

Bureaucracy and Democracy: A Theoretical Analysis

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Abstract This article addresses the relationship between bureaucracy and democracy, bureaucratic politics and democratic politics. Bureaucratic theories and politics are discussed, democratic theories and politics are analyzed, and the argument in favor of reconciling bureaucracy and democracy is analyzed with implications for democratic theory and public administration. Persistence of bureaucracy is stressed, deficiencies in democratic theory and practice are noted, and the importance of a functionally balanced and professionally competent bureaucracy is reminded for administration of sound governance in both developed and developing societies. It is hypocrisy to speak of functioning democracy without a balanced professional bureaucracy.

Keywords Bureaucracy · Democracy · Bureaucratic politics · Democratic politics · Instrumentality · System-maintenance · Public administration · Governance · Government · Representative bureaucracy · Globalization

Introduction

Bureaucracy is one of the oldest institutions of governance and administration in history. It has survived millennia of political and social changes, from the dawn of civilizations to the present. Political masters have come and gone, but none has been able to do away with bureaucracy. The survival and persistence of bureaucracy has been tested over time. As an institution of continuity amidst changes and upheavals, of service delivery in the face of disaster and crisis, and of order and stability out of chaos, instability, and disorder, bureaucracy has gained a historical reputation of resilience, instrumentality, and positive as well as negative organization of public governance and administration. Equally important, democracy has a had long history

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as well, perhaps not as long as bureaucracy, but it too has survived millennia of changes and transformation in governance and administration, both in theory and practice. What do bureaucracy and democracy really mean? How are these two historical institutions related to each other? Are they compatible or contradictory? Are they supportive or diametrically opposed to each other? What do bureaucratic and democratic politics mean? And by the same notion, what does bureaucratization and democratization mean? What perspectives explain these two institutional phenomena, particularly in the age of globalization? This short analytical essay addresses these important questions and sheds some lights on the intricate relationship between these two very important institutions of modern governance and public administration.

Perspectives on bureaucracy and bureaucratic theory

Bureaucracy has gained a pejorative reputation over time, and has often been associated with red-tape, delay, corruption, and stifling processes in getting things done. It has also gained a negative reputation for being a repressive instrument of domination, control, and class rule in the hands of ruling elites. But bureaucracy and bureaucratization have also been historically recognized for being processes through which a policy of “leveling off,” at least to some extent, in socio-economic class structures pursued by certain ruling elites or rulers to ensure broader political bases of support (Antonio 1979), particularly in patrimonial and historical bureaucratic societies (Eisenstadt 1963), or to curb local feudal powers by centralization of authority through bureaucratization (Farazmand 2009b). The same may also apply to enforcement of the “rule of law” through bureaucratization of society (Eisenstadt 1993; Etzioni-Halevey 1983).

Generally speaking, at least two perspectives explain the meanings of bureaucracy. One is the Weberian ideal-type concept of bureaucracy as the most efficient type of organization characterized by hierarchy and unity of command, division of labor and task specialization, merit-based staffing and promotion, rules and regulations universally applied to govern working systems, formal communication and interaction systems, and records for reference and administrative decisions or behaviors. To Max Weber, the ideal-type bureaucracy is superior to traditional and charismatic types of authority structures, because the former is based on legal and rational decisions, action, and leadership; it is based on rational knowledge and expertise. The ideal-type bureaucracy is the most commonly used concept of bureaucracy in academic textbooks and scholarly publications. In reality, however, it is recognized that such an ideal type bureaucracy rarely exists or operates, as merit, task specialization, universal application of rules and standards are rarely applied. In reality, approximation or a combination of merit and patronage, near specialization, and some degree of rules are applied in the real world of public administration and governance worldwide. Exceptions aside, as some societies are better organized along Weberian line, while others hardly resemble such a system.

The second meaning of bureaucracy refers to any large organization or institution organized with structure, process, and normative values, rules, and regulations as well as a mix of merit and patronage and record systems. Waldo (1948, 1992),

Eisenstadt (1963, 1993) and other scholars are known for espousing this view. Expertise and specialized knowledge are obtained through performance, training, and longevity; both are applied in large scale organizational systems that perform either strictly political functions (e.g. organization of foreign affairs), or provide services (e.g., social services, child protection, law enforcement) to citizens both directly or indirectly through proxies such as contractors or outsourced agents. This perspective of bureaucracy is most commonly applied and most realistic meaning of bureaucracy as most bureaucracies of the world's nation-state systems are organized this way, not on the ideal-type line. This notion of bureaucracy is also most commonly found in various societies, both historical bureaucratic empires and contemporary societies.

However, few historical bureaucratic empires, such as ancient Persia, especially the world-state Achaemenid Empire as well as the later Sassanid Empire, Imperial Rome, plus the modern British Empire in India, the Prussian/German and French empires both at home and in colonies, as well as the American bureaucracy resemble a high degree of professionalization close to Weberian type bureaucratic model. The rest of the world bureaucracies appear to be more patronage-based and less meritoriously oriented with lower degrees of specialization and rule specialization. The former Soviet Union bureaucracy—huge on a world scale—was claimed to be meritorious and professionalized, but studies are needed to reveal details worthy of scholarly research consideration. Such studies need to be conducted free from ideological and political biases. The second perspective of bureaucracy also views it as a powerful organization of governance and public administration, and as such it has survived over 8,000 years of political and social changes and upheavals in the Near/Middle East, particularly early Iran and Persia, Egypt, India, Assyria, and Babylon (Frye 1975; Olmstead 1948).

There is a third possible meaning of bureaucracy, and one that is the meaning associated with the “machinery of government,” a system or complex of organizations and institutions—executive, judicial, and legislative—that makes the operations of government and governance possible, get things done, and “run the government.” This notion embodies both meanings of bureaucracy just explained above, and it is more popular a term in political science than in public administration. However defined, bureaucracy as a concept or organization is a powerful institution of governance, administration, and means of modern business enterprise. It is an organizational system no one can escape, whether in the private or public sectors (Marx 1967). Modern societies are highly organized and bureaucratized with specialized knowledge and expertise beyond the comprehension of average citizens (Weber 1947). Obviously, the above meanings or perspective of bureaucracy overlap significantly, but what is relevant is the understanding of bureaucracy—both military and civilian—as a machinery or organization of government and public administration, and this has been the case for the last 8,000 years.

Bureaucratic politics and democratic theory

In another study, Farazmand (1989) has identified several types of politics: group politics, partisan politics, program and policy politics, and bureaucratic politics.

While each of these political types serves particular interests or purposes, bureaucratic politics serve as a “key instrument” in accomplishing or achieving the goals of all other politics. It is the bureaucracy—both civilian and military—that is the institutional arm or machinery of government, one that carries out policies and programs and accomplishes political goals. This raises the central questions of who the bureaucracy serves, who controls the bureaucracy, and how this works as a process. This is a fundamental question that all social scientists, revolutionary leaders, and administrators have tackled for millennia.

Can bureaucracy be neutral? Perspectives abound, but the majority agree that whoever controls the institutions of government also controls and uses the bureaucracy as an instrument of power and rule—including class rule. History has shown this being the case, from the ancient time to the present (Antonio 1979; Eisenstadt 1963; Farazmand 2009a, b, c). Even Max Weber recognized and acknowledged this in his expose of modern ideal-type rational-legal bureaucracy (1947, 1968).

Highly influenced by Karl Marx (1967), Max Weber (1947) agreed that ideal bureaucracy rarely exists or operates and that bureaucracy is a “powerful instrument of power of the first order” in the hands of those who control it—whether a monarch, an elected president, or autocratic dictator (Weber 1947). He also agreed that bureaucracy can be a repressive instrument of class rule and domination, as it was in the imperial Rome or the last stage of the Persian Empire (Antonio 1979; Eisenstadt 1963). Nevertheless, Weber considered it to be the most efficient form of organization for its blind implementation of laws, public policies, and decisions, and for its universal application of rules, standardization of operations, and task specializations leading to expertise and knowledge unmatched by any other forms of organization (Weber 1947, 1968). Weber’s ambivalent attitude toward bureaucracy emanated from his understanding of the Prussian society and the role the bureaucracy played in governing Germany, and elsewhere in the world, such as India under British colonial rule. Unless controlled by democratic or other forms of political rule, bureaucracy has a tendency to “over-tower” and dominate society, stressed.

Aside from the centrality of bureaucracy as a most powerful instrument of government and public administration, several perspectives may explain the question of what bureaucratic politics means in a broader sense. Bureaucratic politics also means internal organizational politics of bureaucracy by those in key positions favoring particular policies, programs, and or ideas. Moreover, it means playing with bureaucratic rules to slow down or expedite certain ideas and programs through policy ‘implementation’. Studies of bureaucratic politics using this angle are voluminous and easily found in the ‘politics of policy implementation’ literature. Further, studies on the role of bureaucracy in society and class rule abound; sociologists have contributed immensely to this body of literature. Finally, the literature on the psychological impacts of bureaucracy on individual citizens and or employees working in such organizations is also enormous, produced by psychologists and anthropologists (See Merton 1957; Parsons 1951; Hummel 1976).

The role of bureaucracy in society, therefore, is manifest through policy implementation, role clarification (defining citizen-government relations), class rule (those who control and those being controlled), regulatory function, development

(economic, social, etc.), destruction (military and wars), and political system-maintenance or enhancement. Sociologists and political scientists have addressed the latter role of bureaucracy, but this notion has not been studied in public administration. Exceptions include Farazmand (1989). The politics of bureaucracy in the policy process reflect a huge literature with implications for democratic theory, and that is the extensive role it plays in not only implementing but making or at least influencing the policy making process—the decision process politicians and critics often argue should be exclusively in the realm of politically elected officials, not appointed bureaucrats. This view is highly shared and promoted by the neo-conservative circles of politicians, citizens, scholars, and academics (see for example, Mosher 1968; and those in the “public choice” theory circles—i.e., Downs 1967; Niskanen 1971; Q. Wilson 1989). To these critics, bureaucracy and bureaucrats stifle democracy and their role must be curtailed and government’s size reduced to a minimum to protect capitalism and marketplace activities. They prescribe ‘privatization and corporatization’ to maximize citizens’ self-interest individualism.

The political economy perspectives of ‘bureaucratic politics’ also offers at least two broad understandings of the role of bureaucracy. One is bureaucracy (both civilian and military) as a machinery of government. More developed and industrialized societies tend to have stronger bureaucracies—both military and civilian—which carry out the will of powerful elites (business and corporate elites, political power elites, military elites, and other administrative/bureaucratic elites). In less developed and developing societies, the bureaucracy tends to have the advantage of being more organized and regimented (military and civilian) and exploits opportunities to influence or even dominate the and political and policy processes. These variations are even accentuated by more diversity found in both presidential and parliamentary systems of government, as well as in various regions and countries of the world governed under either form of the political systems (Riggs 2009).

The second perspective of the ‘political economy’ school explains the role of public bureaucracy (both civilian and military), and private-corporate bureaucracy, in maintaining and enhancing the politico-economic systems they serve and benefit from. Here, bureaucracy is a powerful instrument of system maintenance—and without exception, all bureaucracies perform this function. By extension, bureaucracy also becomes a powerful ‘instrument of class rule’ by those who rule society, whether a capitalist ruling class (ala Karl Marx 1967; and Lenin 1971; Mosca 1939), a few rich oligarchs and “ruling power elite” (Parenti 1988, 2010), or any person—whether a dictator, a monarch, an elected president, or a council (Weber 1947, 1968). A variant of this ‘political economy’ perspective is explained by the politics of bureaucracy in developing or less developed nations. Most of these countries, often known as the South nations, are former colonies of the Western powers, rich and industrialized, also known as the North nations. The only exceptions are Iran and Turkey, which were empires themselves right into the 20th century—Iran was the Persian Empire for several thousands of years, while Turkey was Ottoman empire for seven centuries. In Southeast Asia, Thailand also escaped direct colonization but was eclipsed by indirect colonial and imperialist practices of the West.

Despite official independence—whether by revolutionary wars, or gradual peaceful means of the United Nations in the post-World War II era—the public bureaucracies (both civilian and military) of these nations have been modeled on and dependent on the Western powers of the North. Their character, behavior, culture, structure, and values reflect Western influence. Their military leaders and officers as well as their bureaucratic elites have been carefully trained to serve political and economic interests closely tied to the Western economic, political, and military power structures. These bureaucracies and bureaucratic elites are the actual ‘agents of the neo-colonial rule’ by remote control; in the critical literature, they constitute the “comprador bourgeoisie,” or agents of foreign imperialism (see Kelly 2007; Farazmand 1989). Escaping the Empire’s neocolonial hold requires fundamental changes and transformation of public bureaucracy—both military and civilian—away from Western influence, and this is not an easy task. Most of these developing nations are in need of foreign aid often coming from the Western nations of the North, but the latter do not give aid without conditions that benefit them—no condition, no aid (Amsden 2007); and such conditionality only cements the dependency grip over the countries of the South (Kelly 2007).

Few countries have been able to break this vicious circle, mostly by revolutions and at a heavy cost, and this is the only way to make independent policy decisions toward national “development” (Amsden 2007). Yet, pressures of economic, military, and political, as well as a technological nature mount as a developing country tries to break away from the yoke of neocolonialism or imperialism; their bureaucracy therefore becomes a battleground for this long process of national struggle toward development. The political economy of bureaucracy as an instrument of power in governance and administration is further accentuated in the age of rapid globalization of corporate capitalism, as its bureaucratic elites in key positions of contacts with global corporations become potential targets for corruption opportunities offered by global capitalism (see Farazmand 1999). With sweeping privatization policies, such corruption opportunities only increase and accentuate the public sector accountability problem in the age of globalization. The only way to escape the vicious circle of global neo-colonialism is “building administrative capacity” to govern the economy and society with indigenous resources and leadership determination in developing nations. It requires courage, determination, resolute and resilient leadership, strong popular consensus, and sound governance and administration (see Farazmand 2004, 2009a). A few nations have recognized this reality and are building such administrative and governance capacities toward national development—they are facing formidable challenges and threats (both internationally and domestically), but persistence will pay off, and this can be done.

The third perspective on bureaucratic politics is explained by “bureaucratism,” a process and phenomenon that involves use and abuse of power and authority by bureaucrats in positions of power for personal and other purposes. Bureaucratism is a powerful instrument and can be used effectively, especially when bureaucracy is determined to resist changes affecting its viability, or when key figures of the bureaucratic machinery decide to oppose certain socio-political agendas or processes that may undermine bureaucratic elites’ positions. Bureaucratism manifests itself in many ways, and often includes tactics used by rank and file bureaucrats as well. The dynamics of bureaucratism, however, take ‘political’ shape for political purpose, but it can also be purely for personal gain (see Farazmand 1989 for more details on this).

The fourth explanation of bureaucratic politics is summed up in the “bureaucratization” process and phenomenon, an issue beyond the scope of this short essay. Suffice it to say here that bureaucratization is both political to curtail decentralization and autonomous power centers or structures—such as feudal lords—in favor of more concentrated power structures by kings, elected presidents, or other officials. It is also used as a process through which political control is more easily exercised by those in control of the bureaucracy. There is also a “social or class leveling” practice often associated with the “bureaucratization” process, in order to break the class hierarchy system and spread access to government and its privileges of society among ‘common citizens.’ Historical evidence shows this to be the case in many bureaucratic empires from ancient time to the present, at least in the initial stages of bureaucratization. Ancient Persia and Rome are two examples of this process, and modern/contemporary American bureaucratization is another example.

Finally, the relationship between bureaucracy and change or revolution is another huge topic that requires separate treatment (see, for example, Farazmand 2009c, especially chapters 32–35). In short, at least three theoretical perspectives explain this relationship, with implications for democratic theory. One is the ‘neutrality’ of bureaucracy in governance and administration, regardless of who rules the society. The bureaucracy is viewed as a neutrally competent organization in service of the entire society and must stay as such, and by such virtue, it should not be involved in political regime or system changes—its neutrality is its best safeguard. This is a Woodrow Wilson’s view, or at least attributed to him, of the bureaucracy as a neutral competence (Wilson 1887). The second perspective argues against the first and sees the bureaucracy politically involved at all levels and with all social and normative values. There is no such thing as neutral competence, and bureaucrats or public administrators are involved in all types of policy, programmatic, personal, partisan, economic, and class politics—no matter what social or political change, administrators and members of the bureaucracy play a role and make a difference. Dwight Waldo and Robert Dahl made this point as early as 1940s.

There is also the third view on the role of bureaucracy with reference to change and revolution, as a powerful view espoused by Marx, Lenin, and revolutionary leaders. The bureaucracy is seen a dangerously powerful obstacle to revolutionary change, it is pro-status quo, and resists changes that threaten its existence, privileges, and power. Therefore, it must be changed or replaced once the revolutionary changes in political systems or regimes succeed. Two different viewpoints have emerged within this revolutionary perspective: One arguing the bureaucracy of the old regime must be totally abolished, while the other argues that bureaucracy can’t be abolished overnight and should not be so, because the new regime needs the ‘neutral elements of the bureaucracy’ who may not be loyal to the new system but they are not pro-old system either and pose no direct threat to the new regime. As long as they remain neutral and pose no threat to the system, they can continue to function under the new administrative elite’s control until a new cadre of administrative personnel is prepared. Thus, the leadership of the bureaucracy is totally replaced by new administrative elites who then determine who among the old ones must stay or go. Lenin (1971) was among the strongest supporters of this view who prevailed in the great debate that ensued right after the Bolshevik Socialist Revolution of Russia in 1917 (Lenin 1971). Similar patterns developed after the Iranian Revolution of 1978–

1979; the leadership cadre of the bureaucracy of the old Shah's regime was totally replaced while retaining most career personnel until a new generation of new bureaucrats emerged (Farazmand 1989).

Democracy and democratic politics

From the dawn of human civilizations, rulers, philosophers, and thinkers have tried to create ideal societies. Ancient Greek philosopher Plato conceived an ideal state in his *Republic*, Farabi the Persian philosopher of the 10th century, also known as the Second Teacher in history after Aristotle, developed the "ideal city state," in his book, *Madineh Fazele*, Western philosophers like Locke, Hobbs, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Bentham, Mills, and the American Founding Fathers also proposed forms or models of government. The latter tried to prescribe institutions and systems of government to promote equality, rule of law, liberty, collective mechanism, separation of powers, constitutional rule, and other forms of citizen participation in government and administration. So did the revolutionary leaders of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution by visioning a classless society based on socialism and communism. Similarly, the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran that replaced the longest historical monarchy system on earth through a major revolution, tries to create an "ideal society" based on social and economic justice, and democracy through separation of powers, a mix of presidential and parliamentary systems of government, and direct popular election. All strove to help develop and promote the concept of "democracy." Yet, neither ideal society, nor true democracy has emerged as a political system in the world yet.

Democracy is a term in need of extensive definitions, explanations, and interpretations, a task beyond the space limitation of this short essay. This brief discussion touches upon some of the key points of the subject. First, all democratic theories imply explicitly or implicitly, a number of characteristics common to all democratic systems of societies—such as the role of the constitution, rule of law, respect for minority rights, elections and other forms of representation, citizen participation in political activities, accountability, and responsiveness; most of these characteristics rarely exist in any democracy, but a degree of their presence or practice may be found in various societies or political systems. Second, variations among democracies abound, as political culture and traditions play key intervening variables. Third, pure or ideal democracy does not exist, or is at best rare. Fourth, the larger the society and more complex its socio-cultural and political orientations, the more complex and less democratic that democracy tends to become. Fifth, the more technological advances, the less democratic and more bureaucratic the society tends to become, as specialized knowledge and technical expertise are not comprehensible to average citizens. Sixth, democratic systems based on election are more often unstable and inconsistent in policy directions, practices, and outcomes that affect citizens and other nations in international relations. Finally, there are officially known democracies that have no constitutions, practice undemocratic activities, and their people are treated as "subjects" of monarchs or queens, not "citizens," hence a contradiction in democratic theory in practice because subjects can determine their destiny; the sovereign monarch does. As an extension, there are also 'exclusionary',

racially or religious based political systems that are officially known as democracies, but practice exclusion of people based on religion, race and ethnicity, culture, or color.

Using a continuum, one can easily identify a number of theories representing at least four broad spectrums of theories on democracy and democratic politics. On the far right, various political parties and the governments they form hold ultra-conservative or radical political and socioeconomic ideologies with values that appear under different names or titles, all called 'democratic' in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. In the middle we find various political ideologies often with the titles of 'liberal', 'democratic', 'social democratic', 'Christian democratic', and other forms of political orientations with values in Western political culture composed of individualism, property, liberty, and equality, with the exclusion in practice of certain people of color, gender, and race, etc., as history has shown in Europe, United States, and Australia, some as late as the 1960s. Examples of the excluded groups include the Native Aborigines in Australia, Native Americans and Blacks as well as Women in the United States—the latter gained voting rights early in the 20th century.

On the near-left side of the continuum, there are also many Western democratic systems with various ideological values purported to be 'socialist,' combining a good degree of individualism and collectivism that tend to promote social equality, more equitable distribution of wealth, and expanded opportunities for common citizens. These democratic systems tend to be found more in the Scandinavian countries of Europe. Although called socialist in name, these systems as well as all others noted above are also capitalist with strong religious values and norms rooted in Christianity. Capitalism, individualism, and Christian values constitute the core of the Western democracies, with variations of course.

On the far left of the continuum, we also find political systems of "socialism" with various degrees of democratic orientations, in both theory and practice. This category of systems called democracy appears to be a bi-product or outcome of long struggle against inequality, poverty, repression and exploitation, and injustice so prevalent in most capitalist systems, including in some democracies. They are generally created as a result of "social revolutions" replacing capitalist economic systems and their political orders, hence a reversal of the old order of rule by minority over majority through a new system based on "socialism" with the rule of the "majority over minority." Such a system is called democratic by the left because the "majority of formerly dispossessed now rules over former few super rich." Socialized or public ownership of wealth and national resources are the basis of socialist democratic system of rule—hence socialist democracy, according to Karl Marx (1967), Lenin (1971), and others (Schumpeter 1950). Indeed, Marx identifies several forms of 'democracy' that include "feudal democracy," in which a few feudal lords share power and rule society; capitalist or "bourgeoisie democracy" in which the small ruling capitalist class rule over the vast majority of the working class in constant struggle for better life but dispossessed, property-less, and powerless in the face of the over-towering bureaucratic machine controlled by the capitalist rulers (Marx 1967; Lenin 1971). Even Weber recognizes this fact and shows his ambivalence toward bureaucracy and bureaucratic administration as a powerful instrument of class rule (Weber 1947, 1968). Thus, we see a spectrum of

various ideological perspectives on democracy and democratic systems around the world.

The dynamics of democracy is further explained by the variations in forms of political systems and degrees of citizen participation in the political process. Generally speaking, there are three types of democratic political systems which use election as a rule: the parliamentary system, in which the winning political party forms the government and controls the legislative parliament (e.g., Germany); the presidential system, in which presidents are elected directly by popular votes of people but must deal with a supportive or opposing legislature (e.g., U.S. system); the mixed parliamentary and strong presidential system, in which both features add to the dynamics of the political system (e.g., France). Socialist systems may also have elections, both directly and indirectly through representation. Direct democracy is rare and possible only in small population based towns or villages, hence the case for “representative democracies,” in which citizens have to rely on elected representatives who tend to ‘log-rotate’ through-give and-take strategies with opposing colleagues in order to get things done; and this adds more complexity to the politics of democracy.

The politics of democracy is explained by several perspectives. One perspective on the right complains that democracy is endangered by bureaucracy, big government, and bureaucratic involvement in democratic policy making. This is a neo-conservative perspective noted earlier, represented by public choice theorists who seek small government, privatization, market approaches to government functions. Their suspicion, and criticism, of public bureaucracy is both real and imaginary, as they also need the bureaucracy to protect market interests and promote corporate goals. The second perspective on the politics of democracy concerns its deficiency as a form of government. Plato considered democracy deficient and based on the “rule of the mob,” with human sentiment playing a key role in determining who should rule. Human sentiment and mob rule can be easily manipulated by the rich, fear of retaliation, and other means. To Plato, democracy also means “plutocracy,” in which the rich rule by means of money and manipulation power.

Contemporary critics of democracy also point out the power of money and wealth in ruling society, not formal elections or official names; they consider “plutocracy” as the norm of governance in bourgeoisie democracy, with a few rich who dominates and the vast majority “who is powerless” (Parenti 1988, 2010). The third critical perspective on democracy comes from the left, the socialists and revolutionary progressives who see democracy in capitalism a rhetorical cover for class exploitation and repression of the vast majority of people by the few super rich capitalist class. Still other perspectives point out the changed and ineffective nature of democracy eclipsed by secrecy, lack of accountability, lack of responsiveness, and corruption. This perspective see real dangers in democracy both within and outside its boundaries—within when fewer and fewer citizens bother taking part in the political process and/or trust their governments. This group of critics also notes contradictions between what the Western democracies claim through rhetorical slogans, and what they actually practice in other nations around the world—ignoring human rights and violating democratic values in favor of national economic or business interests. This perspective criticizes industrial democracies for practicing neo-colonial and imperialist ideas, invading rich developing nations for political and

economic reasons, and dominating the world by forming an oligarchic hegemony over it (Kelly 2007; Parenti 1988, 2010; Agnew 2005).

Reconciling bureaucracy and democracy?

Can bureaucracy and democracy be reconciled? Are they mutually exclusive institutions of modern governance? Bureaucracy stands for continuity, order, efficiency, standardization and rationalization of government administration. It stands for fairness through universal application of rules and regulation, and as such bureaucracy is compatible with and serves the interests and goals of democracy. Democracy stands for election, representation, responsiveness, expediency, accountability and citizen participation in the democratic process of government. Yet democracy has been less efficient, often eclipsed by corruption and other problems. The world of the last quarter century has experienced massive reforms in governments and administrative systems, all toward privatization and outsourcing of government functions. The major trends have been 'market reform,' market-based governance, market-based administration, strategic and systemic privatization, and results oriented reorganization. The buzz word has been "new" to describe New Governance, New Public Management, and all the rest. How new are these 'new' ideas?

Proponents of these new market-based reforms have argued that traditional bureaucracy and governance systems have outlived their time and they are no longer good enough, if they ever were; that they are inefficient and unresponsive to citizen demands; and that there are no market signals, no competitions, and no incentives for public bureaucrats to deliver services with high efficiency; and that large government and bureaucracy are a threat to democracy (Mosher 1968; Niskanen 1971). Their anti-bureaucracy solution is in "reinventing government" to reform public administration through privatization and outsourcing of public sector functions (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). Opponents of the sweeping market-based reforms, massive privatization, and outsourcing argue that bureaucracy is actually better and more efficient when taken social and opportunity costs into account of the calculus of efficiency (Goodsell 2004; Farazmand 2009b; Meier 1993); and that accountability is lost with sweeping privatization, especially in the age of rapid corporate globalization in search of absolute rate of profit, total control of societies and their markets and governments. They maintain that privatization does not necessarily produce higher efficiency; that such a policy of sweeping public-private/corporate sector transformation only benefits corporate globalizers and threatens 'democracy' and democratic rights of citizens as well as undermines the sovereignty of nation states (Farazmand 1999; Korten 2001; Waldo 1992; Woods 2006); and that no alternative has ever replaced bureaucracy, and never will.

These critics further argue that it is a hypocrisy to speak of democracy without bureaucracy, because both are well integrated, and one without the other does not work, especially when looking around the world we see all political authorities are organized with administrative systems along the bureaucracy (both military and civilian). Some scholars have even called the bureaucracy as "the fourth branch of government" (Meier and Bohthe 2007). History has shown bureaucracy persists, it is

alive and well in the midst of anti-bureaucracy slogans, and it will be impossible to abolish the bureaucracy. To do so, one have to have to abolish FBI, CIA, the Department of Defense and the Pentagon in the United States, and the same must be done in all other governments—and that is beyond comprehension. The political dilemma of democracy and bureaucracy has always confronted politicians and scholars with major choices to make—dismantling bureaucracy means chaos and disorder, and dismantling democracy means rule by bureaucratic officialdom. A balance must be maintained between the two, as there is no other alternative. As noted earlier, not all democracies are good or effective, especially in the age of corporate globalization in which corporate economic interests dominate democratic rights globally.

Elsewhere (Farazmand 2002), I have argued that both the policy of sweeping privatization and the blind application of the New Public Management (NPM) are strategic instruments promoted officially and unofficially toward achieving the goals of corporate globalization. The first transfers public sector functions and resources to the corporate sector, empowering its strong grip on economies and governments worldwide; and the second changes the “culture” and basic assumptions of public-service and public interests served by sound public administration systems with strong bureaucracies. Corporate control of economic powers tends to dominate policy process, elections, and policy implementation—hence a “plutocratic” democracy with the word democracy being an official name with little substance, especially when more and more citizens become apathetic and lose interest in election and government processes; citizen trust in government has shrunk to the lowest levels (Caplan 2007; Pharr and Putnam 2000). More privatization means more dismantlement of democracy and its institutional systems (Suleiman 2003; Farazmand 2002). It is, therefore, the “sound administration” with a refined and professional bureaucracy—reformed and improved in its performance and accountability—that must be the answer to the declining reliance on democracy to govern societies and manage public affairs. “Sound governance” requires sound public administration, and the sound capacity to govern demands sound administrative capacities (Farazmand 2004, 2009a). Bureaucracy can also be democratized by increasing citizen participation, community-based administrative practices, and other mechanisms, such as “representative bureaucracy.” Scholars have recognized representative bureaucracy as a way of democratizing public bureaucracy and, in fact the political institutions of the United States (Kingsley 1944; Krislov 1974). Academic literature on the subject leads to three forms: social representation by including social groups and genders in organization and administration; policy representation, a process by which specific policies aimed at including and serving specific groups such as minorities and women are pursued through legislation and implementation (e.g., Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its Title VII against discrimination based on color, gender, national origin, race, or religion); and attitude representation focusing on internalization of certain values, such as desegregation, equal pay for equal work, and building a culture of equality and fairness (Krislov 1974; Meier 1993). Thus, strengthening public bureaucracy by making it more representative in social composition, policy, and cultural processes, is one good way to serve democracy and democratic politics, and this would help make up for the deficiencies in democracy and democratic politics noted earlier.

Are, therefore, democracy and bureaucracy reconcilable? Yes they are. Are there contradictions in the relationship between the two phenomena? Yes there are, but they can be either minimized or aggravated depending on the public policies pursued. Extreme choices will result in imbalances and imbalance means accentuating contradictions. The current global stress on the political role of bureaucracies—including the private mercenary and corporate bureaucracies—to perform more military-security, and social control functions has caused a serious imbalance at the expense of creating social and economic opportunities for the mass average people in search of employment, decent living standards, and future well being. Such an imbalance can have serious consequences for sound governance, democracy, public administration. The policy of excessive bureaucratization, militarization, and bureaucratic “domination” was detrimental to the ancient Persian and Roman Empires and contributed to their eventual collapse (Antonio 1979; Cook 1983; Eisenstadt 1963, 1993); it is equally detrimental and dangerous to contemporary empires and political systems, whether democratic or authoritarian. Learn from history and its laws (Kennedy 1989).

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