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The Politics-Administration Dichotomy: Toward a Constitutional Perspective, Second Edition (Public Administration and Public Policy)

Patrick Overeem

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The politics-administration dichotomy is much mentioned and often criticized in the Public Administration literature. **The Politics-Administration Dichotomy: Toward a Constitutional Perspective, Second Edition** offers a book-length treatment of this classical notion. While public administration academics typically reject it as an outdated and even dangerous idea, it re-emerges implicitly in their analyses. This book tells the story of how this has happened and suggests a way to get out of the quandary. It analyzes the dichotomy position in terms of content, purpose, and relevance.

What's in the Second Edition

- Extensive study of the politics-administration dichotomy as a classic idea in Public Administration
- A much-overlooked constitutionalist line of argument in defense of this widely discredited notion
- Exploration and further development of the intellectual legacy of Dwight Waldo
- Coverage of the dichotomy's conceptual origins in 18th and 19th century Continental-European thought
- An assessment of main criticisms against and alternatives for the dichotomy presented in the literature
- Contributions to the newly emerging Constitutional School in the study of public administration
- An argument against the institutional separation of Political Science and Public Administration in academia

Completely revised and updated, the book examines the idea that politics and public administration should be separated in our theories and practices of government. A combination of history of ideas and theoretical analysis, it reconstructs the dichotomy's conceptual origins and classical understandings and gives an assessment of the main criticisms raised against it and the chief alternatives suggested for it. Arguing that one-sided interpretations have led to the dichotomy's widespread but wrongful dismissal, the study shows how it can be recovered as a meaningful idea when understood as a constitutional principle. This study helps readers make sense of highly confused debates and challenge the issues with an original and provocative stance.

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