Chapter 10
Patronage and the Public Service: A Dynamic Performance Governance Perspective

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Abstract Patronage is one of the enduring issues in public administration. Although the virtues of merit-based recruitment and retention in the public service are extolled widely, patronage of some form persists in many, if not most, countries. By using system dynamics modeling applied to performance governance, this chapter provides an analysis of both the pathological and the eufunctional aspects of patronage appointments in the public sector. It also considers the potential virtues of using patronage appointments. In addition, using a dynamic performance governance model, we examine how patronage may actually improve the performance of public services.

10.1   Introduction

The selection and appointment of public servants has been and remains a central issue in the study of the public sector.[1] It is also a central issue for practitioners who want to make government function better. The guiding assumption, everything else being equal, is that the public service will perform better with a permanent career civil service selected based on merit. Going back to the appointment of mandarins in China, and now the standard form of civil service for developed democracies, the

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[1] In this chapter, we will use "public servants" as an inclusive term meaning individuals employed in the public sector, while "civil servants" will refer to those who are appointed and managed through a merit system.

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nonpartisan civil service is the standard for good governance (Dahlström, Lapuente, & Teorell, 2012).

The alternative to the merit system is selection by patronage. By patronage, we mean the selection of public servants based on political affiliations. Those affiliations may be partisan; they may reflect personal relationships with political leaders or may reflect both attributes. The formal definition of patronage is:

> [T]he power of political actors to appoint by discretion individuals to non-elective positions in the public sector, irrespectively of the legality or otherwise of the decision (Kopecky, Mair, & Spirova, 2012)

The familiar argument on behalf of a merit-based civil service is both normative and empirical. The normative argument itself has several components. The primary argument is that hiring public servants based on merit enables governments to create a career public service of high quality that will be able to serve any elected government with equal conviction. The permanence of that civil service enables it to develop expertise in its policy domains and also to develop an organizational memory that helps maintain the stability of policy and service delivery.

A second argument on behalf of a merit-based career public service is that a government should be able to interact with all its citizens *sine ira et studio.* Hiring individuals based on merit, rather than their political affiliations, means that the public servants should be better able to interact with citizens on a professional basis and provide those citizens with high-quality service than if they are selected more on ascriptive criteria. There may still be questions about the representativeness of the bureaucracy on other criteria such as language or gender, but there should not be any political bias in administration.

At a more general level, the public sector should be a model employer for society and should attempt to diffuse ideas of equality and quality in the performance of public tasks. This role as an exemplary employer may be less relevant in market-oriented and achievement-oriented societies but is certainly critical in societies in which ascriptive criteria are important in all aspects of economic and political activity. If the state can establish a pattern of behavior that represents "best practice," then it may have the capacity to influence personnel practices in the remainder of the economy.

10.2   The Place of Patronage into Political and Administrative Theory

The study of patronage transcends two major bodies of literature in the study of political systems—politicization of the public bureaucracy and clientelism—and to some extent, patronage can be seen as a subset of either. While this linkage to broader bodies of theory is important and attaches greater weight to our studies of patronage, the linkage may also create some confusion and some misunderstanding about the nature of patronage in the public service. This paper is intended in large

part to clarify some of the misconceptions about patronage and to make what we consider to be the appropriate linkages with social science theory without distorting the nature and role of patronage appointments.

The basic argument here is that patronage is one form of a broader concept of politicization of the public service. Governments have several options for imposing their political control over the bureaucracy, one of which–and the most intrusive—is directly appointing their loyal people to government. Likewise, patronage may be a form of clientelism, but only one version of patronage—mass patronage at low levels within an organization and especially at subnational levels—can be seen as clientelistic. In the world of clientelism, public sector jobs are awarded to solidify the electoral position of a politician, while most of the patronage we are concerned within this research is used to enhance the governance capacity of a government or a political leader.

This chapter will discuss both the pathological and the eufunctional aspects of patronage appointments in the public sector. Most studies of patronage emphasize the negative aspects of the practice and the extent to which it undermines the professionalization of the public sector. However, patronage can also contribute to performance by bringing highly qualified personnel in the public sector. Furthermore, patronage can even contribute to democracy by ensuring that the program of elected officials is implemented by a bureaucracy that might otherwise be reluctant to do so.

10.2.1   Politicization of the Public Bureaucracy

The first of the two bodies of literature within which the study of patronage can be nestled is the discussion of the politicization of the public sector (Neuhold, Vanhoonacker, & Verhey, 2013; Peters & Pierre, 2004; Rouban, 2003). This literature focuses primarily on public bureaucracies in the industrialized democracies and especially focuses on the alleged increasing level of political involvement in the appointment and management of public servants in those government positions. The assumption behind much of this literature is that the merit system is being subtly but effectively eroded and that there is substantially greater political influence than in the past.

In some of the literature on political appointments in the public sector, there is an assumption that patronage is about creating "jobs for the boys and girls" (Grindle, 2012). In our study of patronage, the typology upon which we are basing that study (Panizza, Ramos, & Peters, 2017) we are assuming that although providing employment for one's political supporters is important, for presidents and prime ministers and their ministers being able to control government and to make good policies may be of greater importance. Not all political appointees are equal, and our primary concern is with those occupying more significantly policy-making or policy influencing roles within government.

Politicization is a rather broad concept and includes a range of mechanisms through which political actors attempt to influence public administration (see Peters,

2013). Politicization can refer to the selection of appointees for positions in government on political grounds–patronage *per se*—but it also can refer to other, more subtle, ways in which political actors attempt to shape the behavior of public servants (Bach, Hammerschmid, & Löffler, 2015). For example, governments may create parallel structures in which political officials monitor the career officials, and attempt to impose control over those careerists. Performance management systems can also be used to impose political constraints on the actions of civil servants (see Aucoin, 2012)–good performance is agreeing with the government.

One attempt to classify forms of politicization and therefore most forms of patronage (Peters, 2013) include as follows:

1. *Direct Politicization:* This is the type of politicization that is the central concern of this research. By direct patronage, we mean the appointment of public servants on political grounds and possibly without regard to professional qualifications. Good examples include Italy, Mexico, Thailand, and several African countries (see Kopecky, 2011).

   The above being said, mass patronage involving creating hundreds if not thousands of jobs for electoral reasons is more in line with clientelism than with patronage as we are discussing it (see below).

2. *Professional Politicization:* In this version of politicization, or patronage, the individuals appointed to public positions may be political, but they are also professional. For example, in Germany, there are two teams of senior civil servants, each having not only expertise and experience as public servants but also party affiliation. When one party controls governments, its civil servants are working, while the other team is temporarily retired, waiting for the next time their party comes to elected office. Having two teams of senior public servants is expensive, but may provide a balance between professionalism and political commitment.

   In Italy, this kind of patronage is also diffused and legally authorized for only staff support positions. The law n. 145/2002 gave elected officials a quite wide authority to fill also line positions of governmental administrations with managers affiliated to them. However, in 2017, the Supreme Court has limited this possibility to only key positions, such as in the case of a department director. A typical example of this phenomenon is provided by the Italian public service broadcaster (RAI) (De Vitis, 2016, p. 26). To describe such phenomena, the concept of "democratic anchoring" has also been used. This is referred to as the "emergence, shaping, and adaptation of anchors that hook and bind, and consequently, may even control civil society in general or specific sectors" (Morlino, 2005, p. 745).

3. *Redundant Politicization:* The third version of politicization was labeled redundant, meaning that the politicization was the result of redundant organizations watching each other. The extreme version of this pattern has been found in communist countries in which the party and the government had redundant structures. A less extreme version could be found in prefectural systems in Napoleonic regimes (Oberdorff & Fromont, 1995), although this may involve more legal than political control over local governments. Finally, the Mulroney government

in Canada created a political structure in ministries that shadowed the civil service structure (Savoie, 1994).

Another standard example of redundant politicization is the use of ministerial cabinets. These cabinets function as political advisory and enforcement bodies for ministers in countries such as France, Belgium, and the European Union (see Eymeri-Douzans, Bioy, & Mouton, 2014). Ministerial cabinets allow ministers to make appointments that often mirror the expertise already existing within the ministry, but doing so with individuals personally loyal to the minister.

4. *Dual Politicization:* In this model of politicization, both the legislative and executive branches are involved in the process. This patronage model may take the form of the legislature having to approve appointments made by the executive. It can also include large numbers of political appointments within the legislature itself to serve as a counterbalance to the analytic capacity within the executive. To some extent, this is both institutional politics as well as partisan politics. The United States would be a good example of this form of patronage.

5. *Anticipatory Politicization:* This is a somewhat subtle form of politicization and reverse patronage. That is, the argument here is that when a new government is elected, then many public servants who do not agree with that government will choose to retire or will find alternative employment. Christensen (2004) noted the presence of this form of politicization in Denmark, a country often considered to be largely immune from patronage and politicization.

6. *Social Politicization:* In addition to the possibility of political parties and political executives influencing the appointment and careers of public servants, various interest groups may also influence the appointment of public servants and may seek to have their members appointed to positions in government. This type of patronage is especially important when political parties and interest groups are closely connected, as in the case of labor unions and social democratic parties. This can also be a reward for interest groups having supported particular candidates in elections.

The above demonstrates some of the complexity of politicization, and that patronage is only one possible means of politicizing the bureaucracy. Thus, patronage is a clear indicator of attempts to politicize the bureaucracy, but that is only one aspect of that broader concept. Therefore, when we consider the attempts of governments to impose their control over the public bureaucracy, we need to ask why a government would choose this mechanism rather than the other available mechanisms to create the control.

10.2.2   Clientelism

The second broad body of the literature to which patronage in the public sector is often linked is referred to as clientelism (Hicken, 2011; Stokes, Dunning, Nazareno, & Brusco, 2013) or perhaps neopatrimonialism (Erdmann & Engel, 2007). Both of

those concepts emphasize the importance of personal rule in government and are in Weberian terms, forms of legitimate domination. The terms clientelism and patronage are often used synonymously but should be discussed more as distinct, albeit-related phenomena. Thus, while political patronage tends to focus on the role of political parties, or perhaps political executives, in the selection of members of the public service, clientelism emphasizes symbiotic relationships between individuals occupying a variety of governance roles.

While the study of patronage begins with the appointment of the public servant as a reward for loyalty to an individual politician or a political party, clientelism focuses more on the relationship between political leaders and their voters. In patronage, individuals are rewarded with jobs, and often high ranking position in government, while the benefits of supporting the patron in clientelistic models is often more economical, with jobs at a lower level within government, or perhaps benefits for a local community.

Thus, patronage is more elite politics while clientelism is more mass politics. The purpose of patronage is to control the government, and especially the executive branch, while the purpose of clientelism is maintaining the political position of the patron by gaining the votes of the clients in exchange for rewards. In most clientelistic arrangements, the patron appears more interested in ensuring his or her election than in the control of the government, and most benefits provided are more in terms of "pork barrel" or economic benefits for an individual or perhaps a region. While "distributive politics" occurs in many if not most political systems, the clientelistic variant tends to be associated with Latin America, Africa, and Southern Europe (an analysis of the vicious feedback loops that clientelism generates is developed by Bianchi et al., 2010, pp. 398–402).

The above having been said, clientelistic politics may involve making appointments of personnel in the public sector. In particular, clientelism may involve more mass patronage, especially in the local communities controlled (politically) by an individual. A public job may be one reward for clients who provide political support to their patron. These public jobs are generally low-level positions, while the patronage jobs with which we are concerned in this paper are often at the highest levels of government. While some of the jobs at high levels may be provided through personal relationships, more commonly, they are related to party affiliation and perceived professional capacities to perform important tasks in the public sector.

Following from the above, we will need to make a sharp distinction between appointments made for patronage and clientelistic reasons. The distinction we use here is often glossed over in the existing literature, but we believe it is important for understanding how political patronage functions. For understanding patronage appointments, we are interested in those appointments which are made by political leaders in order to support their governments, or their careers, as policymakers within the government. Most patronage appointments, therefore, will be made at the higher levels of government service, and most appointees will be working in administrative positions.

Appointments made for clientelistic reasons, on the other hand, tend to be larger scale and are motivated more by individual ambition than by an ambition to govern

successfully. The patron in clientelism may not hold a position in the executive, but merely use his legislative powers, or his powers as a local official, to create public sector jobs. Many, if not most, will be low-level positions with little or no relevance for public policy. These positions are important for the participants in these symbiotic relationships, but not for governing, and hence, clientelistic arrangements tend to be pathological use of appointments.

A real example of clientelism and an analysis of its effects will be here illustrated.[2] ACQUA[3] is a joint stock company established in 2003. It is owned by a large number of small municipalities (about 128) located in Southern Italy and provides water supply and sewerage services to more than 450,000 users. Its Board consists of five people, who are appointed by municipalities. Since the public utility is owned by a large number of small municipalities, it is often difficult to achieve mutually agreed decisions on the appointment of Board members. Therefore, political parties are used to take a leading role in making these decisions, which are mainly based on political affiliation, and rarely on professional experience and skills.

The decision-making process is highly centralized. Each department head has bounded decision power and autonomy. The managing director makes most decisions, which are then approved by the Board. This holds the responsibility of all strategic decisions. Examples of decisions made by the managing director and authorized by the Board include procurement (e.g., supplier selection), and personnel (e.g., recruiting).

The company does not adopt any formal performance evaluation system for its employees. The formal respect for procedures is perceived as more important than meeting performance targets. In this context, customer orientation is not a strategic priority: rules on how to deal with customer complaints are not available. The same is for using performance targets and benchmarking. Although customer service charter formally exists, the utility does not carry on any market survey aimed at detecting the perception of the level of customer satisfaction.

Figure 10.1 shows how the hiring of unnecessary and unqualified staff, due to political interferences, decreases the motivation and skills of personnel, which leads to lower customer service and poor financial performance. To cope with accumulated financial losses, rising social pressures are generated on the Municipal administration to provide financial subsidies that may fix such problems. A hiring volume of municipal funding towards the utility further increases political interferences (loop "R1").

This policy also generates a decline in the level of empowerment of the management in the utility and, hence, motivation, leading to further performance reductions (loop "R2").

Overstaffing also produces an increase in personnel costs, which in turn generates a rise in the operating costs, leading to a decay in financial results, which further reinforces political interferences (loop R3).

[2] This analysis will be based on the case illustrated in: (Bianchi et al., 2010, pp. 397–402).

[3] The name of the public utility has been intentionally disguised.

Fig. 10.1 Effects of clientelism on cost of service, staff motivation and skills, and management empowerment (adapted from: Bianchi et al., (2010), p. 400)

Fig. 10.2 Effects of clientelism on purchasing policies (adapted from: Bianchi et al., (2010), p. 401)
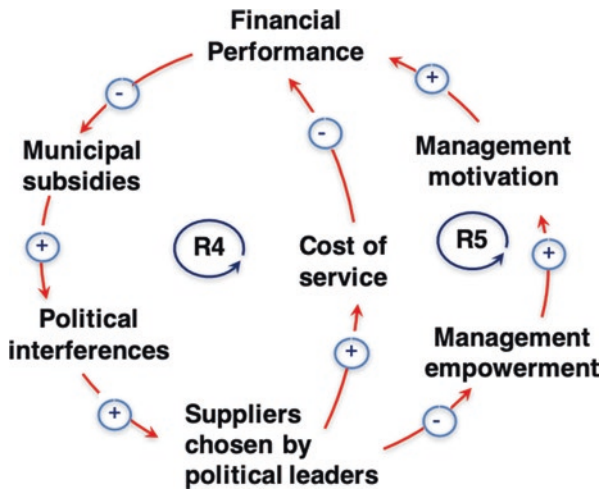
Another area of political interferences in the utility autonomy refers to the selection of suppliers, by the Board, only based on personal ties and political affiliation. This phenomenon increases operating costs (e.g., due to low-quality raw materials) and therefore reduces performance. A lower performance increases debts and the degree of external dependence and provides the basis for further clientelism (loop R4 in Fig. 10.2). It also reduces the public utility manager's autonomy, leading to a drastic drop in their motivation and performance (loop R5 in Fig. 10.2).

Figure 10.3 illustrates, through the balancing loop "B1", a possible successful exit strategy from clientelism in the analyzed case.

In order to neutralize the described political interferences, higher public sector transparency and accountability might be needed. This would require new or better rules to oblige elected officials to appoint public utility board members based on

Fig. 10.3 The possible role of social pressure for political transparency/accountability and performance governance in getting out of clientelism

criteria that differ from political or personal affiliation and may rather consider their certified competence, skills, and reputation.

To sustain an effective implementation of such new rules, an improvement in the quality of the broader performance governance is also needed. This implies the use of methods that may better support political leaders to: (1) outline intended community outcomes, (2) design and implement policies for their attainment, (3) assess achieved outcomes, (4) report them to community members, and (5) learn from a facilitated participation of community stakeholders to the evaluation of achieved outcomes.

This, in turn, does not only require the use of better planning methods but also would primarily need a social pressure by the local community towards higher political transparency and outcome-based accountability. Such pressure might be the effect of low trust in government because of the accumulated financial losses and poor service quality. In the long run, it should also be sustained by a strong community culture for collaborative governance.

10.3 Explaining Patronage

All political leaders want to control the government and to ensure that the administrative system implements its policy priorities. They also want to have the best possible policy advice, especially if that advice corresponds to their political values. Given that patronage appointments in the public service may facilitate governments

achieving those goals, and in some instances perhaps governing better, why do not all governments have extensive levels of patronage appointments? Or conversely, given that there is strong evidence that Weberian bureaucracies are important for development (Evans & Rauch, 1999; see also Grindle, 2012, Chap. 1), why are there so many patronage-based systems?

The first answer to this question is that all governments do have some patronage positions. The differences are quantitative, not qualitative. For example, even countries such as the Scandinavians or the United Kingdom with long histories of professionalism in the civil service have patronage appointments, and an increasing number of patronage appointments by most accounts (Dahlström & Niklasson, 2013). Likewise, all governments appear to offer positions that are more clientelistic, having little real power over public policy but useful for rewarding their political supporters.

Leaving aside the apparent universality of political patronage, what explains different levels of patronage that we can observe? Even within the Latin American countries studied in our ongoing research project, there are differences in the intensity of patronage appointments in the public sector. Or phrased differently, what explains the institutionalization of a career public service when it may be in the interest of political leaders to maintain their possibilities of appointment for both governmental and clientelistic purposes? Furthermore, what can explain the failure of reform efforts that seek to create a more merit-based system of public employment (Geddes, 1991)?

10.3.1 Explaining Adoption of Patronage Model for Administration

Perhaps the simplest explanation of patronage is the dominant social and cultural model that argues that patronage arises because there are strong social norms that support providing support to members of a leader's group. Patronage (often in the broader, clientelistic sense) is expected, and failure to provide jobs would be considered, politically, and even morally wrong.[4] While that explanation assumes cultural patterns are stronger than perhaps they are, there does appear to be some cultural element involved in the acceptance and institutionalization of patronage in public administration.

The most obvious and almost trivial answer is that politicians want to control government and government policies. They may believe that the permanent bureaucracy they inherit when they assume office is biased, or incompetent, or both. That belief may be especially true when there are marked ideological differences with the preceding government, and hence a felt need to "clean house" or in Trump's term

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[4] One of the best explanations of this pattern is provided by Fred Riggs (1966) classic work on the Thai bureaucracy.

"drain the swamp." But even when the governments are more similar, there is generally a perceived need to shape government in a particular way and with a particular set of individuals.

However, it may not only be partisan control that political leaders desire from their use of patronage appointments. These leaders may find that the permanent civil service they inherit does not have the skills necessary to provide good policy advice, or good implementation of programs. This deficiency on the part of the career civil service may be a function of inadequate salaries for government jobs, or perhaps an absence of respect for public employees. Of course, bringing in political appointees at higher salaries and in more important positions may merely institutionalize the inadequacies of the civil service, but for any government taking office, the need to govern may outweigh concerns with the long-term consequences of their actions.

Patronage systems may also result from the perceived need to build political parties where they are weak or nonexistent (Shefter, 1977). That explanation of patronage may be more applicable with the mass patronage more akin to clientelism, but if the purpose is to build more of an elite caucus party, the more constrained vision of patronage we are working with may still be useful. Providing positions in government might be a means of bringing political elites into the party and would be especially useful if those elites had policy and administrative skills. Likewise, making patronage appointments may be a means of co-opting potential political opponents.

The development of patronage appointments in government may also reflect broader social and developmental movements. For example, Kenny (2013) argues that patterns of patronage reflect the distribution of powers at the time of independence in former colonial countries. When the center of power at that formative moment is weak, the tendency is to delegate powers to the periphery and that delegation leads to high levels of patronage. That patronage, however, tends to be more in the clientelistic form than the more governmental form we are concerned about within this project. Although more centralized, patronage was also a central activity in state-building in Central and Eastern Europe (O'Dwyer, 2006).

Patronage may also arise because of the low capacity of the career civil service and the need to build greater policy capacity within a government. That low capacity, in turn, may be a function of poor pay and low prestige for workers in the public sector. Even if governments cannot always hire "the best and brightest," they need to have capable people, but poor economic circumstances or a shortage of qualified personnel may produce a low-quality public service. The ability to hire outside the formal merit system and bring expertise into government can be essential for good governance. While much of the focus in the study of patronage is on Latin America, some of the same problems were experienced in Central and Eastern Europe after the end of communism. That connection tainted many of the trained professionals from the former government, so governments had to seek expertise elsewhere (Randma-Liiv, 2001).

Finally, although somewhat less relevant for the Latin American cases, the imposition of New Public Management (NPM) in public bureaucracies has had the effect of politicians seeking to reassert control over their governments (Peters & Pierre, 2004). One of the effects of NPM has been to "let the managers manage" and to

reduce the powers of politicians over their public service. While this may have produced some efficiency gains, it produced losses in "the primacy of politics." Politicization, in general, and patronage, more specifically, has been one means of restoring control.

10.3.2   Explaining Types of Patronage

In addition to developing the typology (Panizza et al., 2017) on the types of patronage, our paper attempts to provide some explanation for the appearance of the types of patronage we identify. This paper focuses on the importance of party institutionalization and the programmatic nature of parties as primary explanations for the choices being made. For example, we argue that in institutionalized parties and party systems, the party is the central actor in governing, and hence, partisan trust is more likely to play a role in the selection of patronage appointees. Likewise, more programmatic parties can be expected to focus on the policy roles of the appointees somewhat more than on their political roles.

It should be noted also that the relationships between party and patronage may be reciprocal. While more institutionalized parties will be more likely to utilized types of patronage depending upon partisan trust, that patronage may, in turn, create support for the party. That support is not necessarily the mass support expected in clientelism, but rather the support of policy professionals as well as political actors who are interested in governing.[5]

10.3.3   Explaining the Persistence of Patronage

Kenny's arguments about India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) also point to the path dependence of patronage. Once the pattern of employment was established in the public sector, it is difficult to alter it. In the original argument from the historical institutionalists (Steinmo, Thelen, & Longstreth, 1992), an exogenous shock of some sort—punctuation in the equilibrium—would be required. While path dependence is not, at least in theoretical terms, not so difficult to overcome (see Mahoney & Thelen, 2010), still when an institution such as patronage has been established, it may be difficult to dislodge. Gradual methods of change, such as layering and displacement, may be more effective than direct confrontations with a full-blown merit system.

As Geddes (1991) argues, the movement away from patronage in the public sector is made more difficult by those officials who already have public jobs, as well as

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[5]The additional assumption is, of course, that success in making and implementing policies will lead to political success for the party, and hence its institutionalization is at least a very basic conception of that concept.

by politicians who see the value of retaining their appointment powers. While those politicians in office may want to make their appointees permanent, they may be prohibited from doing so by law and by the opposition of other parties that want to be able to make appointments in the same positions at a later date.[6] The incumbent party may be reluctant to begin a process in which their chances for appointments in the future may be limited. Patronage reform appears to be a game in which no one has an incentive to make the first move.

Merille Grindle (2012) takes a somewhat different perspective on movements away from patronage systems. Indeed, she uses a variety of concepts to explain the movement away from patronage systems (as well as their creation in the first instance). Perhaps crucial among these variables is the level of predictability faced by governments, with those with low predictability wanting a more institutionalized civil service to cope with those difficulties. Furthermore, she (to some extent, like the historical institutionalists) places a great deal of emphasis on the role of events as mechanisms for solidifying or creating a coalition for change.

Even if merit-based systems are created in former patronage systems, their stability and persistence are fragile. Institutionalizing an alternative to a system of personnel recruitment and management that has been in place for decades, if not centuries, is a difficult process; the chances for backsliding are significant. For example, Mendez (2010, 2016) demonstrated how civil service reforms in Mexico were undermined quickly by using a clause in the law intended only for emergencies or exceptional circumstances. Likewise, Ferraro (2006) demonstrated the same sort of subversion of the new system in Argentina.

10.4   Coping with Patronage

Given the prevalence of patronage around the world, the desire of many governments (as well as their international donors) to do something about patronage, what are the options for coping with high levels of patronage appointments? This discussion can lead to the development of a dynamic model for coping with patronage.

One means of coping would be to improve the quality of the civil service so that there is less reason to hire individuals from outside. This approach would be viable primarily when patronage is being used to improve the quality of governance and not in cases when patronage is used to reward friends and supporters. This can also be a long and difficult process. Hiring better civil servants will require more money for the public sector. It also changes the regard of public service by members of society, especially by its more talented members. Even without large scale

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[6] The merit system in the United States was built in part by "blanketing in" appointees by presidents. This process began soon after the Pendelton Act that established the civil service (but only covered about 10% of public employees) until at least the Eisenhower administration (Theriault, 2003; Cook, 2015).

injections of money, providing training and exercising greater care in recruitment can produce some improvements in the personnel within a government.

The improving quality of the civil service may have to be coupled with changes in the legal framework that regulates employment in the public sector. These changes will affect the rewards offered to the employees, how they are recruited and retained, and the degree of autonomy they have from political control. Those reforms may be difficult to pass, given that in any case, sweeping reforms are difficult, and incumbent political officials may have good reasons to maintain their options for appointing their friends and colleagues to positions in the public sector.

A second version of using the improvement of the civil service as a means of overcoming problems in governance, and specifically patronage, is to develop "islands of excellence" (Grindle, 2007). Rather than attempting to eliminate patronage and reform the civil service all at one time, the strategy is to focus on a limited number of organizations or policy domains. This strategy has been followed in cases such as Mexico, which created a career service in their electoral institute and then attempted to diffuse the model, albeit with limited success.

A third means of coping with patronage would be to contract out government services to actors in the private sector, whether in the market or the nonmarket sectors. Contracting out, however, could be a (thinly) disguised form of patronage. If the contracts are awarded to the friends and supporters of the political leadership then this is, in essence, patronage through another mechanism. If, however, the contracting is done through an open and competitive bidding system, then some gains in the quality of service provision may be possible. Nevertheless, contracting will be useful primarily for hiring personnel at the lower levels of the administrative system and is of much less use for the policy-making positions in the public sector.

A fourth means of coping with patronage may be to begin to "blanket in" patronage appointments and make their positions permanent. This can be an appealing strategy for political leaders who hold office at the time of making the appointees into civil servants because it means that their appointees will be in government long after the individual leader has left office. An official in office, therefore, would have an incentive to engage in such a process, while those outside and hoping to gain office would have an incentive to oppose this process of making permanent previously patronage positions blanketing in is especially likely to occur when there is substantial party competition, with the leaders of the incumbent party having a significant probability of being replaced at the next election.

We should also note that while "blanketing in" may be the easiest way to reduce the level of patronage in a political system, it may be a very slow way toward creating a merit-based system of civil service recruitment. The individuals being "blanketed in" are themselves political appointees and will be in office (if they wish) for some time after their patron leaves office. Only then will these positions be filled by merit selection. Moreover, if the appointees received their positions because of political criteria rather than merit criteria, the government will be employing less than fully qualified people for a significant period.

10.5   In Praise of Patronage: A Dynamic Performance Governance Approach

Much of the discussion of patronage in the public sector assumes that patronage is undesirable as a means of staffing the public sector. Before closing, we should consider for a moment that patronage may not be as completely negative a form of personnel management as usually portrayed. The conventional wisdom in public administration provides, as already discussed, several strong arguments on behalf of the merit system and career public services. Those arguments are based primarily on the desirability of having neutral public servants making decisions on the legal and technical merits of the cases they confront. This decision-making is expected to produce fair outcomes for all citizens, as well as high-quality policy choices. Furthermore, a career public service is assumed to contribute to the stability of political systems (Arriola, 2009), especially those which might be threatened by frequent extralegal regime change.

Those arguments on behalf of the merit system are important, but there are also significant arguments that can be made on behalf of a more patronage-based public sector. The possible contributions of patronage to governance can be forgotten in the pressures from donor organizations, and other reformers, to create a merit-based system. Perhaps most importantly, the advocacy of merit systems assumes that it is possible to create such a system readily with inadequate resources–both human and material–and with intense competition for talent from the private sector.

The first normative argument on behalf of patronage is that it places people in public office who are committed to the program of the government of the day. While career public servants may be technically competent, they may also be indifferent to, or even oppose, the programs of the current government (O'Leary, 2006). Those political leaders want to have individuals working with them who support their programs and who are anxious to make those programs work. Even if career public servants do not oppose the programs being implemented that may not produce the same level of activity found with patronage appointments.

Related to the first point, a more patronage-based public service may be perceived to be more democratic. Just as politicians want public servants who are committed to the policies on which they campaigned, so to do citizens want to see the policies for which they voted implemented as planned.[7] A career civil service may be seen as hijacking electoral promises as much by the public as by political leaders seeking to implement those promises. While democracy also involves the rule of law and should provide some stability, still patronage appointments may be seen as a means of ensuring that the public's preferences expressed in an election are put into practice.

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[7] We do need to recognize that a career civil service is only of a number of factors that may inhibit changes in policies after an election. See Rose (1976). But it is the one that is most commonly cited by politicians once they take office, especially in the contemporary period when "the administrative state" is seen as a major enemy of the people by populist politicians.

Furthermore, the use of patronage appointments enables public officials to create more representative public sectors than those that are created through merit systems (Peters, 2015). The potential to appoint whom political leaders want is especially relevant in societies in which some minorities may, because of inequalities in the education system or speaking different languages, have difficulties in passing formal merit examinations. There is no guarantee that the political leaders will utilize this facility for appointing members of minority groups, but there is the opportunity.

Following from the above, a patronage-based system of recruiting public servants may be more innovative than one dependent upon career public servants. A common, if generally overstated, complaint against the permanent career system is that it becomes entrenched and protects its positions and its policies. While organizational memory and predictability are important virtues in government, so too are innovation and adaptability (see Karo & Kattel, 2018). Therefore, some degree of patronage in an administrative system can reinvigorate the system and facilitate its adaptation to changing needs, both political- and policy-based.

In addition to the potential political advantages of making the public sector more diverse and more representative, representativeness may improve some aspects of performance in the public sector. This is especially true for the delivery of services by "street-level bureaucrats" (Hupe, Hill, & Buffat, 2015). These public employees meet face to face with the public, and these interactions may be facilitated if the clients are being served by public employees who are similar to them. That may not guarantee successful service delivery, but it may facilitate those activities.

Therefore, any simplistic rejection of patronage is likely to be counterproductive, but that said so too is an excessive attachment to the merit system. The task, therefore, is to find some balance between a patronage-based system with its responsiveness to political direction and its adaptability, and a merit-based system with its professionalism and its probity. All governments search for that balance, and each finds at least a temporary equilibrium that suits it. However, that equilibrium is indeed temporary.

From the analysis developed so far, a eufunctional view of patronage emerges. Several factors in favor of patronage, leading to possible community outcomes improvement, can be identified. The appointment, by elected officials, of trustful people to cover key governmental roles may both enhance horizontal and vertical coordination, and therefore governance capacity (Christensen et al., 2016). Patronage appointments may accelerate the pace and quality of implementation of change reforms. Also, a better vertical and horizontal coordination may improve the consistency of policy design, as an effect of the quality and speed of communication between elected officials and their appointees. Such a benefit would also result in better cascaded political goals and implemented actions at an administrative level.

In addition to improving capacity, increased levels of patronage may also increase the accountability of the public sector. Career public servants do have the virtues of being expert and experienced, but they are also protected from political influences by their tenure in office. If these civil servants are not good Weberians and do not follow the directions of their superiors, then there can be major accountability issues. Fortunately, these are relatively rare in the consolidated democracies (but see
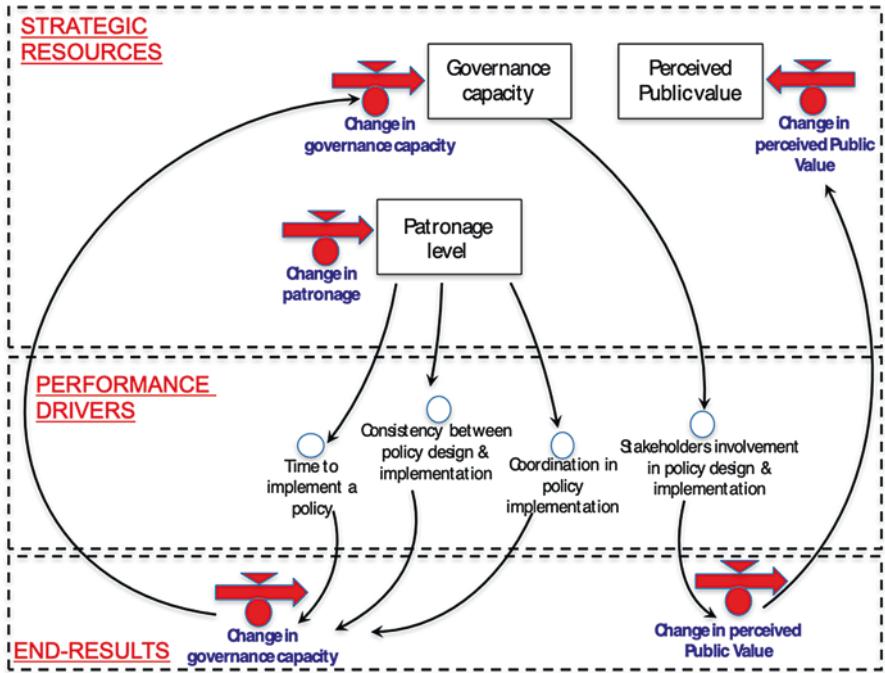
Fig. 10.4 A "Dynamic Performance Governance" chart to model how patronage may affect community outcomes

O'Leary, 2006), but a more politically responsive set of public employees may enhance accountability.

These benefits arising from patronage appointments could be modeled through a "dynamic performance governance" approach. Such an approach is based on applying "Dynamic Performance Management" (DPM) to Performance Governance (Bianchi et al., 2019). DPM (Bianchi, 2016) may allow us to model the factors impacting on performance governance outcomes (Bouckaert & Halligan, 2008) and examine the interactions among numerous factors within the model.

Through DPM, alternative or complementary means (strategic resources) for improving performance drivers and end results can be identified. To affect performance drivers in a short-medium time horizon, decision-makers must build, preserve, and deploy strategic resources that are systemically linked to each other. Strategic resources are modeled as stocks of available tangible or intangible factors in a given time. Their dynamics depend on the value of corresponding inflows and outflows. Such flows are modeled as "valves" on which decision-makers can act through their policies, in order to influence the dynamics of each strategic resource, and, through them, performance.

As shown in Fig. 10.4, two main outcomes from patronage can be identified. A final outcome is the change in perceived public value. Such outcomes can be affected by a higher capability of government to involve different community stakeholders

in policy design and implementation (Bovaird & Loffler, 2003; Bryson, Crosby, & Middleton Stone, 2006; Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011). This capability can be measured as a medium-term driver of such an end result. It can also be fostered by government through the improvement of governance capacity. As said, a eufunctional approach to patronage can contribute to increasing governance capacity. Therefore, a change in governance capacity can be modeled as an intermediate outcome, i.e., as a "small win" (Ansell & Gash, 2007) for the pursuit of final outcomes.

To generate a positive change in governance capacity, three main performance drivers could be affected in a short-medium time horizon through patronage: (1) time to implement a policy, (2) consistency between policy design and policy implementation, and (3) coordination in policy implementation, at the administrative level. In these terms, an intensive patronage level may reduce the time for implementing policies, increase consistency between policy design and implementation, and improve coordination in policy implementation by government administration. Improvement of each performance driver (in relation to respective benchmarks) may generate an increase in the net change of governance capacity (intermediate outcome).

Therefore, the simplified model in Fig. 10.4 identifies three main strategic resources, from which performance governance can be affected. The ultimate resource is the stock of perceived public value. To improve such stock, the improvement of another strategic resource is necessary, i.e., governance capacity. Also, this stock cannot be purchased directly in the market by government. On the contrary, it could be built up through patronage. So, the patronage level (i.e., the intensiveness of patronage) is a strategic resource on which elected officials may act in order to affect a change in governance capacity and to contribute to improving public value for the benefit of voters.

It is important to observe, however, that nonlinear relationships exist between the mentioned variables. For instance, if an increase in the patronage level is likely to generate an improvement in the three previously described performance drivers impacting on the change in governance capacity, this can be true under at least two conditions. A first obvious condition is that more patronage should correspond to an improvement in the intellectual capital at the administrative level. A second condition is that a too high level of patronage—meaning a too intensive resort to contracts to hire trustful professionals by politicians—might become unsustainable (beyond a threshold level), not only in consideration of limitations imposed by law, but also even because of problems that might arise due to the loss of a stable professional bureaucracy. We do not yet have sufficient information to identify the threshold values, but we do need to consider the potential source of governance problems.

10.6   Moving Between Patronage and Merit

We have not rehearsed a set of arguments for and against patronage employment in the public sector. Despite the conventional wisdom favoring merit systems, we are arguing that patronage is neither completely undesirable, and that merit systems are

not completely virtuous. To some extent, the choice of one form of personnel recruitment or the other should be a function of circumstances rather than an ideology about public personnel management. Moreover, in addition to circumstances, the choice of personnel systems should recognize that not all forms of patronage are as potentially damaging as are others.

Patronage arrangements designed merely to reward political cronies or campaign donors are unlikely to produce effective governance. This is the image that most patronage arrangements have with the public and with many students of public administration. On the other hand, patronage designed to recruit talented individuals from the private sector and to supplement the personnel of the public sector with individuals who might not ordinarily take a public sector job can make major contributions to good governance. Thus, we need to be careful in assessing the nature of patronage and public personnel more generally.

We also need to consider patronage and merit employment in more dynamic terms. We have been discussing the forms of employment in static terms, but we are also concerned with how reformers might be able to move employment from one form to another, here including those who might want to increase patronage as reformers. Moreover, we should also consider processes that tend to reinforce existing patterns of employment, making it more difficult to move away from the *status quo.*

10.7   Summary and Conclusion

This paper represents an attempt to discuss some of the major issues in patronage and to locate this important phenomenon in public service in the literature on public administration and comparative politics. By necessity, this paper has been selective in the topics covered, as no single paper could hope to do justice to the extensive literature on patronage and the associated concepts of politicization and clientelism. Nevertheless, this paper tries to raise some of the principal issues that should be explored in a comparative study of patronage and its relationship to public administration.

Although patronage is often conceptualized in a rather undifferentiated manner, we have been attempting to distinguish the types of patronage that exist in a variety of political systems. This differentiation is important because not all forms of patronage may be as toxic as usually assumed in the reformist literature. While a well-functioning merit system can produce good governance in most instances, there are tasks within the public sector that are perhaps better performed by patronage appointees who are more committed to the goals of the party and the individual political leader. Thus, unlike most studies of patronage, we adopt a somewhat neutral normative stance and even find some virtues in patronage appointments, albeit within some bounds.

We also have developed a dynamic performance model to explain how patronage appointments may be reinforced over time if they do contribute to the performance

of the public sector. We identify the drivers of performance that may be related to patronage and look at potential feedbacks among the relevant variables. This model could also be used to explain why patronage appointments may be reduced if there is a reduction in public value if the appointees do not actually improve performance.

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