Bureaucracy and Balance: Bureaucratic Power for Political Development

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Fred W. Riggs expressed his concern on the development of administration which according to him is detracting from the growth of popular responsibility in government caused by the problem of "overdeveloped bureaucracies" co-existing with weak political institutions. Riggs has described the building of other political institutions to counteract the tilt towards anti-democratic forces. A proper balance between the development of bureaucracy and other political institutions must be sought so that elected officials, popular mechanisms and the judiciary could keep pace with the reform and development of the civil service and keep it under control.

Introduction

In 1963, Fred W. Riggs called attention to the dangers to political development represented by an "overdeveloped bureaucracy" co-existing with weak political institutions. Almost a quarter-century later, he suggested the consideration of politics and administration as a unity, breaking away from the persistent doctrine of a dichotomy.[1] The two examples are connected by a continuing concern for the problem of bureaucratic power, with the balancing of political and administrative institutions regarded as a check to possible bureaucratic irresponsibility. This paper discusses the Riggsian perspective on the issue, putting it within the context of the literature of that period and the present. It also identifies the political roles bureaucracy plays, drawing from expectations engendered by different perspectives of the role of the State. Then it analyzes the factors which explain why bureaucratic power may be so manifested and lay out the conditions under which bureaucratic politics may support political development.

Finally, this paper goes back to the Riggsian solution, and analyzes how the balancing of the power of political and bureaucratic institutions may redound to the greater democratization of the political system.

A Note on Definitions

Bureaucracy and Political Officials. "Bureaucracy" and "civil service" are used interchangeably to refer to the civilian state apparatus of each country. "Bureaucrats" and "civil servants" occupy what the country designates as career and permanent positions. The term "political officials" encompasses the President or Chief Executive, his or her ranking assistants (ministers or department secretaries), members of the legislature   and persons appointed by the power-wielders to positions of leadership and confidence in the bureaucracy and serve at the pleasure of the appointing official.

Bureaucratic Power, Bureaucratic Politics. "Bureaucratic politics" is the process by which the bureaucracy - and its members - exercise power, in their own behalf or that of their masters. A politicized bureaucracy may, for instance, severely limit policy choices of its superiors to ensure that certain clients are favored, engage in corruption, give private interests precedence over the general welfare - generally unwholesome uses of bureaucratic power. Or it may go out of its way to recommend and implement poor-biased policies, dissent from unjust alternatives favored by political officials or provide a wide range of policy proposals for them, with reasoned evaluation and clear implications prepared for each one.

The word "politics" itself has two major meanings: the "dirty" one, which is partisanship and interference in government operations and policy making. Bureaucrats are expected to eschew party politics - that is the basis for the rejection of the spoils system, but they can not be prohibited from "energetic involvement in policy-oriented or programmatic 'politics'."[2] In fact, as long as they are not partisan, their participation therein is legitimate. Nevertheless, such participation does not plunge them into a sterile and neutral world, since these activities are fraught with power. This is what Etzioni-Halevy means when she says bureaucracy is in a double bind:

> Bureaucracies are expected to be subject to the control of politicians (in policy matters) and free from such control (in partisan matters); they are also expected to be political (in the policy sense) and non-political (in the partisan sense) at one and the same time.[3]

Political Development. During the hegemony of the Committee on Comparative Politics and the Comparative Administration Group (c. 1950-70), there was a marked reluctance to equate "political development" with the growth of Western political institutions, for it would have seemed then to be a manifestation of the ethnocentricity of the West.[4] Political Development was supposed to describe and evaluate the processes taking place in the countries of what is now known as the Third World, without using the biasing lenses of the West.

Thus, the term came to be understood as the "differentiation of institutions," i.e., the establishment of several political structures and their functional specialization. In line with this, activities relative to governance were identified and new terms created for them to disabuse the Eastern mind that an equation with Western institutions was being proposed. Although it was Riggs who was most identified with neologisms, this paper refers particularly to Gabriel Almond who painstakingly introduced "rule application, rule making and rule adjudication" to substitute for the more common tripartite divisions (executive, legislative and judicial) and "interest aggregation" to refer to organizations that were the functional equivalents of political parties.[5]

However, the introduction of these new terms did not stop the comparison with Western institutions nor gain very much in precision.

A second dimension is "capacity for governance," or how the state deals with large-scale socio-economic changes while maintaining order and stability as a nation. This includes nation-building, that is, creating a cohesive whole out of territories carved out of traditional empires - or villages - by colonialism. Maintaining the integrity of such artificial constructions became the first task of the new states. It would not be an easy one. Secessionist movements based on religion, ethnicity or injustice continue to affect the stability of new states.

Besides, building a nation means more than just avoiding disintegration. It also signifies the change of the focus of loyalty from small, parochial groupings to the overarching whole. In a nation, one forges a "we" against "they," a collective identity "consisting of a network of solidarities superimposed upon the diversity of a society."[6]

"Rapid social change" largely refers to economic growth and social mobilization, the latter the entry of previously uninvolved sectors such as peasants and women into the political system. In the new states, this typically took the form of universal suffrage and broader educational opportunities. However, it usually did not include an overhaul of the social structure which tended to remain extremely hierarchical and unequal.

Increasing differentiation and improved capacity are expected to lead to increasing rationality of the political system. In the bureaucracy, this would find expression in the merit system and other methods aimed at enhancing objective and achievement-oriented decision making. It is also expected to be developed in party systems organized along issues rather than communal and similar lines, and in legislatures and judiciaries that make decisions without regard to ascriptive considerations.

Measuring political development by reference to functions performed, structures generated and capacities manifested made Western scholars (and local scholars trained by them) seem value-neutral. In the process, they instead might have managed only to mask a concern for form rather than substance and a possibly patronizing attitude towards the new states (e.g., "They cannot be any better so let us accept them as they are"). Worse, in the guise of being interested in political development, they fell into the same trap as the US Department of State, closing their eyes to growing authoritarianism in the very countries to which they were providing technical assistance as long as they exhibited modern political forms and maintained political order and stability.

In addition to these dimensions of political development, this school also worked under the implicit assumption of a unilinear, irreversible and conflict-free development, an assumption criticized by Riggs himself in a paper in 1968. In fact, while structural differentiation may be evolutionary and progressive, political systems may undergo discontinuities, as they suffer *coups*, revolutions, or foreign invasions even after years of relative peace. Thus, political systems may be characterized by regime collapse and some kind of reequilibration and conceivably be subject later to new breakdowns and possibly, later normalization.

Unlike the definition above, the process of political development as perceived in this paper is almost equivalent to "democratization." It builds on the participation of the people, an aspect of the early concept of political development that has been overwhelmed by the emphasis on structure. Development is primarily an achievement of human beings, and thus the image of political development includes the involvement of people in an active way, whether or not the people demand and win a growth of freedom and equality in these countries.

This definition of political development is shared with an increasing number of social scientists who recognize that the quest for democracy is a longing of all peoples, not only those in the West. Authoritarianism despite increased institutional differentiation in a society which is stable (because it is repressed and repressive) is a denial of political development.

"Democracy" as presented here has formal and substantive aspects. Procedures are expected to provide the minimal content of formal democracy. They include regular elections, competing parties, alternance of power, universal suffrage, and guarantee of political freedoms and due process.[7] Although the procedural aspects are usually equated with "political democracy," they may also have economic implications. Thus, a citizen under this system may also have wider choice of employment and consumption opportunities.

The procedures of formal democracy are not meant to be only formalistic but could be substantive and meaningful also.

"Substantive democracy" focuses on the growth of equity and social justice in the system. The balancing of freedom and equity constitutes one of the main problems of democracy.[8] Lipson suggests that freedom tends to be more emphasized by the Right, for with it, property and privileges can be assured for the elite. On the other hand, equity is pushed by the Left who tend to regard political guarantees to those without full stomachs as rather empty phrases. They stress instead the provision of basic needs and social justice - aspects of substantive democracy.

The process of democratization or political development would ideally involve both procedural and substantive aspects. However, its minimal referent would be movement toward formal democracy, which at least uses democratic methods of governance. As Linz put it:

> The vain hope of making democracies more democratic by undemocratic means has all too often contributed to regime crises and ultimately paved the way to autocratic rule.[9]

Admittedly, procedural democracy, by itself, may only retain the dominance of richer classes. Nevertheless, despite its inability to satisfy demands for social justice, it is still a first step in the development process. As Carnoy said in paraphrasing Bobbio, "bourgeois democracy, though limited, is still democracy."[10] Political development must necessarily move towards attaining elements of both formal and substantive democracy.

In this context, the development of bureaucracy would not cover so much its expansion and improved technical efficiency, as the early structural-functionalists implied, and as the growth of its responsibility as an institution in a democratic society.

The Riggsian Perspective

Riggs' concern for the relationship of bureaucracy and political development did not begin with the La Palombara paper, and will not end with the one presented to ASPA in 1986. In many ways, his body of works represents a continuous struggle with that issue. In turn, it is echoed in the literature of Public Administration, reflecting the fact that the discipline is still grappling with the issues that confronted it at its birth: the interrelationship of politics and administration, their institutional domains, and the problem of bureaucratic power and responsibility. These are issues raised in the seminal paper of Woodrow Wilson published exactly a century ago. Wilson was sanguine that the development of the science of Public Administration would solve the problem of bureaucratic responsibility, as it shall:

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seek to straighten the paths of government, to make its business less unbusinesslike, to strengthen and purify its organization and to crown its duties with dutifulness.[11]

That has not come to pass. Instead, public administration - both the discipline and the practice - has had to contend with bureaucracies that are less than dutiful, eschewing responsibility to the public (directly or through political leaders) by self-aggrandizement and obedience to elite dictates. Thus, when Riggs put forward his "paradoxical view" he was in effect expressing alarm that the development of administration was detracting from, rather than pushing along, the growth of popular responsibility in government.[12] In that paper, Riggs focused on the negative consequences of bureaucratic expansion on political development. The bureaucracy has been trained to use the most modern technical procedures and paraphernalia to allow it to cope with the demands of rapid social change. Such methods were expected to be value-free. When provided by foreign aid, they allowed the Western donors to say with a clear conscience that they were providing only technical advice to public administration and not interfering in the political affairs of new States.

However, Riggs maintained that that kind of bureaucratic development without a concomitant maturing of other political institutions was contributing to the weakness of the latter and leading to the lack of democratization in the society. For instance, he pointed out that the merit system was retarding the growth of political parties, as it resisted the politicians' attempt to establish effective control. The short ballot was administratively simple but was undermining political participation as it left significant choices to national leaders with no direct roots to the electorate. Budgetary and auditing systems became modernized but gave the legislators no effective weapon for influencing the content and conduct of governmental work. Interest groups were created by "bureaucratic initiative, (not a) spontaneous product of citizen demand in response to felt needs."[13] In short, many methods that could increase bureaucratic efficiency were short-circuiting the development of the democratic process. In addition, they provided this permanent institution too much control over what takes place in the polity.

While Riggs adhered to the definition of political development as differentiation, it was clear that as early as this paper, he was getting dissatisfied with it and already inserting democratic criteria into his evaluation of the performance of political actors. His prescription was to seek a balance between the development of the bureaucracy and other political institutions, so that elected officials, popular mechanisms and the judiciary could keep pace with the reform and development of the civil service and keep it under their control. The need for balancing all these other political institutions and the bureaucracy became the concern of many works.

The continuity between Riggs' concern for the development of institutions and the newer call for the "unity of politics and administration" requires a discussion of the "politics-administration dichotomy" which consists of several distinctions.

The first of these is the orthodox dichotomy which distinguishes between the two concepts as functions - in Wilson's quaint phraseology, politics as "framing..." and administration as "running a constitution." This analytical distinction became the point of division between the academic disciplines of political science and Public Administration. Unfortunately, as Riggs points out, it also grew into theory/practice and Left/Right divisions which have bedevilled Public Administration ever since, as it became the practical, artistic, non-theoretical field as well as the one associated with conservatism.[14] He did not mention another source of confusion: the shift of reference from functions to institutions, i.e., from policy making and implementation to political officials and bureaucracies, thus provoking the view that one has to reject the politics-administration dichotomy when civil servants are recognized as "doing politics."

When Riggs suggested that politics and administration would be better seen as a unity, he was not denying that the functions could be distinguished analytically. Rather, he may be applying the "prudential distinction" identified by Kirwan and limiting his discussion to its second level.[15] Kirwan sees this dimension of the politics-administration dichotomy as a distinction in terms of "two levels of politics, or between the superordinate and the subordinate parts of government in respect to the general scope of their operations."[16] The higher level - referring to broader policy - is assumed to be the domain of political officials.

The essence of the distinction when applied to the bureaucracy is what Riggs introduces as the "unity of politics and administration." Thus, he emphasizes that bureaucrats normally perform *both* political and adminis-trative functions, and as such, they should be evaluated in terms of both the "administrative guide" which consists of economy, efficiency and order, and the "political guide" of responsibility.

The unity Riggs proposed is for the bureaucracy to be both technically efficient and politically responsible. However, since administrative methods have tended to be better emphasized (as contained in his paper on the bureaucracy and political development), he recognized the need to assert more strongly the political guide.

Riggs maintains that without their political accountability, bureaucrats "will abuse their power, neglect their official duties and appropriate public
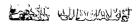
resources for their personal satisfaction."[17] It is at this point that he posits the hypothesis of balance:

> Public administration works best, I think, when this relationship is balanced because it permits non-bureaucrats to hold bureaucrats accountable for their performance. Administration suffers to the degree that imbalances arise, and administration is at its worst when public officials monopolize power - when in short, bureaucrats constitute a ruling class. Under such conditions, no one can hold officials accountable.[18]

Bureaucratic Politics and Power

Riggs' discussion of bureaucratic power and of politics-administration unity is squarely within what may be called the liberal tradition in Public Administration, the dominant school in that discipline. That liberal tradition includes the works of the Comparative Administration Group which, with Riggs as one of its outstanding members, was active in promoting the variant called Development Administration (DA) in the "non-Western world" (Asia, Africa and Latin America) after World War II. While traditional PA has been concerned with order and regularity in the conduct of government operations, DA puts emphasis on the role of government in the management of economic growth and social change. Careful not to allow the models of the West to define the bureaucracies of the developing countries, DA nevertheless exported Western ideas, tools and techniques in attempting to understand and improve public administration in these countries. There, largely upon the advice or with the promise of Western technical assistance, the norms of efficiency, impersonality and rationality were grafted into conditions where reciprocity, particularism and diffuseness were the way of life. As a result, the rules of the bureaucracy have stood apart from the ways of society. This has sometimes led to contradictory results: on the one hand, its alienation from society, indexed by its formalism and incorrigible inflexibility, and on the other, its invasion by the society, allowing cultural notions of personalism and affectiveness to prevail over neutrality requirements.

Development administration as a disciplinary perspective, like traditional PA from which it was derived, looks at the bureaucracy in each new State as its unit of analysis. It includes other nations only as a point of comparison, hardly as part of the system which impinges strongly upon its administration. By the same token, although it has stressed the effect of ecology much more than the traditional view, its active variables are still mainly political and administrative factors, with the administrative generally seen as a dependent variable to the political.[19] This implies that culture, physical technology and the economy, among others, may be hypothesized as affecting bureaucratic performance, but in less direct ways than political actors and often only as filtered by them. Its implicit context is that of a State

which is not only relatively autonomous of civil society but is particularly one which is a neutral arbiter of the interests expressed by elements of that society. That view of the State has limited bureaucratic politics to only two theoretical possibilities: a bureaucracy-for-itself, and a bureaucracy-for-the-political-leadership.

Bureaucracy, however, plays other political roles, but they cannot be adequately described within the liberal framework. Liberalism contemplates a society of free and equal individuals competing for their own interests in a world of abundance. Meanwhile, the Third World is marked by poverty and grave inequalities within individual countries and also relative to the global economy as a whole. Wealth, power and privilege accrue to the same people. Moreover, these countries are at the periphery of the world system, and are further influenced if not outrightly controlled by metropolitan States, their former colonial masters. Although initially inheriting the parliamentary forms of these nations, many have experienced, since independence, authoritarian regimes, or at least some alternation of these and attempts at democratic governance. A State in such a context may be expected to be ruled by policies which maintain the dominance of wealthy classes in the society and would be far from the unbiased referee described by liberals.

Yet, shaped by the DA approach, Public Administration in the Third World has persisted in studying the civil service with liberal lenses. These assumptions have tended to limit their understanding of how bureaucracy and society interact and thus also their prescriptions on how the civil service can assist in achieving political and social development. This paper suggests that it is now time to break out of this theoretical mold and hopes to do just that below as it examines other perspectives on the role of the State and shows how their inclusion illumines the conduct of bureaucratic politics and its consequences.

There are three main views regarding the role of the State: a) the State as a neutral arbiter of interests; b) the State as dominated by the elite or the bourgeoisie; and c) the State as the site of class struggle. Still working within the "prudential distinction" with the bureaucracy as subordinate to political masters, each of these roles pushes the bureaucracy to participate in making and then implementing different concerns. The probable implications of each perspective is shown below:

Role of the State	Concerns of the Bureaucracy
Neutral arbiter of interests	Policies that emerge from political balancing

State dominated by bourgeoisie	Policies that favor wealthier groups
Site of classs truggle	Policies that result from class struggle, including gains of poorer classes

The first role, as already mentioned, is held by the mainstream liberal theorists of Public Administration. The next two are favored by critical or Marxist theorists whose works are only now entering the consciousness of Public Administration students. Each shows that bureaucracy is expected to wield power, but in favor of different groups. Bureaucrats are seen to use power differently in each theory because each school highlights a different set of bureaucratic and societal characteristics in its analysis.

It should be pointed out that certain properties of the bureaucracy push it towards serving not any of the masters depicted in the table above, as much as its own interests. In fact, the use of the bureaucracy's power for itself has been described and decried by liberal and critical theorists alike. Since such self-serving use of power has been recognized regardless of the theory of the State one holds, it is discussed ahead of the other manifestations of bureaucratic concerns.

The Bureaucracy-for-Itself. Through the years, many theorists have maintained that the bureaucracy, if uncontrolled, will work primarily for its own interests. Such interests may be its well-being as an institution or the advancement of its membership, particularly those occupying its highest levels. A bureaucracy may be so pervasive that the whole system becomes, in Riggs' terms, a "bureaucratic polity"

> run in the interests of state officials, so self-indulgent that discipline to carry out
> tasks imposed by the ruling party is impossible.[20]

Caiden also speaks of "bureaucratic states," where the political leadership is perceived as getting orders from the bureaucracy.[21]

However, it is not necessary for a bureaucracy to dominate the polity in order to behave like a bureaucracy-for-itself. At times, it may promote its goals not so much in dominating as in being able "to resist subordination"[22] or to "insulate itself from all but the most drastic changes of political direction."[23]

A bureaucracy-for-itself is developed because of certain characteristics it has as an organization. The first of these is its specialization and expertise. As Weber himself has said:

> The question is always who controls the existing bureaucratic machinery. And such control is possible only in a very limited degree to persons who are not technical specialists. Generally speaking, the trained permanent official is likely to get his way in the long run than his nominal superior, the Cabinet minister, who is not a specialist.[24]

The strength of the bureaucracy may also have developed because of its permanence and institutionalization. Case studies of different civil service systems show that many have been able to dominate their political superiors and the system itself because of just these factors. For instance, in Bangladesh, a new political leadership was persuaded to "shelve the report (of its own reorganization committee) and (to) bar it from public circulation," thereby resulting in "undue dependence on bureaucrats."[25] The Indian bureaucracy, for its part, was said to allow reforms to prosper only if they were "a means of increasing their (civil servants') power or as neutral vis-a-vis their existing roles."[26] This situation has even been generalized to a proposition, drawing from examples in Latin America, that:

> reforms often strengthened the capacity of the national bureaucracies to dominate their environments.[27]

Lenin turns to the bureaucratic quality of secrecy as the culprit, arguing that its decisions cannot be expected to serve the people because they were made outside of public view.[28] Secrecy is reinforced by the information network of the bureaucracy which can function as a mechanism for surveillance. David Held asserts that Marx sees this characteristic as strengthening the bureaucracy's "capacity to undermine social movements threatening to the status quo," thus an activity it undertakes as an instrument of the dominant class.[29] It may also be easily surmised that the same quality may be used by a runaway bureaucracy to work for its self-promotion.

Hegel attributes bureaucracy as "the most important role" in the State since it provides the rationality without which the decisions of the prince can only be arbitrary. For if his will is to be rational,

> it is only because it rests on the universal insight and the universal will of the bureaucrats who provide the prince with the general considerations, the knowledge of the specifics and the rational alternatives between which he has to make a final, and, in a sense, rather arbitrary choice.[30]

However, Marx would later argue that in the process, the bureaucracy will elevate its interests as universal, "while the general interest is reduced thereby to the status of a special interest."[31]

As may be noted from the citations above, the bureaucracy's use of its power for itself appears to be well-observed by both liberal or critical theorists.

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More importantly, this kind of "bureaucratic politics" is seen to flow from the distinctive characteristics of the organization itself - its specialization and expertise, access to and monopoly of information, permanence and stabilization, and rationality.

The State as Neutral Arbiter

Let us now turn to the first view of the role of the state. Liberal theorists tend to regard the state as the focus of demands and supports from all quarters, and a neutral and rather rational arbiter of such diverse interests, none of which is especially dominant. The bureaucracy in this case is seen as playing a neutral role. Such actions have been explained by referring to certain organizational characteristics. However, what are identified are a different set from those which underlie the bureaucracy-for-itself. This time, the bureaucratic qualities referred to are subordination to political leadership, and its acceptance of regime legitimacy.

The more prominent characteristic appears to be the one mentioned above: the bureaucracy's subordination and responsibility to the political leadership which controls it. Such control is supposed to be effected through "overhead democracy" whereby political officials exact obedience to policy dictates for which they are in turn responsible to the sovereign people.[32] Under this assumption, it is posited that the bureaucracy will be neutral, not only in the sense of having no partisan interests, but also in the more difficult sense of having no policy preferences at all beyond what political officials expect the civil service to implement. This is, of course, "theory" in the lay person's sense, one which has no relation to reality. After all, policy alternatives are usually hatched in the bureaucracy, and civil servants insert their preferences consciously or unconsciously as the process moves from collection of information to final decision.

A second factor explaining political control of the bureaucracy is asserted by LaPorte:

> The adaptability of the administrative system (in particular its apex) to work for the person in power will continue. There is enough historical evidence to support this assertion. It is in the nature of the higher bureaucracy to reach some accommodation with whoever is in power... High-level civil servants understand power and its use.[33]

This statement cannot be made unless it is hypothesized that the power of the leadership is stronger than that which the bureaucracy can derive from its expertise, permanence, and access to and monopoly of information. Such power may come from a strong mandate from the electorate in a democracy,

or its acquiescence of the control of an authoritarian ruler. Thus, it is considered as an assertion of the acceptance by the bureaucracy of the legitimacy of the regime.

The State as Dominated by the Bourgeoisie

Marxists divide into two streams the debate on the role of the state.[34] The extreme position is represented by the Communist Manifesto's view of the State as "but a committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie." The State is thus a subservient instrument of that class and functions "to maintain the health of the economy over the welfare of the people"[35] and "to create stable conditions of class oppression essential to monopoly capital."[36]

Even theorists who accept that the State can maintain some autonomy from capital assert that in the last analysis, the State will collapse without bourgeois support. Such dependence on capital is engendered by the fact that that class provides the taxes and other resources which maintain the State.[37]

How does the bureaucracy act in such a State? As the state apparatus to protect bourgeois dominance, the concerns of the bureaucracy is expected to coincide with capitalist interests. Again, let us seek the reasons from certain characteristics of the organization. First, it may be due, as Miliband asserts to the similarity of class origins of capitalists and bureaucratic elites.[38] While this may be true in some Western societies, this paper finds this argument less than persuasive in developing societies where employment in the civil service is a major avenue for social mobility, and it is thus composed of many members even at the top who come from lower classes.

By contrast, Gramsci's concept of hegemony may provide a better reason for the bourgeois hold on the bureaucracy. "Hegemony" is "the ideological predominance of the dominant classes in civil society over the subordinate...the acceptance by the ruled of a conception of the world which belong to the rulers."[39] Since its members are socialized to fit themselves into a bourgeois world, the bureaucracy may see little to question in a political system which regularly legislates favors for this group.

Another factor explaining bureaucratic obedience to elite dictates may be the State's moves to depoliticize relations of domination. In this case, "political goals are transformed into technical problems whose solution requires not public discussion, but subordination to the technically necessary."[40] This makes issues of allocation and distribution as parameters of decision making rather than variables subject to change by pressures from interest groups. Under these conditions, for instance, preferential admission of upper-class children to educational institutions, or the priority of the elite in obtaining

government franchises or services is automatically assured by procedures enshrined by the civil service.

The bureaucracy may also be affected in its performance through connections of fractions of its organization with corresponding parts of capital. In this case, for instance, the sugar industry may have cultivated strong relations with the agency supposed to regulate it, thus ensuring that decisions would be made in its favor regardless of the merits of its arguments or those of its antagonists.

This situation has led Poulantzas to argue that the capitalist's hold on the bureaucracy may be occasioned not only by the strength of the dominant class, but also by the political disorganization - and thus, corresponding weakness - of the working classes.[41]

The State as Site of Class Struggles

This last view of the state is of relatively recent origin, and has developed from the debates of the European Left on the meaning of democratization without the triumph of socialism. This perspective asserts that no matter how imperfect, such developments are not only democratic, but are also a step towards socialism.[42]

How the State becomes the arena of class struggle is a subject of debate. On the one hand, Gramsci and Bobbio, among others, assert a shift of the arena of class struggle from civil society to the State itself which now faces pressures from both the dominant groups and the politicized among the oppressed in society.[43] On the other hand, Poulantzas declares that the State has always been such a site, since the political field of the State (as well as the sphere of ideology) has always, in different forms, been present in the constitution and reproduction of the relations of production.[44]

The bureaucracy under this theory is also hardly a simple receptacle of decisions already arrived at by political officials. Rather, it appears to be also a participant in the struggle. This may be especially true of the lower levels of the bureaucracy which may be, as Guerrero maintains, victims rather than collaborators or beneficiaries of capitalism.[45]

However, the bureaucracy's actions in favor of the poor may not necessarily signal its strong commitment to substantive democracy. Rather, government officials may see the hold of big economic interests over the State as a threat to the bureaucracy's role as guarantor of socio-economic 'order' and 'efficiency.' Poulantzas goes on to say:

For example they may interpret the theme of democratization of the State not in terms of popular intervention in public affairs but as the restoration of their own role as arbiters standing above social classes."[46]

This is a view shared by Lefort who maintains that the bureaucracy helps poorer classes to safeguard its own interests as "it assigns its own goals to the State."[47]

Other analysts perceive sincerity among civil servants leaning towards the underprivileged. For instance, they expect that as organizations are created to implement and develop policies that represent working class gains, they may develop values and structures favorable to that class. This may occur even with programs that come about only because of the desire of the dominant class - and the State - to pacify and regulate the poor. Etzioni-Halevy describes some cases where bureaucracies have not been invariably conservative, and thus have "created the professional reformer."[48]

The bureaucracy may also identify with the State or the nation rather than the regime, thus maintaining its separation from   it.[49] This may be a trait that goes with its designation as a "public organization," and may be a development that goes hand in hand with a sense of permanence as an organization, coupled with a merit and incentive system that makes a lifelong career in the bureaucracy worthwhile. Such incentives appear lacking in many civil service systems, making dissent from the dominant powers a precarious stand. This may explain why the hold of non-dominant groups on the bureaucracy tends to be weak.

Additionally, the bureaucracy may generate "conflicts and tensions... typical of complex modern organizations (which) are exacerbated as administration becomes politicized, (and) these tensions become class tensions within state bodies and departments."[50] These may generate dissent within the bureaucracy from the mainstream of State policies (expectedly in favor of capital) and provide another reason for a growing voice of the weak within the civil service.

The Third Perspective as the General Framework

The third perspective which posits the State as arbitrating over the struggle between classes recalls the liberal view of the State as mediator of interests brought before it. However it is more comprehensive in that it does not assume the neutrality of the State, nor does it insulate politics from economic struggles. Rather it locates the political system in society and recognizes the structure of inequality prevailing in both realms.

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At the same time, it also has elements of the extreme Marxist view in that here, the State practically has the status of a "playing referee," able to concede to the poorer group only under conditions of overwhelming power.

Another advantage of the third perspective is that like the second view, it posits that groups may have access to the bureaucracy directly, and would not necessarily be mediated by the political leadership.

For our purposes then, it may be the best perspective to use, given these advantages which confer on it the status of being the most general context, able to allow for all kinds of bureaucratic subordination and power.

The next problem is to predict what kind of bureaucratic politics will take place. This will depend partly on the strength of bureaucratic characteristics already discussed above. However, it must be emphasized that these variables continuously influence events in the political system, even though our favored perspective may have blinded us of their presence. Indeed· the class struggle has gone on even when we regarded the State as a neutral arbiter of generally equal interests. Moreover, the bureaucratic desire to weaken Big Business and consolidate its power in the polity (highlighted by analysts of the third perspective) and its belief in the legitimacy of the regime (used by theorists of the second) are factors useful in explaining all kinds of bureaucratic politics, although the liberal lens alone may not have allowed us to· appreciate them.

To summarize: bureaucratic characteristics of expertise, permanence, secrecy and monopoly of information and rationality have been identified as pushing for a bureaucracy-for-itself; its responsibility to the political leadership and acceptance of its legitimacy are factors explaining its role under a neutral arbiter; its class origins, participation in hegemony, depoliticization of relations, and connection with small capitals explain its subordination to the upper classes; and its status as victim of capitalism, guarantor of order and efficiency, identification with the State, and intra-bureaucratic conflicts are factoᵣs influencing its work when the State is the site of class struggle. It must be submitted that these factors operate whatever the actual role of the State is and should all be considered in analyzing why the power of the bureaucracy takes different forms and intensity.

To complete the discussion, factors outside the bureaucracy which conduce either to a group's stable dominance over the State or the continuing struggle of several groups are identified. Among these are: a) the strength of the social forces engaged in the struggle; b) the level of regime legitimacy; c) the use of democratic rhetoric; and d) the limits of technocracy. They are discussed below in terms of how they may directly or indirectly affect bureaucratic politics.

The Strength of the Forces in the Struggle. One of the most important factors is the power of the different protagonists and how they get the attention of the bureaucracy. For instance, the State may promulgate policies favoring the working classes primarily because of their strong organization and militance, that is, by their "winning over the State by *struggling within it as part of class conflict.*"[51] This may occur as Gramsci's predicted counter-hegemony develops, with the workers more conscious of their rights and numbers, and of their efficacy as a class. The more usual occurrence, however, seems to be the inverse of this situation: the continued dominance of the elite in terms of organization, resources and support, including those from within the State itself. Consequently, the state apparatus may here become a simple instrument of the elite.

The Level of Regime Legitimacy. As pointed out in the discussion on the liberal view, bureaucratic acceptance of a secondary role hinges on its assessment of the legitimacy of the current regime. Legitimacy may be understood as the belief that in spite of shortcomings and failures, the existing political institutions are better than others that might be established, and that they therefore can demand obedience.[52]

That perception of legitimacy is in turn affected by how the regime handles its civil service. Members of the bureaucracy are part of society and can be expected to share its values. Thus a regime which is losing legitimacy in most of the populace may go down in the esteem of the bureaucracy also.

However, the political leadership may be able to hold bureaucratic loyalty to the extent that it pampers those who work for it with various incentives, especially if beyond what are enjoyed by other groups. This attempt to "buy loyalty" may not always work. First, loyalty will be vitiated if such incentives are not given across the board, but are provided only to favorites of the regime. Thus, the military may be more loyal because it is enjoying more benefits than the civilians. But this may tend to foster resentment in the civilian bureaucracy and limit its obedience to the regime and its isolation from society.

Second, even if incentives are to be equitably distributed, dissent may nonetheless seep into the bureaucracy through social pressure and ostracism, especially in the face of conflicts between professional criteria and regime desires which occur when the political leadership is pressured to produce results more than it is technically capable of delivering. This conflict is embedded in issues to be discussed below.

The Demands of Democratic Rhetoric.   A factor that pushes the State to appear neutral may be the modern need of powerholders to use democratic rhetoric to maintain themselves in power. Such lip-service generates tensions

in the bureaucracy which must implement the law, knowing there is no spirit behind it. This situation conflicts with their knowledge of technical criteria and forces them to choose sides. Such a problem occurred in the Philippines at the height of the Marcosian period, when, for instance, projects were decreed to be chosen on the basis of rational criteria rather than politicians' whims. Bureaucrats then followed the technical methodology of feasibility studies but found themselves having to use the technique to justify favored projects instead.

The example can be multiplied many times, whether it be providing statistics which do not conform to 'technical definitions, producing election returns which do not follow procedural guidelines, or justifying land-grabbing by multinational corporations. While some bureaucrats hid behind ritual conformity, for others, it became the push for dissent - writing adverse memos, smuggling out offending documents, and, later, more open protests.[53] In other instances, laws of the regime may conflict with professional ethics, forcing the government physician, for example, to treat a wounded rebel but not to report the act, as required.

The Limits of Technocracy. The strongest reason for bureaucratic dominance is its control over technology and information. However, such technocracy may carry seeds not only for overarching bureaucratic power but also for a possible push towards democratization. This results not from technological development alone, but also from changes in the socio-political environment and the views of what are acceptable political development. As such, it is very closely related to the use of democratic rhetoric by power-holders, whether authentic democrats or out-and-out authoritarians, who must concede some power to the people because things like "divine right of kings" and "I am the State" are no longer acceptable as bases for continued dominance.

Thus, one must note that social technology has developed along with the hardware. The bow to participation, lip-service though that may be, has produced a concomitant growth and legitimization of techniques that require consultation with the people, such as community organization (CO) methods and Freire's pedagogy. In addition, there is a world-wide trend towards indigenization, which is the search for and usage of native ways of doing things as well as the testing of their efficacy and appropriateness. This includes a range of activities from the use of herbal and other traditional medicine to the choice of village leaders through consensus. As bureaucrats are told to utilize these techniques, they are forced to interact more with the clients who become transformed from the faceless public to flesh-and-blood people with real needs, most of which cannot be met by current standard operating procedures.

Even well-established bureaucratic technologies may not be able to deliver the expected results with efficiency. For instance, development planning is stymied by either too many small private enterprises in a free-enterprise economy or by large monopolies whose hoarding and pricing policies distort the law of supply and demand.[54] In addition, capitalism is a global phenomenon that cannot be controlled within a nation-state, making it difficult for bureaucrats to make national plans with any real chance of predictability.

Moreover, many methods assume a certain level of social organization to be workable. Thus, agricultural production techniques are dependent on growth of knowledge of the farmers. This in turn requires a certain level of agricultural extension, availability of credit facilities, etc. The government cannot just provide infrastructure and expect economic growth to follow. Benefits from such construction tend to accrue mainly to those who were dominant to start with, despite the usual statement in project papers that this would provide benefits to the poor.[55] Under such situations, bureaucrats may continue to overconform with technological requirements and regulations, or start questioning the meaning of their work. Such difficult queries cannot be answered by strictly professional or technical criteria, leading to the need to bring in political and moral factors in decision making, as predicted by Habermas.[56]

These situations then push the bureaucracy to engage in politics by setting their own values. There is always the possibility that they will retreat inward into ritual conformity, self-promotion, corruption and empire-building. But these may also provide the seeds not for neutral performance or self-aggrandizement as for a pressure towards fulfillment of the democratic rhetoric.

The Prescription of Balance

In the preceding section, we have tried to lay out why bureaucratic power may take the form it does. It is already clear that as one of the main instruments of the State, the bureaucracy cannot escape involvement in politics. Its actions as part of the policy process - i.e., as initiator/drafter of policy proposals, analyst of different alternatives, implementor of chosen policy, even though each of these steps may leave wide areas of discretion, and thus power - are not ordinarily denounced as "bureaucratic politics." Thus, when it engages in politics with prudence, it respects the dichotomy ordained by the founders of the discipline of Public Administration and is regarded as a responsible instrument of the State. Under these conditions, the power of the political leadership to keep the bureaucracy responsible cannot be denied. Thus, the Riggsian prescription of balance between the bureaucracy and other political institutions may be taken without argument.

What is problemmatical is when the bureaucracy is perceived as overstepping its bounds, by redefining policy, engaging in self-promotion, or running the country, that is, usurping the power of legitimate rulers. In a few cases, bureaucratic power may be used in the public interest, as when sectors of the bureaucracy engage in rear-guard action against authoritarians and become the oasis of reform in a conservative government.

However, an unbridled bureaucracy having nothing more than the characteristics of Weber's ideal-type may engage in politics for its own goals. Even under a liberal regime, it may "exploit...the near balance of strength between the opposing classes and manipulate the class conflict in playing them off against one another."[57] This recalls the suspicions of Lefort and Poulantzas against bureaucracies that seem to have cast their lot with the poor only as a means of maintaining their dominance over everyone.

In this light, balance should not be a mechanical weighting of the power of different structures, but must take into account the characteristics of other political institutions. The worst alternative for political development will be a political leadership biased in favor of the dominant class, virtually closing the door to reform. Under this condition, a move to make sure they completely control the bureaucracy will fulfill the formal requirement of overhead democracy, but will make the movement towards substantive democracy that much more difficult. In such a case, the only assistance one can have within the organs of the State is through open dissent by fractions of the bureaucracy with ties to progressive parts of the citizenry.

Yet it is also unlikely for the bureaucracy as an organization to lean in the direction of the poor, unless, as mentioned above, forces on the side of working classes are strong. Thus from another view, the prescription of balance is necessary, because changing the bureaucracy alone is not enough. As Riggs pointed out in 1963, over-emphasis on the development of the bureaucracy has weakened those other parts of the political system that could counteract its overweaning dominance.

Thus, students of Public Administration must desist from simply pushing for the old kind of bureaucratic development. First, there is a need for a re-socialization of Public Administration to put democratic ethics as a disciplinal bias and to put at the frontline the idea of the civil service as a public trust. Also, the issue is not only in following orders which may be legal but not legitimate. This requires that the bureaucrats take time and effort to analyze the meaning and implications of their work, instead of assuming correctness simply because it has been so ordered by powerholders.

Secondly, technologies come with their own biases and conditions, and they must be analyzed for their efficacy as a means of bringing about a government of the people. The analysis Riggs started in 1963 must be followed and the unexpected effects of such technologies as the short ballot, the merit system and cost-benefit analysis must continue to be exposed. A way must be found for them to become tools not only for the development of the bureaucracy, but of democracy also.

In the end, as Riggs has declared, the hope lies not primarily in further awakening the bureaucracy but in the building of other political institutions to counteract its tilt towards anti-democratic forces. Bureaucratic power has so often been used to promote only the interests of the bureaucracy rather than any other political goal. Left to itself, despite the exemplary performance of certain reform agencies, the bureaucracy as a whole cannot be trusted to use its power for the public interest. While the political system is now as much the arena of struggle as the economy, that struggle is still in the main carried out by political institutions other than the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy can only be changed so much but it cannot really be responsive to the demands of the people unless social forces and the State move it towards that direction.

Endnotes

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¹⁷Riggs, "The Interdependence...," *op.cit.*

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