

(Continued)

- **Joaquin, M. Ernita, and Thomas J. Greitens.** "Contract Management Capacity Breakdown? An Analysis of U.S. Local Governments." *Public Administration Review* 72 (2012): 807–816.

At least in theory, contracting out allows governments to leverage the power of the marketplace to deliver goods and services more efficiently. In practice, as the discussion of university health services in this chapter made clear, contracting out has a mixed track record. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. This study tries to figure out what some of the underlying causes of this variation might be. Specifically, the authors look at "capacity," essentially the ability of local governments to effectively manage these contracts, which are often made with the private sector. Disturbingly, they conclude that there has been a long-term trend toward the diminishment of this capacity. This may be a result of a combination of decreasing competition and the highly complex and demanding nature of the contracts. Contracting out seems to have increased the need for public officials to undertake often very demanding evaluation responsibilities, even as their capacity to fulfill those responsibilities has shrunk. Given the huge toll the Great Recession took on the public sector, it seems that such capacity is unlikely to begin increasing in the foreseeable future.

- **Nicholson-Crotty, Jill, Jason Grissom, and Sean Nicholson-Crotty.** "Bureaucratic Representation, Distributional Equity, and Democratic Values in the Administration of Public Programs." *Journal of Politics* 73 (2011): 582–596.

One of the key concepts discussed in this chapter is that of representative bureaucracy, or the idea that bureaucracies that sociodemographically mirror the constituencies they serve will do a better job of representing constituents' interests in the provision of public goods and services. Needless to say, this has been a controversial theory given its potential implications of a merit/diversity trade-off. While there is considerable research suggesting that increasing minority representation in bureaucracy leads to better service and outcomes for the same minorities in the community served by that bureaucracy, virtually no research has examined the potential trade-offs of such outcomes. Goods and services can be limited and divisible—in other words, there's only so much of something, and if one person gets it, then another person does not. This is a comparative study—the unit of analysis is a national sample of elementary schools—that looks at the racial and ethnic breakdown of gifted and talented (G&T) students. There are only so many G&T seats to go around. Does more white teachers mean more white G&T students and fewer black and Hispanic G&T students? Does more black teachers mean more black students and fewer white and Hispanic students? Through careful research, the authors found that increasing minority representation does not necessarily lead to such predictable winners and losers. What it generally results in is more distributional equity; in other words, the G&T seats are spread out more proportionally relative to race. This suggests that a more diverse bureaucracy may be a fairer bureaucracy.