

There is no harm in being
sometimes wrong –
especially if one is
promptly found out

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The nature of public administration

PUB 3115

March 11, 2016

Reminders

Statement of interest due on Wednesday,
March 16 – 2 pages in perfect English

Review of article due on April 8 ... must
make reference to the Denhardt and
Denhardt chapter

STATEMENT OF INTEREST

“When I was growing up I developed an interest in government and decided to major in public administration in university.”

“In grade eight, my teacher – Ms. Kim – asked each student to complete a project on “How I would change the world”. I recall spending hours over the course of three weeks, usually in the evenings but also on weekends, looking at magazines, newspapers and anywhere else for pictures of what I wanted the world to look like. I pestered my parents with questions such as, “Why are there still poor people”. The project I submitted had a vivid cover – see the photo below – illustrating my vision of world that, in my mind, was better...”

FOR NEXT WEEK --
READ ANY 15 PAGES
FROM CHAPTERS 2
and/or 3 OF *How to*
Succeed at University
WHICH CAN BE
DOWNLOADED AT:
http://www.ubcpres.ca/search/title_book.asp?BookID=2991749
[10](#)
BE PREPARED TO
DISCUSS THE PAGES
IN CLASS.

2 Skills for Success at School and Work

Oral presentations
Group work
Being a proactive professional
Using numbers
Taking notes
Getting yourself organized

3 Prospering in the Classroom and Workplace

Exams, a fact of life
Strategies for multiple-choice exams
Strategies for written exams
The usefulness of essays
Writing for the academic reader
How to organize an essay
The basic structure of an essay
Essay writing as a process
Common essay-writing errors
Lab reports and similar assignments
The last word

Public Administration and

1. Political Power

2. Public Policy

3. Institutions

4. the Public Service

5. Democracy

6. Evaluation

7 Ethics

8. Accountability

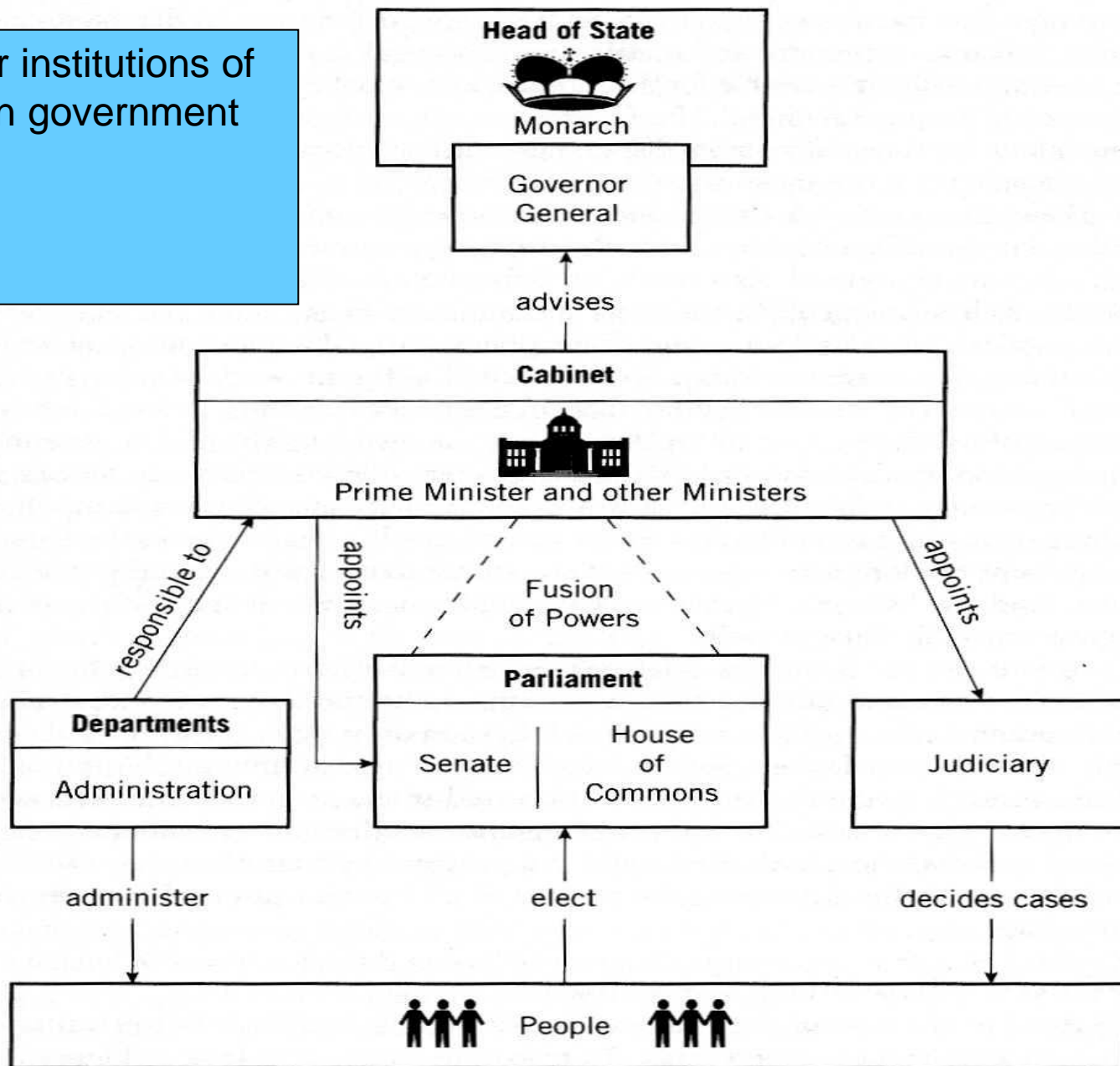
9. Management

D. Johnson, "Public Administration's Top Ten List," in John James Guy, ed. *Expanding Our Political Horizons: Readings in Canadian Politics and Government*, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace, 1997).

1. Public Administration and Political Power

- Politics (political power) concerned with deciding what government should do; while “administration” is concerned with “how to” do it
- Politics-administration dichotomy

The major institutions of Canadian government



Public Administration and Political Power

- Goal of public administration therefore different from private administration
 - **not** profit maximization
 - more diffuse and contradictory goals...
“help people... provide opportunity...
reduce poverty...”

2. Administration and Public Policy

- The role of public administrators in providing policy advice (developing options, making recommendations)
- Importance of knowledge and technical expertise
- Speaking 'truth to power'

3. Public Administration and Institutions

- Public administration occurs within a particular type of institution: large-scale, formal organizations (also called bureaucracies) and associated features such as the constitution
- There are a number of features associated with institutions/bureaucracies (formal rules, etc.) – Max Weber
- Institutions become “givens” – cannot be changed by individuals

The impact of bureaucracies

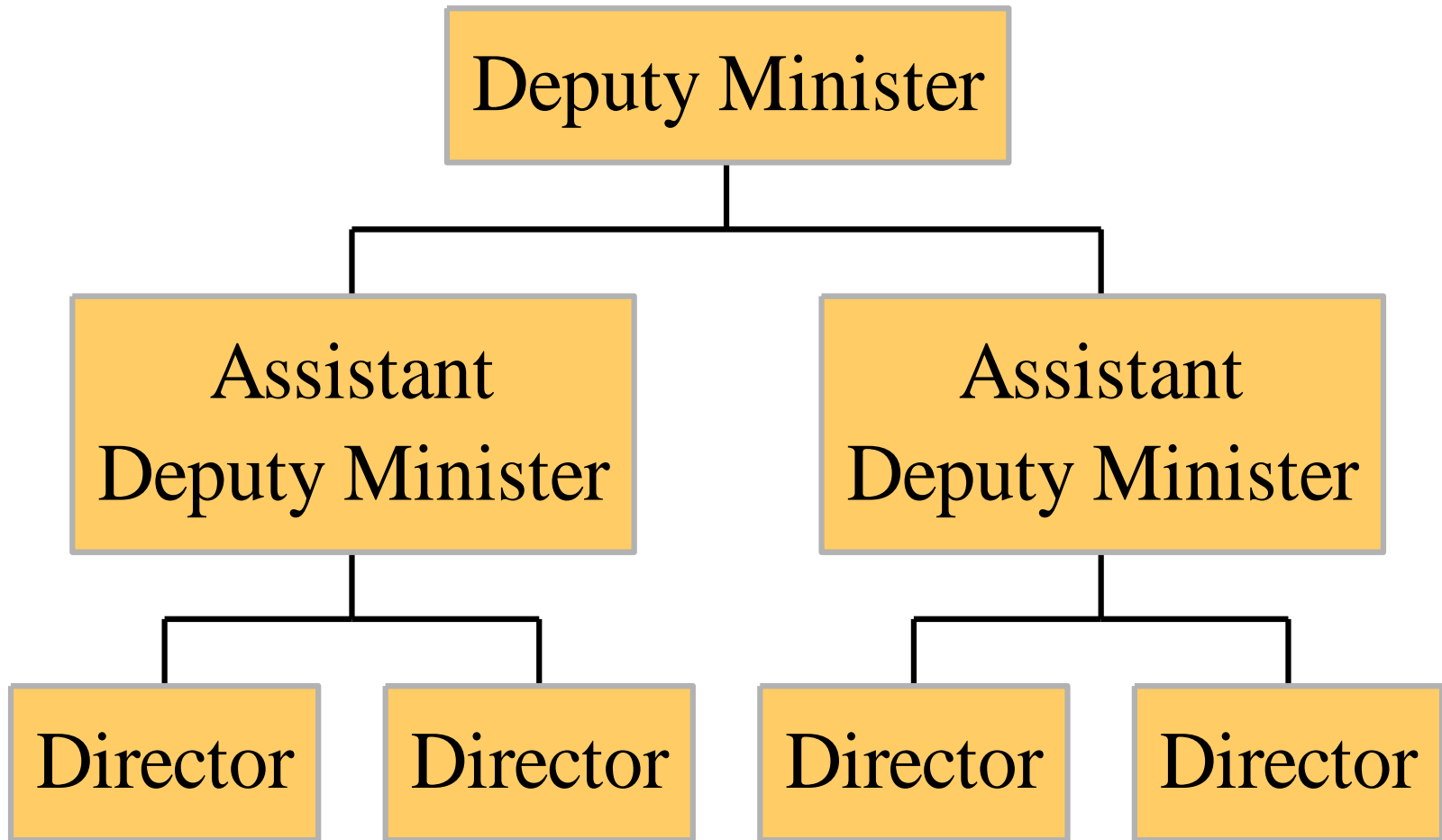
- The bureaucratic organization of the modern state requires that work be organized differently than ever before:
- large scale
- rationally, efficiently....
- As a result bureaucratic organizations came into being, based on principles that were different from the way work was done in the past: - impartial, hierarchy, impersonal, etc.

Working in such organizations is stifling (too many rules and regulation, no creativity, etc.) and dehumanizing

Bureaucracies treat people like cases rather than unique individuals

Thus people at work became “only a small cog in a ceaselessly moving mechanism that prescribes an endlessly fixed routine” (Max Weber)

Hierarchical Structure





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Alternatives?

- Are there alternatives to the bureaucratic organization of public administration?
- What are these:
 - e-government
 - special purpose bodies
 - privatization
 - Flatter organization

4. Public Administration and the Public Service

- The people working in government – permanent public servants
- Merit principle in hiring and promotion
- The government as both employer and regulator (especially important in labour relations, salary setting, etc.)
- Role of unions in public administration
- How representative should be public service be of the population?

Public Administration and the Public Service

- Should the public service set higher standards for those employed in the government?
- Can/should the public sector be used as a test case for specific types of management?
- What is “professionalism” in public administration?
- What are the values of the public service?

5. Public Administration and Democracy

- What is the role of public administration in a representative democracy?
- What is the difference between public servants serving the **government of the day**, not the **party in power**?
- Are public administrators ultimately accountable to the public or to politicians?

6. Public Administration and Evaluation

- How can the “output” of public administration be measured and evaluated?
- How is “efficient” and “effective” service measured? Especially in the absence of a market?
- Note the politics-administration tension (political decisions vs. effective/efficient programs)

Public Administration and Evaluation

- What or who provides incentives for changes in programs and administration (in the absence of “market” signals)?
- Who or what decides if a program or services is effective? Valuable?

7. Public Administration and Ethics

- What is proper behaviour for public servants?
- How are conflicts of interests addressed?
- Who decides “ethics” and who enforces these?
- What is the role of patronage and patronage appointments in public administration (ambassadors, deputy ministers, judges, administrative tribunals, etc.)

8. Public Administration and Accountability

- Greater scrutiny by the public, media, state institutions of public administration than for private administrators
- Accountable to whom? Politicians? Citizens? Interest groups?
- Can public administrators regulate and audit themselves?
- Who regulates the regulators?

9. Public Administration and Management

How different is public administration from generic “management”?

Is management (of people, budgets, resources, etc.) not the same regardless of the setting; whether private or public?

To what extent should government be “business-like”? How can this be accomplished? What are the implications?