

# The Interdependence of Politics and Administration

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*The politics/administration dichotomy persists because it is maintained by the confusion in the distinction between politics and administration and doctrine of "separation of powers" which was designed to safeguard human rights and civil liberties against the power of despotic rulers and despotic "majorities." It is even strengthened by the American career bureaucrats who protect the status they had achieved through the merit system and the academic addiction to the dichotomy myth. A theory of interdependence is necessary and can be achieved by focussing on the bureaucracy and emphasizing the "unity rule." Officials who administer best are politically competent also.*

## Introduction

The dogma of "separation of politics and administration" has been under attack ever since it was promulgated in the US. According to Paul Appleby, "Goodnow's early discussion drew a line less abrupt between policy and administration than some who later quoted him seemed to know."<sup>1</sup> Appleby also quotes Luther Gulick as having denied, the separation of policymaking and administration as far back as 1933. Similarly, Appleby quotes Charles Merriam and Louis Brownlow to support his own conclusion that, ". . . the long attempts to make sharp and real the separation of powers, the separations of policymaking and administration and politics and administration, have been undergoing abandonment."<sup>2</sup>

A generation later, Dwight Waldo observed that we recognize "the 'politics-administration dichotomy' as a seriously erroneous description of reality, and as a deficient, even pernicious, prescription for action." Nevertheless, he wrote, "despite its ideological, 'mythic' qualities — and perhaps in part because of them — the concept served a useful function." And yet, he continued, ". . . a generation after the discrediting of 'politics — administration, we have made little progress in developing a 'formula' to replace it."<sup>3</sup> Gerald Caiden also tells us that "although the ideal of depoliticized bureaucracy firmly places government in the hands of professional politicians . . ." and ". . . denies any political role to public officials," in fact "politicians perform administrative duties, and officials assume political responsibilities."<sup>4</sup>

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Why is it that although leading scholars of public administration have denounced the notion of "separation" as a myth, it nevertheless persists in America as a guide to action, a premise of administrative theory? To correct the myth we need an alternative theory: It is not enough to simply criticize. In this light two questions will be considered:

- (1) Why does the separation myth persist?
- (2) What alternative theory can be formulated?

No definitive answers to these questions are offered here. This conceptual essay has two parts, each offering reflections on the two questions raised above. The first part explains the strength of the myth of the separation between politics and administration in the United States; while the second part proposes an alternative framework based on the interdependence of politics and administration.

#### The Maintenance of a Myth

It is easy to confuse the notion of separating administration from politics with the doctrine of the "separation of powers," expressed in the US Constitution. That doctrine was designed to safeguard human rights and civil liberties against the power of authoritarian rulers or despotic "majorities" by splitting the locus of power into separate and balanced centers of political authority. It did not contain a distinction between politics and administration. Indeed, the American Constitution contains no references to "administration." Alexander Hamilton, a founding father, wrote about the great importance of administration in government, but his theories presupposed the essential involvement of administration in politics.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Civil Service Reform*

It was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century — just a hundred years ago — that the separation of administration from politics became a popular slogan linked with the "progressive" movement that aimed to develop public service careers at the expense of the spoils system. The name of Woodrow Wilson is often associated nowadays with this campaign, but the reform movement antedated his efforts and the dichotomy myth was popularized later on. In retrospect, later scholars rediscovered Wilson and they often quote his famous essay as a basic source for the myth.<sup>6</sup> We must, instead, look elsewhere for a more fundamental understanding of the forces that led to the development of the myth.<sup>7</sup>

To persuade congressmen to accept civil service reform, it was necessary to induce them to vote for changes that seemed to undercut their own ability to win elections. Spoils had become a bulwark of the party system, motivating volunteers to do campaign work in exchange for promised jobs, but the system became a mixed blessing. Negative commitments and pressures resulting from it led many congressmen to welcome changes, but what changes would they accept?

Similar considerations touched the presidency and the political parties. Those who won elections could pressure their spoils appointees to work for their reelection. On the other hand the opposition who lacked the resources to finance their campaigns, could rely on an army of hungry volunteers to help them — provided, of course, there was a reasonable prospect of jobs as rewards for victory.

*The Politics of Merit.* The progressives justified the merit system on administrative grounds. They argued that officials recruited on the basis of competitive examinations would be more efficient than spoilsmen. Moreover, career officials would gain experience and competence that short-term, rotating personnel could never acquire.

However, this argument for administrative efficiency could not overcome the political fears of members of Congress. Those in opposition were afraid that, after the spoils system was abolished, they could not promise jobs to volunteer workers, but the party in power would still be able to use civil servants as campaign workers. To overcome this fear, one principle of political neutrality was popularized. Career officials would be forbidden to engage in "political," i.e. partisan, activity. They would become "nonpolitical" administrators.

The emergent myth of a dichotomy between politics and administration, i.e., the possibility of appointing nonpolitical officials, therefore, strengthened the progressive movement and helped secure congressional support for the Pendleton Act which became law in 1883. If career officials recruited by examination would really be politically neutral, then it would be possible to improve the quality of administration as promised by elected politicians, and at the same time some of the embarrassing obligations to their supporters made by these politicians could actually be reduced.

*Nonpartisan Career Officials.* After public officials gained tenure as long-term career bureaucrats, moreover, they acquired a vested interest in political neutrality for two reasons. First, it relieved them of the unpleasant duty of electioneering. More importantly, it assured them job security whenever the party in opposition came to power. Consequently, career officials quickly championed the notion that administrative functions could be performed in a nonpolitical way. It served their personal interests to argue for a sharp dichotomy between politics and administration.

To reach this conclusion, however, they accepted a *narrow* definition of politics, equating it with involvement in the activities, especially the campaigns, of political parties. The term was identified with electioneering. In a *broad* sense, however, politics includes all efforts to shape public policies and direct their implementation. Public bureaucracies everywhere are necessarily political in this broader sense, whether or not their members are partisan in electoral campaigns.

Parenthetically, *bureaucracy* is used here to refer to the aggregate of all appointed military and civilian officials in a government. No doubt the word has many other possible meanings.<sup>8</sup> Originally, it referred to a political system dominated by appointed officials or the "bureaucratic policy." It is often used for some subset of appointed officials, e.g., the civil services only, career appointees only, or higher officials only. The concept embraces all the appointed office-holders of a government working under the formal authority of a chief executive. The incumbents of a bureaucracy, of course, may be referred to as "bureaucrats."

Civil service reform, in short, changed the motivation of public officials. It largely replaced the *party politics* of spoils appointees with the *program politics* of career bureaucrats. Nonpartisan program politics, accordingly, has far-reaching consequences in contemporary America, affecting equally both its political and its administrative life.

The distinctive pattern of program-oriented nonpartisan politics found in America can be attributed in part to a peculiarly American adaptation of the British merit system. In England, career officers were first recruited to a "class," and then assigned, in rotation, to posts in various departments where members of their class were eligible. Higher positions were monopolized by members of the "administrative class." This scheme, actually, was based on the British experience in governing India where they had evolved a ruling Indian civil service whose fundamental model followed the example of the Chinese mandarin system.<sup>9</sup>

The British formula was viewed by the American reformers as unacceptably aristocratic or elitist. Consequently, while accepting the idea of a merit system, they revised the formula by abandoning the notion of administrative classes. Instead, they recruited all personnel through competitive examinations. Starting at the bottom, positions were classified and filled competitively. This meant that in each service, professionalism prevailed: one had to be an agriculturist in the Department of Agriculture, a doctor in Public Health, an engineer in Transportation, etc.<sup>10</sup> As an inescapable result, specialists in each government agency became strongly committed to its policies and programs since their own careers were at stake: a program's survival and growth led to personal success, while organizational failure meant personal disaster.

The program-oriented career system unintentionally reinforced a peculiar dynamics of any presidentialist system, based on the autonomy of Congress derived from the separation of powers. Unlike a parliament, presidentialist congresses have the prerogative to make laws whether or not the President supports them. Such legislatures find themselves deluged with a vast agenda that can only be handled by delegating much real power to their committees and subcommittees. In this situation, interested public officials found that they could best assure the development and survival of their agencies by means of energetic program politics involving much interaction both with congressional committees and with private interest groups.<sup>11</sup>

American career bureaucrats, therefore, necessarily became deeply involved in a complex, interesting and new type of program politics that their predecessors under the spoils system had not experienced. They had much to gain from success and more to lose from failure. Moreover, to protect the status they had achieved through the merit system, they needed to support the myth of a dichotomy between politics and administration.

Meanwhile, a considerable number of bureaucrats, especially in higher level executive positions, remained under the spoils system, although they were more politely called "political appointees." To retain the myth of a dichotomy between politics and administration, these temporary officials were thought of as belonging outside the category of bureaucrats. Their overt involvement in party politics was obviously linked to administrative functions, but we simply disposed of the question by talking about them as as participants in the political, not the administrative, side of the dichotomy. Although the notion of a bureaucracy originally included all appointed officials, its redefinition after the civil service reforms to include only career officers tended to reinforce the dichotomy myth.

#### *Academic Premises for the Myth*

The fact that reformers, politicians and civil servants embraced the dichotomy myth for their own reasons does not explain why many American scholars also accepted the myth. We might have expected them to unite in opposition to an idea that obscured the essential interdependence of politics and administration. Although some political scientists have protested the myth from its inception, a cleavage emerged in the mainstream of Political Science between those who focus attention on "politics" and others who concentrate on "administration."

Five considerations help us account for the academic addiction to the dichotomy myth. They include:

- (1) the civic/imperial (Greek/Roman) tradition;
- (2) a structural cleavage in American Universities;
- (3) the theory/practice dichotomy;
- (4) the left/right opposition; and
- (5) the failure of comparative administration

*Civic/Imperial Traditions.* Dwight Waldo has pointed to fundamental cleavage in the Western tradition that contributes significantly to the politics/administration dichotomy, namely the uneasy mixture of Greek Civic values with the Roman imperial tradition. The civic values reflected in the classical republics with their emphasis on the equality of citizens in the *polis*, as elaborated subsequently in British constitutional development, were also stressed in the American Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

By contrast, the Roman imperial tradition instituted a hierarchy of government officials whose authority was based on a legal system which they enforced. Whereas our "political" ideas are rooted in the Greek civic tradi-

tion, our "administrative" notions can be traced to Roman imperial origins.<sup>12</sup> Without trying to summarize Waldo's elaboration of this thesis, let us point to three structural cleavages in American university life that seem to be related to it. Although each of these dichotomies is autonomous, it seems to have a significant relationship to the civic/imperial cleavage.

*Structural Cleavages in American Universities.* There is a fundamental distinction in American universities between disciplinary departments and professional schools. In the former, priority is given to knowledge as an end in itself. Is this not a reflection of the Greek civic tradition? In the Socratic mode, academic departments are supposed to advance understanding by research and to impart knowledge to students without worrying about their subsequent careers. By contrast, professional schools are deliberately intended to prepare students for future careers. Could this be a reflection of the Roman tradition, stressing the skills needed to maintain an orderly society?

Since many different kinds of knowledge are typically required in any career, professional schools are necessarily interdisciplinary. They may call upon disciplinary departments to instruct their students as a service function. For example, if they need to teach foreign languages, they can ask a language department to help them. Alternatively they may have their own language in-house departments: a business school, for example, will have its own economics department, and schools of agriculture reproduce departments of sociology.

We normally expect basic research and the development of knowledge to occur in disciplinary departments, and we assume that professional schools will use this knowledge in training their students. To support such collaboration, faculty members in professional schools usually have a Ph.D. from an academic department, and they may even hold a joint appointment in such a department. However, in the case of Public Administration, peculiar tensions and tenuous relationships emerged.

Training programs for public officials originated outside universities, and at first were oriented primarily to local government. The Training School of Public Service, founded in 1911 by the New York Bureau of Municipal Research, was a pioneer. This school and those sponsored by various municipal reform leagues were interdisciplinary and career-oriented, giving priority to the teaching of useful skills. When many of these programs were eventually taken over by universities, they retained their technical, non-political orientation.<sup>13</sup> They did not look to Political Science for fundamental knowledge needed by future bureaucrats, and political scientists, for their part, were not led to think of public service training programs as a promising market for their research findings.

One explanation for this gap lies in the structure of the career services in American government. The program-oriented basis for recruitment to the career services, as noted above, encouraged the development of professional schools, many of whose graduates were destined to become government officials. The teaching of public administration, therefore, became highly frag-

mented — educational administration, public health administration, library administration, social welfare administration, etc. were taught in professional schools as marginal subjects for students whose focus was on a public program area. Most officials, as they rose in the governmental hierarchy, relied on personal experience and intuition — marginally supplemented by in-service training programs — for their understanding of public administration.

No recognized profession of “public administrator” emerged. Instead, some marginal functions of government that could not be subsumed under the categories recognized in the professional schools — notably those associated with such “staff” services as personnel, budget and finance, and planning — emerged as a primary focus for “public administration training.” The classic formulation of these auxiliary functions of government can be found in Luther Gulick’s POSDCORB: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. In a bitterly competitive environment, schools that began to offer the Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree had to focus on subjects that seemed directly relevant to placement in the few government jobs open to non-program specialists. Although a few institutions — the University of Southern California, for example — were able to establish professional schools for public administration, the field remained largely an academic home. Under these handicaps, most political scientists, as Waldo protests, continue to think of Public Administration as a field concerned with “the ‘lower things’ of government, details for lesser minds.”<sup>14</sup>

*The Theory/Practice Dichotomy.* The split between academic departments and professional schools was reinforced by an internal cleavage that appears in many of the academic departments: the dichotomy between theory and practice. Tensions between researchers and teachers on the one side and practitioners on the other are found in Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Linguistics, and many other fields. The *theorists* justify their academic isolation and penury by claims of “purity” whereas the *practitioners* support their seeming affluence and responsibility by claims of “relevance.”

At the risk of sounding far-fetched, we may connect the interest in theory to the Greek fascination with intellectual inquiry and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, while the concern with practice may be linked to the Roman preoccupation with making a large-scale imperial system work. Within the field of governmental studies there were many who thought of politics as “pure” (in the Greek tradition) while others saw the focus on administration as “relevant” (in the Roman mode). Advanced studies in administration could lead to government jobs, to a “profession.”

At the faculty level, specialists in Public Administration often found employment in a professional school and even those who remained in Political Science departments frequently obtained supplementary employment as consultants or took a leave to work for government. There was always a good market for “non-political” research on administrative problems. Sad to

say, such opportunities were less available to the political scientists who chose to focus on politics.

Another factor may have heightened this estrangement: the theory and knowledge of politics evolved largely on an endogenous basis, relying on the speculations and research of political scientists. By contrast, after public administration was divorced from politics, its exponents found more inspiration and data in the work of non-political scientists than they did in their own departments. Much of the basic theory of public administration drew on the work of pioneers in business and industrial management — Frederick Taylor, Chester Barnard, Mary Parker Follet, Henri Fayol, Lyndall Urwick — as augmented by the research of sociologists and psychologists: Max Weber, Elton Mayo, Chris Argyris. Some, like Herbert Simon, sought a balance between economics and political science.

No doubt some good analogies can be drawn between the dynamics of business management, and those of public administration. However, the motives for effective management in market-based organizations are so radically different from the political constraints that govern public agencies that the transfer of ideas and practices from one to the other of these domains is often misleading. Students of politics came increasingly to scorn specialists in administration as lightweights who sold out not only to their itch for government jobs, but also to the interests of an impressive establishment. By defining politics out of administration, administrative theory fell into a limbo that justified the scorn of those on the “pure” side of the theory/practice dichotomy.

Despite this prejudice, Public Administration became a standard subject of instruction in political science departments. Here, in a purely academic environment, we might have expected to find well-grounded theories based on the genuine interdependence of politics and administration. Although some political scientists, as noted above, attacked the dichotomy myth, they failed to produce an acceptable alternative theory based on the interdependence of politics and administration. Consequently, teachers of public administration often become estranged from their colleagues.

In one exceptional department of political science, however, it appeared for a while, during the 1930s, that a genuine synthesis might occur. At the University of Chicago, under the leadership of Charles E. Merriam, administration and its political foundations were closely studied. Marshall Dimock, M. Gaus, Leonard D. White and Paul P. Van Riper were among its scholars who wrote extensively about public administration. Dimock tells us that “. . . the successful administrator is one who has . . . political sense . . . We are not talking about the official who is an active member of a political party; we mean the man who understands people and affairs so well that he is able to get things done . . .”<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, when White’s textbook on Public Administration came out in 1926 — it was the first in its field and remained the most influential for many years — it contained almost no political analysis.<sup>16</sup> White himself, was clearly very conscious of the politics/administration linkage, as



manifested in his magisterial four-volume history of American government. <sup>17</sup> Why, we must ask, did political scientists who understood the linkages between politics and administration write as though the myth of a dichotomy was empirically valid?

The answer can be found, both inside and outside the setting of science departments. The outside aspect is easier to explain. Insofar as the primary market for Public Administration textbooks could be found in career-oriented professional training programs, there was a substantial demand for works that simplified reality by excluding the political dimension. Authors who wanted to augment their income by writing marketable texts, and their publishers, may well have conspired (unconsciously, perhaps) to present depoliticized interpretations that would be more acceptable both to candidates for government jobs and their superiors. They found "practice" more appealing than "theory."

Meanwhile, specialists on politics criticized their colleagues who were writing on public administration, accusing them of diluting or prostituting their profession. Members of the American Political Science Association interested in administration felt so neglected that they pulled out to form the American Society for Public Administration, whose leadership for a long time was based in Chicago right next to the University. If students of public administration were going to ignore politics, it seemed logical for specialists on politics to ignore administration.

*The Left/Right Opposition.* The theory/practice dichotomy may have been reinforced by some unintended political effects of the shift away from the spoils system. By curtailing the attractiveness of volunteering in political campaigns, the merit system made parties more dependent on financial contributions, especially from the well-to-do, to cover their campaign costs. This, in turn, made party candidates vulnerable to their patrons who naturally expected tangible benefits from victory. Today, as television promotion becomes prominent, electoral costs have escalated. When we contrast the presidentialist system with parliamentary regimes, we become keenly aware of the great cost of securing a national majority of voters for a president, by contrast with the relatively modest expense of local elections in which even minority candidates can gain significant power in parliament. Apart from its financial aspects, the need to mobilize a vast electorate for presidential candidates also compels American parties to adopt compromise platforms that scarcely generate the kind of popular enthusiasm that might trigger mass contributions by the poor. <sup>18</sup>

It seems, therefore, to be an inherent requirement of any viable presidential system that it sustain the power and privileges of the affluent. For those whose interest in politics has a Greek civic basis, where the equal rights of all citizens are stressed, and political responsibility is a primary norm, the American polity is seen increasingly as unacceptably elitist and biased toward the privileged. Many "Political" scientists, consequently, question the American system of government and call for fundamental reforms. They

may be attracted to neo-Marxist perspectives, and even non-Marxists denounce the "power elites" in American politics.<sup>19</sup>

By contrast, some "administrative" theorists, estranged from the main stream of political science, and looking for inspiration to business administration and the behavioral scientists who advise industry, have generated order-oriented theories. They frequently use "management" as a key term, and develop a topdown, hierarchical way of talking that gives them a pro-establishment image. May we not, again, relate this way of thinking to the Roman imperial tradition?

Of course, no sweeping generalizations are justifiable. Some specialists on "politics" are very conservative and there are rebels within the public administration community, as manifested, for example, in the existentialist, phenomenologist, and "New Public Administration" movements. Nevertheless, while both the left/right cleavage and the theory/practice cleavage among political scientists cut across the politics/administration split, on balance, they both tend to reinforce the myth of a dichotomy between politics and administration.

All of these underlying cleavages and the fears they generate are so powerful that they cannot be overcome by "voice in the wilderness" protests from scholars who vainly seek to expose the fallacy of the dichotomy myth. What we need, is a powerful new paradigm or framework that directly confronts the interdependence of politics and administration, a framework that will motivate the political scientists to take the administrative problems of government seriously, and at the same time induce the administrative theories to pay serious attention to the politics of public administration.

*The Failure of Comparative Administration.* At one time it seemed that the postwar exposure of American public administration specialists to the governments of developing countries would exercise a powerful corrective influence. Because American specialists working abroad confronted situations in which bureaucratic power was overwhelmingly obvious and adversely affected administration. In the early 1960s, some of us hoped that a comparative administration movement based on this experience could counteract the dichotomy myth. We became active in the Comparative Administration Group (CAG), under the auspices of the American Society for Public Administration, with generous support from the Ford Foundation. In the end, however, we failed. Paradoxically, the American experience overseas reinforced the dichotomy myth.

Virtually all of the new states who gained their independence after a period of imperial domination and control had well organized public bureaucracies but very poorly established institutions for citizen participation in self-government — and the older monarchies that did survive had become derelicts. Most developing countries collapsed after a "vestibule" period which lasted, on the average, no more than six years. When the new represen-

tative institutions collapsed secretly organized bureaucratic groups — mainly, though not exclusively, military officers — seized power, suspended the Constitution and imposed arbitrary rule.

As a result, bureaucratic power prevailed at the expense of popular government, and administrative capacity plunged. The Philippines was exceptional to the degree that its Congress and elected President had deeper roots, but even here a period of arbitrary rule under martial law imposed by an elected president was not avoided. The political rule of appointed officials in the new states was so conspicuous that one could scarcely have been blind to it when thinking about the administrative problems of these countries.

The comparative study of governmental systems which was motivated by technical assistance programs in public administration to highlight the political roles played by appointed career officials in many countries proved to be the basic fallacy of the dichotomy myth. A strong comparative administration movement, by demonstrating the inherent and essential interdependence of politics and administration in the Third World, would also compel Americans to reassess the dichotomy myth at home.

In practice, however, foreign aid had exactly the opposite effect. The rulers of the new states typically welcomed foreign *administrative* advice to strengthen their bureaucracies and (they hoped) to improve their capacity to run development programs, i.e. to engage in "Development Administration." At the same time they rejected *political* advice for fear that it would undermine prevailing structures of power. The receptivity of the new states to technical assistance for administrative but not for political development offered new opportunities for public administration experts if, and only if, they agreed to eschew politics. Under their tutelage, new institutes, departments and schools of public administration sprang up throughout the Third World, uniformly divorced from the study of politics, and outside the framework of political science departments. Nothing persuades like success, and this experience seemed to confirm the validity of the dichotomy myth. Thus, ironically, our post-war overseas experiences largely coincided with and reinforced the schizoid condition of American political science.

Because of the weight of bureaucratic power in many Third World countries, we might have expected specialists in comparative politics to fill the gap, identifying the integral interdependence of politics and administration. However, sad to say, comparative politics paid marginal attention only to bureaucratic power and almost none to administrative failures.<sup>20</sup> It tried to globalize its preoccupation with minus administration, relying on functionalism and cultural analysis to compensate for its failure to address fundamental structural issues.

The split between "politics" and "administration" actually deepened for an accidental reason. The previously integrated field of comparative government was replaced by the separate fields of comparative politics (or political development) and comparative administration (or development admi-

nistration). If efforts made in the mid-50s to secure funding for a research program on comparative administration under the aegis of the American Political Science Association (APSA) had succeeded, a bridge between the two fields might have been built. As luck would have it, funding was secured for CAG, but it was through APSA and comparative politics gained support, simultaneously, through the Social Science Research Council. By lodging the national focus for these two subjects in institutional settings that were utterly divorced from each other the gulf between the two fields was significantly widened.

The efforts of the CAG to find new ways to conceptualize the field and counteract the split never had a main stream influence.<sup>21</sup> Within ASPA itself, the CAG approach was rejected as insufficiently "professional," i.e., not relevant to the needs of practitioners and out of tone with the basic paradigm of Public Administration as an autonomous (non-political) discipline. Moreover, CAG never had a homogeneous thrust. It struggled to answer perplexing problems without reaching any consensus. Its meetings and publications displayed a wide spectrum of points of view and paradigms. Although, some of us persisted in linking politics with administration, many CAG members adhered to the established dichotomous paradigm. Students of comparative politics, moreover, continued to view the development administration approach as both an establishment tool and a trivial preoccupation, focussing their analyses on the political problems of developing countries while neglecting their administrative aspects.

In the developing countries, the gulf between the study of politics and administration also became institutionalized. Although real progress in the understanding of politics/administration linkage will eventually evolve overseas and correct the American parochialism in this sphere, today's out look is far from encouraging. To break out of our impasse, it is not enough just to criticize the dichotomy myth. An alternative paradigm is needed, based on the linkage rather than the separation of politics and administration. Such a linkage must also be demonstrated within the American context — it is not enough to focus on what Americans typically view as the exceptional circumstances of Third World countries.

### Towards a Theory of Interdependence

At the philosophical level, our search for an appropriate paradigm may start by considering the complementarity of the principles of "responsibility" and "order" as basic norms. By responsibility, it refers to the civic (Greek) tradition discussed by Waldo, and by order, the imperial (Roman) tradition. *Responsibility* includes the civic virtues, based on human equality and freedom, and the obligation of elected representatives to serve the interests and needs of their constituents, i.e., the citizens. *Order*, by contrast, is based on the need to counteract chaos, to institutionalize laws and regulations designed to control aberrant behavior and protect people, from violence and abuse.

On their face these principles seem to contradict each other. Exclusive emphasis on responsibility implies giving free rein to all kinds of competing interests to express themselves fully, which may result in disorder. The more we stress equity and justice, the rights of critics and their demands for accountability, the more we tend to see bureaucratic hierarchies and government regulations, — i.e., the ordering principle, — as antagonistic or alien. By contrast, increases in order appear to curtail responsibility, as when authoritarian regimes clamp down on civil disobedience and impose restrictions on disruptive behavior. The more vigorously a regime imposes order through the efficient and effective execution of public policies, the more it may restrict autonomous behavior and limit opportunities for political arguments or dissent.

Each of these two principles may be treated as an autonomous and independent value: students of politics, following the Greek civic tradition, tend to be preoccupied with problems of responsibility in public life; specialists on administration, taking the Roman imperial path, stress the need for order as a primary norm. Both preoccupations are one-sided and sterile because each depends on the other for its realization.

#### *The complementarity of Order and Responsibility*

A more valid analysis starts from these premises:

1. order without responsibility leads to disorder; and
2. responsibility without order leads to irresponsibility.

In other words, order can be maximized only when it is based on responsibility, and responsibility flourishes only in a context of order.

To make these abstract propositions intelligible we need to visualize their application in concrete situations. The first premise is reflected in regimes whose autocratic rulers seek to dominate and regiment the conduct of their citizens without taking their interests or demands into account. This leads, ultimately, to dissent, subversion, terrorism and revolution — the very antithesis of order. By contrast, the second premise is manifested in societies whose members insist on complete openness and freedom of choice, a libertarian unregulated utopia, but one in which competing interests and human aggressiveness generate not only disorder and the inability of any regime to meet the needs of its citizens effectively, but also the eventual usurpation of power, i.e., utter irresponsibility. Thus both responsibility without order and order without responsibility are mirages.

To put the same point in a positive rather than a negative light, consider the hypothesis that responsibility and order are complementary: governments can be responsible only if they can establish order through effective administration and, conversely, they can create order only to the degree that they are politically responsible. Thus order and responsibility are two sides of the same coin — one is impossible without the other. However, just as

one may see only heads or tails by looking always at one side of a coin, so one can also create an illusion of the autonomy of administration or politics by looking only at the problem of order or the problem of responsibility.

### *Bureaucracy as a Focus*

This philosophical argument comes into focus when one looks, concretely, at the status and performance of public bureaucracies. Bureaucracy, of course, never performs all the functions of either politics or administration. In other words, even when bureaucrats are dominant as in a bureaucratic polity, non-bureaucrats still play political roles. Conversely, even when public officials are seen as the main actors in an administrative system, non-officials also play important administrative roles. What is important and usually overlooked, however, is the interdependence of the political and administrative functions of bureaucrats. To summarize, consider the "unity rule:" Officials who administer best are politically competent also.

To make sense of this rule we need to distinguish between political competence and incompetence. One may be politically active but incompetent. To explain this point, we need to think about three dimensions of political action, each of which involves a basic contrast. In practice, the most common behaviors probably fall at intermediate positions on a scale for each of the following polar contraries:

*Micro- vs. macro-level politics.* A distinction between officials struggling against each other solely to enhance their personal interests in contrast with conflicts that are oriented to larger issues of public policy and organization. Since micro-level politics almost always obstructs both good administration and good politics, bureaucrats engaged in micro-level politics only are politically incompetent. Political competence involves macro-level politics.

*Partisan vs. nonpartisan politics.* Involvement or noninvolvement in political party campaigns as a special form of politics. Much if not most politics is nonpartisan. It concerns programs and policies that are not determined by party affiliation. Strictly partisan politics by public officials is often, if not always, subversive of good administration. Bureaucrats who are politically competent, therefore, are normally, but not necessarily, involved exclusively in nonpartisan politics. No doubt there are exceptions, but in such cases they are administratively able despite, rather than because of, their partisanship.

*Endocentric vs. exocentric.* The extent to which bureaucratic politics primarily involves intrabureaucratic struggles between rival officials and departments contrasted with situations in which it also includes relations with extrabureaucratic institutions, such as interest groups, legislative committees and judicial bodies. Both endocentric and exocentric bureaucratic politics require competence, but exocentric bureaucratic politics has a higher correlation with administrative performance.

To summarize, bureaucratic "political competence" means politics at the macro-level and normally (but not always) nonpartisan. It can involve either endocentric or exocentric politics, but the latter probably generates more administrative competence.

We should study the patterns of bureaucratic politics and administration that are associated with different regime types to support the unity rule empirically. Contemporary comparative politics has, unnecessarily obstructed this kind of inquiry by its preoccupation, with cultural and environmental variables at the expense of the structural features of different constitutions or regime types. The basic rules (constitution) of a political system offer the most persuasive grounds for predicting and understanding both political and administrative performance. Only after we have exhausted the explanatory power of a regime type should we look to other explanatory variables. This proposition leads us to compare regimes in order to understand interaction between politics and administration.

### *Bureaucratic Self-Interest*

Such comparisons should start with an analysis of bureaucratic interests and power potentials. Although those who create bureaucracies assuredly do so primarily for administrative reasons — to institutionalize and strengthen the supportive services needed by any government committed to implementing its own policies — it is apparent that after they are appointed, bureaucrats acquire interests as office-holders and they acquire the capacity to protect and enhance these interests. In so doing, of course, they are no different from any other groups or "classes" whose members have interests to uphold.

We ordinarily think of "class" interests as something based on property and income, but we usually do not think of bureaucrats as a class. We expect landowners, industrial workers, farmers, capitalists and industrialists to fight for their income and security but, strangely, we rarely expect public officials to do the same — perhaps because we want them to be self-sacrificing "public servants," we are shocked and surprised when they also strive to advance their own self-interests.

However, when we do think about the interests of officials, we usually relate them to the classes from which they are recruited rather than those of the class they have joined. Alternatively, neo-Marxists may think of government employees as members of the "bourgeoisie," as though salaried workers had the same interests as self-employed business and professional people. This is surely unrealistic. Career officials have a stake in the governmental institutions which furnish their livelihood, not in the private property which gives a "bourgeois" class its power and specific interests. When we think of bureaucracy as a class, we recognize that its functions automatically give it political resources that are consequential and potentially overwhelming. Moreover, if officials can monopolize power, they will exploit it at the expense of administrative performance and the interests of other classes.

To assure good administration, therefore, bureaucratic power must not be destroyed, but it does need to be balanced by the countervailing force of extrabureaucratic institutions. Such a balance permits nonbureaucrats to hold bureaucrats accountable for their performance, yet it gives officials enough power to assure their ability to administer efficiently and effectively. Administrative performance declines with imbalances, i.e., when public officials either monopolize power or become supinely powerless. The degree to which democratic responsibility is feasible depends primarily on the structure of power in extrabureaucratic self-governing institutions rather than on how these institutions relate to the bureaucracy.

### *Bureaucracy under American Presidentialism*

To understand the distinctive pattern of contemporary bureaucratic politics in America we need to combine structural factors. First, as noted above, the modified merit system developed in America since the adoption of the Pendleton Act in the 1880s, causes career officials in America to become program specialists. They are, therefore, exceptionally vulnerable to any decisions that jeopardize their programs and, consequently, their tenure and salary. Because of this, an irresistible interest impels them to press not only for the perpetuation, but also for the expansion, of the programs and organizations (bureaus, sections, departments) in which they work.

Second, the constitutional separation of powers in the American presidential system compels Congress to act autonomously on a large agenda of public policies. Because of its heavy agenda, Congress has to delegate powers to a large number of very powerful committees (or subcommittees). (see note No. 11). Moreover, the essentially weak nature of a presidentialist party system and its inability to take stands on controversial issues creates a context that invites a multitude of special interest lobbies to replace political parties. They find their natural counterparts in congressional subcommittees which, if interested, can sponsor the causes they advocate.

In this political setting, public officials can best serve their own "class" interests by working closely with both the congressional committees and the lobbyists of friendly private organizations so as to win the public policies and the appropriations that will sustain their programs. The growing literature on "bureaucratic politics" in America makes all of this quite explicit: American bureaucrats use their expertise and offices to foster the laws and budgets that enhance their interests.<sup>22</sup> A notable result of this three-sided interaction is the formation of "iron triangles."<sup>23</sup>

### *Administrative Consequences of Bureaucratic Politics*

The administrative consequences of these dynamics have been little noted, however: since American career officials know that their personal welfare depends on the success of the programs in which they are working, they are highly motivated to administer effectively, and to this end they



welcome techniques that work well in private corporations where market incentives also dictate the interest of corporate management in good administration. Consequently the dynamics of presidentialist politics in America drives public officials to try to be good administrators. The American mode of bureaucratic political action, therefore, is exceptionally exocentric and macropolitical. Although American career officials are nonpartisan, there are many partisan appointees, especially at the top executive levels. We conclude that the bureaucracy as a whole, including both its partisan and nonpartisan elements, is politically competent and strives to administer well.

In parliamentary systems, by contrast, because government policies can only be accepted or rejected by Parliament as a whole, parliamentary committees are weak and political parties are more issue oriented. Consequently bureaucrats have fewer incentives and opportunities to "politic" either with legislative committees on private interest groups. In these systems, even though career appointments are customary, the prevalence of class-based rotation between different agencies means that officials have less stake in their own programs and few opportunities to strengthen them by means of exocentric politics. They tend to focus on endocentric bureaucratic politics, lobbying with their colleagues and striving to influence the policies of cabinet members. Although they have fewer motives than presidentialist officials to "politic" with organized constituencies, they are more likely to understand the need for global, inter-agency integration than are presidentialist officials.

In the Third World, by contrast, following the introduction of career systems in the British empire, "modernized" bureaucratic systems became the norm for colonial administration. The Spanish Empire, however, lost their possessions before its colonial bureaucracy had been modernized.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, it was scarcely in the interest of the imperial powers to introduce institutions of self-government while they were struggling to retain control over conquered territories. Consequently when the new states became independent, they found themselves endowed with well-entrenched state bureaucracies but extremely fragile political institutions for self-government. Not surprisingly, these tenuous self-governing institutions were soon overthrown and military domination was established.<sup>25</sup>

By contrast, in those possessions where the independence movement involved prolonged guerrilla warfare, the organizers of revolution created single-party dictatorships. They typically followed the Bolshevik model both ideologically and institutionally, generating regimes that were relatively immune to military domination and able to hold party control over their bureaucracies. The price, of course, was the suppression of civil liberties and of the right to organize peaceful political opposition to those in power.

However, the new states that came under military control have experienced a form of bureaucratic domination in which public officials are not rewarded by extra-bureaucratic institutions for good performance nor are they punished for poor performance. Here we find a contradiction between

the expedient interests of officials and the needs of the people whom the bureaucrats are supposed to serve. Political incompetence is strongly associated with administrative malperformance.

Despite this, these regimes often manifest a keen appetite for American administrative theories and practices. It is not difficult to explain the paradox. American administrative ideas and teachings are carried in packages that include various tangible benefits for recipient officials. They could easily give lip service to the developmental values of foreign advisers, accepting all the personal benefits that come with technical assistance programs while not intending to apply the administrative principles in any basic way.

As we study the political rewards and penalties open to public officials, military and civil, we shall begin to learn more about the motivations that affect their willingness to administer public policies well or indifferently, and the kinds of ideas or theories about public administration that they find interesting and relevant. In short, sound theories of Public Administration, with global relevance, can be developed only after we abandon the myth of a dichotomy between politics and administration and seriously analyze their necessary interdependence.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *Policy and Administration*, (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1949) p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Dwight Waldo, "Some Thoughts on Alternatives, Dilemmas, and Paradoxes in a Time of Turbulence," in Waldo, (ed.) *Public Administration In A Time of Turbulence* (New York: Chandler, 1971) p. 264. Almost two decades later Waldo repeated this conclusion — "the cleft remains a prominent feature of our institutional and intellectual world" — in a lecture entitled, "A Theory of Public Administration Means in our Time a Theory of Politics Also." The lecture, delivered in honor of John Gaus at the American Political Science Association's conference in September 1987, used a quotation from Gaus as the title of this unpublished paper.

<sup>4</sup> Gerald E. Caiden, *Public Administration*, 2nd edition, (Palisades Publishers, 1982), pp. 81-82.

<sup>5</sup> A current reassessment of the contents and significance of Hamilton's views about public administration can be found in Richard T. Green, "Alexander Hamilton and the Study of Public Administration," paper presented at the ASPA conference in Boston, March/April 1987. The standard modern exposition is contained in Lynton K. Caldwell; *The Administrative Theories of Hamilton and Jefferson* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964).

<sup>6</sup> J.W. Ellwood, for example, tells us that "This notion of the generic nature of management can be traced to Woodrow Wilson's seminal essay . . ." See "A Morphology of Graduate Education for Public Service in the United States." Unpublished paper prepared for the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, 1985, p. 5. Wilson's essay, "The Study of Public Administration," originally appeared in the *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 2, (June 1887). After it was rediscovered in the 1920s, it attracted growing attention and was reprinted in the same journal, Vol. 56 (December 1941), pp. 481-506.

<sup>7</sup>For an analysis of the complex background of the myth see Paul P. Van Riper, "The Politics-Administration Dichotomy" in Jack Rabin and James S. Bowman, *Politics and Administration*, New York: Marcel Dekker, 1984), pp. 203-218, especially. "The real origins of the dichotomy," pp. 209-211. Van Riper tells us that Wilson's original essay had "... little or no impact on its field for close to half a century, and no influence whatever on the original development of the concept of a dichotomy." The socio-political pressures associated with civil services reform, and the theoretical arguments connected with this struggle are fully described in Van Riper's comprehensive study, *History of the United States Civil Service*, (Evanston, Illinois, Row, Peterson, 1958) especially Chapter 4, "Snivel Service to Civil Service: 1865-1983." Works by Van Riper and others give us comprehensive information about the intellectual history of the dichotomy myth and expose its fallacies, but they do not fully explain the tenacity of the myth, especially in contemporary academia, after it has been so thoroughly discredited by leading scholars.

<sup>8</sup>Ironically, when the word, 'bureaucracy' was coined by a Frenchman in the 18th century, it referred explicitly to political systems dominated by public officials. The word was intended to parallel the traditional Aristotelian categories of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. As with the word 'aristocracy,' however, 'bureaucracy' came to refer to a class rather than a polity dominated by that class. For details see M. Albrow, *Bureaucracy* (New York: Praeger, 1970). A summary and re-interpretation of the meanings of 'bureaucracy' is contained in F.W. Riggs, "Shifting Meanings of the Term 'Bureaucracy,'" *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 4, (1979), pp. 463-584.

<sup>9</sup>For details see Richard A. Chapman, *The Higher Civil Service in Britain* (London: Constable, 1970). A broad comparative survey of the class systems in contemporary European bureaucracies is given in Mattei Dogan (ed.), *The Mandarins of Western Europe: The Political Role of Top Civil Servants* (New York: Wiley, 1975). The essential feature of the administration class system is noted by James B. Christoph: "... a top bureaucratic elite composed of intellectual generalists, interchangeable from department to department in the course of their careers, and separated from the working lives of ordinary Britons." "High Civil Servants and the Politics of Consensualism in Great Britain." In Dogan, p. 28. An explanation of the Chinese background of the Indian Civil Service and, through it, the British civil service reforms can be found in Ssu-Yu Teng, "Chinese influence on the Western Examination System," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (September 1943), pp. 276-312.

<sup>10</sup>Van Riper, 1984, *op. cit.*, explains this transformation in chapter 5, entitled "Americanizing a Foreign Invention," pp. 96-112.

<sup>11</sup>The reasons why powerful legislative committees are needed for the survival of a presidentialist regime are explained in my essay, "The Survival of Presidentialism in America: Para-Constitutional Practices," to be published in the *International Political Science Review*.

<sup>12</sup>Waldo, 1987. *op. cit.*, see also Waldo, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-9.

<sup>13</sup>Ellwood, *op.cit.* p. 4; also see endnote no. 6.

<sup>14</sup>Waldo, 1987. *op. cit.* p. 2; also refer to endnote no. 3.

<sup>15</sup>M. E. Dimock and G. O. Dimock, *Public Administration* (New York: Rinehart, 1953), p. 66.

<sup>16</sup>Leonard D. White, *Introduction to the Study of Public Administration* (New York: Macmillan, 1926).

<sup>17</sup>*The Federalists: A study in Administrative History, 1789-1901* (New York: Macmillan, 1951); *The Jeffersonians, 1801-1829* (1951), *The Jacksonians, 1828-1861*, (1954); and *The Republican Era, 1869-1901*, (1958).

<sup>18</sup>David S. Broder, in a recent column *Honolulu Advertiser*, December 10, 1987, p. A14, reports that Paul G. Kirk, Jr., Democratic National Chairman, "... genuinely has come to believe that the less the Democrats say as a party on the issues, the better chance Democratic candidates have to win." Broder agrees with Kirk that "... the promise of practical achievement may prevail" over the activists who want to write some of their favorite planks into the party platform. The point, of course, is that whatever side one takes on a given issue, if it is a real issue, some voters will be antagonized. When you aggregate all the opponents of a platform which takes stands, you build a majority in opposition. The safer course is to focus on the personality of each candidate and to hope that the public will support someone in whom they can trust. Such a strategy generates little enthusiasm among the poor who benefit only from vigorous and controversial policies.

<sup>19</sup>No doubt there are many conservative and moderate political scientists, but the pull to the left is reflected in such works as Edward S. Greenberg, *The American Political System: A Radical Approach*, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop, 1980); and H. R. Rodgers, Jr., and M. Harrington, *Unfinished Democracy: The American Political System* (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1981).

<sup>20</sup>There are notable exceptions. Joseph LaPalombara, for example, through the Committee on Comparative Politics of the Social Science Research Council, edited a symposium on *Bureaucracy in Political Development* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963).

<sup>21</sup>This was not only true in the main stream of American Political Science, but it was also true in foreign aid. A history of U.S. technical assistance programs for "development administration," by Dennis A. Rondinelli, asserts that "... CAG's work remained somewhat abstract and had little real influence on AID projects and programs ..." *Development Administration and US Foreign Aid Policy*. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1987), p. 45.

<sup>22</sup>"If bureaucrats do not have a monopoly over policymaking, however, it is clear that they have a strategic role in the process by which decisions are made. Although they are unable to rule alone, no one in modern politics can rule without them." F.E. Rourke, *Bureaucracy, Politics and Public Policy*, third edition (Boston: Little Brown, 1984), p. 190. Although Rourke writes in general terms, the context of his work shows that he has in mind only the situation in the United States. The general tenor of the literature on bureaucratic politics in America suggests that its authors start from the premises of a dichotomy between politics and administration. They seem to be shocked by their discovery that appointed officials exercise (nonpartisan) political influence and they view this as a bad thing which ought, somehow, to be corrected.

<sup>23</sup>On the dynamics of "iron triangles" see Harold Seidman, *Politics, Position and Power: The Dynamics of Federal Organization*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: 1975); Douglas Cater, *Power in Washington*, (New York: Vintage, 1964); and J. Leiper Freeman, *The Political Process: Executive Bureaucracy Legislative Committee Relations* (New York: Random House, 1965) Other terms are used: e.g. "subgovernment" and "subsystem." Overlapping "issue networks" are also found: they frequently cut across the iron triangles and reflect consumer, citizen, public service and environmental concerns.

<sup>24</sup>An excellent account of the traditional Spanish system of administration in the Philippines is contained in Onofre D. Corpuz, *The Bureaucracy in the Philippines* (Manila: UP Institute of Public Administration, 1957). The important differences between modern and traditional bureaucracies are clarified by such works as T. F. Carney, *Bureaucracy in Traditional Society* (Lawrence; Kansas; Coronado: 1971) and E. A. Kracke, Jr., *Civil Service in Early Sung China-960-1067*, (Cambridge, Massachusets: Harvard, 1953).

<sup>25</sup>The essential weakness of self-governing political institutions in the new states may be attributed not only to the policies of imperial rulers but also to the very existence of a modern bureaucracy prior to the creation of these institutions. I offered some comments on the dynamics of this relation in my essay, "Bureaucrats and Political Development: A Paradoxical View," in LaPalombara, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-167. Also refer to endnote no. 20.

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