dialogue in the public sphere. The intimate social context of associations such as universities makes it more difficult for them to address issues of race and gender as compared to market-oriented firms, for whom resolving these issues is instrumental to impersonal goals. One last example: Associations committed to providing the good of "identity" have a low capacity for cooperation and coordination.

The rewards of system are apparent here; Warren's typology illuminates the terrain of associations in the United States and the limitations of much that is written about it. The costs emerge if we look for substantive insight into the democratic effects of specific associations. Political parties are arguably the most important intermediate democratic association, and Warren types them as vested groups oriented toward "the medium of coercive state power," indeed, as "arms of state power." This characterization holds for parties in government but does not point up the face of parties as voluntary associations. Their unique role in accommodating interests, framing issues, altering the parameters of discussion in conjunction with other groups, setting agendas, and shaping public opinion (to say nothing of their distinctive part in political representation) is given short shrift in this and probably in any typology. Moreover, political parties function both as associations and as forums for other groups. So long as "public sphere" is defined as "institutionally unbound" and without powers of collective action, our understanding of parties will be truncated.

Unquestionably, Warren's democratic categories and associational types will help structure and guide the work of political theorists and social scientists. His categories are exhaustive but not so detailed as to overwhelm the bounds of useful typology. At the same time, the grain of generalization is not overly coarse, and the result is a nuanced map of the associational terrain. The author's constructive spirit and attention to the real world of groups are apparent throughout. And Warren's quiet insistence that against the onslaught of legalism, bureaucracy, and markets associations alone preserve voluntary, social forms of collective action gives this excellent work its moral grounding.

American Politics

In the Web of Politics: Three Decades of the U.S. Federal Executive. By Joel D. Aberbach and Bert A. Rockman. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000. 230p. $42.95 cloth, $17.95 paper.

Karen M. Hult, *Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

The legitimacy and the capacity of an administrative state are not easy to demonstrate or justify in the United States, where administration emerged from and is enmeshed in a political system animated by separated powers, checks and balances, individual rights, and skepticism about government. Aberbach and Rockman focus on the "turmoil and controversy" that have swirled around the U.S. national executive branch since 1970, and they sketch the contours of and explore the reasons for the ongoing debate. At issue, they claim, is both a "quiet crisis," which reflects the allegedly deteriorating quality and morale of federal career executives, and a "noisy crisis," which involves the uncertain responsiveness of civil servants to the demands of elected officials. More recently, and amid ongoing criticism, the federal government has belatedly joined many states and localities, as well as other countries, in an effort to "reinvent" government. Aberbach and Rockman find scant empirical evidence of either "crisis" or of reinvention-induced declines in careerist morale. Moreover, they contend, much of the persistent concern about the capacity, accountability, and responsiveness of federal administration is better understood as disagreement about the proper scope and activities of government.

The empirical core of *In the Web of Politics* is the analysis of findings from structured interviews with senior careerists and subcabinet-level political appointees in domestic policy agencies during the Nixon (1970), Reagan (1986–87), and first Bush (1991–92) administrations. The three cross-sections permit the authors to examine the extent and nature of change in the backgrounds, attitudes, work experience, and perspectives of these officials across three Republican presidencies as well as before and after the emergence of the Senior Executive Service, which was created by the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act. Aberbach and Rockman also use the interview data as well as other documentary evidence and material from Office of Personnel Management (OPM) surveys to explore the empirical bases for claims about the representativeness, responsiveness, quality, morale, and adaptability of the federal executive.

The quiet crisis (a term the authors adopt from the 1990 report of the National Commission on the Public Service, popularly called the Volcker Commission) revolves around the ability of the career service to attract and retain qualified individuals and the morale of those officials. Of ultimate concern is the effect of personnel quality and morale on government performance. Aberbach and Rockman find little evidence of a clear drop in competence. Despite the admitted limitations of the indicators of "quality" in their survey (primarily, number and kind of advanced degrees, and the prestige of undergraduate and graduate degree-granting institutions), many may find the favorable comparison between senior governmental and top for-profit sector officials surprising and, perhaps, comforting. At the same time, there has been "a modest overall drop in morale and a more dramatic drop-off in the intensity of [job] satisfaction" among careerists (p. 82). This decline, along with the persistent "guildlike features" (p. 75) of the career service (such as promotion from within, careers within single agencies), may contain warnings about the longer term adaptability of the federal executive to increasingly complex and volatile policy environments.

Far noisier is the purported crisis of unresponsiveness. Both Nixon and Reagan entered office assuming that they confronted a mostly hostile executive branch. Twenty-five years ago, Aberbach and Rockman observed ("Clashing Beliefs within the Executive Branch," *American Political Science Review* 70 [June 1976]: 456–78) that Nixon probably was correct: Most of the civil servants they interviewed in 1970 reported being both Democrats and "liberal." Nixon's response, of course, soon came to be labeled the "administrative presidency," as he experimented with strategic placement of loyal appointees, reorganization, and impoundment to try to boost bureaucratic responsiveness. Reagan brought many of his predecessor's objectives to fruition. The administration placed Republicans in top career positions, especially in "controversial" departments, such as Health and

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055400400316 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Education (pp. 107–8). Consistent with a more systematic and centralized personnel process, political appointees were more likely to be Republican and more conservative than they had been in the Nixon era.

Despite George H.W. Bush's less ideological posture, he also strove to shape congressional influence on the executive through, for example, the use of signing statements (p. 38). Meanwhile, senior careerists during the Reagan and Bush years reported having fewer contacts with Congress, interest groups, and the public as well as somewhat less perceived influence (p. 115). Whether the three presidents' efforts to boost responsiveness, the growing conservative "Zeitgeist" (p. 169), or the decreasing attractiveness of federal government service to Democrats and liberals was most responsible for these shifts is impossible to tell from the Aberbach and Rockman data. Nonetheless, overall, the executive has been notably "responsive to a changing political environment and . . . instruments are in place to promote responsiveness" (p. 127).

The relatively small number of executives Aberbach and Rockman were able to interview (never more than 228, in 1986–87) militate against much fine-grained analysis of similarities and differences among the agencies sampled. Even so, some further disaggregation by agency mission or primary unit task (e.g., regulation versus grant oversight) would have been useful. More important, it is not fully clear how far the findings can be generalized. Robert Durant, for instance, calls into question the responsiveness of federal officials who work outside Washington (*The Administrative Presidency Revisited*, 1992). Similarly, those employed in national security or foreign policy departments (such as the Central Intelligence Agency or the departments of State and Defense) or units (e.g., the international trade division in the Department of Commerce) may have quite different profiles from those in more "domestic" agencies.

Aberbach and Rockman conclude by examining the somewhat different issues of responsiveness that emerged from efforts in the Clinton era to "reinvent" government. This time, the demands of "customers" rather than elected officials (or their appointed agents) were to be heeded. *In the Web of Politics* pays special attention to the National Performance Review (NPR) and the Government Performance and Results Act, and it capably surveys a broad range of praise and criticism the initiatives have elicited. Most helpful perhaps is the volume's placement of reinvention efforts in the context of the broader new public management movement, which has been influential in such countries as Australia, New Zealand, and Great Britain. Still, the tendency of many new public management (and reinvention) advocates to rely on an idealized "business model" rather than actual business practice in their analyses might have been noted. Just as earlier efforts to "reform" U.S. national administration spotlighted value conflicts, so, too, Aberbach and Rockman contend, has reinvention. Not only is NPR ambiguous about accountability relationships, but also issues of political responsiveness—"to which principals in a system of separated and divided powers are bureaucratic agents to respond?"—remain "unresolved and contentious" (p. 157).

In the Web of Politics synthesizes important findings on the senior federal executive with other studies of the challenges of governing in the United States and other advanced industrialized countries. The work crystallizes the key normative and analytical dimensions of efforts at administrative redesign and oversight, and it underscores the profoundly political foundations of such initiatives. Throughout, the authors' reflections on continuities and changes in the U.S. (domestic) executive are nuanced, insightful, and firmly anchored empirically.

Aberbach and Rockman make a persuasive case that reformers' persistent focus on "management improvement" is likely to have "at best marginal effects" on executive branch capacity (p. 176). "If the U.S. system produces complexity, contradiction, bloated or inefficient programs, and unusually high degrees of restriction on managerial latitude, that is primarily the product of politicians" (p. 188). Whether and how that system copes in an era of shrinking federal government employment, expanding shadow government, more complex and challenging tasks, and continuing public demands is a central concern of governance in the twenty-first century.

Campaign Reform: Insights and Evidence. Edited by Larry M. Bartels and Lynn Vavreck. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000. 259p. $69.50 cloth, $25.95 paper.

Paul Gronke, *Reed College*

Actors, evidence, and standards are the three watchwords of this volume on campaign reform edited by Bartels and Vavreck. Campaign reform is unlikely (and very possibly unnecessary) unless some shared understanding of each watchword is reached among politicians and policymakers, academic observers, and journalists.

The book is an outgrowth of a Pew-funded task force on campaign reform and contains seven articles along with the task force report. Topics range from the content of campaigns (particularly the consequences of negative advertising), to the nature of media coverage, to voter reactions (learning, turnout, declines in diffuse system support). All authors keep a primary eye on applying political science theories and evidence to practical questions of campaign reform. Does negative campaigning benefit candidates? Should media outlets provide "free time" to competing candidates and conduct "ad watches"? Can campaigns be conducted in such a way so as to reinvigorate, rather than depress, public interest, information, and enthusiasm about politics? Each article can be read as standing alone (perhaps too much so; see below), but each revisits the issues of actors, evidence, and standards.

Public commentary on campaign reform typically focuses on candidates and their financial statements, but this volume identifies two other actors to consider: journalists and the citizenry. Marion Just and her coauthors, for example, show how the objective of candidates (win office) in many ways runs counter to those of the news media (gain viewers, curry influence). Larry Bartels and Lynn Vavreck, in separate articles, note that the desire of voters for easily accessible information, interesting campaigns, and distinctive policy positions can run contrary to the aims of candidates, who may be interested in maximizing votes, blurring distinctions, and otherwise wooing the median voter.

An even larger set of actors could be included. Vavreck speculates how campaigns in general affect the legitimacy of democratic leadership more generally, and Buchanan worries that campaigns may reduce civic engagement by the nonvoting public. Any campaign reform must address the complex interaction of multiple actors, all involved to various degrees in political campaigns.

Another notable contribution in this volume is the careful consideration and presentation of high-quality social scientific evidence. Multiple authors (Bartels, Geer, Vavreck, and Shaw), using separate data sets and different techniques, show that negative advertising has anything but a negative

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055400400316 Published online by Cambridge University Press