Commentary

A Response to James F. Guyot's "Representative Bureaucracy Recast"

Norma M. Riccucci, University at Albany, State University of New York
Judith R. Saidel, University at Albany, State University of New York

In our PAR article (September/October 1997), “The Representativeness of State-Level Bureaucratic Leaders: A Missing Piece of the Representative Bureaucracy Puzzle,” we offered one way to think about recasting the representative bureaucracy construct to capture a fuller picture of the representativeness of state bureaucracies. We find James F. Guyot’s response to our article somewhat puzzling (PAR, July/August, 1998).

At the very minimum, by arguing that our analysis is “context free,” he seems to miss the vital point of representative bureaucracy measures, which seek, at least in the sense of passive representation, to compare the demographic representativeness of public bureaucracies with the demographics of the general population. Interestingly enough, Guyot frames his analysis around basic ratios of gender integration into the bureaucracy, an approach which, although important, is context-free.

Guyot then asserts that we “overstate [sic] the representativeness of bureaucracies” because we incorporate political appointees into our measure. To buttress his point, Guyot suggests that “when responsibility for getting the gender proportions right is focused at one decision point (the president, the governors) rather than distributed among the procedures of a competitive civil service, it stands to reason that the representation of a protected class will be considerably advanced.”

We are somewhat baffled by this assertion. We find James F. Guyot’s response to our article somewhat puzzling (PAR, July/August, 1998).

Notes

1. It is beyond the scope of these comments to respond to Guyot’s assertion about the effects of competitive civil service procedures on the distribution of women in the bureaucracy.

2. These data were published in a report we produced for the Center for Women in Government, University at Albany, State University of New York, Appointed Policy Makers in State Government: The National Profile (Fall 1996).