

THE EXPERIENCE OF
DEMOCRACY AND
BUREAUCRACY IN
SOUTH KOREA

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THE EXPERIENCE OF DEMOCRACY AND BUREAUCRACY IN SOUTH KOREA

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Administration and cost of elections
ARPI	Audit request for public interests
A-WEB	Association of World Election Bodies
BAI	Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea
BRIAS	Bid rigging indicator analysis system
CAR	Citizen audit request
CO₂	Carbon dioxide
CSO	Civil society organizations
DAC	(OECD) Development Assistance Committee
DFID	(UK) Department for International Development
EMB	Electoral management bodies
EPB	Economic Planning Board
FKI	Federation of Korean Industries
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
INTOSAI	International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions
IOC	International Olympic Committee
ISFs	International Sports Federations
ISP	Information strategic plan
KOCEID	Korean Civic Education Institute for Democracy
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
KONEPS	Korea ON-line E-Procurement System

KRW	Korean won
MAS	Multiple award schedules
MGA	Ministry of Government Administration
MIA	Ministry of Interior Administration
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NAIS	National Audit Activity Information System
NEC	National Election Commission
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIMBY	Not in my back yard
NOC	National Olympic Committees
NPM	New public management
NPO	Non-profit organization
OAS	Organization of American States
OCOG	Organizing Committees for the Olympic Games
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PM10	Per cubic meter 10 or particles less than 10 microns in diameter
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PPPs	Private-public partnerships
PPS	Public Procurement Service
PWC	Price Waterhouse Coopers
RFID	Radio frequency identification
RIA	Regulatory impact analysis
RRC	Regulatory Reform Commission
RRFT	Regulatory Reform Task Force Team
SAI	Supreme Audit Institution
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
TO&E	Table of organization and equipment
TOE	Table of organization and equipment
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WTA	Willingness to accept
WTO	World Trade Organization

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PREFACE

The idea for this book first came to mind in 2015 when I was serving as president for the Korean Association for Public Administration (KAPA). At that time, members of KAPA raised a fundamental question about the essence of “good” public administration. Our interest was to reevaluate the true meaning of “good” when it comes to public administration and find ways for “good public administration” to vitalize both the already developed and the developing countries’ social and economic circumstances.

South Korea is known for its rapid economic growth, with many even calling it a “miracle.” As a professor of Seoul National University in South Korea, I have had opportunities to meet scholars from other countries. Interestingly, many of them from developing countries shared a similar curiosity of how South Korea made it. I could see that their interest was to find a way for their countries to grow economically, which South Korea experienced so rapidly from the 1960s to the 1990s. From then, I have been trying to capture the uniqueness of South Korean public policy and have thought of ways to introduce Korea’s case so that the Korean experience can benefit other developing countries.

This book is part of the effort to search for “good public administration.” Professor Evan Berman from the University of Victoria, Wellington, New Zealand was a great inspiration for me to edit this book. He and I once had a discussion at a beautiful café in downtown Wellington, and there he encouraged me to think more about the fundamental questions that need to be asked in the field of politics and public administration. This book is partly the fruit of this discussion. I would also like to thank all the authors of each of the chapters of this book for sharing their academic and practice experiences to support the idea behind this book. Their contribution and constructive criticisms made this book possible. I am most grateful to my editor, Rachel Wald, at Emerald Publishing for her support despite our different time zones.

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Tobin Im, Seoul National University

INTRODUCTION: BUREAUCRACY AND KOREAN DEVELOPMENT

QUESTION ADDRESSED IN THIS BOOK

In the 1960s, South Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world. Moreover, in the aftermath of 30 years of colonial occupation and a devastating civil war that left the country divided, the country's economic outlook was not favorable. Given this precarious starting position, Korea's subsequent economic transformation is rightly seen as remarkable. A good deal of research suggests that government was a key factor in Korea's rapid economic growth. Specifically, an effective and robust bureaucracy could implement economic policy decisively despite unstable and underdeveloped social, political, and economic conditions. This bureaucracy-driven model has come to be called Korea's developmental state (Chibber, 1999). In this model, the state coordinates investment in strategic sectors while focusing on exports and sheltering nascent industrial concerns from domestic competition. In the Korean case, this approach led to a rapid buildup of industrial capacity and propelled the economy through several stages of economic development beginning with light manufacturing, progressing to heavy industry and construction, and finally into the high-tech era of today.

The effectiveness of this model derived in part from the highly authoritarian nature of government organization. Monopolizing the policy-making power, the executive could force industry toward the objectives that it deemed essential. Civil society was weak and there was little space for political activity outside of the narrow constraints imposed by the government (Kim & Campbell, 2014). Additionally, the state was also to resist co-optation of its institutions for private gain at the expense of its development goals. Of course, there were significant levels of corruption in the relationship between government and industry (a state of affairs, which stubbornly endures even today), however, the abuse of office for private gain was not permitted to overwhelm or to take precedence over economic development. Especially in

strategic ministries, recruitment and promotion were strictly merit based, and while education levels and high-quality human resources were scarce in the country. Generally, government could attract the brightest by offering them stable and decently paid positions and the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the nation.

These characteristics of the developmental state are well known. The puzzle this book aims to address, however, is not the role of bureaucracy in economic development, but in political democratization. At least in its central organs, the Korean developmental state was highly efficient, meritocratic, and fully monopolized coercive force. These resources were skillfully leveraged to shape the direction of private sector actors toward strategic initiatives. However, these very same resources should have allowed the bureaucracy to retain its power indefinitely. Instead, step by step, the resources of the bureaucracy, which during the developmental period were in the service solely of the authoritarian leadership, were exercised toward democratization. What were the conditions that made this transformation possible? Despite the voluminous literature on the developmental state in South Korea, this question has received almost no attention.

Korean economic development and particularly the role of the national bureaucracy have been studied extensively with the goal of deriving practical implications for contemporary developing countries. This volume of essays sheds light on the factors, processes, and structures that have allowed the Korean bureaucracy to play an active role in the country's equally impressive democratic development.

This book explores the ways in which bureaucracy may not only be compatible with democracy but also, more ambitiously, the conditions under which it can enhance it. To illustrate this theoretical perspective, various ways in which South Korea's bureaucracy has influenced the country's democratic transition from the late 1980s until the present day are described. This introduction gives a general overview of the Korean context as it relates to the topic and summarizes the key contributions of the book.

KOREAN BUREAUCRACY IN POLITICAL CHAOS

The modern history of South Korea formally begins in 1948, which marks the beginning of the country as a Republic. This period is related to major revisions of the Constitution and the term of the presidency. Korea is currently under the Sixth Republic period. The First Republic was a presidential system and the Second Republic was parliamentary system. The Third

Republic was a two-term four-year presidency. However, the Fourth Republic was “president for life” situation with a direct election system. The Fifth Republic was single seven-year presidency. The Sixth Republic was a single five-year term presidential system. Except the Sixth Republic, other previous Republic periods of bureaucracy were strongly influenced by the presidential leadership due to the centralized decision-making system and a high level of authority. Therefore, the presidential leadership and its administrative philosophy are critical to understand the characteristics of the evolution of the Korean bureaucracy. [Table 1](#) provides an overview of this evolution, highlighting important changes relevant to democratization.

Era of Nation Building: President Syngman Rhee Government

Anti-Communism: A Transition to Authoritarianism

Following the independence from Japanese colonialism and the devastating Korean War of 1950–1953, Korean society under President Syngman Rhee was caught up in diverse philosophical polemics that ranged from communism to liberalism. In the aftermath of the official day of liberalization, that is, August 15, 1945, the Korean peninsula was soon put under the influence of a concurrent flow of utopian philosophies which in fact often highlighted the stark reality of the war-ridden nation: diverging political factions included nationalists, socialists, pro-American factions (under the guidance of President Rhee himself), pro-Japanese factions, and many others (Kwon, 1998: 173).

The fact that post-independence Korea had witnessed a sudden outflow of political ideologies that can be proved by the sheer number of newborn political parties upon Independence Day. In March 1946, Korea had total of 134 political parties and social factions, and the number increased to 350 in 1947. Among the newborn parties, however, there were a significant number of pseudo-parties as well, which basically were interest-driven cliques centered on a few charismatic individuals (Kim, 2006: 69). In sum, the political climate during this period can be understood more as a sudden outpour of parochial opportunistic ideologies rather than a birth of political factions with a firm basis in philosophical perspectives.

Dr. Rhee (President Rhee received a doctoral degree in political science from Princeton during his stay in the United States) was not very different from his counterparts, as he was more of an action-driven politician than a philosopher (Jeong, 2003: 179). Although President Rhee had a unique combination of international and scholarly upbringing as he spent many years

Table 1. Overview of Korean Political History.

	Nation Building	Economic Development	Transition Period	After Democratization
Presidential leadership	Rhee, Syngman (I) (Yoon, Bostun)	Park, Chung-Hee (II)	(Choi, Kyuha) Chun, Doo-Hwan (III) Roh, Tae-Woo (IV)	Kim, Young-Sam (V) Kim, Dae Joong Rho, Moo Hyun Lee, Myung Bak Park, Geun Hye Moon, Jae In
Time	1948–1961	1961–1979	1979–1980–1987–1993	1993–1998–2003–2008–2013–2017
Republic period	The First Republic (The Second Republic)	The Third Republic	The Fourth Republic The Fifth Republic	The Sixth Republic
Term of presidency	Presidential system (parliamentary system)	Two term (4 year)	Indirect election Single 7-year term	Single 5-year term
Bureaucracy	Authoritarian Centralized, Strong, and Elite Formal and legalism Spoil system Inefficiency	Technocratic Merit system Efficiency and goal oriented	Process of Decentralization Efficiency Military management style, Strong anti-corruption policies	Democracy NPM Transparency, responsiveness Representative bureaucracy
Local government			National mantra (2003–2008) The first five -year comprehensive plan for devolution (2004) Sejong new administrative city Local and regional council elections (1991) Local autonomous system adopted (1995)	
Police	Political force	Myth building National Police Affairs Office established (1974)	Democratic control over the police Police Act enacted (1991)	Performance reform in policing

Election	National Election Commission established under the Constitution (1983)	
	Single Member District System (1988)	
	Parliamentary Electoral Reform (1988)	
Regulation	Financed electoral management and The Presidential Election Law Reform (1994)	
	Regulatory Reform Committee (1997)	
	Digital Petition— <i>Shimungo</i> (2003) Regulatory Reform Task Force Team (2004)	
Personnel Management	Career civil service system	
	The ceiling approval procedure (1977)	
	The standard ceiling system	The total ceiling management
Mega event	Ministry of Sports Established (1982)	The fixed budget
National Audit	Seoul Olympic (1988)	
	National Audit Activity Information System (1994)	
	E-Audit System	
Public procurement	Public Procurement Service Agency established (1961)	
	National Basic Information System project	
	Framework Act on Informatization Promotion (1995)	
	Master Plan for Informatization Promotion(1996)	
	Cyber Korea 21 (1999) Korean online E-Procurement system (2002)	

in the United States, his administration often gets labeled as one-person authoritarianism (Han, 1981: 29), which then highlights an apparent absence of governing philosophy throughout his regime.

However, the fact that President Rhee's governing philosophy lacked contents does not mean that his administration lacked all substance. In fact, President Rhee himself had a firm belief in anti-communism (Jeong, 2003: 179). President Rhee's firm insistence on anti-communism was a decisive factor in cancelling-out even the slightest possibility of political cooperation across the ideological spectrum (Lee, 1989: 327–328). President Rhee's anti-communism policies served as a practical *raison d'être* of Korea's First Republic, which gained even stronger momentum as anti-communism fervor swept the southern half of the Peninsula following the 4.3 Rebellion and Yeosu-Suncheon Rebellion of 1948, and finally, the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 (Jeong, 2003: 181). It was due to such circumstances that Korea's liberal democracy during its First Republic phase could not overcome its limitation as it was effectively used as a disguise for granting legitimacy to President Rhee's iron-clad rule over the populace.

From an economic perspective, President Rhee had a strong proclivity toward free-market capitalism, which can be traced back to his past 40 years of residency in the United States (Yoo & Lee, 1997). In the aftermath of the establishment of the government of the Republic of Korea, public officials soon engaged in active discussions and dialogs on different choices among a centralized planning economy, free-market capitalism, the ratio of state-owned enterprises to private firms, and so forth (Kim, 2006: 91). Although Korea was experiencing severe economic hardship, President Rhee's economic philosophy, which showed high similarity to that of the United States insisted on minimizing the intervention of government over the market. However, President Rhee's economic drives lacked specific directions and deliverables, whereas the overall Korean economy did not have enough public infrastructure or social background for important policy, which in fact led to confusion and poverty.

From a social perspective, Korea under President Rhee was under an abysmal situation. Following the three decades of Japanese colonial rule and an all-out-war on the Peninsula, Korea was experienced extreme social fragmentation. Concerning such dire circumstances, one of President Rhee's policies was to emphasize education. From the very onset of the First Republic, the Rhee Administration secured people's right to education on the Constitution of 1948, and stipulated a six-year mandatory education on the Education Act of 1949. President Rhee's education drive was an all-out effort against the limits of schools, classrooms, textbooks, and teachers (Kim, 2006: 94). Numbers of institutes for higher-education grew to 62 in 1960, a remarkable

increase from 31 in 1948, while the total number of pupils grew to 97,819 from 24,000 (Handerson, 1968: 170). Considering the dire socioeconomic circumstance that the Rhee Administration inherited, the President's education policy was indeed remarkable. Yet, its success cannot be misunderstood as the same level of philosophical inquires and discussions of contemporary Korea, as the nation during the 1950–1960s was under heavy stress of economic despair and underdevelopment.

Corruption and Chaos in Public Administration

During the First Republic, President Rhee was indeed an authoritarian leader, yet his administration lacked a stable political base and administrative background. This was due to the lack of philosophical contemplation on inquires such as “what is the role of public administrations” and “what constitutes an ideal form of bureaucracy.” In short, President Rhee's tenure can be characterized as an utter absence of both political and administrative philosophy other than anti-communism.

During that time, Korea's nemesis in Pyongyang (the capital city in North Korea) was a tangible, constant threat to the national security of the South, while leftist political factions within Korea strived for the downfall of the First Republic. Facing such threats out- and inside of the nation, however, President Rhee's administration did not have enough capacity in national defense and policing (Lee, 1988: 303–305). This was due to the fact almost all of Korea's public functions (e.g., administration, education, transportation, etc.) came to a complete halt as the Japanese colonial government was dissolved in 1945. Korean society was under compressed demands and aspirations for a better future, and given that such desires were kept heavily oppressed under Japanese colonialism, intra-Peninsula disputes and divisions, and devastating poverty and chaos, Korea's lack of background capacity for administrative tasks were a serious impediment for the betterment of the populace (Kim, 1006: 87).

During the First Republic, most of the cabinet posts were filled by foreign-educated officials who had their backgrounds in the independence movement. From a dichotomous perspective of efficiency versus democracy, President Rhee's cabinet can be labeled as the latter, as its appointments had an emphasis on representative bureaucracy. Yet, President Rhee's cabinet can also be perceived more as politics-driven appointments than as an achievement of democracy, as representatives from numerous pro-Rhee factions, such as National Youth League, United Labor Union, and Nationalist Party for Women, were invited to participate as ministers.

Under President Rhee, it does not seem that the bureaucracy itself had conspicuous roots of governing philosophies. In fact, President Rhee had a quasi-permanent, unofficial personal network throughout his close circles and top political appointees across the bureaucracy, police, youth leagues, and party machines of the governing Liberal Party (Kim, 1991: 114). President Rhee often shuffled his cabinet-posts, through which those who were perceived as not loyal to the President or people with potential to become his future contenders were fired from their positions (Kim, 1991). President Rhee, personally, was a believer in liberal democracy, yet his governing tendency revealed a heavy presence of authoritarianism.

Through installing official governmental branches in place, the First Republic had initiated its public administration structure; yet most of the officials, from minister-level to policy practitioners, were novices in public administration, and most of public employees could not perform their tasks effectively (Kim, 2006: 87–88). As government officials lacked know-how and expertise in managing daily administrative tasks, they also could not conduct administrative reforms effectively, and most of their daily tasks and agendas were no more than a mere amalgamation of traditional administrative culture and habitual performances from the remnants of Japanese colonialism (Oh, 2007: 3). Facing the national agenda of prosecuting pro-Japanese collaborators, however, the Rhee Administration did not sort out public employees of the past Japanese colonial government. The rationale for such decision was an urgent need of trained professionals in the public sector, which led to a de facto clemency toward the collaborators (Kim, 1990: 234–235; Park, 1987: 47). This can be diagnosed as a problem originating from the absence of administrative philosophy within the newborn government.

Incompetent politics-dependent bureaucracy tends to reveal characteristics of its pre-modern traits. In this sense, public bureaucracy during the First Republic claimed active roles in financing resources for facilitating the upper echelon's authoritarian tactics, repressive mechanisms against opposing parties and civil society, and disseminating propaganda messages in managing the government's legitimacy over the populace (Kim, 1998: 234–235). In addition, certain branches within the bureaucracy, such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs and regional self-governance institutions, took on the role of executing illegitimate elections throughout the nation, thereby effectively bolstering President Rhee's grip on power and the authoritarian political tactics of the ruling regime (Kim, 1991: 106).

During the latter days of the First Republic, Korea's bureaucracy was dominated by numerous political appointees from the hardliners of the governing Liberal Party. Such politicization of the bureaucracy soon precipitated

a close interaction between the administrative branch and the Liberal Party's nationwide networks, thereby effectively controlling both the civil society and political arena of South Korea (Kim, 1990: 237; Kim, 1991: 106). In order to maintain iron-fisted suppression over the populace, the government of the First Republic soon transformed itself into a combination of centralized bureaucracy and the repressive police agencies (Kang, 1988: 7).

In sum, President Rhee's tenure was a time of corruption and inefficiency among the nation's professional bureaucrats who lacked long-term time-perspective and capacity in policy making. In addition, most of President Rhee's public employees were both the inputs and products of a spoils system, thereby exacerbating the vicious cycle of their parasitic behavior on politics.

Era of Economic Development: President Park Chung-hee

Utilitarianism Focused on Economic Development

President Park, the strongman who governed Korea for more than a decade, was a firm believer in centralized economic planning for the betterment of the nation's material prowess. His governing philosophy was specifically centered on a nationalist sentiment through which Korea's urgent needs for modernization and industrialization were emphasized. In this sense, he thought that Korea, as a Third-World nation, was in a particular historical stage when compared to Western states. Rather than following Western-oriented democratic institutions and governance, President Park put higher priority in generating sustainable growth momentum, even when such an approach entailed rigid top-down authoritarianism.

Witnessing the increase of popular dissent and opposition against the regime's autocratic behaviors, President Park insisted on the principle of "democratic nationalism" that stressed democracy can only be achieved once the survival and welfare of the Korean people was granted. Clearly, President Park did not have a firm foothold in democratic ideals or values, as he ended up amending the constitution to uphold even more repressive elements and uncontrolled power for his regime.

Like President Rhee, Park was also a steadfast anti-communist. President Park perceived the period between the downfall of the First Republic and the success of his coup as an era of social chaos and turmoil. He strongly opposed ongoing discourses on national reunification as a mere tactic of North Korean sympathizers.

In contrast to his lack of political philosophy on democratic governance, President Park had a deep perspective in assessing Korea's contemporary

status as an underdeveloped nation. His strong bias toward economic modernization came from his childhood, as his family had to endure severe economic hardship and poverty. This, combined with his perception of the chaos of post-war Korea, led to Park's continuing call for economic modernization. In this sense, his view on governance can be categorized as a strong emphasis on utilitarianism. Most of the agendas were focused on the question of how to rapidly transform the nation toward the path of material abundance, a goal for which the values of democratic governance were sacrificed.

Claiming the presidency, President Park initiated numerous economic initiatives through so-called "Five-Years Plans" on economic development. His economic policies were different from those of his predecessor, President Rhee, as Park emphasized centralized planning and control over free-market principles with minimalist approach from the government. Of course, Korea under President Park remained as a repressed society with restrictions and limitations on individual freedom in place. National mobilization through political rallies, continuing repression against the opponents, and centralized planning on socio-economic policies were defining characteristics of President Park's presidency.

Emphasis on Efficacy and Effectiveness: Career Civil Service System

In terms of governing and managing the widespread administration apparatus, President Park was a strong believer in efficiency and efficacy. Considering Korea's underdeveloped status, he held a firm belief that a liberalist approach with minimalist intervention from the government was fundamentally unfit to Korean society of the 1960–1970s. His governing behaviors were more centered at initiating top-down guidance which did not necessarily entail agreement from below. Most of the time, he expected consent from the below, and suppressed any dissenting voices. During the Park era, government-led public administration gained a firm foothold upon the Korean society, thereby turning the bureaucracy into the machine of authoritarian governance from above.

As President Park emphasized efficiency and efficacy, and a culture of a modern bureaucracy in the Weberian sense appeared within the government. During the 1960s, most of Korea's public employees had fewer experience and lower general capacity than military officers. In order to overcome widespread skill mismatch of the public sector, President Park brought in numerous military officers into the governing apparatus. Concurrently with the entrance of military officers into the public sector, President Park sought to reform the public personnel management of the government, as he sought to bring in the principles of meritocracy. Unconventional massive administrative reforms

initiated during this era and the fundamental structure of Public Servants System and Administrative System still continues to this day. Career civil service system was institutionalized in Park's era.

Era of Transition: President Chun Doo-Hwan

Extension of Utilitarianism

The Presidency of Chun Doo-Hwan was an illegitimate government as he claimed power through a military coup that was consolidated by a massacre in the city of Gwangju. Compared to the period under President Park, Chun's presidency saw a continuing outpour of dissent and a longing for democracy. People's anti-regime sentiment was simply too strong for President Chun to continue his predecessor's governing philosophy based on utilitarianism. President Chun himself defined power as "source of strength that makes the impossible possible." Clearly, President Chun believed in a clear-cut dichotomy between "us" versus "them" when faced with political resistance and opposition from the below. He even insisted that 70% of pro-democratic activists were comprised of North Korean sympathizers. He continued with his animosity toward the National Assembly by pointing out that the opposing parties did not show full consent to the ruling majority of his governing party.

Most of President Chun's national agendas were focused on economic development, as he held firm understanding that sustaining Korea's high growth rate is the only way that his regime could gain legitimacy. Such a heavy emphasis on economic indicators can be understood as a continuation of President Park's insistence on centralized economic planning. In this sense, bureaucracy under President Chun's Fifth Republic was an effective vehicle in both policy formulation as well as implementation. Yet, President Chun's economic drive has its biggest difference from that of President Park in that the Fifth Republic sought to establish a strong market economy. This was a major deviation from President Park's centralized bureaucracy-led economic modernization (e.g., Economic Planning Board). President Chun, a former military general, did not have deep understanding of the national economy, and he sought to delegate most of his authority on the professionalized bureaucracy on economic matters. President Chun accepted most of comments and advises from his inner circle on how to formulate appropriate economic policies throughout the 1980s.

President Chun's iron grip over the Korean society showed a gradual downward curve throughout his seven-year tenure. In the beginning, President Chun and his cabinet showed highly inflexible attitude toward the populace,

when most of “legitimate” voice against the regime was kept suppressed. Yet, as his administration gained momentum as Korea’s economic growth continued, President Chun increasingly showed some degree of leniency toward the citizens. In this sense, he can be understood as an “instrumental liberalist,” as his first and primary concern was stability of his authoritarian control over the populace. For instance, in 1982, the curfew, which was effectively in-place since the Korean War of 1950 was abolished. In 1983, police officers stopped its surveillance along university campuses.

Professionalism in Bureaucracy

President Chun emphasized professionalism in the bureaucracy. Through granting professional autonomy to the bureaucratic apparatus, President Chun could effectively achieve a number of economic goals such as the stabilization of the price index, balanced development, increased productivity, and financial liberalization. Again, the lack of political, democratic legitimacy led President Chun to open his cabinet posts to subject matter experts, and President Chun himself accepted most of policy proposals from his professionalized bureaucracy. At the same time, in order to root out corruption within the bureaucracy, he introduced various policies such as “The Registration of Property of Public Officials” and initiated the simplification of administrative procedure and the zero-base budgeting system.

Regarding noneconomic areas, the Fifth Republic entailed significant degrees of authoritarianism and corruption, as the intervention from a group of politicized military officers, *Hanahoe*¹, engendered a sort of patron–client relationship throughout society. With its military wing being heavily politicized, the Fifth Republic could not uphold moral values on governance. This, combined with the lack of procedural democracy throughout the seven years was one of the major weaknesses of President Chun. Although the upper echelons of the bureaucracy showed competency and effectiveness in formulating appropriate policy prescriptions, the middle-tier managers and street-level bureaucrats remained passively entangled with rampant corruption.

Era of Delayed Democracy: The Roh Tae-Woo Administration

Democratic Experimentation?

Korea’s fervor toward democratization started to gain momentum during the latter years of the Park Chung-Hee Administration. As the nation endured

seven additional years of authoritarian dictatorship under President Chun Doo-Hwan, popular dissent and frustration reached the culmination point and a massive demonstration for freedom. Facing such large-scale dissent from below, the ruling party and the administrative branch of Korea could not continue to ignore the people's longing for democracy. In this sense, the 6.29 Declaration, which proclaimed the restoration of democratic election of Korea's presidency, was a significant milestone that turned the historic tide away from the past oppression.

The 6.29 Declaration (June 29, 1987) was a comprehensive democratization proposal by presidential candidate Roh Tae-woo that was officially titled the "Special Declaration for Grand National Harmony and Progress Towards a Great Nation." This is the historical declaration in the history of Korean democratization. The Declaration comprised eight points, in which Roh promised to:

1. amend the constitution to provide for the direct election of the president;
2. revise the presidential election law to ensure free candidature and genuinely competitive elections;
3. grant amnesty to political prisoners, including *Kim Dae-jung*;
4. protect human dignity and extend the rule of habeas corpus;
5. abolish the Basic Press Law and restore the freedom of the press;
6. strengthen local and educational autonomy;
7. move the political climate toward dialogue and compromise; and
8. achieve substantial social reform.

However, there is no evidence that reforms aimed at implementing democratization were results of President Roh's inner beliefs or governing philosophy. Rather, it is more accurate to view the Administration's pro-democratic policy as a strategic response to the will of the populace.

Although President Roh's Sixth Republic was a democratically elected administration, it is rather difficult to categorize his government as having a firm with consistent philosophical branch in promoting reforms throughout the society. In this sense, most of historians and political scientists agree that his tenure was rather a time of stagnated reforms toward democratic consolidation.

Also from an economic perspective, President Roh lacked clear direction on policy making. His five years inside Korea's presidential palace was beset with new challenges both from internal and external affairs, specifically surrounding Korea's restoration of democracy. Facing such newfangled challenges, President Roh failed to provide a clear-cut strategy or mission toward the nation's future economic direction.

On the other hand, from a sociocultural perspective, the Sixth Republic showed some limited progress. Upon inauguration, President Roh proclaimed that he would pursue two major agendas, democratic reforms and people's unity, and asked for people's support and cooperation. Yet, it is more accurate to view the aforementioned policy agendas as a mere rhetoric, especially when the persistent problems of inter-provincial inequality and unjust income distribution were considered. Corruption, like his predecessors, became President Roh's biggest concern, as Roh could not control his inner circle from committing massive-scale corruption throughout his presidency. The moral hazard of the Sixth Republic meant that the President and his cabinet could not keep up their promise on implementing societal reforms against the remnants of the past years of military dictatorship. This, again, clearly shows that President Roh lacked a consistent set of governing principles for handling a diverse range of issues from democratic reforms to economic redistribution.

Bureaucracy as a Bystander? Failed Initiatives and Agendas on Reforms

The Sixth Republic's management over its bureaucratic apparatus also revealed ineptitude in providing effective public administration. As President Roh decided to extend the tenure of six government ministers from the Fifth Republic, thereby effectively ignoring the civil society's call for democratic values in governance, much damage was done to his reputation as the first democratically elected president. In addition, President Roh invited four university professors, all of whom did not have any prior experience in public administration, to his cabinet, deteriorating the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the bureaucracy. From the above, with inexperienced novices in leadership positions of government institutions, the Roh Administration revealed significant limitation in its governing capacity.

One of the defining characteristics of President Roh and his cabinet is a persistent overlap of policies and personnel appointments from the previous administration. Although the President actively promoted policies of administrative reform and anti-corruption drives, his guidance and directives could not get through his bureaucratic bodies.

Looking into the personal factors of the administration, one of the noticeable characteristics is an absence of reform-minded faction around the President. Lacking support from his inner circle, President Roh could not meet the citizens' widespread expectation toward democratic reforms. While the Sixth Republic strived toward multiple reform-oriented agendas, most of the government's initiatives were restricted within the administrative

branch. In this sense, the Sixth Republic and its bureaucratic machine was an isolated island, deviating from the will of the populace. President Roh's reform agendas (e.g., marketization, democratic consolidation, a complete implementation of regional decentralization, etc.) were far from complete, failing to transform the short-span attention of the constituents toward long-term dedication and support. Meanwhile, lacking tangible fruits of reform, most of the Sixth Republic's initiatives and agendas ended up in the enlargement of size and scope of governmental institutions and agencies.

Institutionalization of Democracy: President Kim Young-Sam

Cessation of Authoritarian Legacies: Political Democratization

Although President Kim's electoral victory can be characterized as a result of strategic alliance with the governing party of President Roh, the very fact that Kim, a lifelong democratic activist, decided to merge his party with its governing counterpart highlighted that the termination of the rule of presidents with military backgrounds was the most urgent task facing Korean society. Looking into the election of 1992, it appears that Mr. Kim gained more popular support from the conservative electorates of the nation, which traditionally favored Korea's past authoritarian regime. Although his victory was based on a political merger with the governing party of the Sixth Republic, President Kim attempted to conduct decisive reforms aimed at terminating the remnants of past authoritarianism throughout Korean society.

One of the biggest accomplishments of President Kim was ending the enduring legacy of the military's intervention in politics. Upon inauguration, the President soon dissolved *Hanahoe*, an unofficial elite clique within the military, thereby effectively eliminating the military's patron-client relationship with its civilian counterpart in the government. President Kim's philosophy was concentrated on reforming the nation through cutting off ties from its authoritarian past: he held a firm belief that only through such radical turnover from the past could his administration gain credit and support from the populace. In this sense, President Kim had a deep understanding of political theories around the politicized military as the origin of evil on the third-world's drive toward democracy.

Fighting corruption was one of his main agendas as well. He viewed corruption as by far the largest obstacle against Korea's achievement of long-lasting economic prosperity. For instance, the enforcement of the Decree of the Act on Real Name Financial Transaction and Confidentiality was much more focused on eradicating corruption from the nation's financial sector.

In this sense, rather than a mere amalgamation of economic interests and pragmatic solution seeking, his reform-minded policies in the economic sector were indeed targeting the higher goal of overall reforms in the society. President Kim's reform drives were not without objection: his insistence on reforming the financial sector was often a target of criticism within the inner circle, as the President's cabinet frequently advised against such a rapid implementation of the measure.

Under President Kim, Korea succeeded in entering the coveted circle of the "First World" as it was officially invited to the Organization of Economic Cooperation of Developed Nations (OECD). This was a milestone in turning the tide of Korea's overall economic policies, as the nation could not continue its former status as a "developing nation." This meant that Korea's manufacturing firms and its conglomerates could not expect the same degree of tax breaks and tariff protection from the government. Facing the so-called "Wave of Globalization" however, most of the firms in Korea were not fully ready to engage in full-scale competition with foreign corporations. In this sense, economic liberalization and full-scale opening of Korea's financial market were perceived as threats to the homegrown firms in South Korea. For instance, as the government decided to open its financial markets, a sudden, large volume of foreign capital entered the system, while export-led manufacturing firms suffered trade imbalance. In 1996, Korea's net trade imbalance was reaching the alarming rate of 23.7 billion USD, a two-fold increase from the year before. Foreign loans also skyrocketed, leading the nation to the verge of a massive financial crisis.

Although President Kim strived for Korea's new international status as a fully democratized nation with developed economic prowess, he did not set clear-cut priorities between growth and redistribution, nor had any palpable coordination mechanism within his government. Lacking tangible content and sustainable support from within, President Kim's "globalization" reform drive soon faltered. This is due to the fact that the Administration was aiming two different targets with the same arrow one for reforms in improving the quality of life (e.g., education, social welfare, labor and reforms) and the other for globalization (e.g., increased national competitiveness, deregulation, and economic liberalization).

New Public Management in Korea

As mentioned above, President Kim's governing philosophy can be succinctly summarized as cessation of Korea's authoritarian past. From a bureaucratic perspective, the Kim Administration's defining moment occurred when the President ordered initiatives and guidelines based on enhancing transparency

and efficiency of government apparatus, thereby effectively implanting the mechanisms of New Public Management.

First, President Kim's drive toward transparency was a detailed effort, which was soon formulated in the actual policies of financial market reforms and revealing the data on the personal properties of high-level government officials. The very fact that President Kim's reform policies were pragmatic measures aimed at tangible results was a deviation from his predecessor, as Korea's past governments were reluctant in implementing their rhetoric toward enhancing transparency. This is ever more significant as President Kim's emphasis on transparency had a deep, profound connection with the zeitgeist of consolidating the newborn democracy on Korean soil. President Kim started off his policy by opening the list and amount of his personal property to the people, and soon his inner circle followed suit. This is a remarkable achievement as such measures were not legally binding at first. Korea's media and press also joined in by publishing articles and reports on hidden corruption scandals throughout the society.

Second, it was under President Kim's five-year tenure as the school of New Public Management began its expansion throughout Korea's bureaucratic apparatus. NPM can be roughly understood as bringing in management techniques of the private sector to public institutions. "Efficient but small government" was the motto of the NPM school, and President Kim had a firm understanding of the contemporary intellectual flow of public administration that had a great amount of emphasis on the globalization and professionalization of bureaucracy with information-centered organizational structures. In 1993, the first year of the Kim Presidency, the government eliminated two government branches and laid off 139 public employees. In 1994, total of 115 official positions were eliminated from the payroll, with an additional downsizing of 1002 personnel. Facing the wave of NPM-oriented reforms, the military was not an exception either, as the Ministry of National Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Military Headquarters endured significant downsizing.

From an NPM perspective, reforms concerning internal government regulations were also initiated. Regarding administrative regulations and civil complaint matters, a government ombudsman was established. The President initiated policies aimed at reducing unnecessary red tape throughout the public sector, while putting efforts (e.g., consumer protection, traffic accident management procedures, and modifying administrative penalties) on improving the actual quality of life of the populace.

Next, privatization of Korea's state-owned enterprises soon followed. Within the inner circle of the top-echelon, President Kim and his advisers held a belief that private corporations are better suited to attain efficiency

and effectiveness than public entities. Their preference of private firms over public institutions was soon developed into a policy through which government officials and public employees received one-point lectures and seminars from middle-upper level managers of Korea's conglomerates. Most of the lectures and class materials were focused on advertising the success and initiatives of private firms, which obviously did not provide much help to the "students" from the government offices. This reveals that President Kim and his inner circle did not have a concrete understanding on the difference between public and private entities and the discrete environment on which each sector performs its given role. Although Kim's government was consistently active in promoting reforms throughout both the public and private areas of the nation, their blueprint and philosophy on national agendas contained a significant degree of contradiction.

Looking into President Kim's leadership on policy decision making, one can notice a significant distance from what a leader would do under the New Public Management school. President Kim repeatedly emphasized that he, and only himself, is the very first legitimate president of the Republic of Korea. His inner circle harbored moral righteousness and a sense of superiority. From the beginning of the Administration, President Kim and his advisers acted as if they were the sole representatives of justice, and that only they can bring substantial reforms to the Korean society. Their assertive attitudes engendered numerous practical problems as the President's inner circle was a small minority when compared to the overall bureaucrats in the government system. President Kim's leadership was sometimes overly assertive while insisting on his predecessor's top-down approach in delivering guidance and initiatives. More often than not, he did not follow written procedures when deciding significant policy agendas, some of which even lacked rudimentary-level discussion with his advisers before getting announced. This shows that President Kim, specifically concerning his leadership style, was not a real disciple of the New Public Management school.

From the very beginning, Kim strived to appoint "new faces" to key cabinet positions, as he believed that shuffling out government officials from the previous era was essential to achieve democratic consolidation throughout the nation. Yet, what this meant is that most of the newly appointed ministers did not have much experience with how to manage the vast bodies of Korea's administrative machine. Considering Kim's past as a devoted democracy activist, most of his inner circle did not have systemic experience in governance. In this sense, it was far difficult for the Office of the President to effectively dominate the newborn administration. As the Blue House was filled with inexperienced politicians who had devoted most of their career

in fighting against the past autocratic regimes, Kim's inner circle became increasingly closed door, and ironically, started to resemble its authoritarian predecessors. In this sense, President Kim's personnel administration over his key government posts was perceived as nothing more than a kitchen cabinet, which lacked systemic reviewing procedures and democratic deliberation over the appointment. Based on his closed, clandestine nature of personnel management style, President Kim often suffered from mockeries and criticisms from his opponents who frequently referred the Blue House as "reform-minded authoritarianism" and "nonmilitary autocracy."

STRUCTURE OF THIS BOOK: DEMOCRACY AND BUREAUCRACY

The articles in this volume address the relationship between Korea's bureaucracy and the country's democratization. In a key essay in the volume, Im takes a high-level view, analyzing the relationship between bureaucracy and democracy from several different perspectives. The analysis is guided by the question that gave rise to the volume: what are the conditions necessary such that a national bureaucracy may support democratization? Following an analysis of the relationship between democracy and bureaucracy in general, Im argues that, for instance, the bureaucracy must be of a sufficient size to protect itself from the arbitrary use of political power. In addition to size, the sophistication of operations, which Im denotes by the term "red tape," may be used to prevent intervention from undemocratic political powers. The neutral competence of bureaucrats is also instrumental in shielding them from unreasonable external influence. Importantly, Im points out that ill-timed or conceived elections can often exasperate problems instead of solving them.

The remaining chapters in the volume take an issue-based approach to the question of bureaucracy and democracy in the Korean context.

Choi and Jung present an analysis of Korea's technocratic way of limiting the growth of government organizations by the political executive. Dating from 1945, a hard cap on the number of total civil servants was instituted based on an empirical analysis of the number of staff needed. The authors argue that this "ceiling strategy" effectively limits intervention into the bureaucracy by undemocratic political powers seeking to needlessly expand the bureaucracy for their own self-interest. In this sense, the strategy allows the bureaucracy to work in a stable environment and to take a long-term perspective while avoiding undemocratic political influence.

In another interesting article, Cho focuses on the reformation of the national police bureaucracy in South Korea. Tracing the roots of the national police to the Japanese colonial period, an institutional approach is used to analyze the process of change over a long period of time. The institutional approach is well established in studies of police bureaucracy. From 1987, democratic control over the police was established, and following the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, increased pressure for efficiency was placed on the bureaucracy. Cho points out that, while today a greater emphasis is placed on community policing to facilitate legitimacy, it remains to be seen how well this strategy can remedy the deeply rooted, negative perceptions of the police.

Campbell looks at the public procurement process in Korea as well as the implementation of the country's e-procurement system. Due to the scope of procurement in the public sector, public procurement policy has the potential to positively shape the behavior of market actors as well as facilitate the entrance of groups with democratically relevant characteristics to the procurement market. The essay describes how the KONEPS e-procurement system has significantly reduced corruption in the procurement process in South Korea. Second, the essay looks at how the government has developed an active procurement policy for sustainable procurement. The essay concludes with the discussion of the possibilities for developing countries to follow Korea's path.

Lee explores the development of local bureaucracy and how it has contributed to democratization in the country. Korea is a highly centralized country where most administrative functions are carried out by the central government in Seoul. Increasingly, however, local governments have been giving greater autonomy in their operations. Examining the topic from both a political and administrative perspective, Lee points out that, while there are many challenges at the local level, there have also been several distinct opportunities to contribute to democracy. Local bureaucracies are in some ways much closer to the citizens that they serve and career bureaucrats at the local level can try to resist the inefficient use of public resources by temporarily elected officials. However, much like the national bureaucracy, there is, of course, the danger that local government will accumulate too much authority and the author points out that it remains to be seen the extent to which local bureaucracy will continue to support democratization in the future.

Lee makes an interesting argument about how sport can be a significant soft power resource for countries. Focusing on the Olympics, the author examines how the bureaucracy contributed to the success of Korea's hosting of the 1988 Seoul Olympics and he explains how the event impacted the political modernization of the country as well as the attitudes of bureaucrats. Soft power variables, such as democratic participation, have a potential influence on a successful

bid for the Olympics. Interestingly, preparing for the Olympics also potentially stimulated democracy as bureaucrats needed to engage directly with citizens, which in turn increased this spirit of public participation in the country.

Go explores the role of Korean electoral management bodies in fostering democracy in South Korea. The author points out that the successful implementation of elections is not necessarily a straightforward and simple matter but rather requires a significant level of technical expertise and a highly trained bureaucracy. Especially in developing countries, where democracy often has a highly formal character, the opportunities for self-interested actors to hijack the electoral process are many. In the case of Korea, a steady increase in the authority and investigative powers of the National Election Commission has contributed greatly to the legitimacy of the country's democracy.

Lee introduces some key features of the regulatory management system in South Korea as well as the challenges that need to be overcome. In particular, the bureaucracy has worked hard to chip away at past regulations that produce rents for various private interest groups but provide little to society at large. Regulatory quality is tied closely to democracy as maintaining a fair and even playing field for entrepreneurs is a key freedom. Introducing checks and balances into the regulatory system can be an important way to facilitate this goal.

Kim explores the roles the supreme audit institution of Korea explained how the Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea have played during the democratization of South Korea over the last two decades to manage the check-and-balance system among different political powers.

The discourse of "Korean bureaucracy" has been narrowly discussed within the context of political power. Therefore, scholars tend to easily conceptualize bureaucracy through a dichotomous approach: centralized or decentralized. Rather than analyzing the result, this book tries to understand processes of internal control within the bureaucracy. The core argument is that bureaucracy can keep in check undemocratic political influences. The accumulation of these institutional efforts of bureaucracy was hidden because scholars have not been interested in this process. Therefore, revealing the efforts of the bureaucracy before and after 1987 can help us understand the role of bureaucracy and its contribution to democratization.

NOTE

1. Hanahoe ("all for one organization") indicates an unofficial group of army officers that was formed in 1963 by former presidents Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae-woo, both graduates of the Korea Military Academy.

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CHAPTER 1

REVISITING BUREAUCRATIC DYSFUNCTION: THE ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY IN DEMOCRATIZATION[☆]

Tobin Im

ABSTRACT

While many studies have focused on the link between economics and democracy in exploring the strategies adopted by developing countries, they have tended to overlook the role of bureaucracy in democratization. This study seeks the missing link between bureaucracy and democratization. What are the conditions necessary for bureaucracy to facilitate the democratization process of a country? This chapter begins by briefly reviewing the bureaucracy literature from Max Weber and Karl Marx and then argues that despite its shortcomings, bureaucracy in its Weberian form can facilitate the political democratization of a developmental state. This study concludes that although bureaucracy is often regarded as dysfunctional, it can be instrumental in the democratization process in the context of the

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developmental state. This article concludes that there are six conditions for the function for democratization: big enough to protect themselves from the arbitrary use of political authority, qualification and competency, “take administration out of politics” and political neutrality, red tape, consensus about the good government, and having an eye on the long-term, broader interests of the country and the government.

Keywords: Bureaucratic dysfunction; democracy; economic development; Weberian bureaucracy

THE MISSING LINK BETWEEN BUREAUCRACY AND DEMOCRATIZATION

Many scholars raise the question of what the government’s role is in a country’s economic development, but only a few have researched the relationship between bureaucracy and democratization. This reflects “economy first” which is the typical development strategy that many developing countries adopt, placing an emphasis on economic growth and rarely asking about democracy. Relatively, the relationship between bureaucracy and economic development in developing countries has been studied by Western economists, sociologists, and political scientists. [North \(1989\)](#) emphasizes the importance of institutions, such as an efficient judicial system, which can matter in the development of economies. [Evans and Rauch \(1999\)](#) argue in a similar way that an effective and rule-following bureaucracy significantly enhances prospects for economic growth using a sample of 35 developing countries for the 1970–1990 period. [Haggard \(2004\)](#) finds that institutions have played a central role in the political economic accounts of East Asia’s growth, from the developmental state to the microinstitutions of industrial policy. Corruption and its effect on economic growth has also been widely addressed ([Mauro, 1995](#); [Shleifer & Vishny, 1993](#)). Furthermore, recently a consensus has emerged to the effect that not only quantitatively factors like economic growth but also qualitative elements such as quality of life are important characteristics of successful development in developing countries ([Sen, 1999](#)).

It is understandable that many developing countries mobilize and dedicate their available resources to economic growth, since almost the entire population lives in poverty. Therefore, how to rapidly develop the economy of country is the main concern for many political leaders of developing countries as well as many global institutions such as the Asia Development Bank and World Bank. Scholars have explored the role that bureaucracy plays in facilitating economic development ([Chibber, 2002](#)). The “four tigers” – Singapore,

South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong – are well-known cases that help clarify the theoretical concept of bureaucracy in a full economic developmental model. Ironically, however, politics is minimized or ignored in their case research. For example, in a study of Japan's development, [Johnson \(1982\)](#) stresses that bureaucracy, more precisely, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, was the driving force behind Japan's economic development. [Muramatsu and Krauss \(1987\)](#), however, criticize Johnson for ignoring the role of politicians in forming the proeconomic growth consensus. Many scholars seem to generally believe that the more democratized a country is, the happier its citizens will be. South Korea is not an exception in this regard. This phenomenon is possibly shown in most of the Asian states' context due to the "economy first"¹ strategies.

There is mounting evidence that government bureaucracy is strongly connected to good government performance, which suggests that in less developed countries, where democracy is usually not well established, creating a well-functioning bureaucracy can be a prior goal ([Cho, Im, Porumbescu, Lee, & Park, 2013](#)). A strong performance on the part of the government is assumed to contribute to better economic performance in a country. This hypothesis is even more plausible when it comes to developmental states such as Singapore, for example.

Economy and politics are like two sides of the same coin because politics is related to the distribution of wealth. Therefore, if we expand the definition of politics as power and allocation of resources, more connections between the two emerge. First, decentralization can be considered part of the political democratization process to the extent that an authoritarian regime ends up sharing power with local governments. In addition, different kinds of decentralization bring different effects. Fiscal decentralization contributes to economic growth, while political decentralization does not have a significant relationship with economic growth ([Im, 2010](#); [Rodríguez-Pose & Ezcurra, 2011](#)). Second, in a broad context, the allocation process can be part of political democratization. If the allocation process is unpredictable or unstable, political democratization can be beset by corruption. Although political modernization can diminish corruption, corruption is still widely considered to be synonymous with bureaucracy, not democracy. Many researchers, however, emphasize studies that point to the negative effects of decentralization and single out bureaucrats as the main hindrance to economic growth or democratization.

For example, [Hanna Bäck and Axel Hadenius \(2008\)](#) question how democratization affects state administrative capacity by using the time series method. Their conclusion is that there is a curvilinear (J-shaped) relationship between the two factors. In other words, the effect of democratization on

state capacity is negative at low values of democracy, nonexistent at median values, and strongly positive at high democracy levels. However, if we examine the reverse relationship with this statistical method, using the definition of bureaucracy rather than an ambiguous concept of state capacity as a variable, the question becomes whether the bureaucracy affects democratization.

In that sense, this study examines a different version of this question, exploring whether and under what conditions bureaucracy can be an independent variable in the production of democracy. Acknowledging the current status of research on this topic, this study argues that there is a relationship between bureaucrats and the democratization of a country. How can a bureaucracy lead to democratization in a country? What are the conditions necessary for bureaucracy to facilitate the democratization process of a country? These are examples of the kind of questions that this study takes up.

CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS: BUREAUCRACY AND DEMOCRACY

Before diving into the argument, it is necessary to look into the meanings of the key concepts, since they are used in various senses.

Bureaucracy and Bureaucratization

“Bureaucracy” is a term that has been used in many different senses particularly in Europe (Albrow, 1978). Among them, we highlight the sense of it as “rule by officials.” From the bureaucratic-polity perspective, rule by officials is viewed as a political system that is dominated by officials. Laski defines bureaucracy as “a system of government the control of which is so completely in the hands of officials that their power jeopardizes the liberties of ordinary citizens” (1930, pp. 70–74). Herman Finer views bureaucracy as “government by officials” (Albrow, 1970, p. 92), and Lasswell and Kaplan also define bureaucracy as “the form of rule in which the elite is composed of officials” (1950, p. 209). From the bureaucrats-in-power perspective, officials are understood as the ruling class. Sharp refers to bureaucracy as “the exercise of power by professional administration” (1927, p. 394), which in turn leads Brecht (1954) to question the definition of bureaucracy as “government by officials” and embrace instead the idea of it as “office-holders who exercise power.”

According to Max Weber, whose theory of bureaucracy is well known, the modern form of bureaucracy can arise only when legal authority is

institutionalized. Authority, categorized into three types – charismatic, traditional, and legal – in the Weberian sense of the term, has a special connotation to the effect that subordinates in a hierarchy “accept” it. Thus the primitive bureaucracies that stem from charismatic authority or traditional authority are quite different from modern bureaucracies. Until the end of eighteenth century, charismatic or traditional authority dominated the organization of political and social groups of the feudal classes in Western culture. Society was stratified according to family groups. However, the separation of business from the household that began with the shift from an agricultural self-sufficient economy to an industrial one changed the makeup of the classes. By the mid-nineteenth century, the modern bureaucratic form of organization was prevalent in the industrialized world. The bureaucratic structure, [Weber \(1968\)](#) argues, emerges as an efficient way of organizing humans to achieve a goal. Modern bureaucracy coupled with legal authority required the democratization of government. Rationalization of the society is also strongly associated with democratization. It is this particular aspect of Weber’s thesis that this study draws on.

[Weber \(1968\)](#) emphasizes that bureaucratization means intensive qualitative expansion of administrative tasks not just a quantitative increase in the size of an organization. According to Weber, “the fully developed bureaucratic apparatus compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and material and personal costs – these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration, and especially in its monocratic form” (1978, p. 973).

Despite the suggestion that bureaucracy possesses a “rational” character, much literature on bureaucracy is grounded in Max Weber’s ideal typology. Weber clearly defines the principle of modern bureaucracy as the principle of an official jurisdictional area, which is generally ordered by rules, laws, or administrative regulations. In order to function, the authority to give commands and methodical provisions are needed ([Weber, 1968](#)). Bureaucracies are organizations with specific functional attributes: large size; graded hierarchy; formal, rule-based administration; standardized procedures; reliance on written documentation; and clear functional division of labor into specialized tasks (Gerth & Mills, 1946; [Olsen, 2006](#)). They are large normative structures in which authority reigns. The rational-legal political order can be enforced by the authority of the state ([Olsen, 2006](#)).

[Bäck and Hadenius \(2008\)](#)’s study on the relationship between democracy and state capacity defines the capacity for public bureaucrats to be able do

their job in the best way as a criterion for a functioning state. Their statistical analysis uses measurements of bureaucratic quality and corruption control (as defined by the international country risk guide) as variables. However, they fail to provide a full theoretical explanation of either of these variables, to which they give equal weight. In this study, I define bureaucracy as a system in which employees are salaried, technically trained, career appointed, and assigned stated duties that require expert knowledge for them to be able to carry them out (Etzioni-Halevy, 2010) and who advance in the organization according to a principle of meritocracy. Today, as Stephen Miller (1978) notes, bureaucracy has come to stand for all that is wrong with the modern world. It has been made a great target, decried as “headless and soulless,” and subject to demands for reform by presidents, public media, citizens, and even academics. Despite negative perceptions of bureaucracy, it is evident that bureaucracy has positive traits: unity and coordination, precision and speed, predictability, obedience, loyalty, impartiality, an institutionalized memory, and continuity across changes in government (Olsen, 2006).

Democracy and Democratization

Like the term “bureaucracy,” “democracy” is a difficult word to define. It is of no use defining it in terms of the politics of any particular country (Ryan, 1973), since every country has different political conditions. However, the etymological route is worth pursuing. “Democracy” is derived from the Greek words “demos” and “kratos.” “Demo” means “people” and “kratos” can be translated as “power,” and so the root meaning of democracy is “power of the people.” Here, by democracy I refer to political democracy in a liberal sense. In this conception, people must be the master of their fate and be able to determine their affairs at their will. This contrasts with a dictatorship, in which a single person has absolute power over the people. Therefore, simply put, democratization can be defined as allocating power (or authority) to people. People’s sovereignty is the key concept.

David Beetham isolates “the core ideas or principles embodied in the historical conception of democracy as ‘rule of the people,’ “ identifying them as “popular control” and “political equality” (1993, p. 6). Hadenius adopts a similar approach and arrives at the conception of political democracy in which public policy is determined by “the freely expressed will of the people whereby all individuals are to be treated as equals” (1992, p. 9). Lively (1975) describes the norms dictating inclusive citizenship and political equality,

while Holden (1988) equates democracy with popular sovereignty (Saward, 1994). Eva Eztoni-Halevy (2010) defines democracy (or a democratic political structure) as the institutional arrangement whereby two or more organized groups of people participate in a contest for power on the strength of their policies or the image of themselves that they project and whereby they secure their position via a free election in which the whole adult population is able to participate. Satori argues that “democracy is a procedure by which leaders compete in elections for power to govern” (1962, pp. 124–127). In the absence of an election process, the government becomes an authoritarian one. However, although most developing countries have institutionalized elections, these elections have not brought about democratization.

Democratization can also be characterized in terms of where the transformation of political power was initiated. Redford (1969) calls the top-down approach model “overhead democracy.” He views bureaucracy as an authority that puts policy that has been crafted by democratically elected branches of government, which are supposed to rely on the principle of law, into effect. For Schumpeter (1956), democracy is a political method, a certain type of institutional arrangement for arriving at a political decision. Therefore, people’s participation in the policy-making process is important. Democracy, at least in this sense, means that people have the opportunity to accept or reject the individuals who are supposed to govern them. Referendum is a tool to guarantee this minimal power. Transparency is a key to tracking the functioning of democracy.

From a “power” perspective, democracy refers to a change in the way resources are shared. In a participatory democracy, values are shared through citizens’ participation. In an electoral democracy, resources are allocated through elections. In a liberal democracy, rights and liberties are allocated to everyone. From a “people” perspective, democracy is about establishing channels for equality. Economic democracy is about equality in the production process. Anyone who participates in this process has a right to a share of what is produced and a say in the decision-making process. In social democracy, the government takes responsibility for providing welfare (social services). In political democracy, the power of the state is equally shared by the citizens.

In a broad context, factors that facilitate the distribution of resources and power and that encourage participation can be considered part of democratization as well. In the South Asian context, this includes the adoption of Western democratic theory, the introduction of local self-government, and e-government.

THE AUTONOMY OF BUREAUCRACY

Bureaucracy takes different forms and play different roles in different cultural contexts (Im, 2014). In a country where democratization has not been fully installed, it can work as a positive driver of economic, political, and social democracy, especially in developing countries where the private sector has not yet wholly developed.

From a Weberian Perspective

For Max Weber, bureaucracy is a neutral tool that serves political power. He presupposes the principle of subordination of administration, that is, bureaucracy, to politics (Timsit, 1991). The division of labor between politicians and bureaucrats is clear; politics takes care of policy formulation, while the role of bureaucrats is limited to implementation, through which they gain knowledge. Such accumulated knowledge becomes a state capacity, a dominant power factor in bureaucratic administration. From this perspective, Larry Preston (1987) argues that bureaucracy supports individual freedom because a structured system creates opportunity in which to make choices, learn, create, and achieve a higher purpose; bureaucracy can serve to motivate bureaucrats. Bureaucrats concretize subgoals in the process of implementing politicians' goals.

Thus, a concept of bureaucratic power arises naturally. Government is where bureaucrats' collected knowledge is concentrated, and it is the agent in the division of labor that can coerce all other agents in society (Dahl & Lindblom, 1953). Governments make crucial contributions to society and are thus "a necessary evil" (Wills, 2000). Paul du Gay contends that bureaucracy allows the democratic state to act forcefully, morally, and accountably; however, as Carl J. Friedrich notes, bureaucracy is "the core of modern government," and the success of democracy itself depends on a successful bureaucracy (1963, pp. 463).

If the power of a bureaucracy expands far enough, we arrive at what is often called the "administrative state." The autonomy of a bureaucracy is problematic in the administrative state and can lead to the kind of dysfunction that sociologists in the 1960s described in which bureaucrats are too busy protecting themselves to serve the people. These days, since knowledge is part of administrative capacity, it is commonly understood that transparency and trust is possible if appropriate public officials are recruited and promoted.

From a Marxist and Neo-Marxist Perspective

In the Marxist model, there is an antagonistic relationship between the bourgeoisie and proletariat regarding the distribution of surplus in society. Because the mode of production in capitalist society is private ownership, commodity production proliferates under it, and labor becomes increasingly fragmented. The bourgeoisie monopolizes the tools of production to maximize its profits by exploiting the proletariat's labor. The surplus enriches the bourgeois class at the expense of the proletariat.

The state from the Marxian perspective is a governing body reflecting the dominant social force of a society. Marxists view the role of the state as uniting the divided parts of the social order by organizing the capitalists and disorganizing the working class. Marx saw the development of bureaucracy in government as the counterpart of bureaucracy in the private sector. The owners of private companies heavily dominate the capitalist state. According to Marx, the bureaucracy is an "appalling parasitic body" for the proletariat, but at the same time, it is the most powerful instrument of administration that exploits class.

From that argument, Neo-Marxists question the classical Marxist assumption that the state is just a tool of bourgeoisie by homing in on the role of bureaucracy. Because the state is more than the "government." [Stepan \(1978\)](#) argues that state is an administrative, legal, bureaucratic, and coercive system. Therefore, the state cannot be understood only in terms of class relations and class struggles. The state is also an independent organization with its own internal structure and its own interests ([Skocpol, 1999](#)). According to [Skocpol \(1999\)](#), the state is an organic entity and very much an autonomous unit. Neo Marxists argue that the state's interest is not only classical Marxist's idea of economical class but also expands to various social factors such as gender, age group, and ethnic background which can affect class structure.

Neomarxism sheds light on a new dimension of the state that emerges with authoritarian states across Latin America: the ability of them to be sustained at least partially by the rent-seeking behavior of bureaucrats. [Krasner \(1984\)](#) argues that since the state is an autonomous actor in the political system, public officials act as more than referees. Government institutions do have an autonomous decision-making capacity (Truman, cited in [Almond 1988](#)).

Etzioni-Halevy (2010) concludes that bureaucrats around the world not only help politicians make policy but also counter their power and serve as a bulwark against corruption. [Evans \(1985\)](#) argues that the efficacy of the developmental state depends on a meritocratic bureaucracy with a strong sense of corporate identity and a dense set of institutionalized individuals

similar to private elites. He also argues that Weberian characteristics significantly enhance prospects for economic growth and that building better bureaucracies is therefore necessary. Evans regards the state as a set of organizations invested with the authority to make binding decisions for people and organizations that are located in a particular territory and to implement these decisions using force if necessary. Again, the autonomy of bureaucracy is an important factor.

BUREAUCRATIC DYSFUNCTION AND BUREAUCRATS TOOLS FOR COUNTERBALANCING DICTATORSHIP

Civil servants are a feature in most developing countries. At first, collaborators with the dictator are most likely to take government jobs, but as time passes, merit-based recruitment is gradually introduced, at least partially. Even though some employees are highly corrupt, some members of this group acquire a level of professionalism that enables them to take action against the dictatorship. Their accumulated professionalism becomes the basis of autonomy.

National planning can thus be a potential tool in facilitating the political democratization of developing countries. For example, economic planning is a prevalent economic growth strategy in developing countries; such planning establishes that a specific level of national economic or industrial development will be reached within a period of five years (or two five-year plans and so on). This method was first used in the Soviet Union (1928–1991), but later other socialist states such as Argentina (1946–1955), Bhutan (1961–), China (1953–), Ethiopia (1957–), India (1947–), Nepal (1956–), Pakistan (1955–1998), Romania (1951–1989), South Korea (1962–1996), Vietnam (1958–), and Malaysia (1956–1960) have used or are still using this method for their economic growth. The success of a five-year plan requires strong government leadership to implement policy.

In the case of South Korea, Park Jung-hee, who led the May 16 military coup in 1961, introduced a five-year plan in order to boost the country's socio-economic status after the Korean War. It was the first long-term strategic economic development plan in South Korea, and it was renewed until 1996. Before this economic development plan was established, Korea's economy largely depended on U.S. aid and its planning on foreign experts. In the first phase of the economic development plan (1961–1965), 84 percent of total foreign capital was public sector funds in the form of bilateral loans that were

directly made to the government. This allowed the government to lead the development rather than the private sector (Stallings, 1990).

In order to implement the plan more efficiently, the president established an economic planning board, which remained in place until 1994. It was a new type of government agency that comprised four bureaus – a general planning bureau, a budget bureau, a material resources mobilization planning bureau, and a statistics bureau – 19 divisions, and 228 employees. The ability of the economic planning board to recruit elites, its power to implement policy, and its adherence to procedure and the rule of law allowed it to facilitate political democracy (Choi, 1987).

Bureaucrats who worked at the board were members of the elite who were selected for the job after having passed a relatively difficult exam. Being guaranteed lifelong employment made them feel secure, which allowed them to assume a long-term perspective on their work. Bureaucrats who worked at other agencies during this time were not fundamentally different from those who worked at the economic board in this regard. This does not mean that there were no corrupt and incompetent bureaucrats. Many of them in fact collaborated with the Japanese colonial regime. These facts do not match as Bäck and Hadenius (2008)'s prediction that a high level of bureaucracy correlates with a low level of corruption.

When bureaucrats acquire power vis-a-vis the regime, they start enjoying a certain autonomy. This power results from the “establishment of a substantive consensus among elites concerning the rules of the democratic game and the worth of democratic institutions” in the democratization process (Burton et al., 1992, p. 3; Grugel & Ruggirozzi, 2012). It is natural that once a bureaucracy becomes large bureaucrats come to share a sense of solidarity among themselves and are given to exercise power by bending rules to protect themselves if necessary. Bureaucracy in a democratic country can thus have negative effects.

The most common criticism of Weberian bureaucracy pertains to bureaucratic dysfunction such as is manifested in adherence to rules that lead to delay, red tape, unresponsiveness, avoidance of responsibility, power seeking, and corruption (Dimock, 1959). Many scholars in Western countries have analyzed the negative consequences of bureaucracy, including Selznick, Crozier, Gouldner, Merton, and Blau.

Merton (1940), for example, carries out a functional analysis of bureaucracy and argues that it tends to foster goal displacement, by which he means that strict obedience and conformity to norms and rules may lead to a situation where adherence to procedure becomes an end in itself, inhibiting the

ability of the organization to achieve its goals. Merton calls this consequence “latent dysfunction” (Edward, 1975; Merton, 1940, p. 26). Bureaucrats use their capacity as a tool to sustain their position rather than to improve performance.

However, this kind of bureaucratic dysfunction can also have positive effects in developing countries. The main problem of developing countries is how to restrain dictators from exercising arbitrary power, from the politician or dictator (or president)’s perspective, as bureaucracy can be a barrier to their desire to make unpredictable decisions that serve their interests.

Politicians prefer to adopt short-term plans in order to enjoy maximum benefit while they are in office. Several researchers have pointed out that formal bureaucratic procedures, sometimes described as red tape, can act as a safeguard to ensure accountability, predictability, and fairness in decisions (Benveniste, 1983; Goodsell, 1985; Kaufman, 1977; Thomson, 1975). It provides citizens with protection against the arbitrary and capricious exercise of power not only by officials but also politicians and even dictators. Therefore, bureaucratic procedures can serve as a constraint on everyone, including a dictator, which could possibly lead to political democratization. In the following, I explore the principal bureaucratic mechanisms that could promote democratization.

Expertise

Bureaucratic autonomy comes from expertise. Bureaucratic officials have the opportunity to be trained in a field of specialization, and their knowledge of rules of the organization they work for represents a special technical expertise (Weber, 1968). In the case of South Korea, since the task of the Economic Planning Board was to manage foreign aid and capital, they were presented with opportunities to gain financial knowledge. This is the reason why professors of economics were made ministers of the board, while former generals largely made up the ministers in other agencies. The presidents knew that economic policy could not be handled by nonexperts.

However, appointing economists to minister positions on the board was not sufficient to run it. Korea’s five-year economic development plan was renewed seven times, and long-term development planning required hiring individuals who would stay in the job for a significant period of time. Bureaucrats also were able to acquire knowledge by studying abroad and attending international conferences or meetings. Well-educated and highly experienced officials, scholars, and business leaders collaborated with the

board, contributing to the accumulation of expert knowledge. The board's bureaucrats thus developed an administrative capacity that made them superior to other politicians and stakeholders.

In addition, an open merit system made the organization relatively autonomous and enabled it to avoid becoming beholden to special interests. Therefore, its bureaucrats had the ability to say no to politicians, private economic interest groups, and other stakeholders who lacked their expertise.

The economic planning board was not a special case. Other government agencies in Korea during this period were similarly structured, but the difference between them was the eliteness associated with the economic planning board. Anyone could apply for a public official position, but if an individual earned higher marks on the open examination, he or she could start at a higher level. The recruitment system of bureaucrats relied on the National Civil Service Exam, which was highly competitive, and earning a high mark on it was sufficient to give those who did a sense that they led the country.

In addition, the Korean government allocated a substantial budget and supplied talented and technically trained bureaucrats to support other ministries and academic institutions. Proud to be regarded as experts, Korean elite civil servants, especially those working at the Economic Planning Board, were relatively free from influence from regional interests (e.g., kinship networks and school networks). The examination tested both general ability and knowledge as well as knowledge relevant to a particular job (Wilson, 1989). It was therefore a fair process that resulted in talented people being hired.

Implementation Power

Politicians enjoy announcing attractive policies that may turn out to be talk but no action because their concern is to appeal to voters and supporters. The bureaucracy, on the other hand, is the action-oriented sphere; it secures resources, produces agreement, and coordinates structures. Politicians' policy promises depend on bureaucrats if they are to become reality (Brunsson, 1989). Experienced politicians know that a good policy is useless if it is not implemented and that public opinion will turn against them if it is not. Without the bureaucracy, politicians cannot implement policy.

Bureaucrats are experts at implementing policies, which is a difficult process, since there can be inconsistency among different policies, a lack of legal support, a lack of money, and a lack of cooperation from the citizens. Street-level bureaucrats know exactly what is happening in their field, and they are better able than politicians to tell whether information is distorted or not.

Not only government officials but also professors and other experts also provided recommendations to the board for various economic and planning development projects for the implementation. The main role of elite bureaucrats in the Economic Planning Board was to implement development plans and coordinate with other ministries in order to bring all related government agencies under its jurisdiction and to procure, manage, and allocate foreign capital, since there was not enough domestic capital. The board also held various forums designed to allow it to receive advice and support.

These processes associated with implementation created an opportunity to gather elites who were not part of the military regime. Academic elites were able to perform their planning and budgetary roles under a fair and balanced approach with the overall economic framework in mind and relatively free from the control of the assembly and interest groups who were not sufficiently competent or trustworthy to make economic decisions.

Proceduralism

Democracy requires due process, which is the requirement that the state must respect all legal rights. In other words, a set of “procedures” makes democracy (Castoriadis, 1997). In his incisive critique of Prussian bureaucracy, Max Weber (1958) points out that Prussian politicians used parliamentary inquiries as a means to check on the progress of the administrative implementation of legislation. Such inquiries served as a proving ground for politicians in parliament. They would spar with administrative experts, seeking to show the supremacy of political decisions to an official’s use of his education and skill to preserve the technical integrity of an administrative program. In the case of Russia, there is a list of tables containing requirements that must be met for a policy to be implemented. Even if the leader or president wants to implement the policy, if the policy does not satisfy those requirements, it cannot be implemented.

Administrative procedures include processes for making a collective decision inside the bureaucracy and the securing of documents in order to obtain authorizations and licenses. The complexity of these procedures is notoriously referred to as “red tape.” Bozeman defines organizational red tape as “rules, regulations, and procedures that remain in force and entail a compliance burden for the organization but have no efficacy for the rules’ functional object” (1993, p. 283). In reality, however, red tape can be a positive force. It can protect bureaucrats from arbitrary requests, particularly in semidemocratic countries. “Veto points” allow bureaucrats to resist external pressure.

In the context of an authoritarian regime, collaborators with the dictator always attempt to bypass preset procedures. This is the reason why [Van Loon et al. \(2016\)](#) introduce a two-dimensional construct that includes a compliance burden and lack of functionality in order to measure the effects of red tape. Their findings show that red tape that has a high functionality is likely to produce good results even in developed countries.

The Korean government's economic development plan was not dictated by the president. Each Economic Planning Board project featured a set of procedures that legally had to be followed. Development plans were carried out in three stages: a preparation stage, a sector-planning stage, and a consolidation and finalization stage. During the first five-year plan (1962–1966), the supreme council for national reconstruction, the Economic Planning Board (Overall Planning Bureau), and working-level committees all participated. During the second five-year plan (1967–1971), a series of cabinet council, joint committee, advisory committee, and sector-planning meetings were held. During the third five-year plan (1972–1976), the cabinet council, the deliberation council, the coordination committee, and the sector-planning groups contributed to the economic development planning procedure. For the fourth plan (1977–1981), the cabinet council, deliberation council, and working-level committee meetings were held. These meetings were open to the public to allow a national consensus to emerge. These kinds of procedures prevented influential politicians from capriciously intervening in the process.

Rule of Law

Weberian bureaucracy emphasizes the importance of rules and regulations for simplifying complex procedures and therefore strictly prohibits any action that breaks the law. Adherence to rules allows decisions made at high levels to be executed consistently by all lower levels. [O'Donnell \(2004\)](#) argues that “high-quality democracy requires a truly democratic rule of law that ensures political rights, civil liberties, and mechanisms of accountability which in turn affirm the political equality of all citizens and constrain potential abuses of state power” (p. 32). The rule of law “consists of the enforcement of laws that have been publicly promulgated and passed in a pre-established manner; are prospective, general, stable, clear and hierarchically ordered; and are applied to particular cases by courts independent from the political rulers and are open to all, whose decisions respond to procedural requirements, and that establish guilt through the ordinary trial process” ([Maravall, 2003](#), p. 261).

The essential value of rule of law is its universal applicability. Not only the powerless but also people who are powerful are obligated to follow the rules. In other words, laws are uncomfortable for dictators. More powerful individuals in developing countries are more likely to violate existing rules. For example, the rich and powerful families can avoid paying the income tax they owe, while the middle class is compelled to follow the rules and pay what they owe.

The bureaucrats who are in charge of implementing the law are the gatekeepers who can ensure the rule of law is followed. It is an uphill battle in most nondemocratic countries, but it is possible if bureaucrats are patient and start by applying the principle to the ordinary citizen. Gradually, once following the law becomes more accepted, there will be critical disjuncture between a powerful person and politicians.

CONDITIONS OF BUREAUCRATIC DEMOCRATIZATION

Not all bureaucracies are functional in the democratization of a country. A government bureaucracy can operate in favor of democratization or against it depending on conditions. The first condition for success is a strong bureaucracy. An unorganized bureaucracy in a country run by a dictator cannot democratize the country. The bureaucracy should be relatively big and intelligent. The second condition is the accumulation of its own power. In order to use bureaucracy as a tool for democratization, bureaucrats need to protect themselves from the arbitrary use of political authority and have autonomy (Im, 2007). Bureaucrats' neutral competence, which is their ability to do the work of government expertly (Kaufman, 1956), also can help democratization. Heclo (1975) argues that bureaucrats can pursue neutral competence by bearing in mind the long-term, broader interests of the country and the government.

The bureaucracy should institutionalize red tape. A bureaucracy that operates too simply leaves itself vulnerable to the external pressure. Clear decision-making lines can be another requirement. Also, democratization can be aided when there is relative consensus about the goals government is pursuing and about the legitimacy of the agencies developed to pursue those goals and the laws authorizing agency actions. If tasks are easy to define and lines of authority are clear, bureaucrats can be neutral (Aberbach & Rockman, 1994) (Fig. 1).

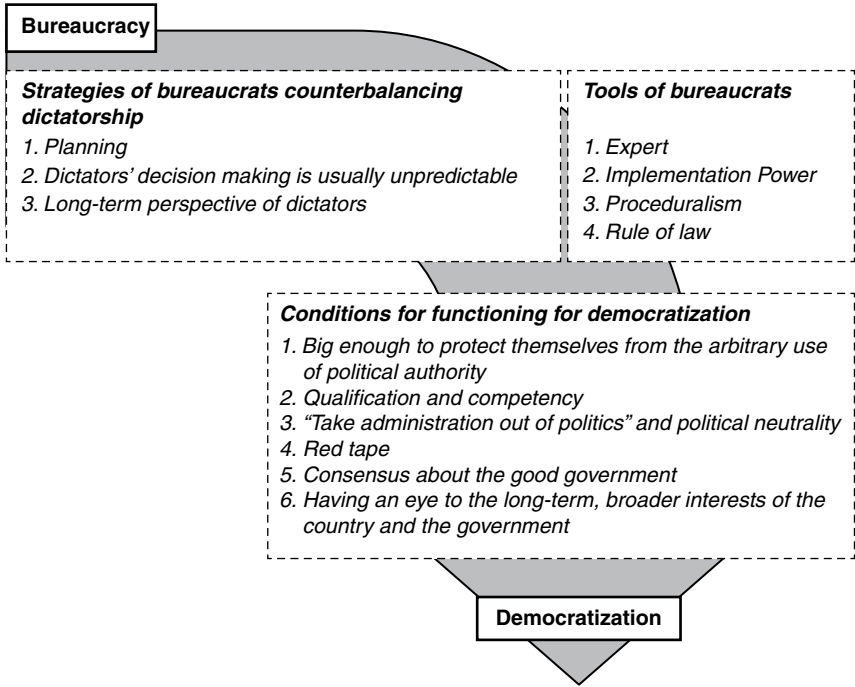


Fig. 1. The necessary conditions for bureaucracy to facilitate the democratization process

CONCLUSION

The main goal of this study is to attract attention to the role of bureaucracy in the process of democratization in developing countries. The suggestion that bureaucracy can contribute to democratization goes against the conventional theory of it, which claims that the chaos that tends to reign in developing countries is the result of politics and that politics in the form of elections can fix the problem, as governance by elected officials, with help from NGOs, will increase transparency and due process.

This idealistic line of reasoning also reflects the Marxist view in a sense, which proposes that after the proletarian revolution, a socialist society can be realized by democratic centralism, a form of government that can be found in China (and that was the form of government adopted by the former Soviet Union as well). However, the conventional view as well as Marxist view cannot explain what is happening in most developing countries. Elections are not

the solution to the problem but the cause of the problem itself. The “winner takes all” principle results in the exclusion of various social groups, whose position becomes desperate, intensifying an already undemocratic situation.

This is the reason why this study suggests focusing on bureaucracy. Bureaucracy need not just be a passive and neutral tool of the executive branch but can actively aid in the democratization of a country under certain conditions. Bureaucracy is a double-edged sword to the extent that it can be unpleasant for citizens to deal with, on the one hand, but can also protect them from arbitrary power, on the other.

Since democracy is the process of giving power back to people, the process varies according to the conditions of each country. Bureaucracy on the Weberian understanding of it has the potential to be a force for democracy. Bureaucracy can train people, collect knowledge, predict decisions, share goals, and establish stable institutions staffed by knowledgeable experts that can counterbalance dictators or interest groups. Bureaucratic autonomy allows planning and the efficient implementation of policy in light of a country’s unique context. Therefore, bureaucracy can be a positive driver, contributing to political democratization especially in developing countries.

NOTES

1. ‘Economy first, and politics second’ is the typical development strategy that many developing countries adopt. This implies that government prioritizes economic development over any other issues.

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