

Chapter 13

Hurricane Katrina: Preparedness, Response, and the Politics Administration Dichotomy

Michael J. Brennan and Steven G. Koven

CONTENTS

13.1	Introduction	254
13.2	Hurricane Katrina and the Readiness of New Orleans	254
13.2.1	The Storm.....	254
13.2.2	Hurricane Studies and Preparedness.....	256
13.2.3	Critics of the Hurricane Response	258
13.3	Katrina the Politics Administration Dichotomy.....	260
13.3.1	The Dichotomy, Representation and Neutral Competence	260
13.3.2	FEMA Director Brown	262
13.3.2.1	Brown's Background.....	262
13.3.2.2	Brown's Behavior at Time of Hurricane	263
13.4	Conclusion.....	264
	References.....	266

13.1 Introduction

Hurricane Katrina made landfall along the Louisiana and Mississippi coast on August 29, 2005. It was the latest of several significant weather related events to impact the Southeastern United States since 2004. In the fall of that year, four major hurricanes made landfall in the region including Hurricane Ivan which made landfall along the Alabama coast in September and cost an estimated \$14 billion due to damage and over 50 deaths (The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2006).

AQ1

When Katrina made landfall along the gulf coast, the storm had sustained winds of 145 mph and measured approximately 400 miles across (Hearing Charter: NOAA Hurricane Forecasting, 2005, 3). The damage and destruction through Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama in the aftermath of Katrina were extensive and widespread covering approximately 90,000 sq. mi. (U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), 2005, Testimony of Norman J. Rabkin, 1).

In each of these events, the federal government had a major role in coordinating relief efforts with state and local officials. The size and scope of the devastation in the aftermath of Katrina required a massive coordinated effort. A number of factors compounded the ability to mount an effective response. This chapter discusses the state of hurricane preparedness in New Orleans as well as the perennial conflict between the ethos of neutral competence and that of political responsiveness. It argues that elected leaders have discretion in their appointment power and that they are entitled to make appointments that they believe will further their broad vision of governance. However, the chapter utilizes Hurricane Katrina as a case study in order to illustrate the danger political patronage poses to effective governance. It concludes that a proper balance must be struck between competence (people with the aptitude to carry out responsibilities entrusted to them) and the ability of elected leaders to implement policies that reflect the wishes of the majority. This balance between neutral competence and political responsiveness lies at the heart of the politics-administration dichotomy enunciated by Woodrow Wilson in 1887. Prior to elaborating upon the inherent tension between these competing mandates, the storm itself and the city's preparedness for such an eventuality are discussed.

13.2 Hurricane Katrina and the Readiness of New Orleans

13.2.1 *The Storm*

Hurricane Katrina was only the third most powerful storm of the season, behind Hurricane Wilma and Hurricane Rita; however, its impact on the Gulf Coast was devastating to people and property. Katrina first made landfall as a Category 1 hurricane just north of Miami, Florida, on August 25, 2005 before moving into the Gulf of Mexico and strengthened to a formidable Category 5 hurricane with maximum winds of 175 mph. Rapid intensification occurred during the first 24 h after entering the Gulf of Mexico due in part to the storm's movement over warm sea temperatures. On August 27, the storm was upgraded to Category 3 intensity. A second period of rapid intensification led to Katrina strengthening to a Category 5 storm by August 28. Katrina reached its peak with maximum sustained winds of 175 mph and gusts of 215 mph. At the time, Hurricane Katrina was the fourth most intense Atlantic Basin hurricane on record; however, later in the year, Hurricane Rita and Hurricane Wilma would surpass Katrina in intensity.

Hurricane Katrina weakened as it approached land, making its second landfall on the morning of August 29 near Buras-Triumph, Louisiana, with 125 mph winds. It is estimated that hurricane-force winds extended outward 120 miles from the center. The storm made its way up the eastern Louisiana coastline, affecting most communities in Plaquemines, St. Bernard Parish, and Slidell in St. Tammany Parish. As Katrina moved diagonally over Mississippi, high winds cut a swath of damage that affected almost the entire state. Storm surges smashed the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast, including towns in Mississippi such as Bay St. Louis, Gulfport, and Biloxi.

The sheer physical size of Katrina caused devastation far from the eye. Major damage occurred on August 29 as the hurricane's storm surge breached the levee system that protected New Orleans from Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River. Most of the city was flooded mainly by water from the lake. Damage inflicted from the hurricane made Katrina the costliest natural disaster in the history of the United States and the deadliest since the 1928 Okeechobee Hurricane.

Katrina's large storm surge despite its Category 3 velocity was attributed to its quick weakening from its previous Category 5 and Category 4 strength. The storm surge was largely produced from its Category 5 intensity. Following landfall, Katrina weakened, losing hurricane strength near Jackson, Mississippi, and was downgraded to a tropical depression near Clarksville, Tennessee. Katrina continued to affect the central United States as it moved into the eastern Great Lakes region. Katrina's last known position was over southeast Quebec and northern New Brunswick where it produced between 1.97 and 6.69 in. of rain in 12 h as well as wind gusts between 31 and 61 mph (Hurricane Katrina, 2006).

The official combined (direct and indirect) death toll is the fourth or fifth highest in U.S. history (behind the Galveston Hurricane of 1900, the Okeechobee Hurricane of 1928, the 1893 Sea Islands Hurricane, and possibly the 1893 Chenier Caminanda Hurricane) (Hurricane Katrina, 2006). As of January 4, 2006 the confirmed death toll stood at 1386, from Louisiana (1077), Mississippi (231), Ohio (2), Kentucky (1), and among evacuees (57). Direct deaths indicate those caused by the direct effects of the winds, flooding, or storm surge or oceanic effects. Indirect deaths relate to accidents including car accidents, fires, and health issues. Aside from the reported deaths approximately 5000 New Orleans residents were unaccounted for after the hurricane (Hurricane Katrina, 2006).

On September 3, Homeland Security Secretary, Michael Chertoff described the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as "probably the worst catastrophe, or set of catastrophes" in the country's history. More than 1.5 million people were displaced with damage estimates ranging from \$40 to \$120 billion, at least double the damage caused by Andrew, previously the most expensive hurricane. The devastation left in the aftermath of Katrina was widespread covering approximately 90,000 sq. mi. in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Storm surge is usually the most significant factor in the loss of life during hurricanes (Committee on Science, 2005, 4). In Katrina, this was clearly the case. Numerous factors contributed to the size of the storm surge following Katrina including: the strength of the winds at landfall, the size of the storm's eye, and the speed at which the storm made landfall. By almost any measure, Hurricane Katrina qualified as a monster storm with hurricane force winds extending 125 miles from the center; compared to an extension from the center of only 50 miles when Camille made land fall near New Orleans in 1969. Katrina's eye was 32 miles across, more than three times the size of a typical hurricane with Katrina's velocity (Farrington, 2005). While Hurricane Katrina was large by historical standards, it should not be shocking that a major storm could someday reach landfall near or at the city of New Orleans. The city's preparation for the inevitable therefore becomes a question of interest.

13.2.2 *Hurricane Studies and Preparedness*

The federal government has tried to control floods since the early 1800s. Policies have evolved over time, usually in response to a specific disaster. For example, a major flood in 1850 in the lower Mississippi basin prompted an approach centering on levees or earthen embankments designed to keep water in check. Several decades of construction ensued, producing a levee system that extended from Cairo, Illinois, to the Mississippi delta.

Following the great floods of 1927, the Flood Control Act of 1928 was passed supplementing the levee system with structural measures such as reservoirs, channel improvements, and floodways, which divert spillover from the main channel. Also introduced were fuse–plug levees, which were built lower than the general levee system in order to siphon water out of the main channel at selected points. The Flood Control Acts of 1936 and 1938, which followed major floods from 1935 through 1937, continued to support these structural measures. A series of Flood Control Acts were passed by Congress and in 1968, both the Federal Insurance Administration and the National Flood Insurance Programs were created. These programs encouraged communities to explore nonstructural approaches to flood management, such as land use planning and flood-proofing of buildings (Hauber and Michener, 2006).

The city of New Orleans had an existing Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, and funding was provided for levee construction. The Flood Control Act of 1965 included the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Project, a plan intended to protect the city from future floods. At an initial cost of \$85 million, this project was estimated to take 13 years to complete; however, it was plagued by delays, cost overruns, legal challenges, local opposition, environmental concerns, and other issues (U.S. GAO, 2005, Testimony of Anu Mittal). The project was never completed as intended and suffered from underfunding (Carter, 2005, 5; U.S. GAO, 2005, Testimony of Anu Mittal, 2). Between 1996 and 2005, funding declined from annual appropriations of \$13.4 million to \$5.7 million. Despite warnings from the U.S. Corps of Engineers about the need to invest in aging infrastructure and a backlog of new construction projects, total federal outlays for projects like the levee systems in New Orleans dropped considerably (Carter, 2005, 5). Faced with difficult budget choices, both Republican and Democratic administrations ignored the threat of a Category 4 or 5 hurricane. It appeared that short-term expediency prevailed over long-term preparedness as government leaders hoped that the dreaded Category 4 or 5 storms would not occur on their watch and they could divert the preparedness funding to other projects of greater perceived value.

AQ3 Prior to Katrina, in 2002, studies were conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers to examine the possibility of strengthening the levee and canal system in New Orleans to protect against a Category 4 or 5 storm. It was estimated that improvements to protect against a Category 5 storm would cost at least \$2.5 billion and would take 10–20 years to complete. Congress appropriated \$100,000 in the FY 2005 budget towards a feasibility study expected to cost \$8 million and estimated to take at least 5 years to complete (Carter, 2005, 5–6). In hindsight, the \$2.5 billion protection would have been money well-spent as the eventual cost of Katrina will dwarf this sum.

In April 2005, the state of Louisiana enacted the current edition of its Emergency Operations Plan. This plan serves as a basic outline for agencies and departments at the state level to develop working plans to respond to various types of disasters (Emergency Operations Plan, Section I, 2005, 1). The Emergency Operations Plan is also designed to work in conjunction with the National Response Plan and with local Parish Emergency plans such as was in practice in the city of New Orleans.

Mock exercises and computer models also forecast the disaster. In July 2004, federal, state, and local officials as well as leaders from volunteer organizations participated in the Hurricane Pam Exercise, the name designated to a mock Category 3 hurricane making a direct hit on New Orleans (Glasser and Grunwald, 2005, A1). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Louisiana State University (LSU) Hurricane Center, and other state and local officials estimated the impact of a fictitious Hurricane Pam with sustained winds of 120 mph and up to 20 in. of rain in New Orleans. Under this scenario, more than 1 million residents were evacuated from the city and over 500,000 building were destroyed (Hurricane Pam Exercise Concludes, 2004). In reality, the storm surge from the Category 5 storm that developed in the Gulf of Mexico exacted significantly more damage than the estimates from the Hurricane Pam Exercise.

Results of the exercise concluded that a hurricane like Pam would require about 1000 shelters to be open for 100 days. A plan called for the state of Louisiana to supply the shelters for the first 3–5 days after which the federal government and other resources would be needed to replenish supplies. The plan also provided for search and rescue of stranded residents (Hurricane Pam Exercise Concludes, 2004). Officials anticipated that 300,000 people would remain trapped in the city if a storm of the exercise's size hit the area (LSU Researchers, 2005).

Federal officials who took part in the exercise were keenly aware of the possible consequences of such a scenario. An LSU report following the exercise indicated that the White House was informed of the possible damage from storm surge that could result. A second exercise was planned for the summer of 2005, although media reports indicate that funding was not provided (Glasser and Grunwald, 2005, A1; LSU Researchers, 2005).

Although there were differences between the simulation Pam and the actual Katrina, the results were quite similar. Hurricane Pam and other simulation prepared by the LSU Hurricane center predicted that a slow moving Category 3 hurricane approaching from the South or Southeast would push water from the Gulf of Mexico into the Mississippi Sound, Lake Pontchartrain, and other surrounding bodies of water. If this water topped the levees and canals, the city would flood. The levees would then trap the water in the city (Would New Orleans Really Flood? n.d.). Flooding occurred in New Orleans not only from this topping off but from actual breaks in three major levees.

The calamity should not have been unexpected. The levee and floodwall system in New Orleans was in fact only designed to protect the city against a fast moving Category 3 storm (Carter, 2005, 1). A study conducted by a team of Louisiana investigators charged that New Orleans was a disaster waiting to happen because of a significant flaw in levee design by the Army Corps of Engineers. The investigative group (known as Team Louisiana) concluded that sheet piles, the interlocking sheets of steel that are driven into soil to anchor the levees and prevent water from flowing underneath them, were too shallow. Sheet piles reached only 10 ft. below sea level in some spots despite the fact that Army Corp of Engineer documents called for a depth of 17½ feet. Designs formulated after the storm called for sheet piles to be driven to a depth of 51–65 ft. The Corp of Engineers confirmed that pilings went down only 10 ft., however, noted that piling depth was only one factor contributing to the levee breaks. The findings of the Louisiana Team mirrored the conclusions of outside experts that the levee that failed at the 17th Street Canal was built with too little regard for the weakness of the soil under the canal banks. Similar conditions contributed to the two other major levee breaches (Schwartz and Drew, 2005).

Despite sophisticated modeling that largely predicted the disaster and widespread planning, government officials seemed to be completely unprepared for the situation. For example, in 2004, the New Orleans police department produced an elaborate hurricane plan and issued it to all its commanders. The hurricane plan, however, stayed on the bookshelves at New Orleans and many

officers did not even know it existed. When the storm hit, hundreds of police patrol cars were in low garages or highway overpasses. As a result, about one quarter of the city's patrol cars were either flooded or stranded. Radio antennas were destroyed, the police department's primary radio system did not function, the armory and jail were under water, the exchange that handled the New Orleans cell phone area code was inoperative, and many of the existing police cars were either running out of gas or had flat tires from running over debris (Baum, 2006). The American media displayed pictures of desperate people sitting on roof tops, surrounded by water, holding up hand written signs that pleaded for help. Criticism came from all domains of the political spectrum.

13.2.3 *Critics of the Hurricane Response*

As the images of Katrina victims appeared on television, Americans asked how such a calamity could occur. Blame was heaped on the professional planners as well as state, city, and federal officials who seemed to be incapable of addressing a disaster of such magnitude. Few focused on the fact that warnings had been ignored and that the seeds of the city's destruction had been in place for decades.

The erosion of land, growth of New Orleans, and insufficient funding to update and expand the levee system all contributed to the catastrophe that fell on the city. An analysis done in the mid-1980s indicated that at that time, erosion of barrier lands and continued commercial development would strain the system and may lead to failures in existing hurricane remedies (Carter, 2005, 3). Barrier Islands and coastal wetlands served as a natural buffer to help insulate the inner coast areas. Through a continuous and natural process, these coastal regions eroded over time. Human intervention, in the name of economic development also exacerbated the danger of a hurricane. Since 1930, coastal wetlands that once separated New Orleans from the Gulf of Mexico have decreased by 400,000 acres (Van Heerden, n.d., 1).

Clearly, officials at all levels of government were aware of the potential for devastation. As the *Times-Picayune*, the New Orleans newspaper, reported on September 2, 2005, emergency managers, hurricane experts, and officials at the Army Corps of Engineers were all aware that New Orleans was unprepared for a large Category 4 or 5 storm (A8). Despite recommendations from the Army Corps of Engineers and dire predictions based on simulations and exercises, officials at the federal, state, and local level failed to take action to prevent the catastrophe that ensued. While politicians sought to shift the blame to the officials at other levels of government, mistakes were made at the federal, state, and local level. These mistakes were a result of insufficient coordination in the immediate hours before Katrina made landfall and failure to follow existing plans as designed.

The chaos and confusion evident in the aftermath of the hurricane suggests inept handling of the response to Katrina. Some failures may be traced to incompetent leadership. Critics have charged that officials like former Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Director Michael Brown, a Bush Administration political appointee, were unqualified for the responsibility they were given. Confusion was evident even before the hurricane made landfall. Internal e-mails were sent to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials, presented as exhibits in an October 20, 2005 Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee hearing on Hurricane Katrina depicted an unorganized and unprepared response at the federal level. For example, local medical officials expressed concern to the FEMA that oxygen was in short supply. Requests had been made to FEMA but as of Sunday, August 28 at a time when thousands of motorists were clogging the roadways trying to leave the city, a new supply of oxygen was yet to arrive (U.S. Senate, 2005).

In addition, responders were unable to make it to New Orleans before the hurricane made landfall. FEMA officials expressed great anxiety that if teams would not make it to New Orleans before the storm reached the city, they would be unable to get in before Tuesday, August 30, and that it would be too late to help some survivors who were unable to make it to safety (U.S. Senate, 2005). There were also concerns that state and local officials were not prepared and that FEMA would be held responsible for real and perceived incompetence (U.S. Senate, 2005).

Two days prior to the storm making landfall near New Orleans, Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco requested that President Bush declare a state of emergency. Following procedures outlined in Section 501 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (2000, 65), Bush authorized the DHS to coordinate efforts with state and local officials. At this point, FEMA may begin efforts to provide a unified response. In addition to freeing up federal dollars, the declaration allowed the DHS to position resources and personnel in the region in advance. By Sunday, August 27, FEMA had moved 2.7 million L of water, 1.3 million meals ready to eat, and 17 million pounds of ice near the area for distribution as soon as the storm passed (Glasser and Grunwald, 2005, A10). Although supplies were in the area, for some reason, they were not delivered effectively. It seems that government officials were not able to competently manage the situation on the ground.

Managerial failures focused upon the actions of FEMA Director Michael Brown. Three days after being replaced as Katrina relief director and reassigned to Washington DC, Brown resigned as director of FEMA. During his tenure as director of FEMA, Brown managed the federal response to more than 164 declared disasters including 4 hurricanes that made landfall in Florida and Alabama in 2004 (Brown, (n.d.), Biography). However, his response to the Katrina disaster raised questions about his competence.

Under the threat of an impending hurricane making landfall Brown was not able to manage for unplanned circumstances or adapt to the changing conditions on the ground. For example, instead of calling for extra personnel early, knowing the intensity of the storm and the limited steps taken by local officials, it was not until after the storm hit, that he requested for additional personnel. In a memo to DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff dated August 29, Brown (personal communication, August 29, 2005) requested 1000 workers within 48 h and 2000 within 7 days. According to the memo, these workers would arrive in the disaster area only after first participating in community relations training in Maryland, Georgia or Florida. Rather than focusing on getting emergency personnel to the site as soon as possible Brown felt it was important that these first responders attend trainings designed to portray the proper image of federal emergency workers (Brown, n.d., 2). A professional administrator, with significant experience in emergency management may have had a better understanding of the situation and made different decisions, or at least, would have been able to more quickly adapt to the conditions on the ground.

The limited experience of Brown (a political appointee) may have also curtailed his ability to provide the leadership necessary to manage a disaster of such proportions and to coordinate efforts of state and local officials. Despite warnings from the director of the National Hurricane Center, Max Mayfield, to the Governor of Louisiana and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin about the potential devastation Katrina could bring, no mandatory evacuation orders were issued for the city until the morning of Sunday, August 28, just 20 h before the storm made landfall and far short of the 24–72 h recommended in the New Orleans emergency management plan (City of New Orleans, n.d.). Stronger leadership may have led to better coordination, a key role of FEMA in disasters. Brown admits his inability to coordinate federal, state, and local efforts in his testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives on September 27, 2005 (Hearing before the House Select Bipartisan Committee, 2005).

Transportation was available that could have helped people leave the city. It has been widely reported that Amtrak offered to transport several hundred people out of the city. Buses that could have been used to evacuate those unable to leave on their own, sat in parking lots and were lost in the ensuing flood. The use of public transportation was discussed in the New Orleans Plan which calls for the city to provide transportation to those who are unable to leave on their own, however, the specifics of the plan were not implemented (City of New Orleans, n.d.).

A stronger federal presence may have been able to mitigate implementation failures. More professional administration at FEMA might have been better prepared to manage the consequences of the hurricane. Brown remained at the eye of the hurricane of criticism that was aimed at FEMA. Despite media reports that evacuees had taken shelter in the New Orleans Convention Center, FEMA Director Brown first said he was unaware anyone was in the center, then later said FEMA was aware of the situation but could not get relief to the victims (Kirkpatrick, et al., 2005, 1).

A firestorm was quickly created through the media about the perceived insensitivity of Director Brown and his inability to inspire confidence as well as his ability to deal with the disaster. Criticism revolved around his background, his knowledge about disaster relief, and the depth of his concern for disaster victims. Before long, the political appointee Brown was reassigned and his oversight of FEMA's day-to-day operations in New Orleans was given to Vice Admiral Thad Allen, the Coast Guard's chief of staff. A quintessential career bureaucrat, Allen's impressive resume included more than 30 years in the Coast Guard. He was one of the youngest officers to rise to the rank of admiral, the son of a chief petty officer in the Coast Guard, a graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, a recipient of a master's degree in Public Administration from George Washington University, and a master of science degree from the Sloan School of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

13.3 Katrina the Politics Administration Dichotomy

13.3.1 *The Dichotomy, Representation and Neutral Competence*

The politics administration dichotomy was first introduced to the United States by Woodrow Wilson and centered on the role of the public administrator in terms of the competing demands for efficiency and political responsiveness (Wilson, [1887] 1992). Wilson believed that as the size and expanse of government grew, it needed a science of administration to provide a professional understanding of the proper role and function of the government. Under the framework of the politics administration dichotomy, administration and technical application of laws are under the domain of professional career administrators who are separate and neutral from the pressures of politics. His 1887 proposal called for those two spheres to remain distinct.

The proper role of the administrator had been a central concern of German and French scholars even before Wilson wrote his seminal article (Martin, 1988, 631). Wilson stated that there needed to be a "science of administration which shall seek to straighten the paths of government, to make its business less unbusinesslike, to strengthen and purify its organization, and to crown its dutifulness." With its poisonous city governments, crooked state administration, and corruption in Washington, America was not seen as the exemplar of good administration. Government efficiency was viewed by Wilson as "a foreign science" that was "grounded in histories of foreign systems, in the lessons of foreign revolutions" (Wilson, [1887] 1992, 13).

AQ4

Wilson unambiguously stated that “administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics and that while “politics sets the task for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices.” Furthermore, Wilson recognized that the value of efficiency in government was promoted by French and German professors who resided in highly centralized forms of government. He stated that if public administration is to be employed in the highly decentralized United States, it must be “Americanized” by getting “the bureaucratic fever out of its veins” and inhaling the freer “American air.” Hoping to adapt the “good” of government efficiency without the “bad” of centralized power, Wilson stated “if I see a monarchist dyed in the wool managing a public bureau well, I can learn his business methods without changing one of my republican spots. He may serve his king; I will continue to serve the people; but I should like to serve my sovereign as well as he serves his. . . . We can thus scrutinize the anatomy of foreign governments without fear of getting any of their diseases into our veins” (Wilson, [1887] 1992, 23).

Under Wilson’s approach, questions related to administration are by definition not political questions. This leads to the establishment of a neutral competence to administer government agencies and programs. In his writings, the German scholar Max Weber also supported the idea of separating politics from administration in order to gain greater efficiency (Fry and Nigro, 1996). In Weber’s view, politicians give direction to policy, while bureaucrats impartially administer a set of laws. Whereas politicians passionately express values, neutral bureaucrats are to be impersonal in the imposition of rules (Fry and Nigro, 1996). It is through the impersonal, passionless application of rules that neutral competence flows.

AQ5

The idea of neutral competence was a reaction to the spoils system that evolved after the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828. In accordance with an ethos of spoils, as political parties gained power, they rewarded their followers by appointing them to special office, or by supporting their election into any number of local offices from dog catcher to Mayor. A rationale for the spoils system posited that change in office that occurred as a consequence of appointments by elected officials was desirable and served as a check against the discretion of entrenched bureaucratic elites (Goodnow, 1900, 110). Patronage has been a staple of American politics from the days of Andrew Jackson to New York’s Tammany Hall, and remains in place today. The question that arose in the aftermath of Katrina is not so much that of whether patronage should exist but the societal costs of patronage and the proper balance between the competing ethics of spoils versus that of neutral competence. Reaction to perceived incompetence and corruption of appointed officials is not new. At the height of the “machine era” of American politics powerful bosses who were more interested in pursuing their own interests than the interests of good governance prevailed. This problem at virtually all levels of government raised concerns about incompetence and stimulated efforts to reign in the appointment power of elected officials (Kaufman, 1956, 1060).

An alternative paradigm to that of spoils emerged based on the concept of a neutral competence. This model sought to separate politics from the administration through civil service reforms such as the Civil Service Act of 1883. The 1883 Act (also known as the Pendleton Act) sought to establish trust in public office by allowing nonpartisan administrators to execute the functions of government. Reforms aimed at increasing the efficiency of government continued into the twentieth century. Both the Hatch Act (1939) and the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 were responses to perceived abuses of the federal government. The 1939 Act forbid federal executive employees from participating in and contributing to any presidential or congressional election campaign. It imposed stiff penalties on any person who used political influence on federal officeholders. The 1978 Act created the Senior Executive Service (SES) allowing for a group of leaders who possess well-honed executive skills and shared a broad perspective of government. The SES was designed to create a corps of executives selected based on their qualifications thereby reinforcing the

concept of competence in government. Members of the SES served in key positions just below the top Presidential appointees.

Despite these reforms, tensions between political and the administrative values continue to exist. For example, Ronald Reagan was criticized for excessive use of political appointees and for using political appointees to do end runs around the professional level staff. Critics assert that the intent of the Reagan administration was to implement policies at the agency level consistent with their political philosophy (Ingraham, Thompson, and Eisenberg, 1995, 265). Reagan entered office under the premise that government was not the solution for problems, in many cases, it was the problem. In efforts to reform the government to make it more efficient and responsive, Reagan slashed budgets and reduced the size of program staff (Ingraham, 1995, 90). Others like George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton have also used political appointees to repay political debts (Ingraham, Thompson, and Eisenberg, 1995, 264, 269).

The use of political appointees is consistent with the idea that under the mandate of representativeness, elected leaders have a right to appoint officials whose views are consistent with those of the citizenry. This can help prevent the establishment of entrenched elites and facilitate the likelihood that the people will interface with government officials somewhat reflective of their beliefs. Fear of nonrepresentative rulers has a long tradition in American politics. For example, James Madison wrote in Federalist No. 39 that those who administer government should be chosen from the society at large, not from a favored class (Madison, 1961, 280–281). An extension of this principle would allow the elected officials the freedom to appoint officials who share their constituents' goals. It is clear that George W. Bush did not abandon the practice of appointing political allies to high level government positions. Consistent with the ethos of representativeness, large campaign contributors as well as ideological soul mates were appointed to sensitive government positions. FEMA Director Michael D. Brown, with his thin experience in emergency management and his strong political connections, represents the quintessential political appointee. The limitations of such appointees unfortunately were clear for all of America to see in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

13.3.2 *FEMA Director Brown*

13.3.2.1 *Brown's Background*

After Hurricane Katrina, FEMA Director Michael D. Brown became a poster child for the incompetence of political appointees. Numerous accounts cast serious doubt on his truthfulness and ability to manage. For example, his biography posted on the FEMA Web site reveals that he served as an assistant city manager in Edmond, Oklahoma, with emergency services oversight. When questioned about Brown's position, however, a public relations representative from Edmond stated that Brown had no authority over other employees and was more like an intern between 1975 and 1978 when he was also a student at Central State University (later renamed University of Central Oklahoma). A legal Web site provided by lawyers or their offices lists him as the recipient of "Outstanding Political Science Professor" recognition at Central State University (Brown later claimed that this was an error but he was named the outstanding political science senior at Central State. The Web site also claimed that Brown was director of a nursing home in Edmond, Oklahoma; however, Brown later asserted that he never made this claim (Fonda and Healy, 2005).

Brown received his law degree (J.D.) from Oklahoma City University's School of Law in 1981 (the school was accredited by the American Bar Association but not by the Association of American Law Schools at the time). In the 1980s, he lived in Enid, Oklahoma, practicing law, and

AQ6

working for an attorney who later described him as “not serious and somewhat shallow.” (Michael D. Brown, 2006). Of the 37 lawyers in Jones’s firm, Brown was one of the two let go when Jones and his partners decided to split up the firm. He ran for Congress in 1988 against a Democratic incumbent and lost against his better funded opponent by a margin of 122,763 votes against 45,199.

AQ7

Immediately prior to joining FEMA, Brown was the Judges and Stewards Commissioner for the International Arabian Horse Association (IAHA), serving in this capacity from 1989–2001. After numerous lawsuits were filed against the organization over disciplinary actions Brown resigned. Some members of the IAHA felt that Brown showed an imperious attitude while heading the organization, and nicknamed him “The Czar.” Others felt that the lawsuits led to IAHA becoming financially depleted and ultimately it was forced to merge with the Arabian Horse Registry of America (Brown, 2006).

Brown joined FEMA as General Council after George W. Bush inaugurated it in January 2001. He was the first person hired by his long-time friend, then FEMA director Joe Allbaugh. Allbaugh named Brown his acting deputy director in September 2001, President Bush formally nominated him as deputy director on March 22, 2002, and he was later confirmed by the Senate. When Allbaugh left government, President Bush nominated Brown for the directorship and Brown was sworn in to his position on April 15, 2003. Allbaugh was Bush’s chief of staff when he was Governor of Texas, and the National Campaign Manager for Bush’s 2000 election campaign. He has been described as one of Bush’s most trusted aides, along with Karl Rove and Karen Hughes.

13.3.2.2 *Brown’s Behavior at Time of Hurricane*

Faults with Brown’s management were well documented in the media. Among the more egregious of Brown’s actions include the following:

- On August 29, 2005, 5 h after the hurricane hit land, Brown made his first request for Homeland Security rescue workers. He requested that rescue workers should to be deployed at the disastebr area only after 2 days of training. Brown instructed fire and rescue departments outside of the affected areas to refrain from providing trucks or emergency workers without a direct appeal from state or local governments. The intent of this was to avoid coordination problems and the accusation of overstepping federal authority. Regarding how he might be perceived on television giving interviews about the disaster, he stated in an e-mail to a coworker that, “I am a fashion god.” In another e-mail, he discussed whether he should roll up his shirt sleeves to look better in photographs.
- On August 31, Marty Bahomonde, FEMA’s only employee in New Orleans when Katrina struck on August 29, e-mailed Brown stating, “Sir, I know that you know the situation is past critical. Here some things you might not know. Hotels are kicking people out, thousands gathering in the streets with no food or water. Hundreds still being rescued from homes. The dying patients at the DMAT tent being medivac. Estimates are many will die within hours. Evacuation in process. Plans developing for dome evacuation but hotel situation adding to the problem. We are out of food and running out of water at the dome, plans in works to address the critical need.” In a response that probably would not encourage Woodrow Wilson’s vision of scientific and efficient management, Brown responded, “Thanks for the update. Anything specific I need to do or tweak?”

AQ8

AQ9

- On the same day he received the e-mail from Marty Bahomonde, Brown's press secretary, Sharon Worthy, wrote that "it is very important that time is allowed for Mr. Brown to eat dinner. Gievn [*sic*] that Baton Rouge is back to normal, restaurants are getting busy. He needs much more that [*sic*] 20 or 30 min. We now have traffic to encounter to get to and from a location of his choise [*sic*], followed by wait service from the restaurant staff, eating, etc."
- On September 1, 2005, Brown told Paula Zahn of CNN that he was unaware that New Orleans' officials had housed thousands of evacuees, who ran out of food and water, in the Convention Center. Major news outlets had been reporting on this for at least a day.
- On September 2, 2005, Mayor of Chicago Richard M. Daley stated that he pledged firefighters, police officers, health department workers, and other resources on behalf of the city, but was only asked to send one tank truck.
- An e-mail offering critical medical equipment went unanswered for 4 days (Brown, 2006).

These actions represent a few of the commonly cited transgressions by government officials who were in positions of responsibility regarding the response to the hurricane. It appears from the historical review that FEMA Director Brown actually hindered and delayed rescue efforts. Furthermore, he seemed quite detached from the problems on the ground merely asking if there was "anything specific he needed to do," overly concerned about his appearance, and was unaware of where evacuees were being housed. Surely, this picture is at odds with Woodrow Wilson's image of the need for government leaders who are grounded in "scientific administration."

On September 7, 2005, Coast Guard Chief of Staff Vice Admiral Thad W. Allen was named Brown's deputy and given operational control of search-and-rescue and recovery efforts. Perhaps this was the beginning of the end for the political appointee and recognition that a career professional would be better suited to carry out the high profile responsibilities of the hurricane response. On September 9, 2005, the head of the DHS, Michael Chertoff relieved Brown of all on-site relief duties along the Gulf Coast. Brown was officially replaced by Allen, however, he remained Under Secretary of Emergency Preparedness and Response and complained that he was being made a scapegoat by the press. On September 12, 2005, Brown announced his resignation as director of FEMA. Chertoff granted Brown two 30-day contract extensions. He continued to receive his \$148,000 annual salary until November 2, when he left in the middle of the second 30-day extension.

Perhaps, the greatest liability of Brown was the fact that he became the butt of jokes for popular comedians. For example, late night comedian David Letterman quipped that "Michael Brown has opened up his own private disaster agency. That's like Robert Blake opening up a marriage counseling facility." Jon Stewart stated, "No word yet on Mr. Brown's future plans, though sources say he does want to spend more time doing nothing for his family." Jay Leno noted, "This is very exciting, you may have heard today President Bush announced a plan to put a man on Mars—the head of FEMA" Damning references also came from elected leaders. For example, the president of Jefferson Parish near New Orleans pleaded for Brown's replacement stating, "Take whatever idiot they have at the top of whatever agency and give me a better idiot. Give me a caring idiot. Give me a sensitive idiot. Just don't give me the same idiot" (Kurtzman, 2006; Associated Press, 2005).

13.4 Conclusion

American governance has traditionally been marked by a long standing conflict between the ethos of spoils (responding to popular elections by appointing supporters) and the ethos of

competence. As a supporter of progressive reforms such as the Civil Service System, Woodrow Wilson actively promoted the view that corruption and inefficiency in government should be ameliorated. He maintained that a clear dichotomy between the world of politics (dirty, wasteful, inefficient, enriching the powerful) and the world of administration (efficient, scientific, based on skill sets, impartial) should be established. This could lead to a better government, lower taxes, less corruption, and politics that delivered more goods and services for the same or lower levels of taxation.

This separation of politics from administration has been a hallmark of public administration with some academics supporting its continued relevance and others denying its value. The response to Hurricane Katrina brought to light a number of concerns related to the proper administration of government. First, while politics has always played a role in government appointments, the hurricane illustrated the potential dangers of placing people in positions beyond their capabilities.

The media quickly exposed FEMA Director Brown as someone who was out of his depth and an embarrassment to his friends. Bush would come to regret the statement he uttered on December 30. While on a visit to New Orleans in early September 2005, Bush stated to the director, "Brownie, you doing a heckuva job." A nonprofit group that monitors language use named this statement as the most memorable phrase of George W. Bush for 2005. It later became a punch line for countless jokes about the administration's handling of the hurricane. Ten days after Bush's statement, Brown resigned amid a public uproar (Spiegelman, 2006).

Secondly, it appears that the use of patronage appointments is still widespread. For example, a 2006 Palm Beach Post editorial castigated the Bush administration not only for appointing the "unqualified" Mike Brown to FEMA, but for other appointments as well. Other examples of Bush administration "cronyism" included appointing Dick Cheney to conduct a nationwide search for a vice presidential candidate and then selecting Cheney himself for the job, trying to promote his personal attorney, Harriet Miers, to the Supreme Court, and appointing Julie L. Myers (niece of former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers) to head the Immigration and Customs Enforcement division of the Homeland Security Department. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement unit had oversight over about 20,000 federal employees and a budget of about \$4 billion. It was asserted that Ms. Myers had no significant experience in law enforcement or management. President Bush used a recess appointment to hire Ms. Myers, avoiding what would have been a contentious debate in the Senate (Moffett, 2006).

Finally, the hurricane seems to have reminded the general public that there is a legitimate role for government in American society, that competence in carrying out official responsibilities is better than incompetence, that excessive cronyism can cause political embarrassment, and that neutral competence and knowing how to do one's job should be valued. The hurricane demonstrated a lack of competence in government can cost lives and efficiencies derived from good government practices can save lives.

In theory, through the "science" of administration, effective government policies and proper public sector behavior can be developed. There is concern that while in theory government can be effective, it is highly constrained by the contemporary desire to appoint political associates to high level positions. These officials often act as a dead weight on agencies. Their costs are bearable as long as political appointees are not faced with responsibilities of any magnitude. Once faced with such responsibilities, however, inadequacies are quickly exposed. Simply stated, the professional administrator trained in the science of administration with extensive experience is better prepared to serve the people than political appointees who secure their position on the basis of loyalty or campaign contributions.

References

- Associated Press. (2005). FEMA Director Bears the Brunt of Katrina. Retrieved January 16, 2006, from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/9244682>
- Baum, D. (2006, January 9). Deluged. *The New Yorker*, pp. 50–63.
- Brown, M. D. (n.d.). Biography of Michael D. Brown, Undersecretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. Retrieved October 21, 2005, from <http://www.fema.gov/about/bios/brown.shtm>
- Carter, N. T. (2005, September 6). *New Orleans Levees and Floodwalls: Hurricane Damage Protection*, CRS Code RS22238. Retrieved October 23, 2005, from <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS22238.pdf>
- City of New Orleans. (n.d.) *City of New Orleans Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan*. Retrieved October 12, 2005, from <http://msnbcmedia.msn.com/i/msnbc/Components/Interactives/News/US/Katrina/docs/City%20Of%20New%20Orleans%20Emergency%20Preparedness%20-%20Hurricanes.pdf>
- Committee on Science, House of Representatives. 109th Cong. (2005, October 7) (testimony of Brigadier General (ret.) David L. Johnson [U.S. Air Force, Ret.]). Retrieved October 23, 2005 from <http://www.house.gov/science/hearings/full05/oct%207/testimony.pdf>
- Emergency Operations Plan. (2005). State of Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. New Orleans Hurricane Impact Study. Retrieved October 26, 2005, from <http://www.loep.state.la.us/plans/eopindex.htm>
- Farrington, B. (2005, October 8), Surveyors Map Katrina's Storm Surge, *Associated Press*. Retrieved October 22, 2005, from <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory?id=1195020>
- Fonda, D. and Healy, R. (2005, September 8). How Reliable is Brown's Resume? *Time*. Retrieved January 12, 2006, from <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1103003,00.html>
- Glasser, S. B. and Grunwald, M. (2005, September 11). The Steady Buildup to a City's Chaos. *Washington Post*. Retrieved October 15, 2005 from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/articale/2005/09/10>
- Goodnow, F. J. (1967). *Politics and Administration: A Study in Government* (Reissued). New York: Russell & Russell.
- Hauber, R. and Michener, W. (2006). Natural flood control. Retrieved January 10, 2006, from <http://www.issues.org/issues/15.1/haeube.htm>
- Hearing before the House Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina, 109th Cong., (2005, September 27) (testimony of Michael D. Brown). Retrieved October 23, 2005, from http://katrina.house.gov/hearings/09_27_05/brown092705.pdf
- Hearing Charter: NOAA Hurricane Forecasting. Committee on Science, House of Representatives, 109th Cong. (2005, October 7). Retrieved October 23, 2005, from <http://www.house.gov/science/hearings/full05/oct%207/Katrina%20hearing%20charter%20final%20october.pdf>
- Hurricane, K. (2006). Retrieved January 9, 2006, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Katrina
- Hurricane Pam Exercise Concludes (2004, July 23). *FEMA News Release*. Retrieved October 14, 2005, from <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=13051>
- Ingraham, P. W. (1995). *The Foundation of Merit Public Service in American Democracy*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ingraham, P. W., Thompson, J. R., and Eisenberg, E. F. (1995, May). Political management strategies and political/career relationships: Where are we new in the federal government. *Public Administration Review*, 35(3):263–272.
- Kaufman, H. (1956, December) Emerging conflicts in the doctrines of public administration. *The American Political Science Review*, 50(4):1057–1073.
- Kirkpatrick, D. D., Shane, S., and Stevenson, R. W. (2005, September 15). Ex-FEMA Chief tells of Frustration and Chaos. *New York Times*, A1, A23. Retrieved January 21, 2006, from Lexis-Nexis Academic database.

- Kurtzman, D. (2006). Late-Night Jokes About the Botched Response to Hurricane Katrina. Retrieved January 16, 2006, from <http://politicalhumor.about.com/od/hurricanekatrina/a/katrinajokes.htm>
- LSU Researchers Assist State Agencies with Hurricane Response Plans. (2005, Summer). *LSU Highlights*. Retrieved October 25, 2005, from <http://www.lsu.edu/highlights/052/pam.html>
- Madison, J. (1961). #39: Republicanism, nationalism, federalism. In Benjamin F. Wright (Ed), *The Federalist: Famous Papers on the Principles of American Government* (pp. 280–286). New York: MetroBooks.
- Martin, D. W. (1988, March/April). The fading legacy of Woodrow Wilson. *Public Administration Review*, 58(2): 631–636.
- Michael, D. B. (2006). From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved January 13, 2006, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_D._Brown
- Moffett, D. (2006). Opinion, At Recess, President Horses Around. Retrieved January 13, 2006, from <http://www.palmbeachpost.com/opinion/content/opinion/epaper/2006/01/08>
- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (2006, January 1). *Billion Dollar Weather Disaster 1980–2005*. Retrieved January 23, 2006, from <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/img/reports/billion/billionz-2005-1.pdf>
- Robert, T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Pub. L. No. 103–390, § 5191a, Sec. 501 (2000, October 30).
- AQ10 Schwartz, J. and Drew, C. (2005, December 1). Levee break blamed on design flaw. *Louisville Courier Journal*, A3.
- Spiegelman. President Bush’s ‘Brownie’ Quote Wings Award. Retrieved January 16, 2006, from <http://today.reuters.com/news/newsArticle.aspx?type=politicsNews&storyID>
- U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). (2005, September 28). *Testimony of Anu Mittal before the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives*. (Publication No. GAO-05-1050T). Retrieved October 13, 2005, from Government Accountability Office Online via <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d051050t.pdf>
- U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). (2005, September 28). *Testimony of Norman J. Rabkin before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Energy and Commerce, House of Representatives*. (Publication No. GAO-05-1053T). Retrieved October 20, 2005, from Government Accountability Office Online via <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d051053t.pdf>
- U.S. Senate, Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee. (2005, October 20). *Exhibits from Hearing on Hurricane Katrina*. Retrieved October 21, 2005 from http://hsgac.senate.gov/_files/102005HrgExhibits.pdf
- Van Heerden, I. L. (n.d.). *Coastal Land Loss: Hurricanes and New Orleans*. LSU Hurricane Center, Baton Rouge, LA. Center for the study of Public Health Impact of Hurricanes, LSU Hurricane Center. Retrieved October 15, 2005 from <http://www.publichealth.hurricane.lsu.edu/Adobe%20files%20for%20webpage/Coastal%20Land%20Loss%20-%20Hurricanes%20and%20New%20Orleans.pdf>
- Wilson, W. (1992). The Study of Administration, *Political Science Quarterly*, 56(4):481–506, 1887, in J. Shafritz and A. Hyde, *Classics of Public Administration*, Third Ed. Brooks Cole Publishers, Pacific Grove, CA.
- Would New Orleans Really Flood In A Major Hurricane? How is that Possible. (n.d.). New Orleans Hurricane Impact Study retrieved October 26, 2005, from <http://www.publichealth.hurricane.lsu.edu/convert%20to%20tables/Would%20New%20Orleans%20Really%20Floodtf.htm>

Author Queries

- [AQ1] The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (2006) in reference list. The year 2004 has been changed to 2006 as per reference list.
- [AQ2] Please check the edited running head.
- [AQ3] Please provide the expansion if appropriate.
- [AQ4] Please specify where this quotation ends.
- [AQ5] The reference “Fry and Nigro, 1996” is not provided in the list. Please check.
- [AQ6] Fonda and Healy (2005) in the reference list. Please check the year 2006 has been changed to 2005.
- [AQ7] Please check the phrase for meaning.
- [AQ8] Please provide expansion for ‘DMAT and CNN’.
- [AQ9] Please clarify if this should be ‘Given’.
- [AQ10] Kindly update the complete details in the reference “Schwartz and Drew, 2005.”