Organization Theory and Bureaucratic Structure

Categories of Explanations

When we examine the extensive literature on complex organizations in the fields of economics, sociology, political science, and history, there appears to be no adequate explanation of why different modes of bureaucratic rationalization occur. The explanations that do exist appear to be of three basic types: system needs/coordination, bounded rationality/uncertainty, and natural selection/ecological.

System Needs or Coordination Explanations

In this type of explanation, rational bureaucratization and its structural form (viewed primarily in terms of Weber's description of legal-rational bureaucracy) is seen as emerging as a response to problems of coordination. Failures in coordination are seen as arising from a variety of sources: (1) size—large numbers of actors and/or transactions without any systematic rules for sharing information (Dahl and Lindblom 1963; Blau 1970; Blau and Schoenherr 1971; Hickson et al. 1969; Goldman 1973; Child 1973a; Hage 1980; Weber 1947:334–38); (2) social and economic complexity—specialization and differentiation of roles and organizations (Parsons 1964:507–8; Cutchin 1965:548; Tilly 1975:72–73); (3) interdependence—complexity of systemic relations (Thompson 1967; Boulding 1964); (4) technology and technological innovation—economies of size and scale (Woodward 1965; Lorsch 1965; Aldrich 1972; Lawrence and Lorsch 1967a; Perrow 1968, 1986; Hickson et al. 1979; Mohr 1971; Leatt and Schneck 1982; Chandler 1977; Chandler and Daems 1979; Finer 1975; Hage 1980; Jones 1982); (5) internalization of cost externalities—public provision of social welfare, education, health care, etc. and internalization of various functions with high transaction costs (Barker 1944; Baumol 1967; Buchanan and Tullock 1962; Coase 1960; Williamson 1975, 1985); and (6) war or external threat as the source of state organizational structure (Hintze 1968; Skocpol 1979; Dorn 1963; Tilly 1975, 1990; Schmitt 1984 [1963]; Brewer 1989).

Whatever variable is emphasized, the development of the large-scale bureaucratic organization along legal-rational lines is seen as a response by decision-makers to the need of the organization or of society to avoid the costly consequences of uncoordinated activity. In this view, state bureaucratization
and, indeed, sometimes the modern state itself, is seen as emerging from demands by elites and/or various social and economic interest groups for coordination of critical elements of the social-economic system or organizational system. The demands are seen as emerging "naturally" in increasingly complex systems where maximization of utility is viewed as the basic goal of individuals and groups. Rational organizations are thus sometimes seen as responses to system needs for stability and survival. In this regard, individual actors are seen as "black boxes" for system needs. The desire to coordinate arises out of the individual's conflation of his or her interest with that of the system or organization.

Bureaucratization is seen here as a systemic response (Astley and Van de Ven 1983). It is functionally efficient in doing what the market does inefficiently in the case of private organizations—it provides greater information, more efficient allocation of resources, and reduces opportunism. Or, as in the case of the state, bureaucratization of administration does what voluntary association or social organization cannot or will not do: enforce the distribution of social costs and/or services over a wider number of actors. Systemic conflict and instability in the society are avoided by the expansion of social and/or private values through the allocational efficiency provided by the bureaucratic structure. In this approach, bureaucracy's structural characteristics are seen as possessing a kind of allocative and relatively frictionless efficiency, especially in the areas of decision making, organizational control, information and communication (Arrow 1974; Williamson 1975, 1981; Perrow 1986:46–48). As one sociologist put it, "Nevertheless, the vast majority of large organizations are fairly bureaucratic, and, for all but a few, the rational-legal form of bureaucracy is the most efficient form of administration known" (Perrow 1986 [1972]:5). Efficiency is seen as a function only of organizations possessing the Weberian rational-legal characteristics. These characteristics are viewed as emerging from a logic of systemic structural demands.

**Bounded Rationality–Uncertainty Explanations**

This approach combines the bounded rationality of the decision-maker with environmental uncertainty (although sometimes the latter is confusingly seen as a function of the former) as the starting point for general explanations of the emergence and variation of bureaucratic organization. Simply put, bureaucratic organization is seen as the means for overcoming both of these conditions. There are two distinct strands in this literature. One of these, primarily sociological in character, emphasizes the problems of structuring and allocating power as the focus of decision-makers' concerns. The other, dominated largely by economists but including sociologists and political scientists as well, stresses the problem of profit or efficiency maximization as the goal of decision-makers. Both strands tend to view bureaucratization as a function of conscious choice about pursuing maximizing strategies.

The first of these sees challenges to decision-makers' power and their legitimacy as being most likely to occur under conditions of continued environmental uncertainty. It is not always clear what is meant by uncertainty here, but it usually seems to mean the inability to predict the kind of decisions that will arise and/or the degree of acceptance of decisions. This condition most often arises at those times when there has been a change in leadership in organizations that do not have highly specified rules governing leadership succession or when such rules have been abrogated (Gouldner 1954; Grusky 1964). Under these conditions, the bounded rationality of individuals leads them to seek to maintain their power and status by resorting to the utilization of rules of decision making that are presented as being objective—that is, as stemming from organizational and not personal necessity. These rules require hierarchy of authority, obedience, well-defined roles, and what constitutes appropriate knowledge for decision making (Gouldner 1954; Selznick 1957:105; Grusky 1961, 1964; Zald 1970; Crozier 1964; Palumbo 1975:357–58; Dreyfuss 1938; Warner and Low 1947:78–80, 174; Selznick 1949:252; Clegg and Dunkerley 1980; Pfeffer 1981; Pfeffer and Salancik 1978).

Here the concept of expertise is seen almost as an ideology in which decision-makers claim obedience because of their possession of systematic knowledge about the organization and/or the means for achieving its goals (Wolin 1960:352–434; Urban 1982; Braverman 1974; Clawson 1980; Meyer and Rowan 1978; Habermas 1975; Dunn and Pozizouni 1976; Denhardt 1981; Marglin 1974; Goldman and Van Houten 1977). Expertise thus becomes the basis of legitimate authority, and rules of bureaucratic organization become legitimate because they appear to be based on scientific observation and analysis of large populations of organizations or analogous systems. Bureaucratization, in this view, is seen as the product of elites or managers seeking to maintain or hold power in the face of uncertainty by transforming the structure of authority and legitimacy into both an object of systematic analysis and an "objectively" rational organization.

In sum, the warrant for authority in such organizations is no longer manifestly the quest for or possession of individual power, status, and material rewards. It stems, rather, from the emergence of a science of organizations or
social behavior that “reveals” the necessity for rules, hierarchy, and other characteristics of rational-legal organization. In this explanation, bureaucratization is constrained by the desire of decision-makers to maximize the security of their position. They seek to achieve this by emphasizing the necessity for hierarchical discretion and obedience to organizational rules as the most efficient means for arriving at decisions and achieving goals (Crozier 1964; Reder 1947; Barnard 1938; Papandreou 1952; Gordon 1961; Morgen and Downs 1965; Gouldner 1954; Williamson 1964; Marris 1964; Marris and Mueller 1980).

The second strand in the bounded rationality/uncertainty literature views rational bureaucratization primarily as the solution imposed by the nature of environmental uncertainty, given the bounded rationality of decision-makers and the ubiquitous character of opportunism. Under these conditions, it is assumed that organizational utility maximization (sometimes fused with the idea of organizational survival when there is the assumption of large numbers and low entry costs) is the aim of decision-makers. On the economics side of this literature, rational bureaucratic structure—described in terms of the organizational structure and behavior of the firm—is seen as the direct consequence of internalizing external functions. When faced with market uncertainty or market failure, decision-makers seek to overcome the high transaction costs generated by imperfect information, the inability to write contracts covering all contingencies, and the tendency of some individuals to use guile in pursuing self-interest. The most efficient way of overcoming the costs generated by these problems, it is argued, is by internalizing a number of functions previously performed outside of the organization. Internalization provides greater information, control over opportunism, greater predictability, and the capacity to stretch decisions out over time, thereby avoiding the worst aspects of failed contracts (Williamson 1975:1–40; 1981, 1983, 1984, 1985:15–130; Coase 1937, 1972; Alchian and Demsetz 1972:779–81; H. Simon 1957, 1973:183–95; Carlton 1979; Ouchi 1980; Francis 1983; Cheung 1983; Teece 1982). The following bureaucratic characteristics result from this internalization process: specialization and differentiation, managerial control in the form of rules regarding allocation of resources and utilization of resources for individual goals, and hierarchy as an efficient means of allocating decision making. Bureaucratization is seen as the result of adjustment to change in which the individual interests of the decision-maker about security are synonymous with the survival of the organization. As a distinguished economist has put it:

[In the economics of adjustment to change the issues of security, survival and maximum profit are merged. . . If a change in conditions calls for a certain re-

action in the name of maximum profits, the very same reaction is called for also in the name of security or survival. (Machlup 1967:13)]

More recently, some of the economics literature has focused on the opportunism aspect as one, or the sole, major constraint on the emergence of firm or organization structure. This literature suggests that hierarchy and division of labor are the means by which the free-rider or shirking problem in any group contractual arrangement is overcome (Jensen 1983; Alchian and Demsetz 1972; Fama 1980; Jensen and Meckling 1976; Williamson 1981:1,545). The political science version of this approach stresses the agency problem (all organizational arrangements are contractual between a principal and his or her agent) as the source of developing governmental structure (Moe 1984; Miller and Moe 1983; Hammond and Miller 1985). A range of functions, such as hierarchy, hierarchical responsibility, financial and decisional rules of accountability, are developed and internalized to overcome the negative externalities of unenforced and/or unmonitored contracts. Organizational structure is the outcome, then, of the problems inherent in those forms of economic or social contract where there are strong incentives to shirk or withhold information.

The sociological side of the bounded rationality/uncertainty literature goes under two names: “open system” (Katz and Kahn 1966; Baker 1973; Cyert and March 1963; Emery and Trist 1965; Terreberry 1968; Lawrence and Lorsch 1967a, 1967b; Rice 1963; Burns and Stalker 1961; Weick 1969; Dill 1958; Duncan 1972; Thompson 1967; Hickson et al. 1971) and “dependence exchange” (Jacobs 1974; Hasenfeld 1972; Aldrich and Pfeffer 1976; Aldrich 1979). Here, as in the bounded rationality discourse generally, the environment is seen as contingent but it is not well specified. Sometimes contingency is defined as lack of information, sometimes as unpredictability arising from organizational or system complexity, sometimes as uncertainty about resources, and sometimes as the unpredictability about the consequences of any set of decisions (Simon 1972; Luce and Raiffa 1957; Terreberry 1968). Organizational structure is viewed as variable and the result of constant adaptation to uncertainty by decision-makers who make relatively unconstrained strategic choices. A major concern in this part of the literature is with the structural variations that occur within organizational populations. In this aspect, the open systems/dependence exchange literature is closely related to the evolutionary and ecological concepts of organizational formation. Like the ecological view, the open systems outlook concludes that structural outcomes are survival-functional for specific environments. Where attention is paid to general bureaucratic characteristics, such as hierarchy, specialization and differentiation, and hierarchi-
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cal authority (Katz and Kahn 1966; Pugh et al. 1968; Child 1972a, 1972b; Lawrence and Lorsch 1967a, 1967b; Hage 1980), variations in these aspects of bureaucratization are seen as a consequence of environmental contingency (Leibenstein 1966, 1969, 1976, 1987). On the whole, however, the implication of this literature is that while rational-legal characteristics may be dysfunctional in some ways, they are, for the most part, functionally efficient in overcoming internal "transaction costs" stemming from conflict, opportunism, or inability to predict behavior. At the same time, they are efficient in reducing environmental uncertainty by internalizing functions and providing the capacity to restructure relationships to the market to capture externalities. In short, like the economics view, this one takes the position that bureaucratic structure is functionally determined and therefore efficient in a context of uncertainty and bounded rationality. Rational-legal characteristics are the response to both internal and external (inter- and intra-organizational) uncertainty about behavior and outcomes. In this sense, much of the literature constituting this view seems to agree with Machlup's statement about the identity of reactions called for by changes in conditions.

Natural Selection-Evolution-Ecological Explanations

This view includes several strands of literature: one that has implicit evolutionary explanations, a second that is explicit in its use of a natural selection model, and a third that seeks to construct an ecosystem as the engine of evolutionary change.

The first view suggests that bureaucratization grows out of historical conditions of cultural and structural conduciveness. Some environments have evolved to a point where they possess values and social structural characteristics which make it possible for rational-legal bureaucracy to emerge (Weber 1958; Bellah 1957; Eisenstadt 1969; Bendix 1964; Riggs 1964; Stinchcombe 1965; Huntington 1968; Huntington and Dominguez 1975; Jaguaribe 1973; Skocpol 1979). "[C]ertain kinds of organizations . . . could not be invented before the social structure was appropriate to them" (Stinchcombe 1965:160).

The conditions said to reflect conduciveness for rational bureaucratic organization are the existence of free-floating resources, manpower, and a value system that is not completely tied to ascriptive or particularistic groups (Eisenstadt 1969; Stinchcombe 1965). Elites, rulers, or entrepreneurs are in the position to take advantage of these resources by virtue of their smaller numbers, their access to information and symbols, and their wealth. Bureaucratic characteristics are functional in these environments but not in others. Inherent in this argument is a notion of selection that provides for survival functional outcomes. Thus, environments that provide high levels of uncer-

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tainty produce variant solutions, some of which are successful in constraining the centrifugal forces inherent in these conditions. Uncertainty is indicated by unallocated resources, undifferentiated or nonallocated resources, undifferentiated or nonallocated human resources, and values that allow unpredictable choices. Success in gaining access to these resources produces widespread imitation and thus institutionalization.

The second strand in this literature, that of explicit natural selection, is difficult to separate clearly from the ecological view; thus, they will be treated together here. The basic premise is that bureaucratic organization is seen as the consequence of a process of natural selection occurring within a population or ecosystem of organizations (Granovetter 1979; Hannan and Freeman 1977, 1984, 1986; Freeman 1982; Aldrich and Mueller 1982; Aldrich 1971; Campbell 1969; McKelvey 1982; McKelvey and Aldrich 1983; Kaufman 1991; Blute 1979; Carroll 1984; Nelson and Winter 1982; Langton 1984; Bidwell and Kasarda 1984, 1985; Astley 1985). The Marxian version of environmental dominance over selection is well-stated (Heydebrand 1977; Goldman 1973; Clegg and Dunkerley 1980). Bureaucratization occurs as the result of the environment differentially selecting either of the organizational variations for survival on the basis of the functional fit between organizational structure and environment. "Those organizations that have appropriate social structure, for whatever reasons, are selected over those that do not" (Aldrich and Pfeffer 1976:81). With the exception of the recent work by Bidwell and Kasarda (1985), the literature does not provide much in the way of specifying the criteria for selection or retention of variants. Implicit in much of this work, however, is the view that retention of functional random variations occurs through their contribution to organizational stability or survival under conditions of competition with large numbers (Weick 1969; Aldrich and Pfeffer 1976; Astley and Van de Ven 1983; Langton 1984; Perrow 1986 [1972]:208–18; Nelson and Winter 1982; Hannan and Freeman 1989). This approach is similar to the coordination explanation in that both stress the determination of organizational characteristics primarily by external market or environmental constraints. They differ, however, in that the natural selection explanation does not specify maximization of profits as the primary criterion for selecting out organizational form. Rather, the emphasis on appropriateness of fit between environmental demands and organizational structure allows the inference that criteria for selection and retention may vary over time, place, and goals. An approach intermediate between macrostructural and individual determinants of organizational structure is represented by Hrebiniak and Joyce (1985), who argue, with considerable cogency, that adaptation is a function of the interdependent relations between individual choice, strategic choice, and external constraints.
One example of how this view has spurred new thoughts on environmental variables is the isomorphic-legitimization approach to structural change in organizational populations. This view argues that once structural changes are adopted by significant organizations, they become legitimized. Once changes are adopted by some organizations, other organizations also adopt the changes in order to acquire the benefits of organizational legitimacy—even though such changes may bring no other organizational benefits (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Rowan 1982; Tolbert and Zucker 1983; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Scott 1983).

Finally, in recent years, the concern with environmental constraints and the ambiguity of the concept has led to attempts to specify variables that make up the environment. This specification has emerged out of the population-community concepts of ecology (Hawley 1950, 1968; Duncan and Hauser 1959; O. D. Duncan 1964). One strand of this relatively new literature tries to follow the dynamic process (Bidwell and Kasarda 1985). Another strand stresses the texture, density, and interdependence of the environmental population and community (Evan 1960; Weick 1979; Laumann, Verbrugge, and Pappi 1974; Laumann and Pappi 1976; Aldrich and Whetten 1981). Network analysis as utilized by organizational theorists is an attempt to put some empirical bite into propositions about natural selection. By tracing networks and organizational changes over time, the hope is that relationships between environmental changes and organizational structure can be specified. Presently, the literature in this area stresses the degree to which the environment is constructed by organizations as they seek rules of cooperation for organizational populations (Emery and Trist 1973; Cook 1977; Van de Ven, Delbecq, and Koenig 1968) or seek rules which allow certain organizational types and goals to dominate (Benson 1975; Clegg 1981; Jackson 1983; Perrow 1984).

Problems Arising from the Literature

At first glance the literature seems both overdetermined and overdetermined. The state of the literature seems analogous to the situation of the man who has lent his lawn mower to his next-door neighbor. On seeking its return after several weeks, his neighbor explains his failure to return it by saying, "In the first place it wasn't working; in the second place, I haven't finished using it; in the third place, you didn't lend it to me." Like the lender, we seem to be confronted with explanations, each one of which would be, on the face of it, sufficient to explain the behavior but when taken together seem at times to be mutually exclusive or contradictory. All of them can't be right, thus the possibility arises that none of them are.

Part of this apparent overdetermination is illusory. Like the neighbor's response, these explanations are aimed at different possible questions. Coordination explanations seem to be directed primarily at explaining and predicting changes in observed levels of coordination. That is to say, it seems to be the attempt to work out systematically the way in which coordination levels will vary with particular changes in conditions such as system size, technology, war, interest-group formation, system complexity, etc. In this sense, the explanation is not aimed at explaining or predicting the behavior of any particular real set of organizations but only the reactions of numerous actors to the existence of changes in the environment affecting coordination. The bureaucratic organization is the theoretical link or "black box" that helps explain how one gets from cause to effect. Indeed, this appears to be the deductive mode utilized by Weber in constructing his ideal type of legal-rational bureaucracy—it is a mental device that explains the capacity of individuals and groups in Western society to grasp positive externalities, to maximize profits or utility. Just as in the marginalist or equilibrium theory of the firm (Machlup 1967; Loasby 1968, 1971; Horowitz 1970:154–248; Williamson 1981:539), a set of organizational characteristics is posited that is assumed to be functional to profit or utility maximization on the part of decision-makers.

Although the assumption about maximization is logically necessary, it must be combined with the concept of effective competition in order to produce a conclusion about the identical nature of individual and organizational goals. The efficiency of bureaucratic organization does not rest solely on its allocative capacities but also on both organizational competition and individual competition to induce persistent attempts to grasp externalities (Leibenstein 1966, 1973, 1975; Jackson 1983:178–84). Characteristics such as hierarchy, hierarchy of authority, specialization, differentiation, decision-making rules based on the accumulation of information, expertise, careerism, and secularism are all deduced as efficient responses to ceteris paribus conditions of effective competition and maximization of utility. In short, bureaucratic organization or the firm, in the theory of the firm, is a heuristic device adopted as the simplest and most efficient way to explain the relationship between variations in levels of coordination and variations or changes in conditions. By inference, bureaucratic organization in this kind of explanation is not meant to be a concept by which to examine any real organization either in processual or normative terms. This explanation uses price theory as a model of explanation.

Precisely because of the heuristic character assigned to the organization, this explanation is poorly equipped to examine the process of bureaucratisation and thus to provide an understanding of why it takes on different
modes. The weakness of the explanation in this regard stems from assumptions utilized to create the link between cause and effect. There are two such assumptions: (1) decision-makers seek to maximize profit, and (2) there is effective competition. The two must be joined since either one by itself clearly is not sufficient to explain why changes in coordination should occur. The explanation thus assumes a uniform set of constraints over time. It is not at all clear that these constraints require any narrowly specific form of organization. They require only that decision-makers pursue profit-maximization as their goal. Presumably, they can use any means that existing rules allow and they will make the most of those means if there are large numbers competing. The point is, it is not necessary for this explanation to specify any particular form, so long as the aim is not to explain bureaucratic organization but rather the change in coordination levels. It is merely sufficient, in a logical sense, to say that the organization is rational or utility maximizing.

Due to its heuristic “black box” approach to organizations, this view suffers from the defects of its advantages. It appears to be an entirely appropriate approach, if the idea is to provide a set of variables governing the relationship between environment and levels of coordination in the manner of price theory. It faces severe problems, however, because it views rational bureaucratic organization as a category that emerges unmediated from a specific environment of the division of labor—that is, the greater the division of labor, the greater the number of actors; the greater the need for coordination, the greater the rationality (utility maximization) of the organization. Other concerns of social or collective choice do not enter into the equation.

When it comes to the question of explaining concrete examples, this explanation runs contrary to our knowledge and understanding of contemporary and recent history. Even a brief glance at the historical development of three major cases of state bureaucratic rationalization in the late nineteenth century, France, Japan, and Prussia-Germany, indicates that rationalization did not arise unmediated from problems of coordination. In the 1870s and 1880s, when state bureaucratic rationalization became institutionalized in these countries, problems of economic coordination (or resource allocation) arising from an expanding division of labor were considerably fewer and less intense than in the United States and Great Britain, where the process of industrialization was farther along (Mathias and Postan 1978; Ohkawa and Rosovsky 1973; Landes 1965, 1969; Chandler and Daems 1980). Indeed it was the rationalized state administration in Japan and Prussia-Germany that undertook to subsidize and encourage the economic transformation of society. This developmental pattern forcefully suggests that problems of governmental coordination may not arise simply out of the failure of the market or politics to coordinate. Rather, such problems may be the result of self-con-

scious decisions arrived at by rationalized bureaucratic organizations aiming to achieve politically determined goals. In this situation, coordination problems are not the cause of bureaucratization so much as the symptom of the bureaucratization process itself (Silberman 1982; O'Donnell 1973; Collier 1979).

The natural selection explanation raises problems in a somewhat different direction. It fails to specify in any but the broadest terms the criteria for selection and retention of bureaucratic structures. This view recognizes that different modes of bureaucratization occur, but it doesn’t tell us why there are systematic variations. Nor does it specify any process or mechanism to help us understand why some rulers, elites, or entrepreneurs are capable of seizing opportunities presented by the environment while others in similar situations are not. The implication seems to be that those who are successful operate not only on short-term maximization of utility as everyone might but also have specific opportunistic advantages—more information and resources. Bureaucratization is thus seen as arising out of the attempt to institutionalize or stabilize organizational success. Weber’s routinization of charisma is an example of this approach. The problem lies, however, in specifying the mechanism or process and the conditions which lead strategic choosers to the same or similar choices. The systematic character of similarities and variations in the history of bureaucratic evolution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries clearly suggests nonrandom constraints on the selection process.

One inference we might draw is that varying bureaucratic modes are selected as a result of variations in uncertainty about organizational authority, power, and stability (Aldrich and Pfeffer 1976). This suggests there are close similarities between this approach and the bounded rationality/uncertainty explanation. This latter approach has been largely confined to analysis within the framework of the theory of the firm (Coase 1937; Williamson 1975, 1985; Marris 1964); organizational behavior theory (Simon 1976; Cyert and March 1963; Zald 1970a; Thompson 1967; Hickson et al. 1971; Allison 1971); and complex organizations (Gouldner 1954). Only in some recent studies has uncertainty as a variable been utilized in attempting to explain systematic differences in public bureaucratic organization (Meyer and Brown 1977; Meyer 1975, 1979; Meyer, Stevenson, and Webster 1985).

Of course, bounded rationality and uncertainty about authority, power, and control is a recurrent theme in much of the historical literature on the emergence and development of the modern state. However, uncertainty is not viewed in a systematic way by historians. It is usually seen as a background constant against which is played out the virtuosity of historical actors. That is, historical explanations or descriptions often fail to define the
constraints within which individuals make choices in a systematic way. Thus, for example, where war is seen as the major dynamic driving state bureaucratization, no explanation is provided as to why rationalization of bureaucracy occurs the way it does. Tilly is instructive in this regard. His discussion of the emergence of “direct rule” as an aspect of rational administration following the French Revolution emphasizes the uncertainty of political leaders as the driving force rather than war itself (Tilly 1990:109). Brewer, in his analysis of English development, describes the eighteenth century as a period of bureaucratic rationalization. Even if we suspend disbelief on this issue, Brewer provides us with no explanation as to why rationalization took on the particular forms he describes (Brewer 1989:64–87). In both cases, which are in many ways typical of historically oriented analyses, the assumption appears to be that war and its demand on finances automatically produces rationalization of bureaucracy with no mediation. This is essentially a systemic functionalist account in which the agents are passive objects of systemic requirements. However, there is no inherent logic in the demands stemming from war that requires the production of a specific organizational structure except the argument that war creates problems of coordination. But this does not, for example, answer the question of why the English in the eighteenth century choose to create bureaus in the form of collegial boards (Brewer 1989:83). Coordination, while it might constrain organizational behavior in some directions, does not provide any logic for the production of the kind of structures described by Tilly or Brewer.

In more traditional Marxist analysis, however, there is the assumption of rationality that is almost completely constrained and, therefore, unable to explain the variation (Marx and Engels 1965:59; Lenin 1947). More recently, there have been attempts to explain the variation in organizational structure in terms of variations in capitalist structure and the path of capitalist accumulation (Johnson 1977; Carchedi 1977:127–34). This provides no clear explanation about how specific paths of capitalist development and capitalist organization produce the variation in organizational forms that exists in a systematic way across capitalist countries. Nor does it explain why some noncapitalist societies like the traditional Soviet regime underwent bureaucratical rationalization similar to those of noncapitalist societies.

In the nonhistorical literature, analysis is rather narrowly limited to contemporaneous private organizations within single societies. The results are generalizations largely deduced from static analysis within the framework of market or general environmental uncertainty. These shed little light on public bureaucracies precisely because the latter do not have to face conditions of market competition. Thus, if generalizations are to be deduced, an analog of economic market competition must be well specified (Niskanen 1971). Furthermore, the static character of the analysis assumes a ceteris paribus condition of uncertainty—uncertainty is seen as constant. But, as historians are fond of pointing out, uncertainty varies over time and place as well as over a cross section of societies, markets, or what have you (Meyer 1979:2, 5–10).

If variation occurs, then the problem is to explain how systematic variations in bureaucratic organization occur over time in a variety of settings. Historical case studies and descriptions of the development of the modern state system aim to do this but err in the opposite direction. The historical literature by and large, as I have argued, fails to provide us with any systematic generalizations of process because of its inevitable emphasis on the uniqueness of organizational development and change. There have been, as a consequence, almost no attempts to conceptualize which elements of uncertainty in the environment are critical to producing those outcomes we characterize as legal-rational bureaucratic.

In sum, the existing literature suffers from both overdetermination and underdetermination. On the one hand, it cites many conditions to which rational bureaucratization is a functional response, but it does not specify any particular set of conditions to which rational bureaucratization is always the response. On the other hand, these explanations fail to provide any adequate proposition for why systematic differences occur across historical, cultural, and national boundaries.

Common Themes

Some of the reasons for this continuing confusion and ambiguity with regard to state bureaucratization are partly revealed when we look at the major themes running through the literature. Despite the considerable differences between explanations, there appear to be three common themes. First, all of them stress some aspect of uncertainty—uncertainty about availability or proper allocation of resources, about legitimate authority, transaction costs, organizational environment, organizational stability or managerial power or status. Second, there seems to be common agreement that limited or bounded rationality—that is, limitations on the availability of information and the limited capacity to search for the best solution—of decision-makers is a major factor in rational bureaucratization. Bureaucratic organizations are seen as the response to the continuing problem of imperfections of individual decisions in situations where neither perfect information nor a perfect market exist. Third, all of the explanations appear to agree that internalization is the processual means by which bureaucratization occurs. It is either a process of internalizing positive externalities or of internalizing transaction
costs, or it is the internalization of information and resources generally. The internalization process is seen as the primary mechanism of response. “Adaptation” is the most commonly used word to describe this process. Whatever the wording, agreement is widespread that internalization accounts for the emergence of hierarchy, specialization and differentiation, career structures, and the utilization of formal rules. This process, depending on the point of view, produces different organizational shapes: unitary or multidivisional (Williamson 1975; Chandler 1962, 1977); loose-rigid (Lawrence and Lorsch 1967a, 1967b); centralized-decentralized (Pugh et al. 1968); tall-short [hierarchies] (Woodward 1958, 1965). Whatever the shape, they all appear to exhibit the structured role characteristics implied by Weber’s description (Mansfield 1973; Aldrich and Pfeffer 1976; Perrow 1986 [1972]).

The presence of these themes over a wide variety of explanations reveals the long-standing debate in organizational theory about what it is that constrains organizational emergence and change. The debate revolves around whether: (1) rational strategic choices of decision-makers seeking to maximize their and their organization’s interests; or, (2) environmental factors to which organizations respond in the systemic pursuit of survival and growth, are chiefly responsible for molding the shape of organizations (Astley and Van de Ven 1983). In terms of the paired notions of bounded rationality/uncertainty, the debate is focused on the question of what constrains decisions—the role and nature of the decision-maker or the environment. From the point of view of internalization, the debate centers on what shapes process—the maximization of the decision-maker’s utility or environmental demands which enforce systemic maximization of utility. Thus, while there seems to be agreement on the central factors in the emergence of organizational rationality, wide differences remain in explanation, depending upon which side of the debate one stands.

The problem is, however, that a commitment to either side makes it impossible to explain the existence of the two major modes of state bureaucratization. To depend only on rational choice arguments without specifying different environmental states is to ignore differences in the institutionalization of rational bureaucratic modes and to seek explanations only at the most general level. Environmental states provide a powerful variable in the search for explanations as to variations in modes of bureaucratization. At the other extreme, to depend solely on macro constraints invites the criticism that all one has said is that different environments produce different modes of institutionalization. This does not tell us what factors in the environment vary systematically so as to produce different modes. Such an approach must rely on some notion of organizational or emergent rationality distinct from those who make and organize its decisions. This would have strong appeal, had we some clearer understanding of how such emergent properties worked, so as to allow us to distinguish between more or less structured rationality. In the last analysis, macro explanations centering on environmental forces lead only to rather gross distinctions between more or less complex or uncertain environments and thus help explain, as Weber did, the differences between patrimonial and rational bureaucratic administrations. Reliance on either one or the other explanatory approach, therefore, leaves us in the dark about the whole process of rational bureaucratization in the state and why it should take on the general and specific forms we observe.
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Political Uncertainty, Leadership Succession, and the Modes of Administration

Although the literature presents some problems, it does, at the same time, provide us with tools to explain why state bureaucratization has had at least two modes of rationalization. Bounded rationality and uncertainty are central elements in the literature. This agreement suggests that they are really paired aspects (Williamson 1975:23, 39) of rational choice and environment; that is to say, boundedness of rationality does not arise as a problem unless there are persistent uncertainties in the environment which call attention to the limits of existing decision-making rules. Here we must be careful to understand that uncertainty does not refer to either psychological or cognitive states of the actors. Rather, it refers to the presence or absence of rules governing role behavior which have the capacity to predict, to a greater or lesser extent, the outcome of choices made by the actors. Uncertainty in this sense does not reside in the general incapacity to know anything for certain but rather in the observable absence of predictability about what outcomes follow from actions or choices. This is akin to the concept of risk economists sometimes use—a state in which complete information is not available, but sufficient information is present to assign probabilities and then select the best outcome (Luce and Raiffa 1957; Coase 1937).

In this context, rational bureaucratization may be seen to occur as the consequence of persistent uncertainty or risk in the environment, thus revealing the unsuitability of old rules for making decisions and provoking attempts to provide new rules which produce greater predictability. Or, to put it in a different way, rational bureaucratization emerges as the result of rational choices made within a context of persistent decision-making problems. The solutions to these problems are constrained by the existence of other structures or role aggregates having rules governing choices and possible outcomes—in short, the environment. Structural change in organizations is shaped by the interaction between individual decision making and environmental constraints in the form of a relatively homogeneous population of rules governing decisions or choices. From this perspective, we might argue that the two different forms of state bureaucratization represent different strategies of choice for dealing with the same specific recurring problem within different environments.

Approaching the Problem

The emphasis in this approach on both strategic choices and the environment as embodied in “ruleful” systems of decision making requires us to engage in a deductive exercise aimed at doing two things. First, we want to arrive at some idea or propositions as to what might have been the recurring problem of state administration and organization in the nineteenth century. Second, having arrived at some such notions, we need to provide an outline of how such solutions could have been reached by individuals making strategic choices within varying kinds of decision-making environments. In so doing, it should be clear that the descriptions of the patterns of strategic choices, characterizing what I have called “professionally” and “organizationally” oriented bureaucracies, are not of any actual historical events. Rather, the descriptions that follow are attempts to provide a deductive account of what choices would be available under certain circumstances and which would be viewed as the most reasonable strategically for individuals making choices.

This, of course, raises the problems of who makes the significant choices and on what basis. In answer to the first question—the agents are no mystery. They are those in a position to make choices about allocating scarce resources. Our interest is not, however, in those who are in a position to make any choice or set of choices. We are interested in those who make choices in similar ways, especially with regard to the development of institutions and roles centering on the structure of decision making. Thus this analysis is focused on the upper-level civil servant.

The concern here is with the way in which decision-makers came to create structures for the perpetuation of decision-making roles. This suggests to us that the standard for reasonableness about choices must at least coincide with the desire to sustain or enhance the status, power, and material well-being of those making choices. To do otherwise would subvert the legitimacy of choices made. After all, if you don’t think well enough of your own capacities and attributes to want to sustain them in the process of decision making, then who is likely to think well of your decisions? Therefore, in this account of what might have occurred, we take the position that significant social choices are made on a day-to-day basis within the framework of reasonable self-interest. That is to say, individuals who claim positions of leadership and decision making and who seek to make decisions that have allocative consequences will try to dedicate considerable resources to maintaining themselves in such offices. Furthermore, we also assume that individuals will not make eccentric choices. Individuals similarly placed are likely to make similar choices when faced with
similar circumstances. This is to say that the range of choices is always limited to some degree by the institutional structure and its norms. But where these constraints are similar, we should expect similarly placed individuals to make similar choices. Here, what we want to do is see just how reasonable a set of propositions and descriptions can be derived from the assumption of individual agency acting in reasonable self-interest within specific kinds of institutional constraints or environments.

We also need, then, to specify the environments—the structure of, or rather, the rulefulness of decision making. In this account, we want to specify at least two kinds of environments which would provide an independent variable to account for the two types of organizational resolution to the problem faced by decision-makers. Following from this abstraction or typification of historical conditions surrounding strategic decision-makers, we want to find and select historically concrete environments that fit the two categories. We should expect to find the historical examples of these two different conditions of decision making are correlated with the appropriate type of bureaucratic orientation. Finally, having elicited this correlation, we should be able to examine each of the historical cases and show how the process of strategic choice in each type of environment worked to produce similar outcomes in each environment.

To do the above analysis, I have chosen four cases of institutionalization of state bureaucracies: the United States, Great Britain, France, and Japan. This selection was motivated by a number of considerations. First, these are major instances of state administrative rationalization. All four states played major roles in international relations in the nineteenth and/or twentieth centuries. Second, this group covers the spectrum of administrative types. France has often been seen as one of the “classic” continental bureaucratic administrative systems (Heady 1979; Barker 1944; F. Morstein Marx 1957). The United States and Great Britain have usually been considered as the classic cases of “representative” or politically dominated rational bureaucracies (Ripley and Franklin 1976; Kingsley 1944; Krislov and Rosenbloom 1981). Japan was the first non-Western nation to institutionalize a rational state bureaucracy—one similar to the classic continental European mode, and it was the first case of a non-European so-called developing society producing a highly rationalized state administration (Silberman 1970, 1967; Spaulding 1967). These four cases are “classic” in the sense that the basic forms of bureaucratic role and structure they now bear were institutionalized by the end of the nineteenth or in the early twentieth century and have served as models for latecomers. They are also classic in the sense that this institutionalization is relatively well-documented and widely recognized. They are the best-known and most often-cited examples of the emergence of the basic patterns of rational state bureaucratization, as well as being examples of the two modes of bureaucratization I suggested earlier.

There is a third important reason for the selection of these cases. While they seem to be representative of the patterns of institutionalization described in the literature, these cases are representative of processual development as well. That is, while these cases represent several categories, they also represent varying paths to similar modes of organizational structure. France and Japan seem to have quite different histories of bureaucratic rationalization. France did not reach the classic Weberian mode until the late nineteenth century after almost a hundred years of resolving the problems of centralization and the relationship of political parties to public institutions of decision making. Japan achieved its classic bureaucratic condition with great rapidity, after only thirty-odd years in which centralization and the differentiation of social, political, and economic structures occurred. The United States came to its particular form of bureaucratic rationalization after a process of political reform centering on intense political contestation in the period between approximately 1870 and 1900. Finally, Great Britain arrived at the professionalism of its civil service at exactly the same time, following some forty years of franchise and parliamentary reform centering on the question of parliamentary control and the nature of political leadership.

Different economic environments also grace each of these cases of bureaucratic change. Bureaucratization occurred in France in the early stages of industrialization. In Japan, bureaucratic rationalization predated industrialization. Additionally, the argument has often been made that bureaucratization was an essential step in the success of Japan’s rapid industrialization. In the United States and Great Britain, bureaucratic rationalization came at the height of industrialization. This suggests that the industrialization stage of economic development was neither a necessary nor a sufficient cause for bureaucratization, unless one wishes to argue that there is an inverse relationship between bureaucratization and industrialization. This line of reasoning implies that for those countries which had early industrialization, state bureaucratic rationalization came as a result of bitter lessons about complexity and coordination. On the other hand, for late industrializers, bureaucratization came as a result of observing the experiences of the early industrializers.

There are two basic reasons for thinking the relationship to be a false one. For the inverse relationship between organizational orientation and late industrialization to provide a clue to explaining the variation, we have to assume that rationalization of the bureaucratic role occurred because either there was a powerful systemic push and/or political leaders in these countries were prescient. In the latter case, we would have to assume that political leaders knew, through their observation of European historical experience,
that a particular structure of the bureaucratic role—the organizationally oriented role structure—was the best means for catching up with Great Britain or the United States.

The former possibility, as we have noted, does not seem possible. While increased complexity or industrialization might be viewed as a systemic force, it is difficult to know how less complexity provides systemic demand for a certain kind of rationalization. That is to say, what kind of systemic demand could one envision, outside of increased complexity, that would require rationalization as a response? Nor does it seem possible that political leaders were able to know that the organizationally oriented pattern of bureaucratic role structure was the appropriate mechanism to bring about rapid industrialization. This was clearly not the case. The two most prominent examples of industrial development, Great Britain and the United States, were anything but organizationally oriented. Furthermore, there appears to be little evidence, if any, to indicate that Japanese and French political leaders thought seriously of these two countries as possible models. In the French case, the commitment to the organizationally oriented mode was made at the beginning of the nineteenth century when neither the British or American solution had yet emerged. Nor were there any clearly successful models of organizational orientation. In fact, there were no models for this approach, with the possible exception of Prussia/Germany, and this one came late for the French and for the Japanese was an ambiguous example. Nor was there any theory of appropriate bureaucratic role structure. Such theories would not be coherently presented until the next century.

It is difficult to conceive of how bureaucratization and industrialization are related, unless one is willing to concede that political and economic elites are prescient about the administrative forms necessary to carry out industrialization within their societies and have the capacity to enforce those functional changes. While this is not an impossible scenario for the twentieth century, it does seem an improbable one for the nineteenth. Latecomers, it is true, have more than one mode of bureaucratic rationalization to choose from. Thus, the Japanese faced the quandary of choosing between the relatively successful form of bureaucratic rationalization in Great Britain, a considerably less successful one in France, and one in Prussia which had won wars but had not yet reached the high levels of industrialization. Furthermore, this puzzle leaves us dawdling with a new question: How is it that some political elites are better able to transform their administrative structures than others? At any rate, the functional explanation of the relationship between industrialization and its requirements and the growth of rational bureaucratic forms seems to require some suspension of disbelief. These four cases present a broad variation in a number of aspects that produced what I have suggested are the two types of bureaucratic rationalization. They vary significantly in culture, economic development, political development, and political institutions.

Within the two categories of rationalization I have outlined, each path to bureaucratic rationalization seems to vary to a considerable extent. In the category of professionally oriented rationalization, however, political contestation and reform are the central features of the process. Within the organizationally oriented category, institutional differentiation, the contest for administrative specialization and autonomy, seems to have been central to the rationalization process. This suggests that, despite the historical variation distinguishing each case, there are systematic differences within the two categories. The question is whether these differences are linked by one or more constraining variables or whether they are the product of two distinct sets of variables.

The Problem of Leadership Succession

What is the common recurring problem in a large number of nineteenth-century states which appears to have produced the institutionalization of the rationalized administrative role as the solution? It is extremely doubtful, in the case of state bureaucracies, that allocational efficiency was the central problem, especially since there was no market to test efficiency in price terms. Although attempts have been made to apply cost-benefit analysis (Zeckhauser and Schaefer 1968; Wildavsky 1968; Weisbrod 1968; Foster 1966; Prest and Turvey 1972; Layard 1972; Borcherding 1977, 45–70; Abouchar 1984), the difficulty is that no reasons are given as to why redistribution decisions made by government officials should be considered as efficient even when goals are specified (Foster 1966; Palumbo 1975; Losi 1976; Jackson 1983:176–210). Indeed, public choice analysis seems to show that no clear or consistent criteria of weighting exists nor what criteria of weighting ought to be used in organizing or distributing any benefits or services (Palumbo 1975; Elkin 1974; Contini 1969: chapter 4).

Precisely because the state is a monopoly and the state administration has no competition (except, perhaps, intramurally), efficiency of its operations cannot be a recurring problem (except, of course, to members of the political opposition) to which the response is rationalization. This is reflected in several aspects of the role structure often associated with rational bureaucracy. Role hierarchy and hierarchical responsibility are not by any means always highly or positively correlated with other aspects of role structure (Udy 1959; Pugh et al. 1963, 1968, 1969a, 1969b). Nor is it clear from the wide variations in criteria for recruitment and advancement in so-called rational bureaucracies that these are directly related to questions of efficiency in the distribution of the state's resources. Indeed, there is a considerable literature
anxious to show us instead that rational-legal role characteristics produce inefficiency and conflict (Gouldner 1954; Olson 1968:62; Michels 1966:71; Boulding 1966:8; Williamson 1975:125; Monsen and Downs 1965; Milles 1976; Braverman 1974; Marglin 1974; Clawson 1980). Such criticism is also widespread in the literature evaluating the performance of public bureaucracies (Kaufman 1977; Pressman and Wildavsky 1979; Sheriff 1975).

As Perrow points out, a major reason for conflicts is that while bureaucratic rules spell out the limits of subordinate roles they also provide the means by which subordinates may resist incursions or demands by superiors (Perrow 1986 [1972]:28–30; also Crozier 1964). The two-edged character of rules gives rise to informal structures of behavior in which the rules are utilized for individual as against organizational interests. In this sense, rules in and of themselves are by no means consistently efficient from the standpoint of the price of services or goods. Finally, arguments about operational or X-efficiency as the main recurring problem do not explain why distinct patterns of rational-organizational roles should emerge (Leibenstein 1973, 1975). If operational efficiency were the recurring problem, it seems reasonable to expect that the limited variables related to operational efficiency would result in very similar structural outcomes for organizational roles.

If the central recurring problem of state organizational life is neither general allocative efficiency nor operational efficiency, what then remains? One clue is provided by the historical conditions under which the two modes of bureaucratic rationality were institutionalized. I have already noted earlier that the cases in the organizationally oriented category seem to share a similar road to bureaucratic rationalization—once centered on the problem of differentiation. What is noticeable is that the problems of institutional differentiation in these countries all seemed to have emanated from total or partial successes of leadership. Organizationally oriented bureaucracies emerged following, in the cases of France after 1789 and Japan after 1868, total successes of leadership.1

What was the connection between crises of leadership succession and a process of differentiation that led to a specific mode of bureaucratic role rationalization? Part of the connection lies in the understanding that leadership succession (when it is total or partial) is not simply some mechanical rotation of elites. It implies the substitution of one means of, and criteria for, selecting leaders by another. When such substitutions are made, there must be new institutional arrangements for the selection process as well as new arrangements for acquiring the criteria for selection. To replace one process of leadership selection with another is to change the whole basis on which decision-makers are selected and decisions are made.

Weber sought to make the point that the rules by which decision-makers were selected were intimately tied to the kinds of information thought to be appropriate for making decisions. The relationship between patronimial authority and custom as the basis for traditional decision making was not arbitrary. Past decisions with "satisficing" outcomes became the standard criterion for appropriateness in the absence of any other system for determining what information was appropriate for producing decisions with relatively predictable outcomes. Where this was the case, custom as a body of knowledge could not be entrusted to anyone or everyone. It could only be entrusted to those who had acted out the custom and who had been trained to do so. Birth became one of the means by which customary practice as a body of information was not corrupted by open contestation. How nice it was that this arrangement worked out so well for those who held power and status.

In the same way, Weber’s conception of rational-legal authority did not combine certain structural characteristics of decision making and role characteristics of decision-makers coincidentally. With the shattering of custom as the means for arriving at decisions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, some systematic constraint had to be placed on information used for this purpose. Those constraints had to provide decision making with the capacity for producing relatively high levels of predictability with regard to outcomes. What was available was science or rather, perhaps, scientism. In scientism, information was ordered not on past trial and error performance but on some notion of the discreteousness of cause and effect. Physical and supposedly social facts were seen as functions of theoretically holistic and discrete ideas of physical and social nature. The correct application of information to specific problems became a function of education and not primarily of birth; of knowledge publicly displayed and not of esoteric private knowledge. The result was that leadership succession was processually related to a totally new criterion for leadership eligibility.

In this sense then, total or partial successes of leadership are not descriptions of individual replacement but rather of a systematic structure of replacement. Thus, for example, the Meiji Restoration of 1868 in Japan led to a complete restructuring of the criteria for leadership and, as a consequence, leadership succession and decision making. Similarly, the French Revolution led to a century-long struggle over the criteria for determining political leadership and power, resulting in an equally transformed structure of leadership succession and decision making.

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Yet, this transformation in Japan did not result in the elimination of all those who were members of the traditional elite, in which entrance had been almost completely restricted by birth. Indeed, the majority of those who came to govern after 1868 were members of the pre-1868 ascensive elites—although they were drawn mostly from the lower end of the hierarchy of birth and social rank (Silberman 1964). Again, the same phenomenon can be noted in France. The change in the criteria of leadership after the Revolution of 1789 did not eliminate the nobility from entrance to leadership roles in subsequent decades (Baeque et al. 1976). Napoleon was notorious for resurrecting the nobility but provided them with no essential claims to power or status (Tulard 1976:8–13).

At the same time, the transformation of the structure of leadership presents powerful pressures for the reconstruction of decision making. The existence of new leadership criteria implies the necessity of new kinds of information for decision making. New kinds of information require new rules or customs of usage and application. Where such restructuring occurs in a formal manner, accompanied by the appearance of new rules for decision making, we have strong reason to believe that a crisis in leadership succession has occurred. We may call this a revolutionary condition. While such a crisis may not be sufficient for a definition of revolution, it seems necessary for one. Total successes of leadership crises in leadership succession which bring new decision-making rules into existence offer clear opportunities for the reconstruction of administrative systems and for the reconstruction of the relationship between state and civil society.

Professionally oriented bureaucracies, such as the United States and Great Britain, emerged under conditions in which there were relatively well-defined and well-regulated rules governing the succession of political leadership. While the task of leadership succession in these two countries came to be organized around well-specified rules of voting and well-governed access to candidacy, these rules did not provide certainty about the outcomes of elections. Hard as candidates might try—through such ploys as organizing political parties, careful surveillance of voter rights and voter lists, and reducing the number of contested offices—they nevertheless could not fix voters in easily predicted outcomes. Despite several hundred years of historical experience, candidates still find voters to be volatile. Indeed, it seems that this volatility was one of the prime if not the prime incentive to engage in reforms that would reduce voting instability. Not only may such reforms include attempts to regulate voters’ choices, but also they may include attempts to remove some choices from the public arena and place them in the hands of administrators, thereby reducing the sources of contestation. Party contestation then also provides opportunities or conditions, although not in anywhere near the dramatic and disconcerting fashion of cases of total leadership succession, for restructuring decision-making rules and thus the criteria for selecting decision-makers.

Both sets of cases had conditions under which political leadership succession crises have occurred and which were followed by the restructuring of decision-making rules and administrative structure. This suggests that the continuing problem facing many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century states was the dilemma of the succession of political leaders and the level of uncertainty regarding their possession of power. Rational bureaucratization may thus be construed as a consequence of strategic choices by those holding political power in environments of greater or lesser uncertainty.

Greater or high uncertainty in this context is a situation in which there is relatively little information about the possible forms of rules concerning decision making, but sufficient is available to assign probabilities to the outcomes of some but not all choices. This condition exists certainly, but not exclusively, in situations where existing rules for selecting political leaders have been suspended or dissolved. One of these situations is where there has been a total or partial succession of political leaders. Lesser or low uncertainty is where there is considerable information available in the form of operating rules about the probabilities of the outcomes of choices. This situation applies to conditions where there are well-articulated and regulated systems of leadership selection. One of these conditions is that of elective systems where the process is highly predictive though the winner is not. There is a general well-understood rule about how to decide a winner which helps to determine the predictability of the processual outcome, that is, we can predict with great certainty that a winner will emerge from any specific election and that nearly everybody will accept the outcome. Utilizing these two aspects of uncertainty, we can construct two quite distinct strategies—the strategy of political leaders in low uncertainty situations produces the professionally oriented bureaucracy, while the high uncertainty situations produce organizationally oriented bureaucracies.

Uncertainty and Equality

One might argue, however, that political leadership succession entails risk at almost any time in any society. Rarely is there absolute certainty about the outcomes of political leadership succession. No set of rules governing lead-

ership selection can forestall every possible contingency. Thus, each succession must produce some uncertainty, if not anxiety, as to the outcome of rules which govern the role behavior of political leadership. Low-risk situations abound in history in the forms of dynastic, oligarchic, and chieftainship rules. The problem (at least in terms of this argument) is that such situations did not produce rational bureaucratization. Bureaucratic rationalization is peculiar, for the most part, to the post-1800 world. What then was distinctive about the environment of the nineteenth century so that uncertainty about rules governing political leadership was sufficiently high that it produced a transformation of the administrative role and organizational structure? Here I would like to suggest that the emergence in the late eighteenth and especially in the early part of the nineteenth centuries of institutionalized patterns reflecting some condition of equality raised the threshold of uncertainty about outcomes of choice (that is, the odds on assigned possibilities rose significantly).

For political leadership, the problem of risk as a function of the way in which equality was institutionalized took on two forms in the nineteenth century. In the cases of the United States and Great Britain (and to a considerable degree Switzerland as well), risk for political leaders grew as a consequence of the expansion of franchise and/or the expansion in the number of elective offices. The development presented increasingly complex problems for determining outcomes of elective processes. In this sense, as many politicians have found, elective processes may not always be low-risk situations. Since the low level of risk in electoral situations is not a result of electoral predictability (except in one-party systems), it seems likely that it stems, at least in large part, from the acceptance or legitimacy of the electoral process.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, in both the United States and Great Britain, the basic processes of franchise were firmly established on the basis of a civil law that assured the equality of individuals in their civil and economic, if not their political, relations. The development of contract in English, and subsequently American, common law rested on the assumption that everyday forms of exchange were based on the equal capacity of individuals to enter into contracts (Atiyah 1979:261–62, 342–54). This civil equality made political participation in the form of the franchise subject to purely nonascriptive criteria. One might be barred from voting by not paying a sufficient amount of taxes, since this was applied equally to all regardless of birth. One, however, could not be barred from voting simply because he was not a gentleman (Atiyah 1979:76–77). If birth were a distinguishing criterion, then civil relations would, of necessity, be carried out among unequals with vast consequences for the way in which contracts could be entered into and enforced.
monarchy, they created a condition of political participation which could end only in some notion of equality. At the revolutionary moment when self-selected putative leaders ended the claims of birth and estate, the road was left open to a number of possible alternative claims to the right to lead. Neither birth nor estate as criteria for leadership could be resurrected since their demise was characterized almost everywhere it occurred as the direct result of class selfishness, self-interest, or the pursuit of private ends. Now only some standard which could incorporate equality could be used. What that standard would be was not easily predictable by the participants. The revolutionary moment was the moment of greatest risk since it imposed no predictable patterns on leadership or decision making.

To those would-be leaders facing such situations, no less than two forms of equality presented themselves. First, claims could be made by putative political leaders that leadership was based on the representation of public interest. Such representation then required a notion of political liberties in which, ultimately, individuals had equality of chance and choice to pursue their interests or to be selected as representing interests. The other form in which claims could be made was that which argued that representation of public interest must be based on merit as determined by some objective standard of evaluation or judgment—the idea that the public interest was simply too important to be left to the public. Here individuals had to have equality of chances as well as choice to achieve a standard which could be defined as meritorious. Equality in the sense of the absence of ascriptive obstacles to chances and choices were common to both situations. The first, however, saw equality as essentially a positive statement of the worth of individual choice and interest. The second saw equality as the necessary condition for providing the means by which merit might be utilized and judged. The first saw the transformation of a private right (choice) into a public one. The second saw the transformation of the idea of merit as residing in birth to that of merit as resident in educational certification and achievement.

In neither the Japanese nor the French case were these notions of equality well set in structures of civil law where the relations between individuals were regulated and ordered on the basis of equal capacity to enter into contracts. Equality did not stem from civil liberties and the attempt to minimize the role of the state as a definer and participant in the contractual process. Equality stemmed from strategic considerations regarding what claims putative leaders might make to establish their right to make decisions. It is precisely for this reason that the idea of equality had such difficult sledding under revolutionary conditions in these two countries. Since equality as an organizational property was unregulated, it could produce the highest levels of uncertainty for those laying claim to power—much higher than in those situations where equality was mediated and kept within well-charted channels by the entire edifice of civil law and civil liberties.

In short, the emergence in the nineteenth century of institutional patterns associated with role equality created an environment where levels of uncertainty about political leadership succession were significantly higher than they had been in the past when role behaviors associated with general equality were absent. The appearance of equality as an institutional norm occurred in two ways, under revolutionary conditions or under the expansion of economic equality to the realm of politics. These two conditions created the environments of high and low uncertainty examined in the next chapter.
The Strategies of Uncertainty

This chapter is concerned with delineating the problems of political leaders under conditions of high and low uncertainty and the strategies they might employ to retain or stabilize their power and status. This chapter also takes up the problem of how such strategies create dilemmas for political leaders over how to hold rationalized bureaucracies accountable. The analysis of this problem provides another variable which, when combined with uncertainty, provides a somewhat finer way to distinguish the outcomes of high and low uncertainty alone.

The Strategy of High Uncertainty

Under conditions of high uncertainty brought about by total or partial successions of leadership, a number of problems face those who have seized power or those who would like to do so. In the broadest sense, these may be termed the problems of legitimacy, equality, community, and history. The problem of legitimacy is raised since it is not clear in revolutionary conditions on what grounds or by whom decisions are made. This ambiguity makes it extremely difficult to predict the outcomes of choices made by any set of putative leaders or by individuals in general. Putative leaders must reject past rules for determining what information is appropriate for use in decision making. Historically, the revolutionary moment meant the abandonment of custom and tradition as the primary constraint on utilizing information for decision making. At the revolutionary moment, presumptive leaders are self-selected or at least not selected by the former rules of leadership succession. In this condition, would-be leaders are bound to reject both the traditional criteria for leadership selection and the structure of rules governing how and on what basis decisions are made. To do otherwise subverts any claims that new leaders may have. Why should new leaders be selected outside the traditional formal structure if the old structure of decision making is seen as perfectly valid? For those who would take power there appears to be little choice but to reject the traditional basis of decision making as well as the traditional structure of leadership selection.

This creates conditions in which there is uncertainty about what information is appropriate, what rules are to be used to determine appropriateness, and how predictable the consequences of decisions stemming from new rules about decision making will be. Bounded rationality on the part of would-be leaders makes it impossible to assign very high probabilities as to the outcomes of their decisions, since they are presumably operating under quite different rules of decision making than those which obtained under the old regime. The major problem for leaders seeking to hold on to their precarious power during and immediately after the revolutionary moment is clear. They must find a decision-making rule system that, when combined with a new and systematic structure of leadership selection, will produce the capacity to make decisions with relatively predictable outcomes. If power stems from the barrels of guns, legitimacy must surely sprout from the more mundane but equally important books of rules which keep daily life from being an exercise in arbitrariness.

The total or partial suspension of rules governing leadership selection and succession also immediately raises the question of equality. Where birth or some such ascriptive criterion is the basis for determining eligibility for leadership or leadership selection—as was the case in pre-nineteenth-century Europe and almost everywhere else—then the revolutionary moment produces the idea of equality immediately. This arises simply because the replacement of old-regime leaders by self-selected, would-be leaders promptly destroys the ascriptive criteria. Any structure of self-selection must subvert existing organizational rules. Under these circumstances, any claim to power may have equal weight. After all, where no rules exist except those of self-selection the contest for power is anarchic and without exception destructive. Would-be leaders must provide a non-narcissistic answer to the uncomfortable question: why should you run things rather than us? What way is there out of this dilemma? What qualities can putative leaders claim give them the right to wield power other than their own selfish desires? Clearly birth cannot be a criterion. The only strategy putative leaders seem to have here is to establish some criterion for which they can claim social equality as a base. No ascriptive or self-seeking criteria can be used.

As we have seen, the claims of equality may take at least two forms: claims for equality of representation or claims for equality to exhibit capacity or merit. The former produces criteria for leadership associated with capacity for rational choice. Everyone has equality of choice and their desires have equality of weight so long as they meet some general standard of rationality. Accordingly, age, sex, race, and economic condition have all been used to exclude individuals from participation in forms of representation. Individuals falling into these categories are not excluded on the basis of birth but on the claim that they do not possess the capacity for making rational choices. Equality, thus, would be constrained only by those elements thought to keep individuals from attaining a mental capacity to make rational choices about
their preferences. This kind of claim, of course, may be, and often is, purely ideological in the sense that it seeks to provide a rational discourse for existing customary systems of exclusion.

Claims of equality to exhibit merit without regard to ascriptive criteria tend to produce criteria for leadership based on the ability to achieve high standards of some measurable characteristic. Achievement in this sense might be measured by economic wealth. There, leadership selection and succession would be based on a hierarchy of wealth. Instrumental capacity might be used to narrow claims to the right to govern. The problem is, except in the most extreme cases, how to measure instrumental capacity with any accuracy. Capacity in revolutionary or crisis conditions seems relatively easy to determine—those who come out on top in a free-for-all are, it can be argued, those with the greatest capacity to lead. Despite Jefferson’s dictum about watering the tree of liberty with blood every generation, this is an extremely costly test of ability, as the failure to follow this advice indicates. This difficulty inevitably leads to claims of substitutability in predicting ability. The claim is often made that future instrumental capacity is relatively well predicted by the ability to acquire objectively testable knowledge of some kind—classical education or legal training, for example. The claims of equality are met by imposing no obstacles of an ascriptive nature on individuals seeking to acquire the appropriate knowledge.

In any situation of social equality, leaders must provide some rationale as to why they should govern. The two dominant strategies for doing so, representation of individual “subjective” rational choices or the possession of knowledge enabling one to make “objective” rational choices, are responses to the greater uncertainty produced by the emergence of social equality. One emerged through the evolution of contract under common law, while the other appeared as the result of “revolutionary moments” or major successions of leadership.

Would-be leaders, in those moments following the suspension of the rules of leadership succession, are also inevitably faced with the problem of community. Not only are they confronted with the general problem of the possible breakdown of rules governing social and economic relationships, but they are also confronted with the problem of community as reflected in the capacity to have relatively well defined notions of leadership. If the existence of community is dependent on the widespread agreement on the rules governing behavior and their meaning, then agreement on who is to interpret and enforce the rules is essential to the continuity of the community. In essence, the inability to define leadership is the inability to define community. However, the absence of rules about what constitutes political leadership and its continuity and selection means that claimant leaders cannot predict the consequences of their choices or of anyone else’s. More important, perhaps, in the absence of rules governing leadership, claims as to who will represent the community remain unresolved and open. Without any agreed-upon criteria for leadership, the sense of community is fractionated. Without systematic rules governing leadership succession, there can hardly be any legitimate system of decision making—that is, one that produces relatively predictable outcomes. Lacking such a structure, there cannot be a uniform or homogeneous representation of the public or social good or of public interest. Presumptive leaders will thus face a multitude of claimants who assert their right to represent the community. Thus, leaders must solve the problem of community. One powerful strategy for doing so is the creation of new systematic structures of leadership selection and succession which promise both stability and continuity of community life.

Finally, claimant leaders in high uncertainty or revolutionary conditions face the problem of history. The total or critical succession of political leadership has clearly shown that history is not the history of a “natural” social order. Once the old regime is overthrown or has itself thrown in the towel, history appears as subject to will or, perhaps more accurately, the object of will. Leaders have to deal with the dilemma, so neatly and elegantly put by Marx, that men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please, rather than to Hegel’s conclusion that history makes men pretty much as it pleases. By overthrowing and bringing to naught preceding systems of leadership, decision making, and community, new leadership seems to have shown that history is secular and given over to will. Order, it would appear, is as contingent as disorder. The latter is not seen as a lapse, moral or otherwise, of a natural stable order. Inherently this must pose a powerful problem for would-be leaders. If the past order is not morally superior or essential, then the future one must be so.

But on what basis can the claim be made that the future order—that which the new leaders will construct—is superior? How will they sustain the claim when faced by others who may, and no doubt will, argue that history is really theirs? The problem is twofold: on the one hand, the structure of order must be seen to be the necessary product of the revolutionary condition; on the other hand, the new leadership must be seen as the rightful purveyors of this superior and necessary social order. In short, the problem is to put history back in its cage. Any new leadership must stuff it back in or face powerful contesting stories of how history can proceed only in the hands of very different actors. History cannot be seen as contingent on human preference and will.
The Organizational Resolution of High Uncertainty Problems

To resolve these problems would-be leaders must construct or reconstruct a system of rules that covers a broad range of social and political behavior. The reconstruction of these rules also implies the reordering of rules governing economic relations. Thus, critical incidents of leadership succession bring in their wake the suspension of a broad spectrum of rules. How will aspiring leaders, confronted with such conditions, decide to act in order to secure their status, power, and material resources? What possible choices are there? One choice that might well resolve the general problems raised by the collapse of leadership succession rules is to depend on some collective choice mechanism that incorporates individual preferences. The problems of equality, legitimacy, community, and history are rather easily resolved by this choice. Equality in the determination of the public interest could plausibly be assured by giving each vote an equal weight. While outcomes in this mode might not always be happy ones, they will be public. Legitimacy can also be assured through the process of voting. Rules governing franchise and the selection and election of candidates produce high levels of predictability about the nature of leadership succession and decision making. The community problem is solved by resorting to procedures determining majorities and protecting minorities. The community of shared experience is the community of shared procedures. Community integrity comes to be based on agreement about the inviolability of selection procedures and the protection of the losers from arbitrary acts. History as a problem is resolved by the notion of progress. The revolutionary condition is defined not as the product of arbitrary will but as part of some greater urge toward civility, humanity, and justice. Or, to put it another way, the historical revolutionary condition is redefined as ideology. The revolutionary condition is now seen as a consequence of some inherent structural flaw, which is cured by political leaders possessing an understanding of a universally applicable solution.

The one problem not resolved by recourse to voting is the specific uncertainty of those laying claim to leadership. Any group of self-selected leaders emerging from the thickets of a revolutionary condition is not likely to find comfort in a system based on individual subjective rational choice. Reliance on such a system might lead to completely unanticipated or uncomfortable consequences. Voters, left free to choose, are notoriously fickle. Would-be leaders are thus likely to want to avoid, as much as possible, any reliance on mechanisms that utilize and allow voting as the means for selecting political leaders unless choice is carefully constrained as in plebiscites. This is a somewhat windy way of saying that leaders who appear after critical events of leadership succession are not likely to endanger their claims to status and power by resorting to open elections.

Strategies and Tactics to Reduce Uncertainty

What choices are left if claimants to leadership wish to secure and maintain their positions? Only two broad possibilities appear: (1) to maintain their power and positions by the use of force alone to eliminate challengers or (2) to seek a leadership structure that excludes solipsistic challenges on the one side and reliance on voting on the other side.

The first option does not resolve matters well since it allows a broad range of solipsistic or opportunistic appeals to moral or other authority. Some sort of civil war is thus a likely possibility and these are well known to have unpredictable outcomes. They nevertheless occur with considerable frequency in early stages of total or critical political successions when either or both sides feel they have everything to gain and nothing to lose or when sufficient time to utilize other solutions is not available. At any rate, victory does not resolve matters in a sufficiently suitable manner. The problem of allocating power and position among the victors is now pushed to the fore. Once again, leadership among the victors cannot resort to open elections lest they be voted out of office. Nor can offices and accompanying benefits be allocated on the basis of loyalty since presumably all those on the winning side may sensibly argue that degrees of loyalty are difficult to determine in any satisfying way. The problem for victors becomes the same as in the second option.

When the second choice is made, the resolution to this problem appears to be the pursuit of two strategies. First, a short-term strategy, with the aim of replacing those in the secondary and tertiary levels of the decision-making structure with those who are seen to be loyal (the criterion in this case is usually some direct knowledge of the individual), is implemented. Second, a long-term strategy emerges from the tactics employed in the short-term strategy. This long-term strategy is based on the development of a qualitatively and quantitatively defined career structure. The aim of this career structure is to create a cadre of decision-makers that is homogeneous and committed to the organization above all personal obligations. The resort to rules reduces ambiguity and conflict engendered by the lack of homogeneity among this first-generation group of leaders over definition of goals and how they should be implemented (Gouldner 1954; Selznick 1957).

The short-term strategy relies on what Gouldner called "strategic replacement" (Gouldner 1954). This action implies more profound consequences than just the replacement of one set of individuals or officials by another set.
The strategy of replacement as opposed to simply getting one’s friends in positions of power as often and as best one can emphasizes the attempt to create an interdependent structure of leadership positions. Such a structure seeks to cover as many layers of decision making as possible. In the first instance, the strategy emanates from the well-understood desire to have those you do not or cannot trust out of offices that have discretion over important resources. The greater the capacity to remove potential obstacles to the implementation of decisions, the greater the ability to reduce uncertainty and all of its attendant evils.

Three types of tactics can be seen to follow from this strategy of replacement. First, and certainly the most easily arrived at by leaders, is to replace all members (or as many as possible) of the preceding regime. This seems simple and to a considerable extent it is, albeit with several important exceptions. Second is the perceived necessity of gaining control over as many offices as possible. Officials who hold offices based on independent access to, and control of, resources are not easily removed. So long as they remain in office they represent alternative sources of power. At the same time, they control resources for which new leaders have a generally voracious appetite. The tactical choice in this strategy of replacement is to try to internalize these positions, that is, to incorporate them within the structure of decision making over which the new or would-be leaders lay claim. This internalization poses several organizational problems. The most significant of these is the problem of “managerial control” or how to get everyone to execute decisions in a more or less uniform manner. From this also follows another important problem—how to internalize positions. For leaders facing the problem of control, the way in which new offices are incorporated into the administrative organization is more than just a trivial technical adjustment. Failure to internalize offices in identifiable systematic categories within a realistic structure of oversight leads to administrative anarchy. The short-term strategy of “strategic replacement” thus leads to attempts to create loyal cadres, to internalization of offices and general organizational centralization, and finally to the creation of systems of internal control and management in order to maintain centralized power and authority.

The third tactic, the creation of loyal cadres within the framework of the revolutionary condition, does not provide much in the way of alternatives for leaders. Unless, as with Lenin, the leaders foresee this problem and create cadres prior to the revolutionary condition, would-be leaders are forced to fall back on contingent tests of loyalty as the sole criterion for entry into the cadre. The criterion for loyalty will most likely be based on personal knowledge of the leaders regarding who can be trusted. The test of trust in this situation will surely be the degree to which individuals supported the putative leaders in bringing about the crisis and the rapidity with which they joined the leaders in their action. In this regard, loyalty may well be sufficient to overcome the problem posed by leaving officials of the former regime in possession of their offices. Regardless of their mixed backgrounds, the newly appointed officials will at least not intend to oppose the leaders to whom they are indebted. Nevertheless, the very criterion used to select them may pose serious problems for the implementation of decisions made by their patrons.

Loyalty as a criterion for decision making and administration is, at best, indifferent and, at worst, a source of disruption and disorder. The most glaring weakness of loyalty as a test for administrative capacity is its inability to provide any guidelines for decision making or implementation except self-interest or patron interest. These are insufficient since the desire to please or to support one’s patrons is not in itself any assurance that any particular act will be helpful or what is desired by the patron. Certainly, self-interest as a guide will not work either, since there can be no assurance that what is good for me will be good for my patron or anyone else. Perhaps a more pressing problem presented by loyalty is the question of how to differentiate between loyal individuals. How can one judge the intensity of loyalty? The inability of loyalty to be subject to a fine test of discrimination must produce a range of problems for the development of any kind of internal labor market or organization.

Only slightly less important is that loyalty, as determined by highly contingent criteria, does not provide any means for organizational continuity. What is to be done about replacements once there are no longer any survivors of the original event that served as the measure of loyalty? Surely a new revolution cannot be created every twenty years or so to produce a new set of leaders—the Cultural Revolution in China has shown us just how futile that can be. Resorting to replacement by personal patronage presents the problem of trying to distinguish between public and private. The continued use of loyalty as a means of selecting and replacing officials is not likely to survive the accusation that leaders are, in fact, pursuing their private interests rather than those of the public. Replacement of officials on the basis of loyalty may solve the short-term problem of administrative opposition, but it does not solve the long-term problems of uniformity of decision making and implementation, organizational continuity, leadership selection and appointment, and the publicness and predictability of leadership.

In the same way, the wholesale internalization of offices, especially local ones as opposed to the central offices claimed by the leaders themselves, solves some of the problems related to institutional sources of opposition, but mere transformation from autonomy or partial autonomy without also
transforming the relationship of the offices within the administrative organization is to invite a return to autonomy. Put another way, centralization or internalization without uniform categories of offices defined by the new leaders may only be a reaffirmation of localism or of the autonomy of the functional division of offices. This internalization creates the long-term problem of defining categories of offices with reference to a center or a central set of decision-making capacities and resources. The long-term problem here, as with the case of loyalty, is the problem of defining roles.

Problems of "managerial control"—keeping everyone from acting in terms of their own subjective rationality—have a short-term solution. Control of subordinates sufficient to provide a half-way reasonable approximation of consensus on decision making and implementation can be arrived at in several ways. One of these is the age-old recourse to cliques or factions. Structures of personal relations, such as patron-client ones, can provide constraints on excessive opportunism or eccentricity precisely because of their high level of personal interaction and short span of control. They can thus create a minimal level of uniform behavior. Under conditions of critical occurrences of leadership succession, however, this pragmatic solution has all the defects of its advantages. The persistence of clique or factional structures seems inevitably to produce challengers who argue that such personalized structures serve private rather than public interest.

There are several other ways to achieve reasonable levels of uniformity in decision making and implementation when faced with the problem of officials with heterogeneous backgrounds. One of these is to define each position extensively, create categories of positions, define or draw from these categories a set of job descriptions, designate appropriate skills, and train or appoint people possessing those skills. "The right person for the right job" allows heterogeneity to exist so long as the individual's actions are constrained by the skill aspect of his or her training. The problem here is that there is no powerful pressure for individuals to be loyal, except, perhaps, to their skills. The use of specific skills as the criterion for office-holding in order to overcome the problem of differing backgrounds gives the possessor a considerable degree of autonomy. The individual can practice his skills anywhere since they are not organization specific. Thus leadership may face the problem of being unable to get subordinates to implement decisions because they represent "unskilled" (or "unprofessional") solutions. In political terms, then, leaders in this type of situation may find themselves in difficulty. They now lead organizations in which there is agreement on the structure of decision making and implementation but in which decision-makers have great autonomy.

Finally, there is the situation noted by Gouldner (1954): the resort to rules to specify the boundaries of decision making as well as the procedures and the appropriate information to be used in arriving at decisions. This has clear advantages over the preceding solutions. It does not preclude the reliance on contingent tests of loyalty as the criterion for appointment. Nor does it preclude the reliance on external or independently held bodies of information or ethical rules on utilization of information since they are constrained by organizational rules. The resort to rules emphasizes the organizational source of information and procedures as against individual and private sources.

Employing rules as a tactic to impose uniformity of decision making and implementation does not solve everything. This tactic has serious defects. While rule-making gives new leaders the capacity to hedge in and restrain individuals from pursuing their own beliefs or interests, the rules can also be subversive if they appear to be arbitrary. In this regard then, the rules defining administrative roles and their boundaries must be related in a systematic way to achieving the public interest since this is the only ground on which the seizure of power can be legitimately claimed. The real problem for leaders is how to indicate that the decision-making process is not arbitrary or for private purposes. How can decision making be made to appear to be public in character without resorting to one person, one vote? Rationalization of administrative roles in the Weberian sense—the quantitative and qualitative definition of role—seems to provide the only organizational solution to the problems of uniformity and legitimacy created by the dissolution of preceding rules governing leadership roles.

The problem of defining roles so that they are not private and individual possessions can only be fully resolved by eliminating office as a private and individual good. The former is accomplished by separating payment from the possession of office. The latter can only be accomplished through reliance on two tactics. The first is the use of uniformly applied formal rules defining roles. By relying on rules, political leaders create a uniformity that makes administrative leadership and its status an organizational rather than an individual characteristic. Second, the problem of the public character of such rules is assured by positing the existence of an objective reality—a body of rules that exists in nature and is capable of being and has been in fact discovered. That is, there is the claim that systems of knowledge exist, the possession of which allows the appropriate ordering of priorities and their implementation. The reliance on expertise as a means of ordering priorities and implementing them seemingly removes issues from politics; and, in effect, science or scientism is substituted for personal interest, and administration is substituted for politics (Wolin 1960:407–34).

Transforming political leadership into an organizational role centered on expertise and competence resolves the problems of authority and commu-
nity faced by political leaders under these conditions. On the one hand, it vitiates the grounds on which challengers stand. Unless they accept these “objective” criteria, challengers to leadership may be accused of pursuing only personal desires rather than society’s interests. On the other hand, the resort to “scientifically” derived rules resolves the question of why leadership should rest in a self-selected rather than a publicly selected group. Revolutionary leadership holds power or has seized it in the name of society in order to achieve society’s wants or needs. These wants and needs can only be known and organized rationally, they argue, by possessing and utilizing a science or sciences of society. This tacit not only reveals the public spiritedness of leaders, it also resolves the problem of community raised by the rejection of preceding rules. As a consequence of this rejection of custom or tradition, the community must find another means for arriving at a society’s interest. By substituting rules derived from a “scientific” understanding of how to achieve society’s wants or needs, the new political leaders reconstitute community while sustaining their own status and power.

Emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge as a major test of leadership capability results in the reliance on merit or achievement as a general value. This goes a long way toward resolving the problem of equality. Rather than defining equality as a direct political or economic characteristic, merit defines it as the uniform application of “objective” standards of intelligence and instrumental ability. From this point of view, anyone, regardless of social station or birth, who meets a uniform test of educational competence may be eligible for entrance into the ranks of political leadership. For those who come to power through self-selection, the problem of reducing uncertainty about their positions is resolved by elevating administration to a systematic science. Only through a science of administration and the elimination of politics can the public interest be achieved.

Administrative Ideology

Under these conditions of uncertainty, leaders are led willy-nilly into assuming an organic utilitarian posture regarding the question of determining public policy. In this posture leaders are unwilling to rely on individual or subjective rational choices regarding wants or needs and are forced instead to argue that society may be conflated to the position of an individual. If they wish to reduce uncertainty about their authority, political leaders must take the view Utilitarians have taken, that “just as it is rational for man to maximize the fulfillment of his system of desires it is right for a society to maximize the net balance of satisfaction over all its members” (Rawls 1971:20). The acceptance of this principle of rational choice for one person would seem to require a conception of the policymaker as an impartial spec-

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ator who is capable of predicting appropriate priorities that would maximize the net balance of satisfaction taken over all its members. Rawls describes this position neatly:

[It is this impartial spectator] who is conceived of as carrying out the required organization of desires of all persons into one coherent system of desire; it is by this construction that many persons are fused into one. Endowed with ideal powers of sympathy and imagination, the impartial spectator is the perfectly rational individual who identifies with the experiences and the desires of others as if these desires were his own. In this way he ascertains the intensity of these desires and assigns them their appropriate weight in the one system of desire. . . . On this conception of society separate individuals are thought of as so many different lines along which rights and duties are to be assigned and scarce means of satisfaction allocated in accordance with rules so as to give the greatest fulfillment of wants. . . . The correct decision is essentially a question of efficient administration. (Rawls 1971:26–27)

From this point of view, administration not only substitutes for politics, it also becomes the representative of the public interest. Political cum administrative leaders under the condition of total or critical leadership succession thus become committed to the restructuring of leadership not only because they wish to retain their power, status, and material goods but also because they have come to believe in the superior capacity of these new organizations to determine the public interest. It appears to them that the public interest is simply too important to be left to the public. In this construction or reconstruction of the idea of public interest, political administrative leaders have also transformed the boundaries of discussion about the public interest. Once they have come to view public interest as a matter of “efficient administration,” political leaders come to value administrative reform as the means to achieve the public interest.

Organizational Closure

The problem for political leaders is how to make sure that this reordering of leadership will be able to maintain its integrity as an organization—the problem of insulating the role from external interest and influences. This requires a strategy aimed at successfully masking the self-interest aspects of reform and, at the same time, convincing the public that their interest is best served by this redefinition of administrative role. This can only be done by seeking homogeneity of leadership and high levels of organizational commitment. The constraints of role autonomy, publicness, and equality must lead to the elimination of class as a means of seeking homogeneity or organizational commitment.
The only apparent solution is to narrow entry into policy-making administrative roles by creating high standards for eligibility and entry. Limiting the number of schools that provide access to appropriate education and narrowly specifying the contents of appropriate education tends to resolve this problem. High standards for entry lengthen the time required for sufficient training to meet eligibility requirements. Limiting the number of schools available for this training not only encourages and sustains homogeneity of socialization, it also reduces the number of trained individuals available to private organizations. Narrowly specifying the contents of appropriate education reinforces the elements of uniformity and scarcity. The stress on merit and ability tends off possible criticism of self-interest. The insistence on an educational career helps to resolve the problem of convincing the public that policy-making is a function of utilitarian criteria for decision making. In short, if administration is to dominate policy-making and implementation, then it must seek to depoliticize the idea of public interest. This is achieved by making the understanding of public interest a function of educational standards. To this end, the education and the training of future civil servants must be directly controlled by the administrative structure.

The result, however, is a situation in which the critical structural element that emerges is the necessarily early commitment to bureaucratic careers by those who wish to become leaders. This follows inevitably from the narrowness of access to training. In order to get into the limited number of schools that formally or informally monopolize correct training, commitments by individuals to such careers must often be made long before entry into the university. Early commitment has high costs for the individual since it means rejecting alternative careers. Two types of incentives might be offered to offset these costs. First are social incentives—encouraging and subsidizing specific occupations requiring well-defined training, such as law. Such encouragement might take the form of legal requirements that individuals and groups must always be represented by lawyers with proper certification as to their training when contracts are entered into or when engaged in litigation. In other words, social incentives can be provided by giving a monopoly over certain general social or economic functions to a group of people who have invested early and heavily in certain kinds of training.

The danger of encouraging professionalism as the means of providing incentives for administrators or any other "professional" entering organizational careers is quite clear. Monopoly of this kind places the control of role definition in the hands of the practitioners—the recipients of the training. Commitment to an organization is thus likely to be undercut by commitments to the professional role and its organization. In the case of administrators, this kind of situation deprives political leaders of the monopoly or near monopoly over that expertise defined as necessary to determine public policy and, at the same time, provides private interests with the capacity to provide definitions of public policy. This kind of incentive will not provide the kind of organizational commitment that political leaders seek in the condition of high uncertainty.

The alternative to this incentive is to provide purely organizational inducement. To provide such an inducement, one basic constraint must be considered—the organizational consequences of remuneration by salary. If office-holding as a private good is eliminated, the problem of job security immediately becomes a problem. Separation of the holding of the office from its material benefits implies that that officeholder has no rights to the office or any office. Payment by salary is thus seen as implying the possibility of arbitrary dismissal. Thus in any system in which the officeholder no longer owns the means of administration, incentives for early commitment to an organizational career must be addressed to the problems of job security; high investment in time, effort, and money to acquire the appropriate training; and the forgoing of other possibly profitable occupations.

These problems are resolved and can probably only be resolved by structuring the role in the following specific ways. First, the problem of security from arbitrary dismissal must be met by a commitment, formally or informally, to tenure or to a very well defined structure for determining dismissal. Second, the payoff for the high investment and possible losses by the individual must be a highly predictable pattern of movement through a series of offices that are hierarchically ordered in terms of status, prestige, and reward (Williamson 1975:77–78). The assurance of a lifetime career so long as one does not violate explicit codes of action and behavior provides both opportunities for security and increases in wealth and status. Third, the beginning stage of the career must be sufficiently prestigious so as to reduce risks about advancement and ensure a minimal movement upward—the great expenditure on education and lost alternatives must be offset in the short-term by creating a distinct category of offices distinguished from run-of-the-mill administrative positions.

From these structural features other elements of bureaucratization emerge. The necessity for providing a highly predictable and special career structure creates great pressure for the development of single departmental-ministerial specialization. This results from the fact that interdepartmental transfers are likely to increase uncertainty about career—they simply create too many possible career tracks. This undermines predictability. At the same time, some transfers may be primarily horizontal and thus are demoralizing also in terms of upsetting the career predictability of those who are the new colleagues of the transferee. Uncertainty about the future clearly reduces the incentive to make
an early commitment to enter the organization and, for those already in the organization, it reduces organizational commitment. Recognition of, or experience with, this fact thus tends to produce careers bounded by departments or ministries and, hence, ones that are relatively predictable. This outcome creates a career official who is likely to have broad experience within his department and is therefore oriented toward the department's structure as a whole rather than to any specific program of the department. Further specialization occurs not through the horizontal admittance of trained specialists but rather through the completion of career promotion. Individuals will not always rise to the very top and the place where their promotion possibilities end becomes the individual's specialty. This career pattern specialization also, unfortunately, has the consequence of producing a sectionalism within the bureaucratic structure that is difficult to mitigate.

The creation of a highly regular, systematic, and predictable career structure also produces an organizational structure that dominates the allocation of information. In a system where the individual is moved through a series of roles for which he or she has not been specifically trained, information about decision making is attached to the role structure. The individual acquires the appropriate information through serving in the role. Here the individual does not bring with him or her a body of information acquired outside of the organization and maintained over time by an occupationally or professionally set body of standards. The individual thus acquires a body of information that is highly organizationally and, often, ministerially or departmentally specific. This specificity makes it extremely difficult for the individual to transfer skills to another organization or ministry. This arrangement of information allocation thus reduces the opportunistic capacities of individuals to withhold information for the purposes of bargaining for promotion, higher wages, or other benefits (Williamson 1975:31–33). When information or skills of the individual are organizationally or departmentally specific, there are fewer chances of mobility outside of his or her venue. This situation tends to make organizational loyalty a necessity and not just a virtue.

The pressure to provide a highly predictable career produces other consequences for role definition. At the early stages of the career, seniority must be the major criterion for advancement. If this is not the case, then, once again, a higher level of career risk is introduced with its attendant effects on incentives. Some criterion other than experience, as reflected in seniority, must be applied at the higher levels of the hierarchy where fewer and fewer offices are available. Nevertheless, seniority is the primary constraint on determining advancement to that point. As a consequence, seniority is likely to emerge as a high value and in itself is likely to reinforce hierarchy and help define its character.

A second problem arising from the emergent career structure is that of providing sufficient offices throughout the hierarchy to maintain the organizationally oriented incentive. Since there is no way to predict the number of offices that will become available over time in a "natural" fashion (that is, as the result of illnesses, resignations, deaths, etc.), some means must be found to maintain incentives to enter while at the same time ensuring the existence of sufficient offices to sustain careers. Two alternative solutions to this problem are available: rapid succession within the career combined with relatively early and well-defined retirement; or expansion of the number of offices on a sufficiently predictable basis. The first is risky since it reduces incentives to enter unless there is high retirement pay or the organizational career is extended by a second career in the private or semipublic sectors. In either case, there is strong pressure for internal growth (Marris 1964; Williamson 1975:120; Marshall 1932:321–22), which entails further specialization and differentiation driven by career demand pressures.

In sum, the organizationally oriented pattern of bureaucratic organization derives and owes its character to the condition of high uncertainty that surrounds political leadership following a total or critical succession of leadership. The necessity for newly emergent leaders to organize their status and power in a ruleful fashion leads them to engage in a strategy that eventually results in a rationalization of political and administrative roles.

The aim of the strategy is not the rationalization of role. Rather the strategy seems to center on the autonomy of the administrative role. The aim of establishing this autonomy is to safeguard political leadership from the volatility of public opinion and choice. The goal of this strategy is achieved through the creation of the organizationally dominated and protected administrative role. This organizational orientation resolves many of the problems facing new political leaders by providing an institutional arrangement that isolates them from environmental risks—it provides them with continuity of power, authority, and legitimacy without serious challenges from other sources. From the point of view of the organizational members, the role structure provides high incentives for early organizational career commitment—direct entry into the higher levels of administration, highly predictable careers, and a minimal upward mobility.

**Bureaucratic Autonomy, Accountability, and Integration Under Conditions of High Uncertainty**

This strategy, however, has certain defects. Not the least of these is the blurring of the line between administration and politics—or rather the attempt to substitute the former for the latter. This must, over time, create serious problems for political succession at the highest levels. The rationalization of
the administrative role provides for orderly succession at all levels of political leadership except the very highest. The absence of other institutions that might play a mediating role in selecting the highest levels of policymakers can only produce ad hoc succession arrangements. Who will select the selectors? The bureaucratic role structure that has emerged under these conditions is clearly loath to hand this privilege over to outsiders. Yet, by its very nature, bureaucratic structure is incapable of providing adequate rules for determining its ultimate leaders. This condition arises because at the penultimate level of bureaucratic hierarchy there can be no internal bureaucratic criteria for distinguishing between possible ultimate leaders. Presumably, everyone at the penultimate level shares the same characteristics. Any selection from among them by themselves would appear to be arbitrary and based upon nonbureaucratic role characteristics. This kind of system must lead to the creation of factionalism within the bureaucracy as the system for selecting leaders. Selections will be made on the basis of the number of followers who can be organized to support a particular individual.

If factionalism within the bureaucracy is the system for selection of leaders, then the penultimate leaders who do not get selected must somehow be rewarded or consoled. If not, they may join together to eliminate the victor. The nature of the consolation is powerfully constrained by the factional system. The ones who get to the top must maintain the group that was responsible for getting them there or else they risk being eliminated by other factions. The reward for those left behind must be to continue to hold high office and thus maintain factional offices. All of this clearly subverts the basic incentive system within the bureaucracy. If factional membership is determinant, career structure predictability declines. Furthermore, as factionalism comes to dominate, the resulting lower levels of predictability produce a decline in the legitimacy of the organization. Advancement comes to have less and less of a public character. Soon, bureaucratic office is seen as the means for fulfilling private rather than public interests.

There are several solutions to the above problem. One solution is to create or encourage the creation of a single authority, external to the bureaucracy, who selects the ultimate leaders—an emperor or an imperial president. This clearly has dangers since a single authority with such power must have support from sources outside the bureaucracy or else he or she will be perceived as pursuing a self- or bureaucratic interest at the expense of the public interest. To reduce the single authority to no more than a symbol is to recreate the problem. The result may thus be that a single authority will represent external interests and constantly seek to reform the bureaucratic structure. Furthermore, this solution is notoriously unstable since an individual with such power cannot afford to make big mistakes as this undermines the charismatic authority that renders such positions tenable.

A second solution is to allow an outside institution, which itself is organized around limited access to eligibility and leadership and utilizes or shares bureaucratic values, to make the selections. The problem here, of course, is how to create such an institution in an environment in which equality of standards or educational/expertise merit is the means used to select leadership in all organizations. The same problem of ultimate leadership selection would emerge here as in the case of an administrative bureaucratic organization—there would have to be some mechanism for selecting leaders external to the organization. Only by gaining a monopoly over the representation and organization of private interests can such an organization avoid being held accountable to external authority, if not power. Under these conditions, the public bureaucracy becomes subsumed by the outside organization. The bureaucratic role maintains autonomy only in the sense that membership in both organizations is acquired.

Another solution, not quite so disastrous from the point of view of bureaucrats who seek to dominate political leadership institutionally, is to have outside organizations that do not have a monopoly over private interest make the selection of ultimate leaders. Since the absence of monopoly produces competitive organizations, such organizations should only be periodic visitors to positions where they make the selections of ultimate bureaucratic leaders. Thus, while they may make selections and perhaps politicize the highest levels of officials to some degree, episodic possession of power by such organizations leaves the bureaucratic organization largely in control of itself. The bureaucracy and bureaucratic leaders become indispensable as parties or other organizations go in and out of the revolving door of power.

The main problem for organizations such as political parties is that arriving at a position of power is coincident with attempting to structure the means to remain in power. Attempts will be made to bend the bureaucracy to the will of the organization. One of the means for doing so is to hold out the promise of promotion to individual bureaucrats. But this has only limited effect since political leaders have no stick to go along with the carrot. Any attempt to change the bureaucratic structure drastically is not only likely to create resistance among bureaucratic leaders, it is also likely to open Pandora's box for those who seek to make the change since such attempts appear to be incited by self-interest. The result is likely to be an uneasy standoff unless one of the parties or organizations can gain sufficient support from private actors for a long period of time—sufficiently long enough, that is, to produce a pattern of cooperation between this external organization
and the public bureaucracy. If this occurs, then bureaucratic role autonomy will be maintained in return for bureaucratic cooperation in implementing choices made by leaders of the external organization.

Any or all of the above resolutions, it is reasonable to assume, can occur over time after the institutionalization of the organizationally oriented bureaucratic structure. In the most general sense, which outcome occurs would seem to depend on the degree to which, at any point in time, the bureaucracy or external parties or organizations are the primary means for organizing and defining leadership and of creating monopolies or near monopolies over private interest. When the bureaucracy has such a monopoly, whether by intent or default, imperial solutions to the problem of external accountability seem most likely. When a single external institution holds a monopoly, the party/bureaucracy solution appears to be the most likely result. Where no single organization has a monopoly, a co-optive solution seems the most likely to emerge.

The Strategy of Low Uncertainty

At the other end of the spectrum of uncertainty are those conditions in which there are clear and systematic rules for determining the succession of political leaders and decision-makers. There are a number of systems governing decision-making roles which do so with a clear and systematic body of rules: dynastic, oligarchic, chieftainship, elective, as well as bureaucratic. None of these eliminates uncertainty about succession altogether, although some dynastic or chieftainship rules have probably come quite close. Here, however, we are concerned with open elective systems because events and developments since the nineteenth century have tended to limit low uncertainty situations to well-defined electoral systems. Furthermore, elective systems, even under limited suffrage, have greater uncertainty than other rule-bound systems for selecting leadership. Where voters have choices, the rules may carefully prescribe the process of selecting eligibles and the winners but they do not provide certainty of outcomes. In this situation, the rules provide legitimacy. What is primarily at stake for political leaders is acquiring and/or retaining their elective official roles and the accompanying status and power.

Prior to rationalization, political leadership and official roles in elective systems tend to be structured around the capacity to organize votes pure and simple. This would seem to make it inevitable that parties of some kind will emerge if only as a means by which candidates seek to reduce uncertainties about voter choices. Among other things, parties play an important role in attempting to reduce the possible volatility of voters when they are left to their own devices. In a sense, parties are partly a response to a "market fail-
means for either participants or observers to decide whether distributive decisions are made on the basis of private (individual and party) or public interest. As a result of this ambiguity, the decisions of those in power, whether elected or appointed, are seen as somehow fulfilling the requirements of all three interests. Failure to make such distinctions or to have criteria by which to distinguish these areas allows those out of power to pose challenges on the basis of legitimacy. Individuals or parties out of power may well argue that choices made on the basis of loyalty ignore the possibility and probability of these three levels of interest being in conflict. The fuzziness of the boundaries between these three levels of interest makes it difficult to predict outcomes of policy choices as they are implemented by individuals. At the same time, administrative officials are open to the charge that since they came by their positions through personal and party loyalty, it is not unreasonable to assume that their decisions will be heavily influenced by patron and party goals, to the detriment of the public interest. Those in power are thus open to the charge of using public resources to corrupt the rules governing political leadership succession.

Role ambiguity is not the only problem arising from the utilization of loyalty as the criterion for administrative leadership. As the determinant of eligibility, loyalty does little to provide a basis for general agreement as to how decisions made by elective leaders ought to be implemented. Party or individual loyalty provides little homogeneity with regard to administrative practice. This is a sure way to create conflict and uncertainty over how policy decisions are to be carried out. This kind of uncertainty is crucial for elected leaders since failure to fulfill their promises may have unhappy consequences for their incumbency. In short, the absence of assurance that appropriate distribution of public goods will take place raises the question of accountability of administrative officials to elected public leaders—another stick with which opponents may beat incumbents.

A final problem arising from the dependence on loyalty and patronage is the difficulty of distinguishing between degrees of loyalty. This difficulty creates the problem of allocating positions. Not only does this problem make it difficult to allocate offices in hierarchical terms, but it also creates the equally difficult problem of trying to decide who should get a position and who should not. There will always be more claimants for rewards than available offices. Any set of choices by a patron or a party must produce some discontent and competition, which in turn produces intraparty conflict. Electoral victory produces intraparty tensions wherever patronage is the means for determining eligibility for administrative leadership.

The uncertainties of party stem from the unhappy fact that voter contracts also produce the inability to predict whether voters will fulfill their part of the bargain. Unpredictability of voter behavior is raised by at least two situations: major shifts in voters' preferences or major expansion of the electorate. For those who come to power as a consequence of one or the other kind of major shift, the unpredictability of their victory can only be disquieting. Once exhibited, voter volatility must be viewed with as much concern by the victors as by the vanquished since it portends the possibility of their own arbitrary dismissal from power. The victors face a real dilemma. They cannot know whether the major shift in voters' preferences is relatively long term or merely a short-term deviation from preceding patterns. How to reduce this particular form of uncertainty is crucial. Political leaders cannot rely on the tried and true patterns of patronage politics and distribution since they seem, in part at least, to be discredited or rendered obsolete by the major shift of votes. The whole structure of administrative office-holding comes under powerful scrutiny as it no longer seems to perform the function for which it was intended.

The resolution of these problems would seem to be a resort to bureaucratization or, rather, the rationalization of the administrative structure. In the first instance, the problems raised by the utilization of loyalty as the criterion for appointment to administrative positions would seem to lead to bureaucratic resolutions. In terms of goal conflicts between personal, party, and public interests that raise the question of legitimacy, the only alternative would seem to be to resort to rules governing decision making and implementation that clearly draw a line between public and private goals. What kind of rules and criteria for office-holding would not only provide for such a distinction but also serve given problems of being unable to distinguish clearly between degrees of loyalty, of homogeneity of training, and the allocation of offices? The difficulty is that this body of rules must also have the capacity of maintaining an open and flexible role structure. That is, the rule system cannot result in the creation of an autonomous bureaucratic role capable of resisting the demands of political leaders.

The only solution appears to be a set of rules governing the selection of officials which requires that they possess: (1) a systematic capacity to distinguish between subjective and objective rationality—some sort of internal accounting mechanism that provides criteria for making the distinction; (2) an expertise based on the possession of knowledge about the relationship of specific actions to specific consequences; and, (3) a set of rules governing the accountability of administrative officials to elected ones. These rule systems seem to solve all of the problems mentioned above. The rules governing eligibility for office reduce the problem of too many claimants by introducing discriminatory criteria; they eliminate or reduce the problem of goal conflicts by specifying what kinds of information may be used in making deci-
sions and by specifying the procedures for reducing opportunism; these rules also reduce the problem of administrative conflict by specifying or implying a uniform pre-entrance training.

Not surprisingly, this strategy helps to resolve the problem of voter volatility. It does so by establishing the grounds for internalizing functions. Utilizing a system of objective knowledge that is public in character as the basis for decision making makes it possible for elected leaders to shift the ground on how to achieve their constituents' satisfaction without doing violence to the public interest. They do so by arguing that objective knowledge provides a superior, more efficient way of relating actions to consequences. From this position they must proceed to the conflation of society to the single individual. Just as individuals have the right to order preferences that maximize their utility, so do societies have the same right, indeed, the obligation to do so.

Once this shift occurs, political leaders move to internalize functions on the grounds that the public interest cannot otherwise be achieved. This internalization process reduces the number of issues over which voters have a chance to make choices. An increasing number of choices are viewed as technical and administrative in character. In this process, voter choices become increasingly choices about leaders rather than about issues. This narrows the range of choices over which voters may exhibit volatility. By making more issues subject to objective rules and a system of objective knowledge, party leadership at once legitimizes its claim to act in the public interest and at the same time reduces the number of issues over which voter realignment or the attraction of first-time voters may take place. Moving major issues from the realm of politics and debate to that of "scientific" administration and expertise becomes the hallmark of political reform.

What occasions these reforms? Under well-defined rule systems there do not seem to be great incentives for political leaders to leave the well-charted waters of patronage for the impersonal and unknown ones of rational bu- reaucratization. Two possible answers are suggested by the conditions of administration under elective systems. The first is the challenge and charge of corruption. Corruption becomes an engine of rationalization under those circumstances where political parties contest relatively evenly for political power and rights to patronage. Where party loyalty dominates in the appointment of administrative leaders, the "outs" have a ready-made issue with which to appeal to voters. The problem is especially acute when there are few other issues around which the outs can organize. Party contestation, then, may drive elective leaders gradually toward attempts to distinguish clearly between individual, party, and public interests, even though rationalizing the administrative role may be the last thing they desire.

A second driving force is the problem of providing sufficient offices for patronage. The success of patronage organizations may carry within it the seeds of subversion. Success attracts more and more demands and the very ambiguity of the criterion for selection makes it extraordinarily difficult to make clear-cut distinctions about who does and does not deserve an appointment. The highly personal character of the criterion (the evidence for party loyalty is the evocation of support from party leaders) makes it very difficult to find a rational system of patronage allocation. Over time, especially in a system with a growing electorate and a growing number of patronage positions, the demands must become increasingly importunate and a source of divisiveness among party leaders.

Party contestation and patronage are incremental and developmental forces arising out of the very nature of political parties. A third driving force toward rationalization, however, arises out of specific contingent historical moments that are related to the structural properties of parties but do not arise directly from their structural characteristics. This factor is the well-articulated rule system's approximation of the "revolutionary moment." The wholesale addition of voters to the rolls either by group or individual enfranchisement or the wholesale shift in preferences of voters produces major moments of leadership uncertainty. As I have suggested earlier, such major shifts or large additions to the electorate are as worrisome to the winners as to the losers since they must now seek to understand the sources of the shift and the means to maintain its orientation. This would seem to suggest a strategy to further rationalization of the administrative role. Removing controversial issues from the public arena and removing offices from the elective and patronage arena and placing them within the administrative structure are strategies that seem to arise logically from such situations. Thus major moments of electoral change would seem to be followed almost always by attempts to reform administration.

In this tactic, elected political leaders are led to a distributive conception of utilitarianism. Elected leaders who are unable to rely on the party mechanism, especially patronage, to distribute public goods and unable to gain a monopoly or near monopoly over private interests are forced to argue that the social means of distribution may be conflated to the position of the individual. If they wish to reduce uncertainty about incumbency, and they lack the other alternatives, they must take the view that just as it is rational for individuals to organize means of maximizing the fulfillment of their desires, so it is right for society to organize means of maximizing the net balance of satisfaction over all members of society. Accepting this conflationary principle would seem to require: (1) a conception of the public policymaker as one who is capable of translating revealed choices into a system of priorities and; (2) a public policy implementor who is capable of predicting the
appropriate means by which such priorities can be implemented to maximize
the net balance of satisfaction taken over all of society’s members. The latter
must be an impartial spectator who possesses the capacity of determining the
one best way of organizing the distribution of public goods so as to meet the
system of desires organized by elected officials.

Endowed with ideal powers of rational instrumentality, this individual is
one who selects the best way to achieve the distribution of public goods. The
impartial spectator would thus seem to be required to possess a body of or-
ganized knowledge that has the capacity to predict the outcomes of specific
courses of action. In this conception of society, to paraphrase our earlier
Rawls quote (1971:26–27), separate individuals are thought of as so many
different lines along which rights and duties have been acquired (rather than
assigned by the administrator) and scarce means of satisfaction allocated in
accordance with rules so as to give the greatest fulfillment. Here the correct
decision is essentially a question of efficient administration of the allocation
rather than the priority process. In effect, administration comes to be sub-
stituted for the politics of distribution rather than the politics of preferences.
Delegating the administration of distribution completely to a corp of homoge-
neous officials whose roles are autonomous and committed to the organiza-
tional structure would deprive elected politicians of the means to or-
ganize voters in any significant fashion. Loss of discretion with regard to
policies of distribution of public goods would tend to undermine the struc-
ture of party roles. Yet, when faced with the continuing problems of leader-
ship homogeneity, publicness, and accountability of the administrative role,
the party or elected leader must move to some form of rationalization of the
administrative role.

The central problem as seen from the point of view of elected officials is
how to devise an administrative role that is not anchored in an organization
over which administrators themselves have control. The only strategy avail-
able for elected leaders here is to utilize some existing social roles that already
possess the basic elements of publicness and expertise but are not rooted in
organizational structures directly related to the public bureaucracy. The
professional role in low-uncertainty societies like the United States and Great
Britain meet these criteria. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth cen-
turies, the role came to be organized around: (1) a conception of public service;
(2) the possession of a body of specialized knowledge and training that is
“scientifically” based; (3) the possession of a distinctive ethic of role behav-
ior, especially with regard to the way in which knowledge and information
may be used to arrive at decisions; (4) the capacity for self-regulation arising
out of the internalization of codes of behavior; and (5) the creation, within
a community of professionals, of an organization that produces a monopoly

or near monopoly over the supply of trained service (Larson 1977; Millerson
1964; Cogan 1953; Goode 1957; Freidson 1970:78; Elliot and Kuhn 1978).

The distinctiveness of the professions appears to be founded on the combina-
tion of these general dimensions. These uncommon occupations tend to become
‘real’ communities, whose members share a relatively permanent affiliation, an
identity, personal commitment, specific interests, and general loyalties. (Larson
1977:x)

The commitment is to a loosely organized community of status and identity
centered on the professional organization, the professional school, and a self-
administered code of ethics. Professionalism is broadly defined since it is
never stated with precision and evidence how long, how theoretical, or how
specialized training must be in order to qualify (Freidson 1970:78). The
breadth of this definition allows the elected political leader leeway to change
the criteria of the administrative role depending on the conditions or prob-
lems that arise.

The major difference between this strategy and the one adopted in the
high uncertainty case is that the professional role rather than the bureau-
cratic administrative organization comes to represent the public interest. By
emphasizing or encouraging the acquisition of expertise by individuals
rather than by organization, political leaders undermine the capacity of bu-
reaucratic organizations and their leaders to lay claim to a monopoly of ex-
pertise. Where expertise is structured by individual possession of the appro-
riate skills and knowledge to make decisions, organizations are less central
to the process of ordering information. Expertise often exists outside of or-
ganizations. Thus, insofar as elected leaders can claim professional status
they appear to have the capacity and legitimacy to intervene in or govern the
administrative process. Or, to the extent that elected and administrative
leaders share professional status, they may come to share the same views
about policy and policy-making. In either case, resorting to the structure of
professional autonomy makes it possible for the elected leader to retain con-
siderable discretion over the administrative role.

The problem for elected leaders in this situation is one of incentives. Pro-
fessional status has a built-in incentive structure that is oriented toward in-
dividual autonomy. The most important elements of the incentive structure
are: self-regulation, the ability to practice the profession in a self-determined
way (in the sense that practitioners collectively determine the nature of their
practice); the ability to select a specialized area of competency; and the abili-
ty to gain high individual rewards. Any incentive structure aimed at attract-
ing people to administrative roles must stress most of the elements that make
up individual occupational autonomy and professional practice. If the indi-
individual is to be allowed to retain the basic elements of the professional role, then the administrative structure must take on a very different look than is the case under high-uncertainty strategies.

With this emphasis on individual capacity and discretion, career flexibility becomes a central attribute of administrative structures emerging out of low-uncertainty situations. This flexibility may be reflected in a number of structural characteristics: lateral entry, interdepartmental mobility, greater range of vertical mobility, and mobility across public and private organizations. These characteristics reflect the greater leeway that may be given individuals entering the upper levels of civil bureaucracies. The flexibility of career that these characteristics indicate is a recognition of the professional status—the capacity of the individual to utilize his training and expertise in a variety of settings. It is recognition that the individual is not a mere "clerk" or "employee" serving as a cog in a large organization.

Building incentives around an individually acquired status has great consequences for the structure of higher administrative roles. There is less emphasis on career predictability since the career is tied to the professional role rather than to any organizational one. People have careers as doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc., and these can take place in a number of settings. The professional status assures the individual of a social and often an economic role. The result must be that there is less emphasis on the necessity for insuring high payoffs through a highly specified career structure. Professional skills that are not narrowly oriented toward one specific organization but are generalizable throughout the society means alternatives are available to individuals at varying stages of their careers. This means, in effect, that the bureaucratic administration need not be overly concerned with maintaining rigid hierarchical structures of offices.

At the same time the desire on the part of elected officials to avoid creating a bureaucratic structure that controls the definition of eligibility and appointment leads them to encourage professionalism. Elected political leaders will provide direct and indirect subsidies for universities and professional schools, for professional associations, and, perhaps most important, will grant the power of self-regulation and monopoly over the provision of services. It is in this manner that they provide the institutional basis for professional careers. The payoff for the individual is admission to a professional role and only secondarily to an organizational role. The administrative structure confirms this by emphasizing the characteristics of the professional role. In other words, elected officials seek to avoid creating a powerful autonomous administrative role by turning to and encouraging the professional role with its characteristics of built-in incentives and individual autonomy.

The recognition of professional status does appear to require the incentive of entry directly into a relatively high level of administrative office. This is a function not only of providing an incentive to overcome the cost of training but also of recognizing the status of the professional. It follows from this that distinctions in entry level will be oriented toward the possession of professional credentials. Indeed, the logical outcome of stressing professional certification is to specify the qualifications required for specific positions. This has a number of likely consequences. First, it would make lateral entry—entry at a number of points instead of only one—an acceptable characteristic. People enter to take positions for which they are qualified as professionals. Under these conditions, individuals may or may not move to other offices. They may stay put, they may advance, they may move laterally to other similar offices, they may simply leave and never return, or they may leave and return after acquiring more skills and hold a higher office; a large number of alternatives are possible under this kind of professional incentive system.

A second likely consequence of the emphasis on professional credentials is that less attention will be paid to seniority and hierarchy. Because high levels of predictability about career are of less importance than possession of professional credentials, seniority is likely to be important but not crucial. It is the varying levels of professional expertise and certification that are crucial. Since these levels may vary considerably from individual to individual, they provide a means of differentiating between people when promotions are at stake. Hierarchy is also likely to take on less importance since professional roles have referent points outside of the organization that are more important in determining status. Organizational hierarchy will therefore play a lesser role in determining status—it may help confirm it but that is about all. What is more probable is that hierarchy in this mode of bureaucratization will reflect the social hierarchy of status accorded to the various professions, and within the profession it will reflect the criteria (publications, for example) used to establish professional standing.

Hierarchy will also suffer because of the difficulty in imposing power over people with specialized training. Specialized knowledge and training give its holder the opportunity to withhold it when placed under pressure—information impactedness is difficult to overcome under conditions where the knowledge may be somewhat arcane. To put it the other way around, the internalized ethic and specialized training of the professional requires less in the way of rules for defining their discretion; at least this would seem so from the professional's point of view. Heavy dependence on rules to define role behavior would seem to be a real disincentive given the individual autonomy orientation of professionals.
The professionally oriented pattern of bureaucratization outlined here emerges, I have argued, out of the problems that elected leaders face in seeking to secure their incumbency in the face of equally legitimate challengers. Over time, especially within the context of modern economic development and change, the primary mechanism of party organization—patronage—creates severe problems of publicness as well as rulefulness in the distribution of patronage and public goods. At different times, these problems are greatly exacerbated by major shifts in voters' preferences or the number of voters. These problems lead elected political leaders to engage in strategies of rationalization of patronage appointments. This overall strategy has as its aim limiting the autonomy of the administrative role. To do so allows elected leaders to continue to have discretion over the allocation of resources that will ensure their reelection. Their aim is to continue to dominate the administrative structure and bend it to political will. This is achieved by creating an administrative role organized around existing professional roles or which incorporates major aspects of these roles.

The professional orientation resolves the problem faced by elected leaders by providing an institutional arrangement that insulates them from charges of corruption and at the same time provides them with a well-defined means of distributing public goods. Equally important, this resolution produces a bureaucratic structure that, on the face of it, seems to have little capacity to assert its own will or interests. The professional role with its lack of organizational commitment, its emphasis on individual autonomy, and its roots in external (private) social and economic organization seems to provide a nice foil for elected officials seeking to avoid loss of control over administrative structure. Recruiting professionals seems to provide a corps of administrators and a structure of administration which would be highly instrumentally oriented but which would lack an organizational ethos or monopoly of expertise that might serve to challenge the power and legitimacy of elected leaders. From the point of view of the organization’s members, the administrative structure provides incentives by recognizing and rewarding professional status or by conferring professional status on those who have not completely followed the social and educational canons of professionalism. In short, low uncertainty for political leaders produces, over time, an organization with low boundaries and high permeability. The organization is easily penetrable because it shares a role structure readily found in society at large. The bureaucratic administrative structure in itself has no distinctive character that would allow it to make special claims about representing and formulating the public interest. This capacity is shared with all those organizations which systematically use professionals to staff the highest levels of their bureaucracies.

The solution described above is not without its drawbacks. The central problem is accountability. How can elected officials be sure that administrators will organize the distribution of public resources in ways that will help, or at least not threaten, their incumbencies? Control over budget does not seem to have much leverage since failure to allocate funds will surely hurt elected officials as much or almost as much as administrators. Budget manipulation seems to be too gross an instrument. Specifying by legislation the way in which distribution should be carried out seems to have equally great dangers. First, there is no possible way to stipulate every contingency. Administrators will thus continue to have discretion. Furthermore, attempts to specify the contingencies may lead to intensification of conflicts among elected officials. The problem for officials arises from the absence of agreement as to which contingencies ought to be spelled out and how they are to be met. There does not seem to be a way in which formal rules can resolve the problem of close oversight and accountability.

If we turn to informal solutions, the only strategy that seems available is to attempt to make administrative officials share the same distributive aims as elected officials. There are several ways this might be achieved. One solution would be to select the very senior civil servants on the basis of their party membership. In effect, party leaders have a veto power over administrative appointments. The problem with this solution is that party turnover, if frequent, results in the turnover of senior civil servants. This has the effect of pushing real power in the administrative structure down to those middle-level officials whose stay in office is relatively unaffected by party turnover. The problem of accountability is thus not resolved. Even if party turnover is infrequent, lack of tenure for those at the very top produces lower incentives for people to want such offices except as a step to a postservice career. Lower incentives will produce high administrative turnover even if party turnover is not rapid. This allows administrative power to descend to middle-level officials as in the first strategy. In this sense, party can no longer serve to bridge the gap between elected and appointed officials. Where party once helped to guarantee a minimal homogeneity of policy aims and implementation among elected and appointed officials, expertise and the resort to professional criteria remove that constraint. Elected officials are condemned to use ad hoc measures to enforce accountability if party continues to be the reference point for appointment of officials.

A second solution to the accountability problem is to select higher administrative officials using criteria similar to that which emerges for elected offi-
sional training are one solution. However, it is only a solution where elected leaders are themselves selected by this criterion. In the long run, this must create some ambiguity about the role of political parties as the structures for selecting political leadership. If education is the primary sifting mechanism for eligibles, then parties become increasingly secondary devices for reducing the number of eligibles. They become secondary to the occupational and status structures determined by advanced education.

Conclusion: High and Low Uncertainty Strategies

The two modes in which the administrative role has been institutionalized may be viewed, then, as the result of strategies of response to two central problems of politics in the nineteenth century. In both strategies of response, equality played a catalytic role. The two problems were leadership succession and leadership organization. The different outcomes with regard to administrative structure and role are the result of variation in the level of uncertainty about leadership succession. Within these two categories, variation in the nature of political leadership organization at the beginning of the process accounts for the differences in the way the administrative role is integrated into the political structure. Where rules concerning leadership selection and succession are in the process of being transformed—as is the case following total or critical successions of political leadership—high uncertainty over holding power, characterized by the absence of rules of succession and the absence or presence of formal leadership organization and role definition, is the major constraint on putative leaders as they seek to reduce the uncertainties these aspects produce.

Where the uncertainty is high and is combined with the absence of formal leadership role organization or definition, the strategies are carried out by individuals held together by social networks. Such groups attempt to remove similarly organized groups by pursuing a strategy of establishing a set of formal rules governing leadership roles and succession over which they alone have dominion. Autonomy and insulation of the leaders is the central goal, and this produces a set of choices leading to the organizationally oriented administrative role that dominates all forms of political leadership. By monopolizing both the criteria for leadership and the organizational structure of succession, political leaders transform the privateness of social network into the publicness of administrative bureaucratic organization. This form of administrative rationalization is the means by which political leaders, lacking and seeking to avoid any formal organization such as political parties, proceed to perpetuate themselves organizationally. This particular relationship between succession and organization of leaders produces an administrative structure that must create a claim to a monopoly over political leadership.
This is so since the organizational structure of leadership is now centered on the publicness of the organization and its consequent knowledge of the public interest.

The relationship and structure of the administrative bureaucracy shifts somewhat when the organizational structure of leadership changes. Where there is a well-defined structure of leadership organization, such as a party, under conditions of high uncertainty, the strategy of rationalization is similar to the one described above. The main difference lies in the party leaders' desire to retain the party as the means for determining administrative eligibility and insuring accountability of implementation. The primary aim of the party under the conditions of total or critical succession is to remove challenges to power. Party leaders seek organizational rather than social network dominance and definition of information by a single party, their own. In doing so, party leaders distinguish between publicness or commitment to the public interest based on the representativeness of party and the publicness based on the collectively structured information characteristic of a rationalized administrative bureaucracy. In this strategy the aim of party leaders is to perpetuate party leadership by using it as the means for determining higher administrative positions (see the admirable description of this process in Gill 1990). In this sense, the party is the functional analogue of the bureaucracy in the preceding case—it is the means by which political leaders organize themselves and determine the rules for political succession. By utilizing the single-party dominance over administration, party leaders create a closed system of accountability and administrative career in which party and administrative leadership are synonymous.

Where uncertainty over political succession is low, where there are well-regulated rules for determining succession and leadership is organized on the basis of social networks, then the strategies of political leaders are aimed at reducing the uncertainties raised by the volatility of voters by displacing major contests over public policy. This is achieved by rationalization of the administrative structure based on a preprofessional training which holds high social status. Leadership organization here is based on social status as indicated by preprofessional training. Elected political leadership and administrative leadership are viewed as professional careers differentiated by a selection process—one elective, the other appointive. Both require the same standard of eligibility: a high-status educational experience. The strategy of elected political leaders here is aimed at producing a bureaucratic structure which is not autonomous but which is not easily permeated. At the same time, elected political leaders do not seek to use political party organization as the primary means for organizing political leadership. The main aim of party organization is to organize legislative voting. The shared exclusive edu-

By 1988, these were high-status political leaders and the main exception to the bureaucratic structure that is viewed as synonymous with the creation of a professional career. Service throughout the organization is what produces the professional, not prior training.

Finally, there is the low-uncertainty situation, characteristic of open elective systems, combined with the presence of formal structures of leadership organization, such as competitive political parties. The strategy of elective political leaders when faced with the problems raised by the conflicts of party contestation is directed, as in the preceding case, to the rationalization of administration in order to displace conflicts over public interest. The prior existence of party organization of leadership, however, produces a strategy aimed at maintaining the subordination of administrative office to party leadership. However, the inability to continue using party leadership as the means of determining administrative eligibility leads political leaders to utilize the existing structure of professional status as the criteria for appointment. The result is an administrative structure centered on job specification rather than organizational career.

What I have argued here is that there are two major modes of rational bureaucratic organization, determined in the first instance by the variable of uncertainty—high and low. Analysis of the two possible strategies and their outcomes leads to the conclusion that each strategy also had, in the second instance, two possible outcomes, depending on the nature of political leadership organization prior to rationalization of the bureaucratic role. This second strategy emerges as a consequence of analyzing the difficulties of strategies in overcoming the problem of securing accountability of rationalized administrative roles to political leaders. There appear to be two basic strategies for securing a resolution to this problem, depending on the structure of leadership organization. This variable has two distinct modes. One is a structure of leadership based on informal social networks. These have systematic eligibility characteristics, usually derived from shared aspects of social status. In these structures, little attention is paid to formal organization of the network. Indeed, the attempt is often made to avoid calling attention to what appears to be private criteria for exclusion. Accountability is secured through visible social status and experience of political administrative leaders. The second mode is based on the formal organization of leadership, principally through political parties. The criteria for eligibility are public and well defined. Parties come to have explicit rules about entrance and selection for posts within the organization. Anyone who meets the criteria set by the rules may enter the party and seek access to its leadership structure. Election, sen-
iority, and merit are some of the criteria used in determining party leadership. Accountability is assured through the intermingling of party leadership with administrative leadership. That is, party leadership assumes positions of administrative leadership according to well-understood rules.

The two outcomes, the organizationally oriented and professionally oriented roles, are thus each further determined by a second element—the presence or absence of formal leadership organizations. This second instance produces two types within each mode. This can produce the usual four-cell typology as shown in Table 3.1.

Thus, high uncertainty, when joined with a political leadership based on informal social networks, results in the organizationally oriented bureaucratic role. Accountability is achieved through political leadership acceptance of high levels of bureaucratic autonomy based on Weberian-like internal rules of organization. Political leaders accept the arrangement since they have common social networks that allow bureaucratic leaders to move into positions of political leadership. Examples of this type are Japan in the pre-World War II period and Germany in the pre-Nazi period and, to some extent, in the postwar era as well. High uncertainty combined with party-organized political leadership produces single-party dominated, organizationally oriented bureaucracies. Accountability is assured by party organization of rules governing the selection of political leaders as senior administrators. Examples of this type are the former Soviet Union and other similar states dominated by the Communist Party where some form of nomenklatura provides for the systematic selection of party leaders for administrative posts. Nazi Germany might also be viewed as falling into this category, although a nomenklatura did not exist to translate party status into administrative status in a systematic way. Postrevolutionary France may also be in-

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<th>LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE</th>
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<td><strong>High Uncertainty</strong></td>
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</table>

The various assemblies that were the inheritors of the Third Estate acted, in effect, like a pre-existing party, which served to organize leadership.

When low uncertainty is combined with social-network organized leadership, the outcome is the professionally oriented role where the bureaucracy is dominated by a party system. Accountability of the bureaucratic role is assured by the homogeneity of the political and administrative leaders' educational experience and its accompanying socialization and status. Political and administrative leaders share the same understandings of the nature of professional responsibility and adhere to the same rules governing the use of information. Early twentieth-century Great Britain and Canada are examples of this outcome. Combining low uncertainty with a pre-existing structure of leadership organized on the basis of political party produces a professionally oriented outcome in which a party system dominates. Accountability is maintained by party appointment of professionally trained party supporters to the senior administrative posts. The United States and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Switzerland are examples of this kind of accountability.

Finally, this chapter has relied on the idea of strategic choices by political leaders as the agency of rationalization. Strategic choice is not conceived, here, as a series of independent choices. Put another way, I do not view strategies as independent. Rather, in the descriptions set forth in this chapter, strategic choices are constrained by the chain of choices to which each belongs. A problem is seen by political leaders as producing a particular resolution, which, in turn, creates new problems calling for new solutions. This process continues until there is a relatively stable collection of solutions or a structural equilibrium. The outcome is highly constrained but not completely determined by the original set of choices. The uncertainty to which political leaders respond becomes internalized or endogenous to the structure that emerges from the original problems and their solutions. That is, external uncertainties—political uncertainties—may change from one generation of political leaders to another, but these are viewed as belonging to a general category of uncertainty to which the strategic choices made by predecessors were basically appropriate. Successive generations of political leaders view the cost of producing past solutions as being too high to replace them with a new set. Instead, they build on the structure of solutions already in existence. The uncertainty political leaders become most concerned with is that generated by problems arising from existing structure, which were the result of earlier strategic choices. The process ends when closure occurs within the structure. This is a condition each generation of political leaders seeks. It is achieved, however, only when the accountability of the senior administrators is reasonably assured. Once this has occurred, exogenous politi-
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cal uncertainty—perturbations in the political environment—tends to be subsumed under the existing structure with relatively little effect on the structure of the bureaucratic role. The equilibrium arrived at—the "rational" bureaucratic role—has become institutionalized at this point. It is more than an organizational artifact, it has become a social value.

PART TWO

Strategies of High Uncertainty