinet and a helpful annex giving advice to teachers on how to use the book in the seminar situation.

All such exercises have to be judged carefully for their *educational* and *wider academic* value. There is little new here for the public policy specialist. There are some nuggets in the chapter by Posner and Heald and in the postscripts by Jones and Likiernan. It is a pity that there were not more such reflections on the PESC system in the book. Educationally the questions raised are: is the topic important enough to warrant a game? Is the simulation grounded close enough to reality to be of value, yet simplified enough to be useable? Does it generate questions, stimulate discussion and enlighten the student?

On the whole, as a teaching aid, the book comes out well in such an assessment. Certainly there are too few simulations on public expenditure (only one, by Burch and Clarke, comes to mind). The student will benefit from using the framework developed, if for no other reason than that it should end the prejudice held by undergraduates that public expenditure is boring and dry. It is, however, flawed in important respects. Political partisanship is lacking. No ideological line was recreated. Dell played the part of a Wilsonian cabinet chairman – not pressing his own case. Does this ring true in the days of conviction politics and the powerful Treasury–No. 10 axis? The academics-cum-ministers were praised by