



An Analysis of Bureaucracy as a System of Scientific Management

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Abstract: Bureaucracy as an institution is as old as human civilization with which it has a very close relation. As an organ of government and administration, bureaucracy has roots in the ancient world where it has played a vital role in administering great civilizations like Chinese, Persian, and Roman, and provided continuity, stability and order to them and their administrative systems for a long time. Practically we do not have a true alternative to bureaucracy with the results that no institution will ever entirely replace it. The twentieth century witnessed an enormous expansion and development of bureaucracy because of the emergence of new states, the end of colonialism, and the struggle/competition of capitalism and socialism across the globe. The welfare state in socialist and capitalist regimes extended their ranges of roles beyond limits, and both created a large network of bureaucracy. Side by side, when citizens, business owners, politicians and scholars intensified their crusade against bureaucracy and began to mark it as autocratic and oblivious to the people, steady political pressure against bureaucracy began. The modern world is passing through a speedy globalization of corporate capitalism, and with the collapse of socialist world there is global chaos in ideological, ethnic, political, institutional and economic spheres which has kept bureaucracy in serious crises with its institutional capacity started to erode. But these crises have not rendered bureaucracy dead or disappeared. The main objectives of this paper are to give a detailed description of bureaucracy, its various theoretical perspectives, the causative factors of bureaucratization, and to highlight the means through which shows how bureaucracy can be made responsibility. The paper is mainly a qualitative study on bureaucracy with descriptive framework and is largely based on secondary data to answer the questions of how bureaucracy has been so powerful and how it could be made accountable.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, Scientific Management, Traditional Authority, Rational-legal Authority, Charismatic Authority, Formalism.

1. Introduction

Bureaucracy is understood under three different meanings: first as a traditional view as presented by Max Weber under Weberian model and refers to any societal organization with several idyllic features like clear hierarchy, unity of command, division of labor, record keeping, merit-based system, specialization of functions, and lastly, rules and

regulations regulating relations that govern organizational performance [30]. This type of bureaucracy is the most professional and efficient organizational structure for policy implementation. Secondly, it refers to any large institution or organization structured with functions, missions, and processes with a major impact on its external and internal environments. This meaning of the term is boarder and applicable relatively to all large public, private, ancient and modern organizations [29]. This meaning of the term was already mentioned, studied and applied in academic inquiries. Thirdly, the term is sometimes referred to as “dynamic” and is applied to security and military bureaucratic organizations. Although there is a risk of distinguishing between the three meanings of the term, such classification is useful to understand the term in a better way. It should be kept in mind that all bureaucracies are integral components of broader social systems (society, culture, government, religion and economy). Like other types of organizations, bureaucracies operate within and are part of larger social structures that extend and limit them accordingly.

The main objectives of this paper are to give a detailed description of bureaucracy, its various theoretical perspectives, the causative factors of bureaucratization, and to highlight the means through which bureaucracy can be made responsibility. The paper is mainly a qualitative study on bureaucracy with descriptive framework and is largely based on secondary data from books and journals etc. It attempts to answer the questions of how bureaucracy has been so powerful and how it could be made accountable.

2. Theoretical Perspectives on Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy can be interpreted through three theoretical viewpoints. The first takes bureaucracy positively as the machinery of government, an important tool in internal and foreign relations for operating and coordinating government affairs. This view sees bureaucracy as an unavoidable systemic type of an entity and as an integral part of the governance structure. It sees bureaucracy as the best mechanism for productivity and considers it as an administrative branch of the government to which there is no equivalent alternative. This means impartiality in the execution of laws, merit-based decisions, professionalism, efficiency, consistency and stability against disorders, resilience, competence and vast capacity for work [30; 22; 28; 29].

The second view takes bureaucracy negatively: rigid, pathological, slow, dysfunctional, stifling, obstacle, objectifying social life and thus dehumanizing. This perspective views bureaucracy as undemocratic and unaccountable to the citizens. The solution lies in privatizing governance functions through large scale marketization, privatization, and commercialization. Contemporary neo-liberal and neoclassical "public choice" economic and political thinkers and the movements of New Public Management support this view [17/195-205; 19; 12].

The last perspective on bureaucracy is more balanced and realistic one. It views bureaucracy both positively and negatively. Waldo [29] reminds us of the efficacy of bureaucracy as a public administration agency, with both positive and negative characteristics. Bureaucracy is constructive when it is unbiased and logical in performance, free from tyranny, corruption and rigidity, and serves general public interests. It is detrimental when it supports special interest groups and operates against society's general interests.

However, modern organizations have been bureaucratization. There are many causative factors responsible for this increasing trend of bureaucratization like, (a) Increase in governmental functions and the rise of welfare state: With these developments, there occurred a greater need for the satisfactory implementations of the governmental policies and decisions. In the direction of bureaucratization, the rising demand of a society for law and order and security in all fields has a positive effect. [31/213], (b) The rise of capitalism: Modern capitalist business economy requires an unambiguous, accurate, continuous and rapid discharge of the administrative

enterprise. Modern capitalist institutions are usually unrivalled examples of rigid bureaucratization [31/215], (c) Need for technical expertise: The justification for the supremacy of the hierarchical organization over all other forms of organizations was its sole technological superiority. Bureaucratic structure compared to other organizations, is like machine to non-mechanical mode of production. In strictly bureaucratic administration, precision, unambiguity, speed, continuity, unity, discretion, strict subordination, reduction of friction and material and personal costs are raised to the optimal point [31/214], and (d) Improved means of communication: The new modes of communication have acted as pacemakers of the modern trend towards bureaucratization. This development is of vital significance for the likelihood of bureaucratic management. The improved means of communication have helped in the centralization of power and decision.

3. Bureaucracy Explained

Bureaucracy is more efficient and rational organizational structure than the traditional and charismatic ones. It is a rational structure to achieve goal with maximum efficiency-highest possible outcome with least human and material resources cost. Bureaucracy has instrumental role in achieving the specified goals. In order to justify his concept of bureaucracy, Marx Weber differentiates three kinds of authorities; (a) Traditional Authority is based on proven beliefs in the sacredness of immemorial uses/traditions and the validity of the authority in accordance with those traditions; (b) Rational-legal Authority is based on faith in the legitimacy/legality of the pattern of normative rules and the right to issue orders under those rules; (c) The Charismatic Authority is founded on an individual's attachment to overt and extraordinary heroism and exemplary nature [24/40].

It should also be kept in mind that the division is not too strict but erosive. A distinctive administrative structure is associated with each authority. Traditional form of authority provides a diffused and particularistic structure exemplified by patrimonialism like feudalism and patriarchalism. A charismatic type of authority is associated with a purely personal relationship that links an inspiring leader to his loyal followers. This type arises during crisis and instability when the situation requires individuals believed to have exceptional gifts of spirit and mind [30/358-73]. Weber says that in modern states and most specifically in most advanced institutions of capitalism, traditional structure gives way to rational-legal structure as a result of its technical superiority over all other type of organization. Bureaucracy has distinct features which are as below:

A Hierarchical Structure of Offices: This implies the power or control of the higher over the lower. It is a graded organization with several successive steps in which each of the lower steps is immediately subordinated to and through the next higher level to the other higher steps right up to the top level [25/151]. Each of the lower administrative unit is supervised and controlled by the higher one. It is also called as scalar system. It is a means of formal control and communication. Order, directives and commands go down the scale and complaints and performance go upward. All bureaucratic structures follow the principle of hierarchy [31/197].

A List of General Rules Governing Performance: General guidelines are enforced by the leadership of the office. The laws regulate official decisions and acts, including behavior. Such laws are more or less stable and detailed. Jurisprudence, administrative or corporate management are involved here. Modern public administration theory recognizes that the power to order certain matters by decree does not cause the bureau to regulate the matter by orders issued for each case, but rather to regulate the matter abstractly. This is in stark contrast to the domination by human rights over all connections, which is evident in patrimonialism. [31/198].

A Stable Division of Labor and Functional Specialization: Fixed and official jurisdictional regions, laid down by regulations, laws or administrative provisions, have been specified. This shows that the routine tasks needed for the purposes of a system governed by bureaucracy are distributed as official duties in a fixed manner and

that the authority to give orders required for the discharge of those duties is distributed in a stable manner and is strictly restricted by the rules on coercive means, whether physical or otherwise. Only individuals who have the generally controlled credentials to work are appointed. These elements constitute 'bureaucratic power' in public and lawful government and constitute bureaucratic leadership in private economic dominance [31/196].

A Division between Personal and Public Property and Rights: It is important to isolate the representatives of the administrative staff fully from the ownership of property or administration in a rational organization. The non-human means of production and administration are not owned by authorities, employees, and personnel attached to the administrative staff. In practice, there is total separation of the property belonging to the entity that is regulated within the sphere of office and the officials' personal property, which is for their own personal use [30/331-2].

Written Record: Administrative decisions, acts and regulations are drawn up and recorded in writing and are based on written documents. There is a staff of all types of subaltern officials and scribes. The body of officials actively engaged in a public office, along with the corresponding apparatus, and the files form an 'office' [31/197].

Merit Based Selection of Personnel: Employees are selected on the basis of professional skills. This is, in the most reasonable case, checked by examination, or assured by professional training certificates, or both. There is a merit-based appointment.

Administrative Responsibility: In the conduct of the office, the staff is subjected to a strict and formal supervision and discipline [30/334].

Careerism: Employment is viewed as a career. The office is regarded as the incumbent's main or, at least, primary occupation. There is a promotional scheme according to seniority or accomplishment, or both. Promotion depends on the decision of superiors [30/334]. Careerism undoubtedly helps attract and retain skilled and knowledgeable individuals to bureaucratic organizations. Workers have guaranteed tenure. They earn a pension at retirement as a reward for their corporate loyalty. If taken too far, a very different form of employee can be generated by the definition of careerism. For the whole of their working lives, successful probationers stay with the same organization without knowing any other organization.

Impersonality: Bureaucrats behave impartially and rationally decide, setting aside any personal considerations. The logical judgment is probably the right one. Excessive impersonality, nevertheless, transforms consumers into dehumanized artifacts who are inevitably very indifferent to real human plight.

Instrumental Role: The bureaucracy performs an instrumental role. This means that it is restricted to the implementation or enforcement of the policies enacted by the political authority.

Goals Specificity: Specific goals not only include guidelines for deciding between alternative activities, but they direct decisions about how to construct the organizational structure itself. They decide what tasks are to be carried out, what kinds of staff are to be selected and how to distribute resources among participants. The more general or diffuse the objectives, the harder it is to design a system to attain them [24/32].

4. Bureaucratic Formalization

In bureaucratic structure, the rules regulating human behaviors are explicitly and precisely formulated. Formalization makes the behaviors more predictable by standardization and regulation. Stable expectation is expected from each official. It makes the structure and principles of behavior more explicit and visible. It is possible to diagram the organizational structure, information flow, communication and the means of reporting to each other by officials. It ensures the smooth organizational functioning free from the feeling (positive or negative) officials have for each other. Formalization is the object of criticism; some scholars support it while others oppose. Adler & Borys [1] while giving the concept of two aspects of bureaucracies, coercive and enabling, say that there are both negative and positive arguments regarding formalization. Formalization has been found to be directly linked to propensity to leave, absences, stress, and indirectly linked to job satisfaction and innovation [see for example 2; 4; 18; 14; 23]. Positively, formalism is related to efficiency and enhancing workers' pride of workmanship. Formalization reduces ambiguity and role conflict, thus enhances job satisfaction and reduces feeling of stress and disaffection [see for example 7; 13; 20; 21].

5. Approaches to Rational Structure

Most of the supporters of the rational structure believe in the importance of formal arrangement and concern themselves with specifying the nature or contents of that structure. In this respect, we have the following four approaches to the study of rational model.

Weber Theory of Bureaucracy: This approach is mainly based on the principles like labor division, office hierarchy, general performance rules, merit-based appointments, technical expertise etc. Our preceding discussion mainly depicts Weber's approach.

Administrative Theory: This theory emphasizes on management works and aims to provide broad administrative concepts which would serve as guidelines for organizational practices to be rationalized. While Taylor and his followers suggested rationalizing the organization from the "bottom up", the administrative management theorists worked from the "top down". There is no agreement between the different scholars to this approach as to what principles are required. However, consensus was reached on the importance of two types of activities: specialization and coordination [24/38]. Unity of command, scalar principle, span of control, coordination, departmentalization, line and staff principle, exception principles, and delegation principle are the main principles which greatly emphasize formalization.

Simon's Theory of Administrative Behavior: Organization, in Simon's view, simplifies decisions and also supports staff in the needed decisions. The way in which the organization simplifies the decisions of the members is to limit the objectives to which the activities are directed. The model of Simon emphasizes moderate participant control by suggesting that knowledge, attention, training and channeling of information play a greater role in generating reliable actions/behavior than doing orders or punishments. Formalization and goal specificity are the two main elements of rational system incorporated into this model.

Taylor's Theory of Scientific Management: Winslow Taylor [26] explains how efficiency could be increased by applying the scientific method to workers' management. The methods of scientific management call for improving the way tasks are carried out and simplifying the jobs enough so that staff can be educated in one "best" way to carry out their specialized series of motions. The core philosophy and guiding principle of Taylor was to develop a production method that would include both machines and men and that would be as powerful as a well-oiled, a well-designed machine [11].

The workman's initiative is obtained with absolute uniformity under scientific management. Managers collect conventional knowledge and then categorize, tabulate and reduce the knowledge to rules, laws and formulas that help the worker perform his duties. The management takes on the entire job for which it is suited, while in the past the entire burden was imposed on the worker. Completely half of the concerns are now up to management under this approach. Both are equally exposed to the field of science because the activities of both managers and employees are rationalized. It is possible to scientifically analyze tasks performed by employees under scientific management in order to discover those procedures that could produce maximum results with minimum energy and resources [26].

Scientific management has foundation in the belief that the real interests of employers and employees are the same, i.e. that employer's prosperity cannot exist for a long time unless it is accompanied by employee's prosperity and vice versa. Under this approach, the worker is given what he wants most, i.e., high salary and the employer what he wants most, i.e. lower labor costs with increased production. Under it, the work of each worker is prepared by the management and each individual receives complete written instructions specifying in detail the task to be performed and the means to be used in doing the work. The work arranged in this manner constitutes a task to be solved not by the worker alone, but by the collective efforts of the workers and the management [26/20]. The essence of modern scientific management is intimate, close, and personal collaboration between the management and the employees. In the past work was to be carried out by professional craftsmen who had learned their jobs in lengthy apprenticeships. They made their own choices about how to carry out their work. Much of this independence was taken away by scientific management and skilled crafts were converted into a series of simplified jobs that could be carried out by unskilled workers who could easily be trained for the tasks. Taylor [26] says that scientific management of a job is more efficient than the "initiative and incentive". Taylor has proposed the following basic principles of scientific management:

- a) Replacing the old rule-of-thumb method by developing a science for every aspect of a man's task,
- b) Selecting, training and improving the worker scientifically, thus guaranteeing the selection of the "right man for the right job",
- c) To heartily cooperate with the men so as to ensure all of the work being done in accordance with the principles of the science that has been developed, and
- d) The division of the job and the responsibility between the management and the workmen is almost equal.

Scientific management is summarized as:

- a) Science, not rule of thumb,
- b) Harmony, not discord,
- c) Collaboration, not independence,
- d) Each man's growth to his greatest prosperity and efficiency, and
- e) Maximum productivity [26/74].

Although the new methods of working were welcomed by the employees in many cases, in some cases they were rejected. Complaints about Taylorism being dehumanizing led the US Congress to investigate the issue. Majority of the employees did not eagerly accept Taylor's strategies. Actually, his efforts to reform the work process started a war immediately which became increasingly bitter as time went on [16/80]. Despite its rejection in some cases, scientific management altered the relationships between management and workers. However, unskilled, inexperienced and unorganized labors were mainly affected of the advance of scientific management [10].

6. How Bureaucracy can be Made Responsibility

Ministerial responsibility is the methods used to restrict bureaucracy to its instrumental functions. There are broadly two methods of this control: Internal and external.

Internal Responsibility: This is the control exercised on the officials within the bureaucratic structure. This can be ensured by the following ways:

- a) Annual Confidential Report (ACR): The superior in every department and ministry writes the annual performance report of every subordinate which may exercise some control on the subordinates.
- b) Hierarchical System: Every subordinate is under the strict control of the superior in the scalar system and is restricted to the area of his jurisdiction.
- c) Administrative Code of Conduct: Every official has to observe the administrative code of conduct which specifies the administrative ethics and morals.
- d) Efficiency Survey: In various cases efficiency surveys are conducted to know the progress of the subordinates. This method also makes the subordinates restrict to their area of jurisdiction [15].

External Responsibility: It is that type of control which is exercised over the bureaucracy from the outside. This is ensured through the following ways:

- a) Responsibility to Executive. This can be ensured by the executive through the power of appointment and removal. However, executive can control bureaucracy only when it has an extra-bureaucratic power base.
- b) Responsibility to Legislature: This is ensured by the members of the legislature by asking questions and supplementary question from the members of the cabinet in parliamentary form of government. Other methods of ensuring it are passing resolutions, appointing investigation committees and budgetary control.
- c) Judicial Control: This is the control exercised by the judiciary over the administration. This can be ensured by the following methods:
 - i. Writ of Habeas Corpus: It is a Latin term that means "you must have the body or (we command) that you have the body." It is a writ by which a prisoner can be released from illegal imprisonment. The prisoner or any person who comes to his assistance can request the remedy. It is a summons with the force of a court order, addressed to the custodian requesting that a prisoner be brought before the court, and that evidence of authority be submitted by the custodian, allowing the court to decide if the custodian has the right to detain the individual. If the custodian lacks authority to arrest the inmate, he must be released from custody [15/213].
 - ii. Writ of Injunction: It is a court order under which a person is compelled to perform a specific act or is restrained from performing it. An injunction commands an act that is considered necessary to justice by the court, or it forbids an act that is considered contrary to good conscience. It is an unusual solution reserved for unique situations in which it is appropriate to maintain the status quo temporarily. Injunction is not a right. It is within the discretion of the court to refuse it. Granting an injunction varies from case to case. The courts exercise their authority, and only where need exists, to judiciously issue injunctions. An injunction is typically given only in situations where it may otherwise result in irreparable harm to an individual's rights. There are four kinds of injunctions that are i.e. (a) Preliminary Injunction (provisional remedy invoked to retain the subject-matter in its current state), (b) Preventive Injunctions (an injunction ordering a person to refrain from performing an act.), (c) Mandatory Injunctions (issued to direct the implementation of constructive acts), and (d) Permanent Injunctions (granted by the ruling that eventually disposes of the injunction suit, is issued at the time of final ruling and is final remedy) [15/216].
 - iii. Writ of Mandamus: In Latin it means that "we command" which is "issued by a superior court to compel a lower court or a government officer to perform mandatory or purely ministerial duties correctly".

Mandamus is issued to any lower court, public authority or corporation of the government to perform or refrain from performing any particular act that that body is required by law to perform or abstain from performing and which is in some cases considered to be in the nature of public duty [8/980].

- iv. Writ of Certiorari: It is a type of writ requesting judicial review. Certiorari means "to be more fully informed". This implies an order by an upper court directing a lower court to present record for review in a given case [15/218].
- v. Writ of Quo Warranto: Its Latin meaning is "by what warrant?" It is a writ requiring the individual to whom it is addressed to explain what authority he has to exercise some right or "franchise". It is a legal process during which the right of a person to hold an office or government privilege is disputed. It is the name of a writ issued against any person or company that usurps any franchise or office in the name of a nation.
- vi. Judicial Review: It is the power of the supreme courts where the executive and legislative actions are subjected to review, validation. Specific courts with such powers may annul the acts and laws if they are found to be incompatible with the constitution. The courts are allowed to evaluate and review administrative acts [15/224].

7. Critical Review of Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic setup has some merits, if it is restricted to its role of instrumentality. These advantages are as below:

- a) Bureaucratic setup works with precision.
- b) If the bureaucracy is not corrupt, it works with speed.
- c) Clarity and continuity which are the hallmarks of bureaucratic setup.
- d) Friction and confusion and other costs (human and material) are to a great extent reduced.
- e) Equality before the law and the requirement for legal assurances against arbitrariness needs an administration to be officially and rationally impartial.
- f) In the military organization only the bureaucratic structure allows for the development of the professional standing army [31/220-22].

However, bureaucratic structure is criticized for its strict formalism. The real bureaucracy has been considered to be less productive and effective than what Weber ideal type proposes. Bureaucracy, if not restricted to its instrumental role, has some distinct demerits, which are as below:

- a) The notion of "official secret" is the unique innovation of bureaucracy and nothing is so zealously defended by it as secrecy.
- b) Power grabbing: Bureaucracy tries to go out of the instrumental role and gains non-bureaucratic power of other institutions. That is why it usually welcomes an inadequately informed and hence an ineffective and powerless parliament.
- c) Corruption, nepotism, political infighting and other weaknesses may counter the principle of impersonality creating a system of selection and promotion not based on merit.
- d) Bureaucracy is believed to be an inefficient form of organization as far as change, innovation, and environmental complexity are concerned [5; 3; 27].
- e) Overspecialization: It makes officials unaware of the larger repercussions of their actions.
- f) Over rigidity of procedures makes decision-making slow and even impossible when facing some extraordinary case, thus delaying change, and similarly the adaptation of old procedures to new circumstances.

- g) A sort of group thinking, loyalty, and lack of critical thinking concerning the organization is developed which is considered to be perfect and always correct. This makes the organization incapable to adapt to change and recognize its own mistakes and limitations.
- h) Crozier [6/3] examined bureaucracy as a form of organization that implies routine, slowness, the complication of procedures and gives a very slow response to the needs which they should satisfy [6/198];
- i) Red-tapism, formalism and the emphasis on the rule and delay in decision.
- j) Circumlocution: Pursuing the case in roundabout manner.

8. Conclusion

Bureaucracy survives because it ensures continuity and professionalism in managerial and organizational structure. It ensures stability and order in crisis and turbulence. However, its rigidity and sometimes opposition to change makes it hard to bring about possible changes. Only dedicated leadership with its roots in the masses can reform bureaucracy. Radical reforms necessitate fundamental and revolutionary changes in the old structure of bureaucracy; otherwise, we will fail to fulfill our commitment of truly establishing the principles of a welfare state. A will to bring about reforms demands a rapid administrative response. Bureaucratic structure is usually not suited, unless it has special organizational capacities to deal with the emergent situation. The conventional bureaucratic models must learn how to change and adapt to the demands and expectations of the contemporary society. Bureaucracy has to modify its “Weberian concept” and adapt to the changes challenging the administrative structure. Bureaucracies all over the world are required to adapt and change, disclose secrets, share it with other organizations and even with citizens, and work with transparency and ethical standards.

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