



# The Politics Versus Bureaucracy Interface In Developing Countries

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## Abstract

A lot of scholarly attention has been paid to the interplay between politics and bureaucracy. However, the political-administrative interaction in developing nations has received little attention in study, which has tended to concentrate only on wealthy institutionalized democracies. The relevance of interactions between politicians and bureaucrats is becoming more and more evident in the evidence on reform processes in developing countries. This study offers a methodical summary of the political-bureaucratic connection in developing nations, drawing from this work. Two contributions are made in this study. It begins by outlining four forms of political-bureaucratic relations—integrated, invasive, collusive, and collaborative—and providing examples of each. Second, it examines how nations might transition between several models of political-administrative relations and analyzes the key elements linked to each model. Therefore, the article offers a much-needed starting point for academics and development policymakers to get a deeper understanding of the dynamic between bureaucrats and politicians in developing nations.

**Key words:** Politics, bureaucracy, interaction, institutionalized democracies, developing countries

## Introduction

Since Woodrow Wilson's 1887 work on the nature of the political and administrative spheres, the political-bureaucratic interface has generated a great deal of scholarly attention and discussion (Peters and Pierre, 2001). Scholarly attention is maintained by this discussion of the distinct functions of (Georgiou, 2014). However, research on the relationship between politics and bureaucracy has tended to concentrate almost entirely on affluent, established democracies (Gulrajani and Moloney, 2012). The interaction between politicians and top bureaucrats in developing nations, and how this relationship might influence the development process, has received relatively little research, despite the significance of the politics-bureaucracy relationship for policymaking. This is demonstrated in Georgiou's (2014) recent "atlas of the politics-administration

dichotomy," which reviews the literature on the subject and draws attention to how little emphasis is placed on the interaction between politics and bureaucracy in developing nations.

The significance of the politics-bureaucracy interaction in the development process has been emphasized by recent studies. An increasing body of research examines the reform process in developing nations and emphasizes the significance of political-bureaucratic interactions (Tendler, 1997; Grindle, 2004). This study demonstrates how far the politics-bureaucracy interaction deviates from the Weberian ideal in many developing nations. It also highlights the significant variations in the characteristics of the political-administrative relationship among developing countries. In many emerging nations, the civil service "has power rivaling that of the political establishment" (Grindle and Thomas, 1991: 60–61). In other nations, however, the lack of a cohesive bureaucracy makes governance difficult (Evans, 1992). The Weberian paradigm does not accurately reflect the realities of political-bureaucratic engagement in these situations. Nevertheless, in spite of these lessons, the kinds of connections that exist between bureaucrats and politicians in emerging nations have not yet been thoroughly examined.

### **Types of Political-Bureaucratic Relations**

Four models of political-bureaucratic connections are presented in this section. According to Svava (2006), these theories are predicated on two aspects that can be used to characterize the interaction between politicians and bureaucrats: autonomy and separation. The degree of formal distinction between the political and administrative domains is referred to as separation. The tasks and responsibilities of politicians and bureaucrats are clearly defined in some situations, while there is a lot of overlap and unclear responsibility assignment in other situations. According to Svava (2006), roles are the "functions that an official performs," which include establishing the policy agenda, carrying out policy, assigning resources, managing resources, and so on.

### **Collaborative Model**

High degrees of bureaucratic autonomy and little role delineation between political and bureaucratic elites are characteristics of the collaborative model. It is especially linked to governments that actively support socioeconomic development through market-oriented policies, such as Botswana (Leftwich, 1995; Taylor, 2005), the East Asian Tigers (Amsden, 1989; Wade, 1990; Evans, 1992), and more recently, China (Baek, 2005; Knight, 2014). The use of industrial policy in the developmental states that resulted in economic transformation is thought to have been largely dependent on the close ties between political and bureaucratic elites as well as the autonomy granted to a highly qualified and meritocratic bureaucracy (Johnson, 1982; Wade, 1990; Evans, 1992; Leftwich, 1995).

## **Collusive Model**

Patrimonial or predatory nations also have a close interaction between the political and bureaucratic elites based on little role separation. But in many nations, bureaucratic autonomy is minimal, if not nonexistent, and political-bureaucratic relations are founded on a collusive model. Patronage networks that are utilized to collect rent are fostered by this collusive relationship. Predatory states like Zimbabwe exhibit this (Dashwood, 2000). It is also linked to other more democratic nations, like Mexico, where a system of patronage controls politics (Grindle, 2012).

## **Intrusive Model**

Compared to the first two models, the intrusive model has a far greater degree of separation between the political and administrative domains. This is related to the existence of more politically neutral bureaucracies that are focused on the rule of law; these bureaucracies were frequently founded during colonial control, as is the case with India. Despite the strong role separation between politicians and bureaucrats, political meddling in civil servants' daily tasks frequently results in poor degrees of bureaucratic autonomy. More democratic developing nations like Brazil and India frequently choose the invasive model. It is crucial to remember that governments that fit the invasive model have a wide range of political systems; democratic systems are not the only ones that fit this description.

## **Integrated Model**

High bureaucratic autonomy and a distinct function division between politicians and bureaucrats are characteristics of the integrated model of political-bureaucratic relations. This approach is linked to developed democracies with robust political institutions, including the United Kingdom and the United States. Instead of necessarily reflecting the reality of political-administrative relations, these traits are typically consistent with the Weberian ideal, which is the normative ideal in Western countries that are distinguished by an integrated model (Hansen and Ejersbo, 2002). The division of political and administrative responsibilities can occasionally be ambiguous, and bureaucracies in many developed democracies are really significantly more politicized than the Weberian ideal (Svara, 2006).

How governments transition from one model of political-bureaucratic relations to another is a crucial subject when examining forms of political-bureaucratic relations in developing nations. In recent decades, donor-sponsored governance reforms have made a major effort to change the dynamic between public officials and civil servants. However, these initiatives have often failed, highlighting the need for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying transformation. Public services based on collusive political-bureaucratic interactions and patronage systems have existed in every state at some point. Many academics, most notably Grindle (2012), have studied the transition of nations from patronage to merit-based public service systems, taking into account both historical and modern examples. Most of the time, political entrepreneurs who strategically collaborated with like-minded reformists to implement public service reform were the ones who

brought about change. Depending on the situation, this adjustment was implemented differently. Elite settlements or rivalry between political parties were the causes in some nations, while top-down initiatives by political leaders were the cause in others. Patronage frequently persisted even after reforms were established, therefore more calculated political work during the post-reform era was necessary to guarantee reforms were carried out. As a result, change usually happened "slowly and gradually" (Grindle, 2012: 9).

The main elements influencing the political-bureaucratic relationship in developing nations should be taken into account when examining how the interaction between politicians and bureaucrats may alter in a given nation. These concerns provide insight into the variations across political-bureaucratic models as well as the potential causes of continuity or change in a given political-bureaucratic relationship. Based on empirical analyses of governance and reform processes in developing countries (e.g. Evans 1992; Tendler 1997; Grindle, 2004), we identify four issues that consistently influence political-bureaucratic relations, though a wide range of context-specific factors will influence the nature of political-bureaucratic engagement in a given country. These include: a) resources; b) hiring and career advancement; c) representativeness; and d) motives, values, and interests.

## **Conclusion**

Rich institutionalized democracies have tended to be the exclusive focus of the substantial scholarly research on political-administrative relations. The nature of political-bureaucratic relations in developing nations and how they may influence the process of development have received little consideration. However, it is becoming more widely acknowledged that a crucial component of comprehending the politics and governance of reform in developing nations is the interactions between politicians and bureaucrats. Because this topic has received little attention, a large portion of what we know about the interaction between politics and bureaucracy in these nations is based on what we see in developed democracies. This disregards the notable distinctions in institutional development and governance frameworks between wealthier and poorer countries. Consequently, development policy has all too frequently adopted a "best practice" approach to governance (Andrews, 2012), in which donors and other development organizations have attempted to transfer governance institutions from developed countries to developing country contexts in an attempt to address the failure to improve public services and development outcomes (Andrews, 2013; Levy, 2014). The current "political turn" in development research and policy, as well as the majority of the recent literature on reforms in poor nations, have been sparked by the failure of attempts at comprehensive governance reform (Carothers and de Gramont, 2013; Hudson and Dasandi, 2014). In order to lay the groundwork for additional methodical studies on the politics-bureaucracy interaction in development, this study compiles this work into a comprehensive framework. The paper has made two contributions in the process. First, a typology of political-bureaucratic connections was covered. In particular, we use the ideas of autonomy and separation (Svara, 2006) to examine the primary categories of relationships that can exist between bureaucrats and politicians. As a result, we have delineated four forms of political-bureaucratic relations: integrated, collaborative, collusive, and invasive.

Additionally, we have examined the key features of each model and given a summary of how these kinds of relationships undergo change.

Various models of political-bureaucratic relations in developing nations have been developed by us. However, we have not thoroughly studied the relationship between particular models of political-administrative relations and development results, nor have we offered a detailed study of these models in particular country examples. As a result, this article opens up several important research directions. Since most of the current study on the connection between politicians and bureaucrats is country-specific, one area is a greater emphasis on comparative analysis. Future studies should also focus on the factors that influence the evolution of political-bureaucratic relations. This work lays the groundwork for such future studies and gives academics and development policymakers a starting point for a deeper comprehension of the dynamic between bureaucrats and politicians in developing nations.

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