

The Dysfunctions Of Bureaucracy In Contemporary Ghana

Dr. Daniel A. Bagah

School of Business and Law, University for Development Studies, WA, Ghana

*Email: debagah48@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT:

Weber's analysis of bureaucracy is one of the central issues in the sociology of organizations. This paper looks at bureaucracy as a distinctive feature of modern society, especially as linked to Weber's notion of bureaucratic functional efficiency. The fundamental describing characteristics of bureaucracy are reviewed. Without denying Weber's essential proposition that bureaucracies are more efficient, important dysfunctional consequences of bureaucratic organizations in the light of Ghanaian socio-cultural context are suggested in the paper. These dysfunctions are not intended to suggest that Weber's analysis of bureaucracy is without value. Rather, they demonstrate that the normative non-empirical character of his approach conceals the dynamic and highly fluid nature of the relationship between bureaucracy and the larger society. This paper therefore establishes this relationship in Ghana.

INTRODUCTION

The questions sociologists should try to answer are: What varieties of socio-cultural patterns prevail? In what ways are they universal or unique? In what ways are they dynamic or static, made sensitive or blunted by the functional structures operating within them? Bureaucracy, as one of the many functional structures in society, has relevance to the questions posed for it has no independent existence (that is, existence outside the successive generations of people, who as members of it, construct it, give it legitimacy and its life). In short, bureaucracy has no existence independent of the particular socio-cultural pattern with which it is conceived, delivered and nurtured.

According to the popular and scholarly wisdom of the law of social development, just as bad money drives out good so, it is dichotomized and polarized, gessellschaft chases away gemeinschaft (Toennies); modernity replaces tradition (Hosetitz, McClelland, Rostow); contractual relations replace status in community (Maine); secularization of the world drives out sacredness of magic and mystery (Becker); folk society diminishes in the face of urbanization (Redfield);

mass society gives way to organizational society (Perrow); bureaucratic (rational-legal) social organization smiles upon the demise of traditional social organization (Weber); and complex division of labour (based on specialization) supersedes simple (or rudimentary) division of labour based on sex and age (Durkheim). This complex division of labour necessary for bureaucratic organizations brings about a change from "mechanical" to "organic" solidarity.

As Durkheim (1933) puts it,

A change from social organization held together by their differences and interdependence. As these organizations increase in number and complexity, human relationships become impersonal, superficial, transitory and segmented. It all seems so logical, so inevitable, so beyond the control of human will as it's inevitable (1933:).

Viewed from this typological perspective, traditional networks of informal personal social

relationships are considered anachronistic and must give way to modern networks of formal, impersonal, bureaucratic social relationships. As a microcosm in which the inescapable transition is being played out, traditional social organization, it is asserted, will lose all its traditional qualities in the face of modern bureaucratic social organization. Surely, there are signs that this is happening. Western contact with Ghana, like the Industrial Revolution in Europe, has created new social and psychological needs which life, based on traditional social organization, is rarely able to satisfy. The consequence of this situation, as Little (1957) observes, is a tremendous migration of men and women to towns, and to places (and into bureaucracies) where money can be earned to pay taxes, to provide bride wealth, and to buy manufactured goods and appliances. There are also signs that the Ghanaian society is becoming increasingly "rational" and individualistic. Social relationships are becoming more contractual, artificial and contrived. This trend of events created the essential conditions for "fictional kinship groups" in these bureaucracies which, according to Wirth (1964), substitute for actual kinship ties prevalent in traditional social organization. Detribalization (the loss of tribal and ethnic values and identity) is also gradually receding as bureaucratic culture grows (Wilson, 1951; Southhall and Gutkind, 1957). These patterns of development (erosion of tradition) notwithstanding, there are still signs in Ghana that support the contention that notions of the inevitable demise of "traditionalism" in the face of bureaucratic rationality may be based on false assumption and biased perceptions. It is against this background that we wish to extend and examine Weber's ideal bureaucracy thesis beyond the boundaries of western culture and experience.

Weber's concept of bureaucracy is considered as a part of a whole historio-sociological discussion within the framework of Western society (Gerth and Mills, 1958). Weber saw the evolution of Western society as a transition from one form of social order based on tradition to another form of social order based on rationality. He assumed implicitly that social action can be ideationally and logically determined. That society can be

rationally and legitimately ordered. Consequently, he sees bureaucracy as the most efficient form of social organization in which all action is rationally directed towards the attainment of specific (organizational or national) goals. Blau (1956) provides a sociological definition of bureaucracy which indicates its goal; "the type of organization designed to accomplish large-scale administrative tasks by systematically coordinating the work of many individuals". In order to provide textiles in a factory, as opposed to weaving at home, the work of many individuals (workers) must be coordinated. Similarly, in order to run a national system of Lottery, or Education, or a Ministry of Information, or Justice, large numbers of workers must be organized so that all necessary tasks are done well and on time at the lowest costs possible.

Obviously, Weber's bureaucracy is an ideal type and ideal types are focal points in terms of theory construction. As such, deviations are inevitable and must, therefore, be explained in the empirical world. Without denying his essential proposition that bureaucracy is or was more efficient than other forms of organization, the probing research and thoughtful analysis of Merton (1940), Selznick (1949) and Gouldner (1954) have suggested important dysfunctional consequences within bureaucracies. What we must note is that these contradictions (dysfunctions) relate, in large part, to structural problems in the society (socio-milieu outside bureaucracy). Admittedly, therefore, all expectations and bureaucratic dysfunctions are partly due the nature of the organization and partly due to the societal expectations and social definitions of bureaucracy and bureaucrats. Some aspects cause difficulties everywhere. But others arise because of the specific socio-cultural environment within which a given bureaucracy is conceived, delivered and nurtured. The works of Merton, Selznick and Gouldner, undoubtedly, represent sound scholarship and extremely creative and suggestive lines of thinking. However, as implied earlier, they are all exercises in bureaucracy within the same socio-cultural context (Western society). The aim of this paper, therefore, is to explicate the nature of the relationship between bureaucracy and the larger society in order to bring out some

of its dysfunctions within a different socio-cultural context (Ghanaian society).

THE GHANAIAN SOCIETY

Certainly, it would be a gross oversimplification to say that Ghana is a traditional society; nor can we consider it a rational-legal society (in the Weberian sense) without falling victims of a gross exaggeration. However, if we think of these two types (traditional and rational-legal) as polar points on a continuum, then it seems fair to say that most of Ghana's social organization and life is essentially traditional. Between 60 to 70 percent of Ghanaians live in traditional social organizations with agriculture ("horticulture") as the predominant economic activity (Bentsi-Enchill, 1978) and its traditional social and economic institutions retained (Twumasi, 1975). It is an undisputable fact that the pace of industrialization in the country has been accelerated in recent years and the focus of life gradually shifting to the urban centres and into bureaucratic organizations. The point to note, however, is that the norms of the larger society are still mainly enshrined in traditional cosmology. The best way to act, for instance, is the way the ancestors and lineage and religious heads have ordained, and guides to proper conduct are enunciated in proverbs. In such a society, therefore, legitimacy is largely based on customs, inherited traditions and religious beliefs and not on rationality characteristic of rational-legal societies.

Furthermore, Peil (1972) observed the existence of a great dearth of job opportunities in Ghana and the Government as the largest single employer of labour. The situation has not changed ever since. This coupled with the fact that Ghana lacks the existence of many secondary institutions (or third-party agencies) such as insurance companies, welfare agencies, trade unions and government bureaus (in the real sense), makes it difficult for workers in bureaucracies to adjust to their new roles and values. Difficulties exist in learning new roles and accepting new roles and values in all social systems. But the Ghanaian situation, as Peil (1972) and Crisp (1984) observed, is aggravated by the "absence" or "impotence" of these

secondary institutions to take care of displaced workers (either retrenched or redeployed), the sick, the aged, and the unemployed. Under circumstances where the worker is not only geographically remote from his native home, but also "socially alienated" from his new rational-legal environment (bureaucracy), he is compelled to look up to his urban (if any) and rural based kinsmen or kin groups for support in the event of the unexpected (unforeseen circumstances). Such a worker, no matter how bureaucratized may be, is obliged to maintain primary relations. In specific terms, the worker in the Ghanaian bureaucracy is confronted with a serious problem – one in which traditional construction of reality alters (or is disturbed) and the new social reality that emerges remains to be gratifying in the eyes of the participants of bureaucracy. Correspondingly, new problems of articulation of primary group relations and formal bureaucratic behaviour are posed. As Peil (1972) aptly described, the Ghanaian worker is more satisfied with a less formal style of social organization than with more bureaucratized impersonal management characteristic of modern organizations.

METHODOLOGY

Without striving for methodological rigour or even logical elegance, we shall limit ourselves to the examination of published data of the Ghanaian bureaucratic administration. Data related to our purpose have been assembled and adequately documented by various social scientists who have worked in Ghana since coming into contact with western form of administration. This affords us some measure of consistency with which to judge the adequacy and quality of the information available.

Expositions of organizational theorists that have relevance to bureaucratic administration within the scope of this paper shall also be used whenever and wherever appropriate. This process of eliciting information affords us the opportunity to compare data in order to establish some measure of reliability and validity in our discussions. Finally, experience accumulated as a result of personal participation in and critical observation of Ghanaian bureaucratic

administration, as practiced in recent times, serves as basis which allows us to extract whatever information may have escaped official documentation.

THE WEBERIAN BUREAUCRATIC MODEL

Before launching into the details of the dysfunctions of bureaucracy in the Ghanaian context, it is necessary to give a brief account of the Weberian ideal bureaucratic model. The account of this model does not, of course, imply that Weber's analysis of bureaucracy is not sufficiently familiar. The purpose here is only to furnish a framework from which our discussions will ensue with some intelligibility, a framework that provides an analytical "telescope" with which to view some of the perversions.

The term bureaucracy has assumed many meanings over the years (Riggs, 1979). Colloquially, the term has become epithet which refers to inefficiency and red tape in government (Blau, 1969). Many people, Perrow (1970) observed, use the term to mean impersonality, unwieldiness, and shortsightedness. Still others, Robbins (1983) wrote, equate bureaucracy with paper shuffling, rigid application of rules and redundancy of effort. In everyday usage (that is, in the layman's terms), bureaucracy refers to the negative consequences of large organizations such as excessive "red tape", procedural delays, and general frustration (Crozier, 1964). None of these definitions reflects its original meaning and the term will not be used in this paper in any of these senses.

The German Sociologist, Max Weber (1864 - 1920), was perhaps the first to provide a systematic treatment of organization theory and to offer a compelling description of the more radical organization structure that had emerged. He believed that technical rationality required the design and construction of an administrative system based on the interplay of various kinds of human relationships. The term bureaucracy was used by Weber to describe this administrative system. Accordingly, bureaucracy refers to a particular way of organizing collective activities.

Weber's interest in bureaucracy was a consequence of his concern for the ways society develops hierarchies of authority and of control (traditional, charismatic, and bureaucratic or rational-legal). He believed that the bureaucratic structure is "superior to any form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline and its reliability". The fully developed bureaucratic mechanism compares with other organization exactly as does the machine with the nonmechanical modes of production (Gerth and Mills, 1946: 214).

For the needs of mass administration today, bureaucracy is viewed to be indispensable. Some organizational factors which are particularly crucial for the emergence of bureaucracy are as follows:

1. Growth in the size of social organization;
2. Formalization of social ordering;
3. Secularization of values, norms and goals;
4. Development in social technology; and
5. A money economy.

Each of these variables is a necessary component of the overall process of rationalizing social organization. In the Ghanaian socio-cultural context, however, all of these interrelated conditions or variables are just beginning to crystallize. We therefore have a situation in which there is an inadequate socio-technological base to support the emerging bureaucratic structure in the Weberian sense. The fundamental feature of bureaucratic efficiency is the elimination or control of all extra-organizational influences on the behavior of its members. Bureaucratic characteristics are therefore designed or devised to close off the organization from such unwarranted influences. In his description of the defining characteristics of bureaucratic structure, Weber identified the following:

1. The use of a division of labour and of specific allocation of responsibility;
2. Reliance on fairly exact hierarchical levels of graded authority;
3. Administrative thought and action based on written policies, rules and regulations;

4. An impersonal, universalistic application of the bureaucratic environment to all inhabitants;
5. The development and longevity of administrative careers;
6. The attainment of the highest degree of efficiency (Weber,1947: 333 – 337)

The extent to which organizations follow the bureaucratic model varies, of course, from organization to organization and from one socio-cultural setting to another. While Weber's concept of bureaucracy provides a framework for prescribing administrative action, much of that intended by participants of bureaucracy in Ghana may result in unanticipated reactions from the human organization and dysfunctional consequences for bureaucracy. It is this unintended threat to the stability and smooth functioning of bureaucracy that affords the principal incentive for this undertaking.

THE DYSFUNCTIONS OF BUREAUCRACY

It is argued that if an organization is to be bureaucratized, then it must establish operational procedures that, at least, approximate Weber's bureaucratic characterization. Following from this logic, it can be said that Weber provided a functional analysis of bureaucracy. His presentation makes the bureaucratic structure appear to function in a smoother rhythm than it actually does. It appears the socio-cultural environments of bureaucracies are taken for granted and assumed to be predictable; organizational goals are assumed to be known, harmonious if not homogeneous; technology is well understood by all because of their necessary training to gain entrance and resources that are available to support the bureaucracy. Much of sociological analysis follow this lead, suggesting that formal organizations, as functional entities, have "objectives which are explicit, limited and announced" (Udy, 1965; 678), and are structured so as to attain "a particular type of goal" (Parsons, 1964), or "a recognized, limited goal" (Firth, 1964).

This nomothetic approach to bureaucracy is considered partial, limited and superficial and therefore, inadequate and biased (Watson, 1980:186). In fact, bureaucratic organizations, like all social arrangements, have within them the possibility of different ends (goals) of different people, or the typical ends of different strata. This simply suggests that organizational goals vary and are not necessarily identical. They may, in fact, be contradictory. Individuals and groups of individuals, like bureaucracies, have goals which they express through their personality and pursue according to their unique need dispositions (idiographic dimension). No bureaucracy may then be spoken of as having either identical or harmonious goals. Similarly, bureaucracies also have within them the possibility of unintended consequences which might threaten their stability and efficiency or the purposes for which they are established. Marx's notion of contradiction within every perceivable entity could be borrowed to clinch the argument.

To protect ourselves against this danger, Merton (1949) points out that it is essential for us to extend the analysis of bureaucracy beyond the mere consideration of functions. He argues that the pressure put upon the individual official by Weber's type of bureaucracy, which encourages accountability and predictability through the use of rules, could encourage a counter-productive inflexibility on the part of the officials themselves (Waston, 1980: 197). Merton asserted that many activities have both manifest and latent functions. Everyone recognizes the purposes of certain activities, but there may also be consequences which are not intended or even known to the participants. While manifest functions are usually seen positively, latent functions may be negative, preventing the achievement of goals. The study of bureaucracy's dysfunctions, those "consequences that interfere with adjustment and create problems in the structure" (Blau, 1956: 33), therefore, nourishes a better and a complete approach to bureaucracy.

From a more analytic perspective, Weber assumed that social behaviour can be determined according to the ideals of a particular set of individuals irrespective of their social power positions. He

appears to be making the same error as Durkheim did when he conceived of the “collective conscience” as operating independent of the intervention of interested and differently powerful groups. On the contrary, bureaucratic organizations are embodiments of multiplicity of goals, as we have argued, which may be reinforced by group pressures. Bureaucracies, therefore, are to be seen as spheres of parallel power relationships. Watson (1980) defines power as the capacity of any group or individual to affect the outcome of any situation in such a way that access is achieved or maintained to whatever resources are scarce and valued within a society or a part of that society. Individuals of similar interest combine to achieve their ends, and such combinations of interlaced values and interests constitute or form subsystems now cooperating, now competing, now moribund, in terms of the rise and fall of local issues. In short, bureaucracies are shaped, pushed and pulled in directions unintended and unforeseen by its members. In this paper, our major interest would be how bureaucracies are shaped, pushed and pulled in the Ghanaian socio-cultural context. Gouldner’s classic factory study “Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy” (1964), Peil’s creative work “The Ghanaian Factory Worker” (1972), and Crisp’s “The Ghanaian Miners’ Struggles” (1980) are suggestive examples that demonstrate the ways and means by which power is created, shared and exercised in bureaucracies. The briefest summary that is applicable in all three studies and relevant to our discussion is that an individual or a group of individuals that is in a relatively weaker bargaining position will find it difficult to determine action ideationally.

In any bureaucratic organization, individuals and groups of individuals make up its configuration. Inherent in this social configuration is the concept of social structure. Some of these groups or individuals are never able to determine patterns of particular exchange. Others are able to determine who does what in a particular situation. Those who are able to determine the patterns of particular exchange are said to have social power. On the contrary, those individuals and groups of individuals who are in a relatively weaker

bargaining position are oriented implicitly or explicitly to the power structure because they want to get the best they can from the social relationship. They have implicit or explicit life strategy relative to the social situation in which they find themselves. This life strategy is formed by them in terms of their past, present and future orientations. In the light of this analysis, it can be concluded, with minimum doubt that individuals or groups of individuals in bureaucracies do not act according to the manifest rules and regulations vis-à-vis rationality. Rather, they act according to their implicit and explicit assessment of the situation before them. In relation to the Ghanaian socio-cultural context, therefore, it can be argued that as a result of lack of job opportunities and secondary agencies, workers in bureaucracies find themselves in weaker bargaining positions. Consequently, behaviour in Ghanaian bureaucracies is largely determined by situational factors vis-à-vis power positions rather than by rationally devised variables and patterns.

Weber avoided a simple empirical description of any particular bureaucracy (an exception – he did this with the government bureaucracy of Bismarkian Germany in appendix II of his *Economy and Society*). Rather, he confined himself to the description of the major characteristic of bureaucracy which are common to a wide variety of concrete bureaucratic organizations found in modern societies. The concept of impersonality is one of such fundamental principles of bureaucracy. That is, the dominance of a spirit of formalistic impersonality, “*sine ira et studio*” without hatred, passion and hence without affection or enthusiasm in all dealings within the particular bureaucracy (Weber, 1947; 329-340). The dominant norms are concepts of straight forward duty without regard to personal considerations. Impersonalisation of human relations involves a behavioral pattern in which the individual uniqueness of people or their problems is ignored and they are treated as “cases”, “problems” or “things” (Gouldner, 1952). In actuality, impersonality connotes a process whereby all cases of similar nature are handled alike.

Acting impersonally may improve efficiency if it results in the best (on technical rather than personal grounds) being chosen for a post and careful attempt to apply the rules equally to all rather than deciding in favour of the one who can pay the largest “dash” (Peil, 1972). However, in a society where emphasis on personal relationships reigns supreme, where family and other primary ties remain central to the people’s lives, as we argued in the case of Ghana, they cannot understand why a family member or friend, an ethnic brother, or a religious sister should not be preferred to all others regardless of the effect this might have on the bureaucracy’s effectiveness. In Ghana, people deal with participants of bureaucracies (civil servants, police service, politicians and others in authority) by trying, first of all, to establish a personal relationship if it does not already exist) through either remote family, ethnic or religious connections. In the event of failure, the individual then tries through gifts or political associates to establish same. This is done partly because they do not understand the rules (or even know about them) but largely because it is not in them (that is, part of their culture) to interact on an impersonal basis. It is often assumed (mostly correctly) that their chance of assistance will be enhanced if they are known as an individual rather than as a “case” or a “thing”. In Ghana, therefore individuals relate on affective level, thereby, negating the principles of impersonality and rationality as a result of the interplay of the “irrationality and personality” of traditional forces.

Weber’s analysis seemed to have assumed that the environmental setting of a specific bureaucracy would remain neutral or indifferent to the application of bureaucratic rules. By this assumption, he remained silent on several questions:

1. To whom do the rules have to be useful if bureaucratic authority is to be effective?
2. In terms of whose goals are the rules a rational device?
3. Whose end do they have to realize if bureaucracy is to operate effectively within a particular socio-cultural context?

As we have demonstrated, we cannot simply assume that the ends of the different strata in a particular bureaucracy would be identical or, at least, highly similar, and hence not to be distinguished from one another. Selznick (1949) observed a tendency of goal displacement arising from sub units setting up their own goals as a result of delegation of authority within bureaucracies. This implies that behaviour which is functional in certain circumstances may be dysfunctional in other circumstances and behaviour which is functional for other goals or individuals may be dysfunctional for other goals or individuals. Ideally, from the point of view of efficiency, bureaucracies should have a constant environment, and their personnel should not be influenced by extra-organizational factors. However, in Ghana such ideal bureaucracy does not exist. One major reason is that the people who perform bureaucratic tasks are sustained by factors outside the organization. As Perrow (1970: 52) explained, the organization is not the total world of the individual; it is not a society. Once the individual is a multiplicity of varied “realities” his behaviour can no longer be viewed as a direct response to one reality, but rather a response to the individual’s perception of that reality vis-à-vis other realities (McGregor, 1966: 216). This view is important because it emphasizes the necessity for explanation of human behaviour in bureaucracies to take account of not only the “situation” but also the “orientations of the people concerned.

In addition, the structure of a bureaucracy and the expectations of its members (shaped by the culture in which they live) may make strict adherence to bureaucratic principles difficult if not impossible. For example, van den Berghe (1973) in his description of the recruitment (hiring) procedures at an African University shows how rules can be used by various parties in ways which are quite contrary to their intention and how in other cases the rules actually interfere with the goal of efficient running of the institution. The rules prescribe that all job vacancies be advertised and a committee, established for that purpose, examines the applications and recommends who should be considered for the job. This process was thought

to be time – consuming. Hence, a majority of lower level appointments in the University were officially temporary at first. Temporary appointments, as a rule, are subject to less regulation (intended action), van den Berghe concluded, the complexity of the formal procedure was an effectively circumvented. Thus, the attempt to maintain universalism was an inevitable casualty (unintended consequence). Most appointments in Ghana's bureaucracies are based on this principle of circumventing bureaucratic rules. A situation like this guarantees maximum benefits for the participants and clients rather than the bureaucracy concerned.

Any individual appointed through a process like this is likely to have a different construction of reality. His loyalty and general attitude towards bureaucratic rules and regulation is likely to be influenced by the extra organizational or extra-bureaucratic variables that may have enhanced his entry. He is likely to have a distorted definition of bureaucracy. Inadequate or distorted definition of bureaucracy implies an inadequate, limited and superficial definition of his position in that particular bureaucracy vis-à-vis his competence and role performance, “garbage in, garbage out (“GIGO”) to use the computer operator's eloquent term.

There is yet another factor which operates to thwart bureaucracy in Ghana. Weber's decision to treat only the purely formal organization implies that all deviation from these formal requirements are idiosyncratic and of no interest for the student of organizational studies. At most, little explicit recognition is given to many social distinctions residing in bureaucracies. The emphasis is on mechanical regulation, control and rationality of bureaucracy. Henry Ford based his assembly line on the rationality of this approach, saying of the industrial giants: “it is clearly up to them now, as trustees, to see what they can do further in the way of making systems fool-proof, malice-proof, and greed-proof; it is a mere matter of social engineering” (Flink, 1976:82-83). Recent empirical studies, however, demonstrate the misleading character of this approach. It is now clear that formal organization cannot take account of the sentiments and values residing in it by

means of which individuals or groups of individuals are informally differentiated, ordered and integrated. Thus, the formation of informal groups within the formal structure becomes a mathematical certainty. The nature of these informal groups is very important as has been demonstrated by the Relay Assembly Test Room and the Bank Wiring Observation Room studies.

In Ghana, a close examination of bureaucracy in actual operation reveals the existence of such informal groups (welfare association and cliques). Informal relations and unofficial practices or “bureaucracy's other face” (Page, 1946) therefore develops among members of bureaucratic rules and regulation, spontaneous to fulfill human needs which the formal organization per se cannot supply. Barnard (1948) called attention to this phenomenon and argued that these “informal organizations are necessary to the operation of formal organizations”. He explained, for instance, that informal groups can be necessary prerequisite for effective collaboration, much of which sometimes facilitates the functioning of the formal organization. On the other hand, he cautioned, most of these informal networks exist to circumvent or to get around bureaucratic rules and regulations. The important consideration is, therefore, the relation that exists between formal and informal organizations. In Ghana, because of ethnic (tribal), religious, and even regional rivalries the formation of cliques in bureaucracies along these lines is the only premise for “individual job security”. These cliques can become subversive by making it difficult for the bureaucratic administration to operate efficiently.

Clearly, here the consideration is not only the relations between formal and informal organizations, but also the relations between the cliques inherent in these bureaucracies aimed at ensuring ethnic, religious or regional homogeneity and dominance. Classical examples of this situation demonstrated outside the Ghanaian socio-cultural context are Gouldner's investigation of the process of bureaucratization in a gypsum plant where Peele tried his strategic replacement device to ensure homogeneity and dominance of some sort; and Roethlisbenger and Dickson's study of Operators in the Western

Electric Company. Among the findings of the latter study was that members of the Bank Wiring Observation Room were pulled together in some ways, for instance, in mutual help and in restriction of output, and in others they were divided. We can conclude from the results of the studies that the conception of bureaucracy as a mere administrative paradigm is inadequate. The instrumental aspect of bureaucratic behaviour characteristic of Weber's analysis therefore constitutes only one dimension. The other dimension is that bureaucracy is a system in which human beings with emotions, beliefs and goals of their own interact. These aspects of human personality influence the structure and functions of the whole bureaucracy which cannot be ignored or treated as constant variables.

We also contended that bureaucracy has no existence independent of the successive generations of people who, as its members, give it life and legitimacy. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), the key requirement for an organization that must initiate its members is a self-legitimizing belief system. "The most important conceptual requirement for alternation is the availability of a legitimating apparatus for the whole sequence of transformation. What must be legitimated is not only the new reality, but also the stages by which it is appropriated and maintained" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

Bureaucracy, as a form of organization therefore, is made legitimate by it appearing to be a meritocracy. In order to be able to attract worthy neophytes and to continue to command the loyalty of its members, bureaucracy must engender an aura of fairness and be presented to all participants as a perfect meritocracy that bestows its rewards upon those who are most talented and hard working. In Ghana legitimacy has no meaning outside political considerations and the definitions society gives to a given bureaucracy. We have argued that in the Ghanaian society participants of bureaucracies circumvent bureaucratic rules in order to honour traditional demands (the appointment and promotion of relatives and friends as required by tradition). Promotions and other considerations are made with open disregard for rules and procedures.

Under these circumstances, workers' commitment and loyalty (if any) are not developed towards the enhancement of efficiency of the particular bureaucracy. Rather, they are marshaled and deployed in conscious defiance of bureaucratic norms in order to sustain whatever extra-bureaucratic influences may have been responsible for their appointment and/or promotion. Top executive positions are often filled with political loyalty rather than technical competence in mind. Hence, for such people bureaucratic culture means nothing to them. The government in power is the only compelling reality. In many ways then, we can argue (in support of the thesis) that Ghanaian bureaucracies are grossly inefficient, when a close look is taken at the more specific tasks which are performed incidental to the main end product of the system. Inefficiency grows out of at least three aspects:

1. Obsolete procedures;
2. Incompetent personnel;
3. Negligence of duty.

The frequent accusations of red tapeism are perhaps overstated. It is true, that many bureaucracies are working under rules and regulations which may have been the most efficient possible at the time they were formulated, but not today. This factor of bureaucratic inefficiency may be reinforced by some form of factors. In government, for instance, reorganization for increased efficiency is almost always thwarted, if not completely nullified by political considerations and rapid change of government. Ghana, since independence in 1957, has experienced only **13 years of constitutional rule** and seven military regimes with several coup attempts. In an atmosphere of great political (and therefore economic) uncertainty and instability, bureaucracy cannot flourish. Yes – but why? Especially, where almost all bureaucratic organizations are either controlled or influenced by government, such as prevails in Ghana, bureaucratic unpredictability becomes the order of the day. Closely related to this is yet another factor. One of the dilemmas inherent in Ghanaian bureaucracies centres on the concept of tenure (Twumasi, 1975). A person who does his work properly cannot be removed from office without

sufficient cause after serving his probationary period. This is said to be necessary for the efficiency of the organization for the following reasons:

1. If persons in position cannot be dismissed, it is argued they will function more courageously instead of simply courting the favour of the superior officer.
2. Furthermore, it is argued, persons of superior caliber are said to be attracted to the organization if they have reasonable assurance that they will be retained and promoted according to seniority and merit as we indicated before.

Problems, however, arise on other scores. Competency or incompetency is not constant over the life time of the individual worker. In theory, in its efforts to be efficient, bureaucracy may select and promote the most efficient people possible and surrounds them with conditions which tend to maximize their efficiency. Just as Richardson (1986) argued that protection from arbitrary dismissals of organizational effectiveness, so we wish to argue that the tenure concept, as practised in Ghana, is detrimental to efficiency. In practice, the argument is simply this: that there are many ways of circumventing and even perverting the basic theory. Circumvention such as nepotism and other practices dysfunctional to bureaucracy do occur. Whyte (1956) points out that the traditional virtues of hard work and excelling others do not fit very well in the bureaucratic phenomenon. According to him, the worker may easily become a nuisance and knowingly adopts a life strategy which he finds expedient and necessary; this strategy Whyte calls the "social ethic". Briefly, his explanation is this: the individual finds himself more or less pressured into bureaucratic mould of conformity in order to fit into the prevailing work patterns of his colleagues. In the final analysis, talent is often rare and mediocrity abundant. So the majority pattern of mediocrity becomes the work mode. We can also say, in terms of this analysis, that bureaucracy is uncreative. The bureaucratic work place is routinised and the prime consideration is shifted from getting work done most brilliantly and effectively to just getting along well with

colleagues. If Whyte's analysis is correct, then the basic objective of efficiency in bureaucracy has been perverted to substitute objective of convenience. In a developing economy like Ghana such inadequacies cannot be afforded. There is therefore the need for a re-examination of bureaucracies in order to economize and improve efficiency.

CONCLUSION

Bureaucratization of the Western countries flourishes, in most cases, in far more favourable conditions of economic organization, political cohesion and stability, and psychological preparedness of the populations by the decline of traditional institutions. Quite apart from the economic difficulties of Ghana as a junior partner of the world international market economy where it "competes" with advanced bureaucracies in trade and investments, the country also has to contend with political instability and with powerful opposing forces of "traditionalism". The transition from traditional to a bureaucratic adaptation involves the attenuation of kinship, ethnic, religious and other primary ties which do not disappear overnight. Transitions from one stage of development to another are always gradual, involving a series of individual adjustment and in appropriate organizations of social relations. We also demonstrated (by the Ghanaian experience) that different socio-cultural worlds are affected at varying rates, which leads to different types of simultaneous adjustment. Some cultures try to retain, as much as they can, the traditional organization of social relations. Others try to meet the challenge head-on and adjust their social relationships accordingly. Still others try to live in both – traditionalism and bureaucratism. We have seen in the Ghanaian socio-cultural setting that some social relations in which people are organized are often relatively fixed and assigned to them (traditionalism). But we have also seen within the same socio-cultural setting that other social relations are defined and assigned according to bureaucratic norms. The main idea that underscores our analysis, then, is the view that while bureaucracy exists in Ghana

for the purpose of providing an efficient procedure to get large-scale tasks performed, it is like all human inventions, an imperfect device. Bureaucracy is certainly a place of opportunity – possibly the most fertile field for upward social mobility in modern times. But its old virtues of talent, competence, initiative, risk-taking and independence are not what are rewarded in Ghana. Rather, socio-cultural variables, such as political, religious, family and ethnic pressures, that obliterate whatever technical differences there might be between individuals, to a large measure, tend to dominate bureaucratic decisions and life, thereby culminating in a series of bureaucratic dysfunctions.

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