

BUREAUCRATIC ELITE, POLITICAL CULTURE, AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN BRAZIL

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INTRODUCTION

Technical bureaucratic neutrality and interest-based party politics have long constituted key issues in political philosophy and political theory. Whenever we emphasize one of these elements, either implicitly or explicitly, we necessarily affect the other, insofar as they are intimately linked. Indeed, from a broader perspective, any political culture – that is, any set of values and notions related to the political sphere – will display some sort of normative frame that relates bureaucracies and politics. Thus, for example, while liberal democratic thought posits a normative balance between these two elements, state corporatism argues for the technical and moral superiority of bureaucratic decision-making over party-based politics. In the communist model, the idea is to merge bureaucracy and the ruling party, therefore making any distinction between politics and administration superfluous.

In real life, the relations between bureaucracy and politics are always much more complex and fluid, as has been widely emphasized in the literature. The distinction between political and bureaucratic roles has nevertheless remained crucial, and the terms of interaction between the two are a key aspect when characterizing a given political order. The success of ongoing attempts to consolidate Latin American democracies and other democracies elsewhere will depend to some extent upon the relations between bureaucracy and politics.

For analytical purposes, we will focus here mainly on the bureaucratic actor, confronting this elite sector with other elite sectors, in particular with politicians. We will start from the simple assumption that democratization affects the role that bureaucrats play in politics, while at the same time we must bear in mind that bureaucratic behavior has its own

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decisive consequences on democratic consolidation. Taking this mutual interaction into account, we argue for the centrality of the political values and beliefs of bureaucratic elites. In other words, we contend that the political culture of a given bureaucracy is a key dimension that influences prospects for democratic consolidation. From this perspective, some important questions emerge: To what extent do the values and attitudes prevailing among bureaucrats converge with or diverge from those of other key actors in the political arena? How may differences or similarities between bureaucratic and other elite sectors affect the democratization process?

In the first section, we take the Latin American experience with bureaucratic authoritarianism as a framework of reference in speculating about the relations between bureaucracy and politics. In the second, we make a preliminary exploration of data from a recent survey conducted to identify the values and beliefs of sectors of the Brazilian elites. We compare bureaucrats to other elites, particularly to elected politicians, and explore their normative perceptions of political issues. Finally, in the third section we discuss possible implications of points of convergence and divergence in the political cultures of bureaucrats and politicians.

It is our contention that a thoughtful understanding of bureaucrats' normative and cognitive perceptions regarding policy and politics will both affect and be affected by newly established democracies. By being aware of this two-way causation, we may contribute to the chances for achieving successful democratic consolidation.

BUREAUCRACY IN POST-BUREAUCRATIC AUTHORITARIANISM

The alleged conflict between soulless neutrality and passionate partisanship has long channeled intellectual anxieties into the discussion of politics and administration. Weber's metaphoric images of an iron cage or of heartless specialists, contraposed to his heroic image of the responsible politician, are still powerful references in criticisms of bureaucracy. For the activist, the redemptive role of politics – whether organized through parties and unions or expressed in spontaneous political movements – constitutes the most efficient antidote to bureaucratic rigidity. For political scientists, the technical superiority of rational-legal bureaucracy over other forms of administration – another classic Weberian theme – makes it necessary to search for a compromise between politics and administration.

As has in fact been observed, in Weber's world view the conflict between bureaucracy and politics presents a dilemma for which no definitive resolution can actually be foreseen. Each one of the terms of the dispute

presupposes the other, and it is their permanent rivalry that remains our only fragile defense against either bureaucratic or political oppression. From a philosophical standpoint, the paradigmatic reference here is Mommsen's classic interpretation of Weber's "dialectic" between charisma and instrumentality (Mommsen, 1965). On a more theoretical level, the immediate reference is Etzioni-Halevy's (1983) discussion of bureaucracy as both an obstacle and a means to achieving democratic politics.

Academic clarifications aside, in real politics the terms of the interaction between bureaucracy and politics remain, at best, the subject of major controversies and disputes or, at worst, defined to the advantage of one side of the equation. The reader can easily conclude here that we are taking an explicitly normative stance, "at best" meaning "in liberal-democratic polities" and "at worst" meaning "in authoritarian polities." To be more precise, it is our contention that it is better for bureaucratic and political actors to be ruled by checks and balances of some sort than for one group simply to be subordinated to the other.

While the above normativity may make some uncomfortable or appear inappropriate, we hold that any academic discussion regarding the ongoing process of democratization in either the so-called Third or Second Worlds will have strong normative connotations. Furthermore, we argue that only by making this normativity explicit do we take our biases into proper account. Instead of concealing our preference for permanent competition between technical and political criteria over subordination of one to the other, we are better off making this preference explicit. The next move is then to indicate our reasons for this preference.

In modern times, whenever governments have sought to tilt the balance in favor of bureaucracy over competitive politics, they have in doing so resorted to some kind of rationalization, wherein they stress a need to overcome the partiality and divisiveness of interests. A centralized administrative body is alleged to be the most adequate way of taking into account the general interests of the nation, the people, or any other organic, holistic representation of society.

In Latin America's corporatist experiences, for example, a need to overcome the particularisms of party politics has often served to justify the allegedly technical and moral superiority of centralized, authoritarian regimes³. Moreover, the modernizing dictatorships of the recent past, characterized as **bureaucratic authoritarianism**, strongly favored administrative neutrality as a strategy for promoting economic growth and assuring political order (O'Donnell, 1973). Under such circumstances, a technocratic caste

3 On Latin American corporatism, see, for example, Stepan (1978).

clinging to top governmental positions was transformed into both a political and bureaucratic elite.

As analysts from different ideological persuasions agree, the suppression of open political competition will in practice politicize bureaucracy by transforming it into a natural space where privileges can be advanced and social discrimination enforced. In other words, instead of generating the alleged bureaucratic neutrality, the elimination of partisan politics contributes to politicizing bureaucracy, making it the privileged locus of interest disputes (Peters, 1981, p. 55-82).

If political neutrality cannot be enforced in a bureaucratic regime, it is also true that merely restoring party politics is not a sufficient condition for consolidating democracy. How bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic actors interact is an important clue to the way power is structured. As such, when we attempt to assess processes of democratic consolidation within what were formerly authoritarian orders, the ongoing re-definition of political and bureaucratic roles becomes a crucial dimension.

It is therefore surprising that the democratic transition literature has had so little to say about the interplay of politics and administration. True enough, the literature has contemplated the problem of how to accommodate old and new power holders, how to account for hard and soft liners, and so on. Yet there has been very little asked about how to assure bureaucratic accountability on the one hand while, on the other, eliminating pork-barrel politics.

Even less has been said in the democratic transition literature about the political culture of the elites in charge of consolidating democracy. As we have observed elsewhere (Reis, Cheibub, 1994), the cultural-ideological dimension has been widely neglected in the democratization debate. If values and beliefs have been taken into account at all, it has been as variables in addressing the legitimation issue. That is to say, the analysts have usually been concerned with the political culture of the masses. Whenever the focus is on the elites in charge of democratization, then political will, strategic choices, and structural and institutional constraints on action are the dimensions stressed.

In our view, the cultural-ideological dimension – where values and beliefs take shape – constitutes an important key to the behavior of bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic elites relevant to the democratization process. We contend that values and beliefs constitute a set of variable, structured patterns, much as one can speak of the institutional context as being a structured environment (Hays, 1994, p. 57-72). As such, identifying the normative views that different elite sectors hold about politics and administration becomes a crucial task. From the particular angle we defined

above, it does matter if bureaucratic elites and politicians do or do not hold to common basic values regarding democracy, policy priorities, market organization, and so on.

THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF TOP PUBLIC OFFICIALS

This section discusses the values and beliefs that members of the Brazilian elite hold concerning important dimensions of a democratic political order. Particular attention is paid to convergence and divergence between bureaucrats' and politicians' cognitive and normative perceptions. The data we use have been taken from a research project entitled "Strategic Elites, Political Culture, and Development," carried out at IUPERJ in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil⁴. Interviews took place between October 1993 and June 1994 and encompassed a sample of 320 individuals, who were members of one of four elite sectors commonly identified as key policy actors in Brazilian politics and policy: top public officials, elected politicians, business leaders, and labor union leaders⁵.

While we offer only a preliminary analysis here, we believe that this attempt to map out the values and beliefs of the Brazilian elites may point towards new research questions and hypotheses, which can in turn help to enhance our understanding of the process of democratic consolidation. We particularly believe that by making more explicit the meaning that different elite sectors attribute to democracy, we are taking an important step in evaluating the chances for conflict or cooperation between these sectors during construction of a democratic order.

4 This survey was a joint effort conducted at the Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas do Rio de Janeiro (IUPERJ) and at the Centro de Informaciones y Estudios del Uruguay (CIESU).

5 Since resource constraints as well as the continental size of Brazil prevented us from covering the entire country, we chose to concentrate on the nation's most well-developed areas. In the case of the business sector, the sample was thus selected from a list of the top 800 corporations and associations in Southern and Southeastern Brazil and the federal capital. The labor sample was drawn from a list of the largest unions and rural and urban labor associations within these same regions. In the case of the business and union sectors, organization presidents were selected as interviewees (except in a few cases, where the person in charge at the moment of contact was interviewed). Deputies and Senators were sampled according to both party membership and region of origin, while top Federal Government officials were chosen by Ministry (in the latter case, the person occupying the position at the moment of contact was interviewed). Our operational definition of "elite" was, thus, an institutional one, that is, an individual was considered to be part of the elites if he or she held a top position in a relevant institution.

Our first observation is that for the majority of the elites interviewed, Brazil is already a democracy. About two-thirds (65%) of our respondents take it for granted that Brazil is already a democratic order⁶. This is true whatever the sector in question: neither bureaucrats, politicians, nor business or union leaders revealed distinct patterns of response on this issue⁷. Using a fixed-choice question, we also asked our elite members to identify the major obstacles to democracy in Brazil. Table 1 summarizes their answers.

The most noticeable point of consensus found in Table 1 is that the elites feel a return to military rule is inconceivable: not a single elite member entertains the possibility of military intervention. Yet the general picture suggests significant perceptual differences across elite sectors when it comes to the other major factors threatening democratic consolidation. Given the purpose of this paper, we will concentrate on a comparison of top public officials and politicians, although a close look at Table 1 makes evident a sharp divergence between the perceptions of business and union leaders as well.

The most important obstacle identified by politicians, namely “high levels of poverty and social inequality,” was ranked second by top public officials, the large percentage differences between their answers notwithstanding. The paramount obstacle for the bureaucratic elite, “low educational level of the population,” was also somewhat salient for members of the political elite. However, the ranking of other obstacles suggests a somewhat divergent pattern between bureaucrats and politicians, particularly when the obstacle touches on aspects directly related to these sectors’ own role definitions.

Thus, for example, about one-third of elected politicians (30.8%) considered a “lack of party tradition” to be an obstacle to democracy, but only 12.4% of the bureaucratic elite shared this opinion. While 9% of bureaucrats perceived “political clientelism” as a problem, no politician agreed. Likewise, while 12.4% of bureaucrats saw the “corporatism of groups and sectors of society” to be problematic, only 3.8% of the elected politicians did.

6 The question asked was: “In your opinion, is Brazil currently a democracy?”

7 Chi-square values were:

Method	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	4.37	3	.22
Likelihood Ratio	4.37	3	.22

Table 1
 The main obstacles to democracy in Brazil
 - fixed-choice responses by members of four groups
 within the Brazilian elites, in percentage terms

Obstacle	Total sample	Deputies and Senators	Top Public Officials	Businessmen	Labor Union Leaders
Low educational level of the population	24.1	11.5	27.0	33.0	18.5
High levels of poverty and social inequality	23.4	32.7	21.3	12.8	32.1
Lack of party tradition	15.8	30.8	12.4	9.6	17.3
Corporatism of groups and sectors of society	10.4	3.8	12.4	16.0	6.2
Incompetence of power incumbents	6.0	3.8	6.7	7.4	4.9
Lack of popular political organization	5.4	7.7	4.5	5.3	4.9
Selfishness of the elites	4.7	3.8	3.4	3.2	8.6
Political clientelism	3.8	0.0	9.0	3.2	1.2
Too much power in the hands of the executive	3.2	3.8	1.1	4.3	3.7
Impoverishment of the middle class	1.3	0.0	2.2	1.1	1.2
High inflation rates	1.3	1.9	0.0	3.2	0.0
Prolonged economic recession	0.6	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.2
Threat of military intervention	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0 (n=316)	100.0 (n=52)	100.0 (n=89)	100.0 (n=94)

In short, there are some indications that among top public officials such political practices as the exchanging of favors (clientelism) and disputes between groups defending their own private interests (corporatism) are perceived as prejudicial to the consolidation of democracy, while the proportion of politicians who share these opinions is much smaller. (It should be noted that the common-sense understanding of the term ‘corporatism’ in Brazil sees this phenomenon as expressing a kind of restrictive social morality, which is placed in contrast to a “morally superior” identification with the general will.) In turn, bureaucrats considered the lack of a strong party tradition a much less worrisome problem than did politicians, who trade on party politics.

When the elite members were presented with a fixed-choice question about medium-term national priorities, we also found indications that role definition somehow influences politicians' and bureaucrats' perceptions, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2
Brazil's main medium-range national goals
- fixed-choice responses by members of four groups
within the Brazilian elites, in percentage terms

Goal	Total sample	Deputies and Senators	Top Public Officials	Businessmen	Labor Union Leaders
Increase educational levels	23.0	14.8	24.7	29.8	18.5
Reduce size of state	18.2	22.2	13.5	33.0	3.7
Eradicate poverty and reduce inequality	17.6	25.9	19.1	9.6	19.8
Increase popular participation in political decisions	16.4	5.6	14.6	5.3	38.3
Preserve the democratic regime	11.3	20.4	7.9	8.5	12.3
Guarantee economic growth	9.7	7.3	14.6	10.6	4.9
Integrate the economy into the international market	2.2	1.9	2.2	3.2	1.2
Keep the order	0.9	1.9	2.2	-	-
Further integrate the country into Mercosur	0.3	-	1.1	-	-
Protect the environment	0.3	-	-	-	1.2
Total	99.9 (n=318)	100.0 (n=54)	99.9 (n=89)	100.0 (n=94)	99.9 (n=81)

While there are other noticeable differences in the ways each elite sector identifies national priorities, we will again restrict our attention to the fact that the differences detected between bureaucrats and politicians can be related to their respective role definitions. Thus, among politicians, downsizing the state was a much more prevalent choice than among bureaucrats, who are members of this state structure. Also worth mentioning are

differences regarding the following national priorities: "expanding popular participation in political decisions," "preserving the democratic regime," and "assuring economic growth." Here too there seems to be a direct relationship between the relative importance of particular objectives and the position of each elite sector within the sociopolitical structure.

If the data in Tables 1 and 2 reveal somewhat dissimilar patterns regarding bureaucrats' and politicians' perceptions of the obstacles to democratic consolidation and of national priorities, does the evidence point to a deep-seated difference between these two actors? Do they likewise display differences in their normative views of politics in general and of democracy in particular? A series of questions in our survey dealt with normative issues. Let us start with the topic of the most relevant characteristics of democracy, as defined by the elites interviewed. Table 3, based on an open-ended question, provides some clues.

Table 3
The main characteristics of democracy
- open-ended responses by members of four groups
within the Brazilian elites, in percentage terms

Characteristic	Total sample	Deputies and Senators	Top Public Officials	Businessmen	Labor Union Leaders
Civil/individual liberties	31.8	34.0	21.3	39.4	32.9
Political participation	20.4	17.0	25.8	12.8	25.6
Equality of opportunity	9.4	5.7	20.2	8.5	1.2
Equality of rights	5.7	7.5	5.6	3.2	7.3
Pluralism/tolerance	5.3	7.5	4.5	6.4	3.7
Various institutional features*	4.7	3.8	3.4	8.5	2.4
Respect for majority rule	4.1	5.7	3.4	5.3	2.4
Socioeconomic equality	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.1	8.5
Representation	3.5	3.8	5.6	2.1	2.2
Respect for law and government	3.2	3.8	3.3	2.1	3.6
Liberty/equality	2.2	1.9	1.1	---	6.1
Power transparency	1.9	1.9	2.2	3.2	---
Others	4.4	5.7	2.2	6.4	3.7
Total	100.1 (n=318)	100.2 (n=53)	99.7 (n=89)	100.0 (n=94)	99.6 (n=82)

* Includes such features as party organizations; secret ballot; alternation of power; independence of governing powers; and so on.

We can conclude from the data that the majority of the elites defined democracy in the classic liberal fashion: first comes respect for liberty and, then, political participation. The bureaucrats, however, displayed a somewhat different pattern, with these actors ranking “political participation” as most relevant to the definition of democracy. Even more noticeable is the fact that “equality of opportunities,” another liberal tenet, was also highlighted by the bureaucratic elites, whereas no other elite sector displays a comparable preference for this choice. We can speculate that some traits of their role definition – such as universality, impersonality, merit – make the bureaucrats more sensitive to formal equality than are other elite segments.

Nevertheless, it is too early to infer from the above data that Brazilian bureaucrats are indeed more neutral/ universalistic in their political outlook. Nor can we conclude from the patterns of response in Table 3 that the bureaucratic elites hold political views that actually differ from those of other elite segments. When asked to make a forced either/or choice between “liberty” and “equality,” top bureaucratic officials did not diverge from politicians, as indicated in Table 4⁸.

Table 4
Liberty or equality - forced either/or choices
by members of four groups within the Brazilian elites,
in percentage terms

Value	Total sample	Deputies and Senators	Top Public Officials	Businessmen	Labor Union Leaders
Liberty	60.1	66.0	61.4	83.9	26.0
Equality	39.9	34.0	38.6	16.1	74.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(n=308)	(n=50)	(n=88)	(n=93)	(n=77)

8 The question was: Although liberty and equality are extremely important, imagine a situation in which we were forced to choose between them. In this hypothetical case, with which of the following sentences would you identify more? (a) Forced to choose, I'd take personal liberty, because only liberty forestalls arbitrariness and gives everyone the chance to develop their potentials as they see fit. (b) Forced to choose, I'd take equality, because only equality eliminates privileges and assures that everyone can live decently.

Although the two variables are significantly related, this derives essentially from the pattern of labor union and business leader responses⁹. Indeed, bureaucrats and politicians displayed a remarkable similarity when forced to choose between liberty and equality.

Additional questions allow us to further inquire about possible dissimilarities in the way different elite sectors rank basic liberal and democratic values. Thus, for example, in order to explore how elite members evaluate social conflict, we devised an additive index based on responses to two statements¹⁰. Table 5 summarizes the results when the Conflict Index is recoded into three categories¹¹.

Table 5
Evaluation of political conflict by members of four groups
within the Brazilian elites, in percentage terms

Evolution	Total sample	Deputies and Senators	Top Public Officials	Business- men	Labor Union Leaders
Conflict is negative	29.4	30.8	17.0	29.3	42.0
Intermediary position	39.0	42.3	48.9	32.6	33.3
Conflict is positive	31.6	26.9	34.1	38.0	24.7
Total	100.0 (n=313)	100.0 (n=52)	100.0 (n=88)	100.0 (n=92)	100.0 (n=81)

9 The Chi-square value (likelihood ratio method) for Table 4 is 62.52, significance = .00. When one breaks the table down into only Top Public Officials and Politicians, the Chi-square value becomes .03, significance = .59.

10 The statements were: "Political conflicts normally result in damage to the collectivity" and "Antagonism between social groups is not damaging to the general interests of the country" (answers recoded in the same direction as the previous item). The correlation between responses to these two statements across the entire sample was .29, significance = .00. Respondents chose from Likert scale options, namely: "strongly agree," "agree somewhat," "disagree somewhat," "strongly disagree." We assigned "1" to the least liberal position (i.e., aversion to conflict); "9" to the most liberal; and "3" and "7" to intermediary positions, generating a 9-item index.

11 The first category reflects a negative view of conflict on both questions; the second reflects agreement-disagreement; and the final one indicates a consistently positive view of conflict.

We can see that the bureaucratic elites presented the smallest percentage of consistently negative views towards conflict, while their proportion of positive views approximated that of businessmen, the sector that valued conflict the most. We can inquire further into the significance of these figures by taking into account the mean score of each sector in the Index of Conflict. As Table 6 indicates, as a group, top public officials are the least averse to conflict.

Table 6
Evaluation of political conflict
by members of four groups within
the Brazilian elites (means)

Elite Sector	Mean	N
Deputies and Senators	9.73	52
Top Public Officials	11.25	88
Businessmen	10.48	92
Labor Union Leaders	8.52	81

The higher the score, the more positive the view regarding conflict (the highest value is 16).

F= 3.91

sig. .01

We also designed an Index of Hierarchy to explore the normative perceptions of elite members concerning hierarchical or egalitarian values¹². The following two tables show the percentage and mean opinion expressed on this matter.

Tables 7 and 8 indicate no significant differences in the way bureaucrats and other elite segments evaluate hierarchy. In other words, belonging to one or another elite sector does not influence one's posture regarding the need for hierarchy.

¹² The same procedure described in notes 8 and 9 was followed for these statements: "The best society is one in which everyone knows his or her place" and "Without a clearly defined hierarchy, no order can be sustained." The correlation between these two questions was .34; significance = .00.

Table 7

Evaluation of the need for hierarchy by members of four groups within the Brazilian elites, in percentage terms

Total Option	Sample	Deputies and Senators	Top Public Officials	Businessmen	Labor Union Leaders
Hierarchy is necessary	68.3	78.0	61.4	71.0	66.7
Intermediary position	23.4	12.0	29.5	22.6	24.7
Hierarchy is not necessary	8.3	10.0	9.1	6.5	8.6
Total	100.0 (n=312)	100.0 (n=50)	100.0 (n=88)	100.0 (n=93)	100.0 (n=81)

Table 8

Evaluation of the need for hierarchy by members of four groups within the Brazilian elites (means)

Elite Sector	Meam	N
Deputies and Senators	5.28	50
Top Public Officials	6.39	88
Businessmen	5.38	93
Labor Union Leaders	5.82	81

The higher the score, the more negative the opinion regarding hierarchy (the highest value is 16).

F= .96 sig. .41

We next established an Index of Preference for Technocratic Criteria, summarized in Tables 9 and 10¹³.

13 The Technocratic Index is an additive index for responses to the following three items: (1) From your point of view, when creating new laws, the government should take into account mainly: (a) the opinion of people who really know something about the subject involved. (b) the opinion of the majority of the citizens. (2) Although an ideal government should be both efficient and elected, this is sometimes an impossible combination. Under such circumstances, which is more important? (a) Having an efficient government. (b) Having an elected government. (3) It is essential to place more weight on technical considerations than on political factors in order to solve contemporary economic and social problems. (a) agree (b) disagree. For each item, we coded the most technocratic position as "0" and the least technocratic as "1". The correlation of the three added variables has a significance greater than .001.

Table 9
 Index of Technocratic Preference,
 measured among members of four groups within
 the Brazilian elites, in percentage terms

Value*	Total sample	Deputies and Senators	Top Public Officials	Businessmen	Labor Union Leaders
0	19.6	15.6	16.5	34.1	8.1
1	26.2	24.4	27.8	28.4	23.0
2	29.7	40.0	30.4	25.0	28.4
3	24.5	20.0	25.3	12.5	40.5
Total	100.0 (n=286)	100.0 (n=45)	100.0 (n=79)	100.0 (n=88)	100.0 (n=74)

* "0" indicates that preferences were consistently technocratic (all three answers in this direction), while "3" reflects consistently non-technocratic preferences (all three answers in this direction); "1" and "2" express mixed patterns: "1", two technocratic answers; "2", only one technocratic answer.

Table 10
 Index of Technocratic Preference,
 measured among members of four groups within
 the Brazilian elites (means)

Elite Sector	Meam	N
Deputies and Senators	1.64	45
Top Public Officials	1.65	79
Businessmen	1.16	88
Labor Union Leaders	2.01	74

The higher the score, the lower the preference for technocratic solutions (the highest value is 3).
 F= 9.68
 sig. .00

This last index indicated no significant differences in the value that bureaucrats and politicians place on technocratic solutions. It is noteworthy that the responses of both sectors stood in sharp contrast to those of union leaders, who clearly favor political over technical criteria.

To sum it up, the results of our survey revealed some noticeable differences between the values and beliefs of bureaucrats and politicians but also some remarkable similarities in important normative perceptions. While the preliminary character of our analysis precludes our making any conclusive statement about divergence and convergence between these two typical political actors, these results can nevertheless help us reflect upon conflict and cooperation among elites and on possible implications regarding the chances for successful democratic consolidation. It is from this cautious, tentative position that our third and last section must be interpreted.

COMPETITION, COOPERATION, AND DEMOCRACY

If the distinction between bureaucrats or administrators, on the one hand, and politicians or representative leaders, on the other, is merely an analytical one, its recurrence in the literature indicates that differentiating politics and bureaucracy is indeed a useful tool in understanding political orders. Thus, even though in the real world social complexity frequently conflates administrative and political functions, some role specificity persists, as the already classic study by Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman (1981) indicates. Investigating the United States and some European countries, these authors concluded that despite an undeniable trend for these roles to merge into a “hybrid” form, the specificities which politicians and bureaucrats bring to the policy process remain significant.

Role specificity seems to explain the divergent distribution of attitudes and cognitions that we detected between the Brazilian bureaucratic and political elites. Analyzing Tables 1, 2, and 3, we called attention to the fact that the relevant differences in the patterns of responses between these two elite sectors are easily related to their respective places in the political system.

In turn, in discussing some normative perceptions of politics and democracy, we found marked similarities between top public officials and elected politicians (Tables 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10). This seems to indicate that despite role-related peculiarities, bureaucratic and political elites share some key values, a finding which may augur well for democratic consolidation. That is to say, while maintaining an independence from politics, top Brazilian bureaucrats hold opinions and beliefs that make them adequate partners in the democratic political game.

The similarities we observed between these two elite sectors regarding certain normative issues is compatible with the profile identified by Aberbach, Putnam, and Rockman (1981) for mature democracies. According to these authors, a “pure hybrid” tends to occupy top political and

bureaucratic levels, that is, an actor type who clearly merges political and bureaucratic criteria. The career patterns themselves of top public officials often suggest that these actors constantly cross the borders between public administration and other professional roles. In this sense, they combine somewhat different values and beliefs, instead of displaying an essentially bureaucratic world outlook. In our Brazilian survey, we looked at the career patterns of the bureaucratic elites to see if such “mixed professional experiences” actually occur. The data in Table 11 show what type of professional experience these actors have had in addition to civil service.

Table 11
Occupations held by top Brazilian public officials,
in addition to public administration employment

Occupation	Frequencies	%
University professor	14	30.4
Professor & businessman	6	13.0
Private executive	6	13.0
Lawyer	4	8.7
Professional in private firm	4	8.7
Medical doctor	3	6.5
Farmer	3	6.5
Private consultant	3	6.5
Businessman	2	4.3
Politician	1	2.2
Total	46	99.8

Our data indicate that about 52% of the bureaucratic elite have engaged in significant activity outside public administration, that is, activity not restricted to a public-service experience. But do career patterns make any difference as far as the values and beliefs held? We ran a variance analysis for each of the indexes presented in the previous section (conflict, hierarchy, and technocracy), and in none of the cases did we find a significant difference between the group boasting differentiated professional experience and the “pure” civil servant group¹⁴.

¹⁴ The data obtained were:

Index of Conflict	F = .30	significance = .59
Index of Hierarchy	F = .32	significance = .57
Index of Technocracy	F = 1.45	significance = .23

Be that as it may, the fact that Brazil experienced two decades of bureaucratic authoritarianism makes it significant that its bureaucratic elites hold values and beliefs which attest to their independence and specificity *vis-à-vis* the political elites and yet are partners of the latter when it comes to important dimensions of political culture. An optimistic reading of the data suggests that while maintaining their distinctive identity, Brazil's top public officials implicitly recognize the differences between their role and that of politicians. At the same time, by sharing with elected leaders certain normative perceptions regarding politics and democracy, they are suitable partners in the political game.

In such a positive scenario, the points of divergence and convergence observed between bureaucrats and politicians point to a possible blending of competition and cooperation between these two actors that would favor democratic consolidation. Being partners and competitors at the same time, these actors preserve their reciprocal autonomy and their mutual dependence as well. We know, however, that the analytical confrontation we have examined here will not find immediate correspondence in real political life. To start with, neither the political nor the bureaucratic elites are homogeneous. Crucial differences permeate each of them, prompting the formation of alliances and coalitions between fractions within both elites¹⁵.

Moreover, when we take into proper account other partners besides bureaucrats and politicians, the political game becomes much more complex. Here we have not even explored the similarities and differences between other elite sectors, but some of our tables indicate that the patterns of response for businessmen and labor union leaders are worth careful examination. Further analysis is required before we can say more about the interactions between bureaucracy and democratic consolidation. The complexity of the answers recorded under our survey suggests, however, that we must re-think the bureaucratic actor in post-bureaucratic authoritarian contexts.

In our view, more than inquiring about bureaucratic neutrality, we should inquire about current conditions for expanding both bureaucratic autonomy and bureaucratic accountability. By "expanding bureaucratic autonomy," we are talking about enhancing the distinctiveness of administrative roles so that technical efficiency is preserved. In other words, in the context of Brazil and other former dictatorships in Latin America, we would like to see politics regain its value without debasing administrative capacity. "Increasing accountability" would involve a persistent effort to make the

¹⁵ For an interesting elaboration on possible patterns of interaction between bureaucrats and politicians, see Peters (1987, p. 255-282).

state administration transparent so that it does not become a place where private interests are hidden and crystallized, at the price of continued social exclusion and discrimination.

That bureaucrats hold their own opinions and values about the political order does not mean they cannot play their roles properly. More to the point, understanding their political culture may help make their performance more transparent and allow us to better assess their contributions to democratization.

CONCLUSION

This article addressed the values and beliefs of senior Brazilian bureaucrats as a distinct sector of the elites. More specifically, we compared the political cultures of the bureaucratic elites to that of the political elites active in Congress. Instead of taking issue with bureaucratic neutrality *per se*, we opted to collate how the two elite sectors perceive and evaluate major aspects of a political order.

As we observed in the first section, interactions between bureaucrats and politicians depend upon normative patterns that vary according to the type of political order in question. For example, a defense of bureaucratic authoritarianism argues for the superiority of technical bureaucratic neutrality over interest politics. In turn, the contemporary defense of liberal democracy takes a much less clear-cut stance: instead of posing neutrality and partisanship as the definite attributes of bureaucrats and politicians, respectively, it deems the distinctiveness of these two actors as their overriding characteristic. That is to say, to the extent that role differentiation exists, it is expected that some sort of checks-and-balances mechanism will develop, to the benefit of responsiveness and accountability – elements that are the backbone of democracy.

Following the classic Weberian tradition, the postulate of a fragile and often conflictive equilibrium between bureaucracy and politics as constitutive of a democratic order has remained a powerful analytic perspective. It is therefore surprising – and even disappointing – how the democratization literature has paid scant attention to the interaction between bureaucrats and politicians. If in former modernizing dictatorships the centrality and alleged superiority of the bureaucratic actor was indisputable, why has so little attention been dedicated to this subject in approaches to democratic consolidation?

Moved by such considerations, in our second section we examined a survey of the Brazilian elites. Our paramount aim was to identify

major points of convergence and divergence in the values and beliefs of bureaucratic and political elites. As our data show, while significant differences can be detected between the two sectors, there are also important points of convergence. To some extent, we were able to link most of the observed differences to specificities of the respective role definition of each actor.

Finally, in the third section we stressed that most of the converging answers obtained from top bureaucrats and members of Congress seem to be concentrated in normative perceptions of politics in general and democracy in particular. We derive some optimism from this finding and would like to suggest that perhaps the observed blend of converging and diverging values and beliefs among the two elite sectors may constitute an asset for democratic consolidation in Brazil. In other words, while some perceptions and beliefs about politics differ, depending upon the administrative or legislative role of each elite member, when we focus on their basic political values, we perceive much less variation across the two sectors. In our view, these shared values suggest that a democratic consensus may be growing among the Brazilian elites. As a preliminary finding, this seems to merit further exploration. We believe it to be relevant to an assessment of democratizing prospects, as well as to the enhancement of our understanding of the bureaucratic partnership in democratic governance.

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