

# THEORIES OF BUREAUCRACY

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WEEK2

# REFERENCES

- Heywood, Chapter 18.
- Kamu Yönetimi Sözlüğü (1998). Ankara: TODAİE.

# DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF BUREAUCRACY

- Negative Definition:
  - Ineffectiveness
  - Pointless and time-consuming formalities
  - Red-tape
- In terms of politics, bureaucracy means
  1. A group of people:
    - Civil servants/public officials charged with administration
  2. A system:
    - The administrative mechanism

# DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF BUREAUCRACY

## 3. In terms of organization :

– A different form of organization present not only in democratic and authoritarian states , but in all layers of modern society

- Bureaucratic organization is present not only in government , but also in
  - private firms,
  - trade organizations,
  - unions, and
  - political parties etc. as well.

# BUREAUCRACY AS A PROBLEM

- As the governments' sizes and responsibilities increase, importance of the bureaucracy grows as well.
  - Bureaucracy is not only made up of administrators and policy practitioners .
- The organization and **control of the bureaucratic power** is one of the most important issues of modern politics.

# BUREAUCRACY AS A PROBLEM

- Criticisms of Bureaucracy
  - Liberals
    - Lack of transparency and accountability
  - Socialists and Marxists
    - Is a tool of class subjugation
  - New Right
    - Bureaucracy tries to maximize its members' self-interests

# CRITICISMS AGAINST BUREAUCRACY

1. Bureaucracy can not be disciplined by the profit motive .
2. Bureaucrats are not susceptible to market pressures .
3. Bureaucracy is financed through the tax system , so bureaucrats can not be motivated for working in a productivity -oriented way.

# THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BUREAUCRACY THEORY

1. Weberian bureaucracy
  - Bureaucracy as rational - administrative apparatus
2. Socialist / Communist Approach
  - Bureaucracy as a conservative power block
3. New Right / Public Choice Theory
  - Bureaucracy as the source of excessive costs in government



# 1. RATIONAL-ADMINISTRATIVE MODEL

- According to Weber, bureaucracy is based on a rational system of rules.
  - Administration based on laws and written rules
  - Hierarchy and chain of command
  - Impersonality of the bureaucrats and their powers
  - Bureaucratic rules that minimize the personal discretion of the bureaucrat
  - Merit-based employment and promotion
- Contrary to the patrimonial bureaucracy based on traditional or charismatic authority.

# 1. RATIONAL-ADMINISTRATIVE MODEL

- The **main characteristics** of bureaucracy is its **rationality**.
  - Bureaucracy is a **reliable, predictable and an effective** way of social organization .
  - It is technically superior to other forms of administration.
  - Bureaucratic organization is the **inevitable and irreversible result** of capitalist development for all organizations.

# 1. RATIONAL-ADMINISTRATIVE MODEL

- Bureaucratization and democratization
  - weakened the ideas of tradition and privilege
  - strengthened the ideas of competition and meritocracy (administration of the persons with merit)
- Regardless of their dominant ideology, all industrial societies **are similar** in terms of bureaucratization.
  - The **Convergence** (yakınsama) **Thesis**

# 1. RATIONAL-ADMINISTRATIVE MODEL

- James Burnham (1905-1987)
  - In his book , titled "The Managerial Revolution" (1941), Burnham argued that **all industrial societies are governed by bureaucrats** due to their **technical and administrative skills**, regardless of ideological differences.
  - It **supports the convergence thesis**.

# 1. RATIONAL-ADMINISTRATIVE MODEL

- Problems of the Model
  - The dilemma between organizational efficiency and democratic participation
    - The possibility of hierarchical tendencies strengthening too much and becoming a «**bureaucratic dictatorship**»
  - Bureaucracy as an «**iron cage**» that imprisones human desires and individual freedoms
  - The **Iron Law of Oligarchy** , Robert **Michels**
    - In contemporary societies that adopted democratic principles and bureaucratic organization, all the institutions and political parties **are in the hands of a minority** (PA/KY Dictionary, p. 184).

# 1. RATIONAL-ADMINISTRATIVE MODEL

- Weber's solutions to the problems caused by bureaucratization
  - Competition in elections
  - Institutional differentiation

## 2. The Power Block Model

- Largely stems from the socialist and Marxist analysis
  - Marx did not develop a comprehensive theory of bureaucracy as Weber did.
    - Bureaucracy is associated with capitalism's specific needs.
    - Marx was interested in the class role played by the government bureaucracy.
    - He regarded bureaucracy as a **promoter of bourgeois interests** and as a **defense mechanism of the capitalist system**.

## 2. The Power Block Model

- The Neo- Marxist analysis :
  - Ralph Miliband :
    - Senior government officials make up of **a veto group** that slow down and/or prevent the radical initiatives of socialist ministers and governments
    - Senior government officials are the conscious or unconscious **allies of the current economic and social elite**



## 2. The Power Block Model

- Ralph Miliband:
  - Despite being officially neutral, senior government officials **share the ideas and prejudices of the businessmen** because they have similar educational and social backgrounds with industrialists and businessmen.
    - Bureaucrats with radical political views are **not being promoted**.
  - National interests are defined according to the interests of capitalism.
    - This will prevent the achievement of socialism with a constitutional process.

## 2. The Power Block Model

- Ralph Miliband :
  - The continuation of the relationship between civil servants and business groups, is the result of the government's increasing intervention into the economy.
  - Consequences of this relationship :
    - **The revolving door model**: There is personnel/staff exchange between government bureaucracy and private sector bureaucracy.
      - Retired civil servants are offered lucrative business opportunities in the private sector.
      - Laws and rules limiting this exchange are becoming widespread.

## 2. The Power Block Model

- According to Marx and Engels, **both state and bureaucracy would be abolished**, when a classless, communist society is created.
- Marxist theory of bureaucracy does not examine many of the problems of bureaucratization in the socialist system.
  - An effective analysis : Leon Trotsky (1879-1940)
    - Book: The Revolution Betrayed

## 2. The Power Block Model

- Trotsky:
  - Wrote about the «**bureaucratic corruption**» problem/issue.
    - «Because of the backwardness of the Russians and lack of political experience of the proletariat, government bureaucracy, in the form of Stalinist dictatorship, has blocked the progress of socialism in order to protect their interests.»
  - Bureaucracy can be removed with a political revolution.
- Milovan Djilas (1911-1995):
  - The bureaucracy is a new class that controls wealth .
  - Communist systems increasingly become similar to a kind of **state capitalism**.

### 3. Bureaucratic Over-Supply Model

- Bureaucracy is not only criticized by the left.
- Another criticism: Rational choice and public choice theory
  - This approach focuses on the interests and motivations of bureaucrats.
  - Homo economicus:
    - All individuals , including bureaucrats, are rational, self-interested and benefit-maximizing persons.

## 3. Bureaucratic Over-Supply Model

- William **Niskanen**'s book : «Bureaucracy and Representative Government»
  - High bureaucrats are motivated by self-interest in the professional sense.
  - They want to increase/maximize their
    - Units' sizes and budgets
    - Job security , wages and advancement opportunities
    - Power, authority and prestige

# 3. Bureaucratic Over-Supply Model

- Niskanen :
  - Therefore, the bureaucrats want to increase the state's functions.
    - The appointed officials can dictate the policy priorities to the elected officials.
  - The attempts to implement free market policies will fail unless the bureaucratic power is taken under control.

# 3. Bureaucratic Over-Supply Model

## New Right :

- The private sector - public sector comparisons
  - Private Sector: Competition in markets and profit maximization
  - Public Sector: Using taxes when the costs exceed the revenues
  - Public Sector: In general, government bureaucracies are monopolies.
    - Extravagance and inefficiency
    - Low quality of goods & services
- Solution: Privatization and the **use of private sector techniques in the public sector** (New Public Management )



# 3. Bureaucratic Over-Supply Model

- Criticisms against public choice :
  - Examines individuals by ignoring their social environments
  - Bureaucrats **try not to maximizing budgets, but to shape their bureaucratic environments** (Dunleavy)
    - Senior bureaucrats are concerned less with financial issues than their work-related interests.
      - Such as **enjoying an interesting job, creating an attractive business environment.**

# FUNCTIONS OF BUREAUCRACY

- The primary job of bureaucracy:
  - Implementing the policies enacted by the Parliaments and the governments
    - In Weberian bureaucracy, administration is separate from politics
  - Bureaucrats as the **cogs in the machine**?
    - Despite being formally politically subordinate and impartial, bureaucrats affect the political process substantially.

# FUNCTIONS OF BUREAUCRACY

## 1. Carrying out administrative tasks

- Bureaucracy : Administration, Political Executive : Government
  - Is there a clear distinction between these two roles ?
- Too much administrative detail is left to the discretion of the bureaucrats

## 2. Providing policy- advice

## 3. Expressing and combining interests

## 4. Maintaining political stability

# FUNCTIONS OF BUREAUCRACY

## 2. Providing policy- advice

- Monopoly of expertise/expert information?
  - What are the policy options for policymakers ?
  - What are the possible impacts and consequences of policies ?
- Regular/daily contact/access opportunities of senior bureaucrats to politicians
- The degree of interaction/nesting in politics
  - Political neutrality (England , Japan, Australia )
  - Political appointments system (USA)

# FUNCTIONS OF BUREAUCRACY

## 2. Providing policy- advice

- Is there a real distinction between policymaking and providing policy advice?
  - Control of the flow of information by the bureaucrats
    - The advantages of expertise and information asymmetry
    - Information can be hidden from decision-makers or it can be manipulated

# FUNCTIONS OF BUREAUCRACY

- 3. Expressing and combining interests
  - The chance to come in contact with interest groups in the process of forming policy decisions
  - The risk of **Corporatism**
    - Blurring of the distinction between organized interests with government departments
  - The risk of **Clientalism**
    - Government agencies/departments to be **controlled by and to serve the interests of the interest groups** that these agencies are regulating/supervising
      - **Regulatory Capture**

# FUNCTIONS OF BUREAUCRACY

## 4. Maintaining political stability

- The function of bureaucracy as a bullwark of **order, stability and continuity**
  - «Ministers and politicians come and go, but the bureaucrats are always here/permanent»
    - If the bureaucrats have the status of permanent and professional public officials
    - If they are politically neutral

# FUNCTIONS OF BUREAUCRACY

## 4. Maintaining political stability

- The disadvantages of continuous stability
  - When there is no or little public scrutiny and accountability; **corruption** may increase
  - Stability can increase the **self-righteousness or narrow-mindedness** of the bureaucrats
  - Bureaucrats can see themselves **more capable** and able than politicians to determine the common interests of the society



# ORGANIZATION OF BUREAUCRACIES

- Is Weber's claim of the **universality** of the adoption of efficient and rational bureaucratic organization valid?
  - Forms of organization may differ due to different political, social and cultural contexts.
- **Pressures to reduce public expenditures** since the 1980s, created by the new right ideas
  - New Public Management (New Public Management )
  - The impact of economic globalization

# ORGANIZATION OF BUREAUCRACIES

- Centralization and Departmentalism
  - **Departmentalism** is the centrifugal (merkezkaç) pressures within a bureaucratic structure that **strengthens the identity of individual departments and agencies**.
    - Example : The Communist party bureaucracy in China
      - The Soviet Communist Party bureaucracy was closer to pluralism.
- **Rotation and tighter political control** against departmentalism
  - Decreases the level of expertise and specialization .
  - Compensated by the tendency of ministers and senior officials of the ministry to be **withdrawn to the ministerial culture (to live like the locals )**.