

Week 10

Where are we now? Get out the map: PA's response to Plunkitt will be to bridge the gap between bureaucracy and democracy by building new organizations. As managers, our hands will be tied by bureaucratic rigidity, vague goals, diffusion of implementation responsibility, penetration of the task environment, and limited power over employees. Even as we struggle with these limitations, we will have to balance the need for information with the right to privacy; and we must focus on productivity even though our work is not often amenable to productivity improvement. Most important of all, we know that we will confront politicians and voters who want lower taxes and increased spending. Pressure to lower taxes will often result in inequitable approaches to taxation, even though equity is an important consideration in PA. And the techniques we use to manage the budget will probably not do much to control spending since the forces that determine levels of expenditure are very powerful and remain more in the domain of politics than administration.

Chapter Preface: Plunkitt knew how to hire the right people: political loyalty was rewarded with public employment. Ability to manage effectively was not part of the equation. This made public office very democratic, in Plunkitt's view, since a government job was available to everyone who participated in the political process and supported the winning candidates. Civil service, which tried to replace political loyalty with non-political exams and to base promotion on merit rather than political affiliation, was therefore anti-democratic, since it restricted public employment to those who did not treat electoral politics as the central arena of governance. In this chapter, we see the latest phases of that battle between employment as political reward and employment as apolitical profession. The civil service system, which has been "the historic heart of public administration," now applies to only about 40% of federal level employees, and the chapter notes that Florida, among other states, has more or less abolished the civil service system in favor of at-will employment. In part, this is because the civil service system, in spite of its apparent emphasis on merit, did not do a very good job of attracting or promoting managers who were effective and efficient; because those characteristics were difficult to define, in practice the civil service system tended to identify a good employee as "one who simply did not break laws and commit criminal acts." Now, it is not enough to be honest and law-abiding. Governments need truly effective managers, and the best managers want the flexibility to hire those who can get the job done and fire those who cannot – and civil service rules often get in the way of this. Therefore, those rules have been set aside to give managers more flexibility to focus on performance. However, managerial effectiveness is not the only criteria that might be used to determine who gets a government job. As the chapter notes, as recently as 1990 the Supreme Court ruled that "party affiliation could not play a part in the hiring, promoting, or transferring of most of Illinois's 60,000 gubernatorial appointees," to which the governor replied, that "turns politics on its head," suggesting that the spirit of Plunkitt is still very much alive. Political and ideological loyalty are also becoming "a qualification of rising importance" at the federal level where the number of political appointees has been growing. The supplemental material for this week illustrates how this occurred at the Justice Department. As you listen to the National Public Radio reports, ask yourself how Plunkitt would have responded to this situation. To what extent should political affiliation or ideology be a consideration for public employment? Shouldn't politicians be allowed to place in office those folks who best represent their world view? How would you feel if, as in Britain, France, and Germany, the American president only had about 100 political appointments to make, rather than the thousands available now? Would that make

government more or less representative of the people's will, or more or less effective and efficient?

Plunkitt would look upon the techniques described in this chapter as a disaster for democracy, for they represent efforts to make the staffing of public agencies independent of political influence. Recall that Plunkitt thought of government jobs as a reward that the machine could distribute to the party faithful for their service up to and during elections. People needed those rewards to be loyal to the machine and, he insisted, to democracy itself, and their patriotism was diminished by restricting public employment to those who were "fit" for them according to some academic or expert standard. This chapter describes techniques to remove public employment policies from the grips of the spoils system ("to the victors go the spoils") which gave to political winners the right to distribute jobs to their supporters. In place of that system, you will see here all manner of efforts to professionalize the bureaucracy, to put it on a merit basis, and to insulate it from efforts to politicize it. How successful are those efforts and what are their consequences? Are they as Plunkitt feared?

Chapter Nine

MANAGING HUMAN CAPITAL IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The development of American human capital management in the public sector is discussed. Particular attention is paid to the four different systems of human capital management operating simultaneously in government, the challenges of affirmative action and diversity policy, and the future of human capital management.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and review the six phases of human capital management in the United States.
2. Describe and understand the civil service system and the meaning of merit.
3. Describe and understand the collective system and the role of organized labor.
4. Discuss the scope and powers of the political executive system.
5. Review the development of specialized public professional systems and the professional public administration system.
6. Understand the goal of affirmative action and protected classes. Identify the positive and negative consequences of those programs and designations.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

WHO WANTS TO WORK FOR GOVERNMENT? AND WHO DOES?

Who Wants to Work for Government?

A Peculiar Pool?

A Less Talented Pool?

Who Works for Government?

Acquiring Public Talent

Keeping Public Talent

THE EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC HUMAN CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

Government by Gentlemen, 1789-1829

Government by Spoilers, 1829-1883

Government by the Good, 1883-1906
A Very American Reform: The Civil Service Act of 1883
Long-Lasting Legacies
Government by Scientists, 1906-1937
Government by Policymaking Managers, 1937-1955
In the Service of Managers
Acknowledging Power
Reconciling Neutrality with Policy
Government by Professionals, 1955-Present
THE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM: THE MEANING OF MERIT
The Meaning of Merit
The Position
Hiring by Score
A Sovereign Civil Service
The Murkiness of Merit
The Profession of Public Human Capital Management
Recruiting and Hiring Bureaucrats
The Faltering Feds
Federal Fragmentation
Federal Frustration
Missing Talent
Entry-Level New Hires
Classifying Bureaucrats
Washington's General Schedule
Classifying at the Grass Roots
Reforming Classification: Broadbanding
Paying Bureaucrats
Public and Private Pay
Determining Salaries: The Federal Experience
Doing Good and Doing Well at the Grass Roots
Training Bureaucrats
Training Feds
Training at the Grass Roots
Rating Bureaucrats' Performance
Merit is Not Performance
A Federal Failure
The Pit of Performance Assessment
The Prospects for Performance Assessment
Disciplining Bureaucrats
Dealing with Federal Incompetents
Dealing with State Incompetents
Dealing with Local Incompetents
Bolstering Bureaucrats' Bravery
Legislating Blowing Whistles
In the Wake of Whistle Blowing
Securing Bureaucrats' Jobs

THE SLIPPAGE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM

The Morphed Meaning of Merit

Does the Civil Service System Impair Public Administration?

A Faltering Federal Civil Service

Civil Service Slippage at the Grass Roots

Civil Service Reform in the States: Radical and Revolutionary

Civil Service Reform in Communities: Moderate but Meaningful

The Impact of Civil Service Reform

A Modest Proposal

THE COLLECTIVE SYSTEM: BLUE-COLLAR BUREAUCRATS

Merit versus Solidarity

The Scope of Organized Labor

Public Employees: Labor's Life-Blood

The Federal Collective System

The Grass-Roots Collective System

Representation versus Membership

Bargaining with Governments

Federal Bargaining

Grass-Roots Bargaining

Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration

Striking Government

Striking Washington

Striking the Grass Roots

Money and Unions

THE POLITICAL EXECUTIVE SYSTEM: POLITICS IN ADMINISTRATION

Political Executives in Washington

Baroquely Burdensome: The Appointment Process

The Rise of the White House Loyalty Test

An Educated, Avaricious, Inept Elite?

Political Executives at the Grass Roots

The Departure of Patronage

The Entry of Professionalism

Experience and Sector: Our New Understanding of Executive Quality

The Less Experienced Political Executive

Sector Matters

SPECIALIZED PUBLIC PROFESSIONAL SYSTEMS: THE PERSON OVER THE POSITION

The Scope of Specialized Public Professional Systems

The Public Implications of Specialized Public Professionalism

THE PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM: EMBRACING THE PROFESSIONS OF POLITICS AND MANAGEMENT

The Roots of the Professional Public Administration System

A Self-Aware Profession
The Model Public Personnel Administration Law of 1970
Watergate and the Muffled Mouthpiece for “Merit”
The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978
Performance and Pay
Paying Performers in Washington
Paying Performers at the Grass Roots Level
Can It Be Done?
FEDERAL HUMAN CAPITAL: A QUESTION OF COMPETENCE (case study)
RACE, SEX, AND JOBS: THE CHALLENGE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
The Federal Impact: A Tortuous Evolution
Roots
LBJ: The Archangel of Affirmative Action
Age Discrimination
Vietnam Era Veterans
Setting Aside for Minorities and Women
Disabled Americans
Sexual Orientation
A Summing Up
Federal Enforcement of Affirmative Action
Congressional Enforcement
Judicial Enforcement
Executive Enforcement
Affirmative Action and the Grass-Roots Governments
“Reverse Discrimination” and the Quota Question
Two Defining Decisions
Two Definitive Decisions
The “Quota Bill” of 1991
Tests: The Validation Vexation
Validating Tests
Federal Fecklessness
Grass-Roots Problem Solving
Race Norming and Banding
Following the Rules. It Works!
Women’s Work?
The Bona Fide Occupational Qualification
The Curious Question of Comparable Worth
The New Meaning of Sex at Work
Who Harasses and Where?
The Court Weighs In
What a Strange Trip It’s Been: The Unique Experiences of Minority and Women Public Administrators
Minority Public Administrators: Career Impeding Experiences?
Women Public Administrators: Capable, Comparable, Confident

Backlash!

Public Opinions on Affirmative Action

Affirmative Action's Odder Outcomes

Affirmative Action as Stigma?

A Grass-Roots Rebellion?

Is Affirmative Action a Defensible Policy?

An Un-American Policy?

Is Diversity Desirable?

The People versus Person Problem

The Effects of the Efforts

The Federal Record

The State and Local Record

Minorities at the Grass Tips

Women at the Grass Tips

The Third Sector Record

A Palpably Progressive Public Sector

A Demographic Solution?

KEY CONCEPTS/TERMS

public personnel administration

public personnel management

public human resource management

public human capital management

spoils system

civil service system

specialized public professional systems

professional public administration system

merit system

position

merit principle

Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

direct-hire authority

hiring authorities

appointment authorities

Federal Career Intern Program

position classification

broadbanding

paybanding

salary banding

performance rating

performance assessment

performance appraisal

whistleblowers

job classification

equity
at-will-employment
collective system
unions
sovereignty
individualism
collective bargaining
meet-and-confer negotiations
productivity bargaining
goldfishbowl bargaining
sunshine bargaining
mediation
conciliation
arbitration
voluntary arbitration
compulsory arbitration
binding arbitration
political executives
policy
loyalty test
profession
performance pay
pay for performance
pay for contribution
pay for competence
affirmative action
age discrimination
set-aside programs
disparity studies
disability
protected classes
disparate impact
adverse impact
reverse discrimination
test validity
veterans' preference
race norming
banding
protective labor laws
comparable worth
sexual harassment
hostile environment
diversity