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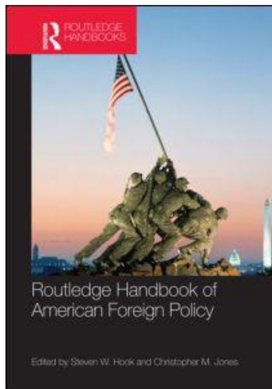

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Bureaucratic Politics

Christopher M. Jones

Both practitioners and observers have long recognized that bureaucratic politics are a persistent feature of U.S. foreign policy making. Bureaucratic politics shape the daily formulation and implementation of American foreign policy and have the capacity to affect the content and quality of particular decisions and actions. The many factors that facilitate bureaucratic politics are simply too prevalent to dismiss.

Most notably, competing interests and policy preferences often arise between policy makers, within institutions, and across bureaucracies. American foreign policy is marked by overlapping jurisdictions, so policy issues can span several domains of organizational responsibility and competence. In addition, the U.S. political system's fragmented political authority serves to strengthen the power and influence of bureaucratic actors. The political power of bureaucratic officials and agencies, in turn, fosters resistance to innovative policies that challenge existing organizational programs and routines. A busy chief executive and an overburdened institutional presidency do not always provide the coordination and integration necessary to mitigate these pressures. This reality, coupled with other individual- and institutional-level constraints, impedes "rational" decision making and instead increases the likelihood that a significant portion of American foreign policy will be shaped by political interactions among fragmented governmental actors pursuing their organizational interests.

The best known scholarly effort to capture and analyze this behavior is Graham Allison's governmental politics model (more commonly referred to as the bureaucratic politics model). In his classic study of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis (1969, 1971), Allison challenged the longstanding realist assumption that states behave as rational, unitary actors and embraced the perspective that foreign policy decisions are the product of political bargaining among individual leaders in government positions. These positions or bureaucratic roles have a strong impact on decision makers' policy preferences. While the model has been the subject of significant criticism for four decades, it remains an enduring element of American foreign policy analysis. The articles and books that outline the model sells thousands of copies each year and, according to Google Scholar, have been cited in thousands of subsequent studies. The bureaucratic politics model is also a prominent fixture in American foreign policy course syllabi and textbooks. Case studies based on the model, while less numerous today than in the 1970s, continue to appear along with articles, literature reviews, and conference panels that reference the model or the behavior that it seeks to capture.

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This chapter reviews the research related to bureaucratic politics and American foreign policy with an emphasis on different generations of scholarship. It begins with a brief consideration of the intellectual roots of the bureaucratic politics model (the first-generation literature). The chapter moves to a treatment of Allison's work and other scholars' efforts to build upon it (the second-generation literature). It then proceeds to detail the major criticisms of this literature and highlight some leading case-study applications. This portion of the chapter highlights a number of salient issues and enduring debates associated with bureaucratic politics. In the next section, more recent contributions to the bureaucratic politics tradition (the third-generation literature) are discussed. The chapter concludes by identifying future research paths that might further our current understanding of bureaucratic politics and American foreign policy.[1]

The First Generation

The intellectual roots of Allison's bureaucratic politics model can be traced to the field of public administration (see, e.g., Herring 1936; Appleby 1949; Long 1949; Simon, Smithburg, and Thompson 1950; March and Simon 1958; Holden 1966; Downs 1967; and Seidman 1970). It can also be tied to the early systematic study of foreign policy decision making (see, e.g., Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin 1954, 1962; and Rosenau 1966). However, the greatest influence on the development of the bureaucratic politics tradition in American foreign policy were classic studies examining the role of domestic politics in public policy making (see, e.g., Hilsman 1959; Lindblom 1959; Neustadt, 1960; Almond 1960; Huntington 1961; Schilling 1961; Schilling 1962; Braybrooke and Lindblom 1963; Hammond 1963; Hilsman 1967; Lindblom 1968; and Neustadt 1970). For these scholars, many of whom were associated with the Harvard Faculty Study Group on Bureaucracy, Politics, and Policy, the essence of policy making—why states do what they do—was politics rather than a rational cost-benefit analysis of geopolitical and strategic considerations. This body of work articulated a set of ideas that collectively became known as the "political process model" (Hilsman 1990: 58). Art (1973: 468–469) provides a useful summary of the approach's basic assumptions.

1. Political power (the ability to get someone to do something he [or she] would otherwise not do) is widely distributed [among institutions] at the national government level.
2. Within these institutions, which Schilling termed "quasi-sovereign powers," sit participants within the policy process with differing views on what they would like done on any given issue.
3. Political leadership within or across institutions is exercised primarily through persuasion, but with persuasion dependent upon skill with which a figure makes use of the limited power his [or her] position [provides].
4. Foreign policy making is a political process of building consensus and support for a policy among those participants who have the power to affect the outcome and often disagree over what they think that outcome should be… [F]orging of a policy consensus is achieved through the standard techniques of negotiation, bargaining, and compromise.
5. The content of any particular policy reflects as much the necessities of the conditions in which it is forged—what is required to obtain agreement—as it does the substantive merits of that policy.

Given the centrality of these general assumptions to Allison's later work, Hilsman, Neustadt, Huntington, Schilling, and Lindblom are considered progenitors of the bureaucratic politics model. Yet it is also important to note the key differences that separate this first generation of bureaucratic politics scholars—the proponents of the political process model—from Allison.

Unlike Allison's bureaucratic politics model, the political process model contends decision makers behave both as individuals in governmental positions *and* through organizations. It also highlights rather than virtually ignores the role of domestic politics, placing a greater emphasis on foreign policy actors outside the executive branch, such as the Congress, interest groups, the media, and the public. In addition, the political process model contends decision makers' policy preferences are far more influenced by their worldviews than their governmental roles and the policy-making process. Lastly, it treats U.S. foreign policy outcomes as *intended* political resultants that are tied closely to the preferences, strategies, and expectations of the decision makers (see Art 1973: 468–472; Hilsman 1990: 88–89).

The Second Generation

The governmental or bureaucratic politics model was one of three conceptual lenses that Allison (1969, 1971) employed to explain U.S. foreign policy making during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. It was labeled Model III to distinguish it from Allison's other two frameworks, the rational actor model (Model I) and the organizational process model (Model II). In essence, the bureaucratic politics model views the actions of government as political resultants. These resultants emerge from a foreign policy process, characteristic of a competitive game, where multiple players holding different policy preferences struggle, compete, and bargain over the substance and conduct of policy. The policy positions taken by the decision makers are determined largely, although not exclusively, by their organizational roles. Miles' Law (Miles 1978: 399–403)—"where you stand depends on where you sit"—is an oft-cited proposition associated with this aspect of the model. The final government decision is not the product of a single rational choice where a unified body of decision makers methodically pursues a coherent set of national objectives, but rather "politics is the mechanism of choice. Each player pulls and hauls with the power at his [or her] discretion for outcomes that will advance his [or her] conception of national, organizational, group, and personal interests" (Allison 1971: 171).

The bureaucratic politics model encompasses more than twenty detailed assumptions, organizing concepts, or general propositions (see Allison 1971: 164–181). However, its most significant claims can be summarized as follows.

1. Individuals in governmental positions make government decisions and actions.
2. Actors outside the executive branch play a far less influential role in policy making than those inside. (Allison does not state this claim explicitly. His presentation, however, clearly leads to such an inference, and related case studies and critiques draw the same conclusion.)
3. An individual's policy preference can be predicted from his or her governmental position. Decision makers' policy stands, however, can also be affected by idiosyncratic factors.
4. An individual's policy goals and interests are influenced by national security, organizational, domestic, and personal concerns.
5. Deadlines and events compel busy individuals to take stands on a variety of policy issues.
6. Different individuals see different sides of the same policy issue because they occupy different governmental positions.
7. An individual's influence on particular policy issue is dictated by (a) bargaining advantages, (b) willingness to use such assets, (c) skill in using such advantages, and (d) other actors' perceptions of the second and third items.
8. Action-channels—"regularized means for taking action on a specific kind governmental issue"—activate bargaining advantages and formal or informal rules that govern political interactions.

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9. Governmental decisions and actions are *unintended* political resultants. That is, political bargaining produces outcomes that do not reflect what any one actor would have selected independently.

Of the three models within *Essence of Decision* (1971), Model III immediately generated the greatest attention. Many U.S. foreign policy analysts found it accurate and intuitively appealing to depict government actions as "intranational political resultants" where "players in positions" adopt policy stands based on their "parochial priorities and perceptions" (see Allison 1971: 162–181). Several studies employing, refining, or relating to the new framework were published in the 1970s (see, e.g., Halperin 1972; Allison and Halperin 1972; Destler 1972; Rourke 1972a; Allison 1973; Halperin and Kanter 1973; Gelb and Halperin 1973; Thompson 1973; Allison 1974; Halperin 1974; Halperin 1975; Gallucci 1975; Beard 1976; Destler, Clapp, Sato, and Fukui 1976; Allison and Szanton 1976; Jefferies, 1977; and Peters 1978). The initial popularity of Allison's work led one scholar to observe: "the bureaucratic interpretation of foreign policy has become the conventional wisdom" (Krasner 1972: 160).

Of these second generation bureaucratic politics scholars, Morton Halperin's work is most noteworthy. Allison and Halperin (1972) combined elements of Allison's Models II and III into a bureaucratic politics paradigm. In addition to aggregating the models, the authors extended Model III in four ways. First, they assumed that in some instances organizations could be treated as single, policy actors just as senior, junior, and ad hoc players were in Model III. Second, Allison and Halperin included shared attitudes and organizational factors as constraints on political bargaining and final outcomes. Third, a distinction was drawn between policy, decision, and action games. Fourth, they offered advice, in the form of a "planning guide," to senior policy makers on how to play the game of bureaucratic politics more effectively. Overall, Allison and Halperin sought to refine the bureaucratic politics model (as outlined in *Essence of Decision*) so it could be employed as a more effective analytical tool. Nonetheless, Allison's original Model III remained the prevailing scholarly means for explaining the influence of bureaucratic politics on U.S. foreign policy behavior; and the presence of two bureaucratic politics frameworks ultimately created confusion rather than facilitated clarity, with some observers mixing elements of the two together to create an amorphous bureaucratic politics "approach."

Morton Halperin's *Bureaucratic Politics & Foreign Policy* (1974) was chiefly responsible for supplementing the bureaucratic politics approach as articulated by Allison (1971) and Allison and Halperin (1972) by providing his readers a richly detailed account of how the game of politics is played within the U.S. foreign policy making arena. Specifically, his contribution was threefold. Halperin identified and described the wide range of executive branch actors—the president, political appointees, career bureaucrats, and organizations—that are consistently engaged in foreign policy decisions, namely military and security affairs. Importantly, the book described these players' interests, which emanate from their governmental roles and are essential to understanding their policy positions. In this context, he introduced the concept of "organizational essence," which relates to how bureaucrats interpret their organization's mission through the performance of particular tasks. Halperin also addressed extensively how these policy positions are advanced and defended through the use of arguments, the manipulation and control of information, and a variety of other bureaucratic maneuvers. Furthermore, he stressed the significance of distinguishing between decisions and actions with particular attention to the bureaucratic politics that pervade the implementation process and often distort decisions. However, Halperin (1974) did not refine or extend the preexisting bureaucratic politics model or tackle the issue of *how much* bureaucratic politics truly matter within the U.S. foreign policy-making process.

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Second Generation Critiques, Case Studies, and Revisions

While the bureaucratic politics model remained the dominant framework within the second generation literature, its scholarly appeal began to wane. By the late 1970s, the number of published critiques began to rival the number of published studies employing Allison's model (see, e.g., Krasner 1972; Holsti 1972; Rourke 1972b; Art 1973; Ball 1974; Conford 1974; Perlmutter 1974; Wagner 1974; Yanarella 1976; Brenner 1976; Freedman 1976; Caldwell 1977; Steiner 1977; and Nathan and Oliver, 1978). While critics argued the bureaucratic politics model was plagued by a number of deficiencies, including some descriptive inaccuracies, the most serious charges concerned its explanatory power. Simply put, the model was considered too complex. The same quality that allowed the model to offer accurate description, namely its rich detail, was seen as an impediment to parsimonious explanation. Some critics, moreover, complained this added complexity did not eliminate the model's ambiguity on key issues (discussed below). Overall, scholars consistently identified eight criticisms of the bureaucratic politics model as analytical tool to understand American foreign policy.

1. *The model is too complex* (Allison 1971: 274; Holsti 1972: 139; Bendor and Hammond 1992: 302, 318). Bendor and Hammond (1992: 318) argued, "Model III is simply too thick. It incorporates so many variables that it is an analytical kitchen sink. Nothing of possible relevance appears to be excluded."
2. *The model is too ambiguous and imprecise* (Art 1973: 486; Ball 1974: 84, 87–88; Conford 1974: 241–242; Wagner 1974: 448; Steiner 1977: 390–391, 406; Nathan and Oliver 1978: 86; Welch 1992: 121 and 136; and Bendor and Hammond 1992: 302–304, 314, 317, 319). According to critics, some underlying assumptions and propositions of Models II and III are difficult to separate analytically.[2] Critics also asserted it was not clear whether the players in Model III act according to pure or "bounded" rationality.
3. *Bureaucratic politics cannot be considered a genuine social-scientific model* (Holsti 1972: 138–139; Wagner 1974: 448; Ball 1974: 87–88; Yanarella 1976; Caldwell 1977: 95; Steiner 1977: 419–421; Bendor and Hammond 1992: 302, 319; and Welch 1992: 120). Holsti (1972: 137) observed "there are relatively few if-then propositions which link independent and dependent variables."
4. *The model neglects the roles of Congress, interest groups, and other actors outside the executive branch* (Art 1973; Ball 1974: 79; Wagner 1974: 450-451; Brenner 1976: 327; Freedman 1976: 445; Caldwell 1977: 96; Nathan and Oliver 1978: 88-89; Hill 1991: 287). Nathan and Oliver (1978: 88) wrote, "We can … gain only a distorted view of policy from the perspective of public governmental process if our conception of that process is too narrowly drawn."
5. *It is not clear that an actor's policy stand is determined by governmental position* (Krasner 1972: 165–166; Art 1973: 472–473; Ball 1974: 77; Caldwell 1977: 94; Bendor and Hammond 1992: 317; Welch 1992: 121; and Rhodes 1994). Krasner (1972: 165) asserted, "Decision makers often do not stand where they sit. Sometimes they are not sitting anywhere. This is clearly illustrated by the positions taken by members of the ExComm during the Cuban missile crisis which Allison [1969, 1971] elucidates at some length."
6. *The model neglects idiosyncratic factors in foreign policy making* (Art 1973: 486; Kohl 1975: 4; and Caldwell 1977: 95–96). Critics complained the governmental politics model ignores the importance of personal background, personality, operating style, generational mind-sets, worldviews, and past experiences.
7. *The model, if accurate, undermines accountability and democratic responsibility* (Steel 1972: 46; Krasner 1972: 160; Ball 1974: 85; Conford 1974: 237; Caldwell 1977: 94; and Steiner 1977: 395). Krasner (1972: 160) noted, "[The model's] vision is … dangerous because it under-

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mines the assumptions of democratic politics by relieving high officials of responsibility and … offers leaders an excuse for their failures."

8. *The model unduly dismisses the considerable position and power of the president in U.S. foreign policy making* (Krasner 1972: 166–169; Rourke 1972b: 432; Art 1973: 474–480; Perlmutter 1974: 90; Kohl 1975: 3, 5; Caldwell 1977: 96–98; Bendor and Hammond 1992: 315–317). Critics held the key to explaining foreign policy is in the "strong leader" assumption (Art 1973: 480; and Viotti and Kauppi 1993: 238), the "royal-court model" (Kohl 1975: 3), or "a central institutional-constitutional political struggle" (Perlmutter 1974: 90). They took issue with Allison's assertion that the president is both a regular player *and* a first among equals (see Allison 1971: 162 and Art 1973: 474–475).

Allison and other second-generation scholars failed to counter these eight major criticisms with refutations or corrections. Instead a small number of scholars used the model as a point of departure for theory-building. Rosati (1981) drew on the insights and limitations of the bureaucratic politics literature to present a systematic decision-making framework, encompassing decision context, structure, participants, process, and outcome. Kellerman (1983) sought to complement Allison (1971) by developing a Model IV, Model V, and Model VI to capture the role of small groups, the dominant leader, and the cognitive process in shaping decisions. Drawing on the agenda-control literature, Hammond (1986) developed a set of propositions related to the effect of organizational structure on bureaucratic politics and policy making. Hollis and Smith (1986) explored the reasons why decision makers do what they do by probing the relationship between bureaucratic roles and decision makers' individual perceptions. Lastly, Kozak (1988) drew on Allison (1971) and Halperin (1974) as well as Appleby (1949), Long (1949), Rourke (1972a), Peters (1978), and Wildavsky (1981) to develop a broader, more loosely defined model of bureaucratic politics for the study of U.S. national security policy.

More commonly, however, scholars simply employed the bureaucratic politics model (1971) or the bureaucratic politics paradigm (1972) as an explanatory tool in cases when bureaucratic or governmental factors were clearly salient (see, e.g., Rosati 1981, Townsend 1982; Smith 1985; Hicks 1990; Sullivan 1991; Spear 1993; Jones 1994; 1999; Qingshan 1994; Conley 1998; Holland 1999; Wiarda 2000; Carey 2001; Jones 2001[3]; Zhang 2006; Saiya 2005; Lavallee 2007). These cases, many of which were characterized by low presidential engagement and high bureaucratic involvement, provided useful insights on a wide range of U.S. foreign policy issues.

In terms of the bureaucratic politics model/paradigm's explanatory power, it is impressive that the approach has been used convincingly to capture decisions related to crises, the use of military force, arms control negotiations, diplomatic recognition, export control policy, arms sales, the revolution in military affairs, weapons procurement, humanitarian intervention, and bilateral relations between the United States and particular countries.

At the same time, a number of these case studies provide useful insights for theory-building and further refinement of Allison's bureaucratic politics model. In one of the best applications of Model III, Smith (1985) makes a compelling argument that Carter administration officials' policy stands in the American hostage rescue mission case were a product of both their bureaucratic roles and personal worldviews. In case studies examining U.S. prewar technology sales to Iraq and the development of the V-22 Osprey aircraft, Jones (1994, 1999, 2001) illustrates that bureaucratic organizations can be treated as single-policy players and their policy preferences can be predicted by their institutional missions and interests. Jones (2001) also shows the core assumptions of the bureaucratic politics approach can extend to actors outside the executive branch. Hicks (1990) and Holland (1999) finds that the bureaucratic politics model does not fully explain decisions related to the Iran-Contra Affair, Operation

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Desert Shield, and Operation Desert Storm. Instead its value lies in contributing to a deeper, more nuanced, and more complete understanding of U.S. foreign policy decisions, sometimes in combination with other explanatory frameworks.

Others directed their attention to critiques rather than case studies (see, e.g., Hill 1991; Bendor and Hammond 1992; Welch 1992; and Rhodes 1994). This work suggested the bureaucratic politics model remained flawed, but nonetheless worthy of continued scholarly interest and discussion. These critiques coupled with fewer applications of the model caused the political approach to foreign policy analysis to become less fashionable. Realists clung to rational choice models; and many pluralist analysts devoted more study to group dynamics, cognition, perception, and decision making style than to the influences highlighted in Allison's Model III (for an overview, see Hudson 1996: 224–225; Garrison 2003: 155–202).

A second edition of *Essence of Decision* (Allison and Zelikow 1999) did little to alter this state of affairs. Instead it prompted sharp criticism (see, e.g., Bernstein 2000; Garrison 2003: 179; Houghton 2000; and Rosati 2000). As Bernstein (2000: 147) observed, "The revised volume seems hasty and less like a thorough revision and more like a patchwork operation: inserting new material, adding qualifiers, and acknowledging much of the new history, but not dealing thoroughly, and often not adequately, with many criticisms published since the 1971 edition." In another review, Rosati (2000: 396) wrote that Allison and Zelikow's revision "is extremely disappointing … Indeed, the 'original' chapter on [Bureaucratic] Politics in the first edition remains clearer and much more powerful than the revised chapter. Why the authors chose to ignore so much relevant literature and why they decided to review literature that had limited application to Model III is unclear.… This is the model that required the most updating and refinement, but it has been neither enriched nor extended."

Where the second edition of *Essence of Decision* did not fall short was in its solid updating of the three descriptive case studies that parallel the discussion of each of three conceptual lenses—Model I, Model II, and Model III. It incorporated a wealth of new information from U.S. and Soviet sources that was not accessible when Allison first wrote the book. Similarly, Halperin and Clapp's second edition of *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy* (2006) followed the path of the first edition and did not make significant theoretical contributions. However, its expanded treatment of Capitol Hill recognized the growing role and influence of Congress in U.S. foreign policy making. With that element noted, the real value of the updated edition was an interesting collection of new examples of bureaucratic politics in action based on developments in the Carter, Reagan, Bush I, Clinton, and Bush II administrations. If anything, the book served as a convincing illustration of the continuing salience of bureaucratic politics within an American foreign policy process marked by more actors, issues, and overall complexity.

The Third Generation

Although Allison and Zelikow (1999) failed to respond seriously to two decades of criticisms of the bureaucratic politics model, the publication of a second edition of *Essence of Decision* coincided with renewed scholarly interest in the approach, beginning in the late 1990s. This wave of scholarship tends to use the term "governmental politics" to highlight the significance of policy actors with and beyond the bureaucracy and executive branch.

One prominent example of third-generation literature is a symposium in which eight scholars critically evaluate the current state and future prospects of the bureaucratic (governmental) politics literature (see Stern and Verbeek 1998). Welch (1998) argues from a positivist perspective that only by proceeding down a more scientific path will the approach have the capacity to cumulate meaningful knowledge about the true role of bureaucratic politics in shaping state behavior. One real benefit of Welch's contribution is his "menu for

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a bureaucratic politics paradigm" in which he provides an overview of the approach's key axioms, assumptions, and concepts from both an individual and organizational perspective. Weldes (1998) diverges from Welch to embrace an "argumentative turn." Specifically, she proposes that critical social constructivism may offer a more fruitful path for bureaucratic politics analyses by devoting greater attention to the discursive elements of policy struggles and power relations.

Kaarbo and Gruenfeld (1998), however, see more promise in updating the bureaucratic politics approach through the social psychology literature, especially if one wishes to understand the sources of political conflict and conformity within and between groups of policy players. This position is consistent with (Ripley 1995), who argues that blending bureaucratic politics with insights from the social cognition and organizational culture literatures offers a potentially fruitful path for reinvigorating the study of bureaucratic politics and foreign policy analysis.

Writing from a public administration perspective, 't Hart and Rosenthal (1998) advocate that scholars move beyond the taboos and risks associated with bureaucratic politics by devising strategies to live with bureaucratic politics, highlighting instances when such interactions enhance policy outcomes. Thus they contend two foci of study are in order: (1) an empirical analysis of the sources of and reasons for bureaucratic politics, and (2) a normative appraisal of the implications of bureaucratic politics. Lastly, Stern and Verbeek (1998) conclude the symposium by proposing a "neopluralist approach to bureau-governmental politics." Such a framework should reformulate Miles' Law to account for players' multiple and often conflicting roles, capture how organizational culture shapes conflicting roles and policy views, and seek to explain a wide range of substantive issues as well as transnational and cross-national policy behavior.

In other third-generation scholarship, Preston and 't Hart probe the political psychology of bureaucratic politics to "explain how the interaction between leaders and their advisory groups may create bureaupolitical dynamics that affect (in either a positive or a negative manner) how groups function and how the policy process is likely to evolve over time" (1999: 91). They also reconceptualize bureaucratic politics as a multidimensional variable rather than a permanent condition of foreign policy making; introduce an empirical framework to evaluate the degree to which bureaucratic politics is present in policy-making structures and processes; and create a normative framework to assess the impact of bureaucratic politics on the quality of the decision making. While Preston and 't Hart find the Johnson administration's Vietnam policy making was marked by "decisional pathologies associated with bureaucratic confrontation," they stress that the presence of moderate forms of bureaucratic politics in other cases could potentially enrich the quality of the decision-making process (1999: 90–92).

In an effort to recognize the breadth and diversity of actors, interests, and politics tied to foreign policy making, Jones (1999: 282; 2001: 65) suggests the development of a new governmental politics paradigm encompassing multiple analytical models. On one level, the models would share a common set of assumptions capturing the general characteristics of governmental politics, such as multiple actors, role-based behavior, and politically generated outcomes. On another level, each model could be distinguished by particular actors, forms of politics, and other procedural characteristics, which might vary with salience of the policy issue or the locus of decision making. Jones (1996, 2007) presents this approach in greater detail, building on the insights of Allison's bureaucratic politics model and then moving beyond by integrating a procedural issue area variable, several clarifications, and fewer underlying assumptions. These modifications seek to respond directly to the leading criticisms of Allison's bureaucratic politics model and lay the groundwork for a more analytically useful framework.

Similarly, Michaud (2002) reassesses Model III, as presented by Allison and Zelikow (1999), concludes it remains a useful mode of analysis for describing policy making processes, and then seeks to address one of its longstanding weaknesses—failure to operationalize the model. The

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study argues this shortcoming can be addressed by integrating Allison's work with Vincent Lemieux's "structuration of power" approach (1989). According to Michaud (2002: 272), Allison does not provide a means for knowing *how* political games affect policy outcomes. Yet, Lemieux's framework offers a remedy, because it "allow[s] the researcher to consider the actors involved in the pulling and hauling games Allison refers to, and the power they wield in order to see their preferred option win or establish dominance."

Other noteworthy research proceeds in different but related directions. Brower and Abolafia (1997) draw directly on Allison as well as their own broad ethnographic study to extend the traditional bureaucratic politics model. The result is a framework designed to explain the political behavior of low-level officials rather than the "pulling and hauling" between the high-level players depicted in Allison's work. The "politics from below" are motivated by the pursuit of personal identity and reflect a more improvisational and nondeterministic character than the "politics from above" specified in Allison's Model III. Another study (Hoyt 2000) argues proponents and critics of the bureaucratic politics model have overemphasized the *structure* of the policy-making environment at the expense of giving real definition to elements of the policy-making *process*, such as bargaining, pulling, and hauling. Using literature in political science, public administration, and social psychology as a point of departure, Hoyt contends that a potentially fruitful bureaucratic politics research program lies in process-oriented studies, which emphasize the process of resolving intra-group conflict.

Christensen and Redd (2004) are also interested in process, but in a different way. They test the relative explanatory power of bureaucratic politics model and poliheuristic theory to uncover which approach best captures how foreign policy makers assess information provided by their advisers and decide final courses of action in a crisis situation. Consistent with poliheuristic theory, Redd and Christensen find decision makers consider alternatives in political terms employing a noncompensatory principle rather than bargain over options. However, their study reveals these political evaluations and the choices that follow can be shaped by the presence of multiple advisers representing different foreign policy bureaucracies.

Another area of emerging scholarly interest involves the relationship between ideas and bureaucratic politics. Through a statistical analysis of U.S. Navy force posture over a four-decade period, Rhodes (1994) finds players' ideas and images offer far greater explanatory power than their bureaucratic roles and interests. Mitchell (1999) disagrees. His study of U.S. naval strategy in the 1980s shows the navy's service unions have a far greater impact than represented by Rhodes (1994). Mitchell also dismisses the separation of ideas and interests, as well as the claim that ideas are superior. Instead, he concludes that ideas and interests are mutually dependent phenomena. Lastly, through case studies of the U.S. Peace Corps and the State Department's former Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, Drezner (2000) explores the capacity of "missionary" (idea-infused) organizations to survive and thrive within an environment marked by bureaucratic politics. Agencies that are insulated from other bureaucracies have a better chance of surviving (maintaining their ideational mission) than embedded agencies. However, embedded agencies that are able to survive are more likely to thrive (influence national policy) than insulated agencies. Drezner contends his ideational approach addresses research gaps in the bureaucratic politics literature by drawing attention to the sources of bureaucratic preferences, the means employed to maximize organizational interests, and the use of organizational culture to sustain ideas that are critical to shaping final outcomes.

Future Research Directions

The preceding review of third-generation literature reveals an active and potentially rich research agenda for bureaucratic politics and American foreign policy analysis. For example,

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scholars should continue to respond to the criticisms associated with Allison's Model III with special attention to making it a more genuine social-scientific and analytically useful framework. In particular, more efforts to examine and broaden the decision maker and issue area applicability of the model would be desirable. Additional work that links bureaucratic politics and the theoretical insights from public administration, poliheuristic theory, political and social psychology, and other research traditions is likely to lend greater refinement (and excitement) to the study of bureaucratic politics and American foreign policy. Drawing upon the research related to intragroup dynamics may be especially fruitful. Furthermore, more analyses of the sources of decision makers' preferences, namely the complicated nexus between ideas and interests, idiosyncratic factors and bureaucratic roles, and leadership style and advisory systems, are needed.

In the absence of a new, widely accepted bureaucratic politics approach to U.S. foreign policy analysis, Allison's model (1969, 1971, Allison and Zelikow 1999) with all its imperfections will remain the focal point of the literature. Its durability and pervasiveness coupled with its intuitively appealing depiction of American foreign policy making as an inherently political process makes it difficult to believe otherwise. Case study applications of the model will continue to appear in print, as will the inevitable critiques. The bureaucratic politics model is also not likely to disappear as a fixture in university courses and textbooks. Fundamentally, it remains a useful frame of reference. Scholars and students will be inclined to turn to the model when they wish to probe the bureaucratic sources of policy options, or when certain conditions prevail, namely the low presidential engagement and high bureaucratic involvement associated with more routine, technical U.S. foreign policy issues.

Notes

1. This survey of the literature is drawn from Christopher M. Jones, 2010. "Bureaucratic Politics and Organizational Process Models." In *The International Studies Encyclopedia*, ed. Robert A. Denemark. London: Blackwell, Volume 1, 151–168.
2. Based on his reexamination of the Cuban Missile Crisis, McKeown (2001: 1187) believes the distinction between Model II and Model III is largely artificial.
3. Updated versions of this case study appear in Wittkopf and McCormick (2004, 2008).

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