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# Public Administration

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the sense of stability and steady, incremental change which is conveyed by many passages in the book is achieved partly by *excluding* or marginalizing issues to which other commentators would give heavier weight. Thus 'balancing fiscal loads' is seen as *the* crucial contemporary problem for government, not 'avoiding war' or 'ameliorating mass long term unemployment'. Or again, a distinction is drawn between people's allegedly satisfying 'face to face relationships' on the one hand and 'the impersonal activities of big government' on the other. This seems to imply a fairly traditional (and narrow) concept of the political. No doubt Professor Rose would have a spirited response to any critique along these lines: I hope one of the products of this important book will be just such a debate.

Christopher Pollitt  
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### PLANNING THE URBAN REGION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POLICIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Peter Self

George Allen & Unwin, 1982. 174pp. £12.95 (cloth), £5.95 (paper).

At a time when the abolition of elected metropolitan government in Britain is imminent it is clearly appropriate to reflect on the experience of one whose commitment to regional and metropolitan planning has been of the highest significance over the past quarter of a century. *Planning the Urban Region* is an edited and extended version of a set of lectures given by Peter Self in the late 1970s. It synthesizes his perspectives both on urban policy in general and on the relative merits/demerits of particular metropolitan governmental experience in London, Stockholm and Toronto. In essence, though, this is not a comparative study, even if the argument is enhanced by material from other countries, notably Australia. Rather it offers an overview of the case for metropolitan government.

Self starts with a restatement of his view of planning as being concerned with differing values and of planning policy as being directed to the reconciliation of the conflicts between these values. Recognizing that the failings of much of the planning effort of the past have been attributable to both technical and political disfunctioning, the theme pursued is the extent to which the scope for planning hinges upon political/organizational conditions and the variety of these conditions in relation to different urban services in different countries. Pursuing this theme within the context of a review of the central city in its regional context and of the relative problems of expanding cities and cities in decline, Peter Self moves on to the heart of his lectures — an examination of 'metro schemes' in principle and practice with extensive evidence from the cases of London, Toronto and Stockholm. A subsequent chapter on the role of central government, or more accurately on the absence of a national urban policy, reflects the author's long standing concern about the absence in Britain of a regional planning system which encompasses both economic and physical planning issues and which is based on an effective co-ordination of powers and resources.

The space between central or federal governments on the one hand and local governments on the other is often a confined and crowded one, and this volume is in effect about the competition to occupy that space and gain control over such functions and resources as are allocated to it. The urban region has tended to attract (and continues to attract) a clutch of semi-autonomous agencies, and it is the proliferation of such single-function agencies at the metropolitan region level and the consequent dilution of the elected government role that this study helps to illustrate.

Parts of this book were to me unsatisfactory. So much has happened to 'planning' since the lectures were delivered in 1978, and whilst considerable revision has been made the themes have a dated feel to them. The concepts, the language and the style reflect

the paradigms of the sixties and early seventies with the author not fully capturing the urgency which a contemporary study of policies and organizations surely requires. There is, in fact, very little reference to the wide range of organizational and inter-organizational literature, the relevance of which to public policy has become recognized in recent years, and the book offers no particular new analysis of, or theory for, understanding the urban region. Finally, we cannot be sure of the appropriateness of the arguments pursued; after all it is easy, in retrospect, to criticize Self's earlier *Cities in Flood* for being the cornerstone of much of the decentralist philosophy which for so long stood in the way of the development of effective urban policy in Britain.

Such minor doubts, however, are submerged by the breadth of view and depth of experience which Peter Self brings to his survey of the urban region. It is indeed salutary to contrast this thorough, extensive and thoughtful discussion of alternative forms of metropolitan government with the vacuum which is passing for a public debate on the most effective form of metropolitan government in Britain for the 1980s and 1990s. Peter Self recognizes well the contradictions inherent in big city government — the tensions between efficiency and equity, the merits and demerits of specialist agencies as opposed to multi-function governments, the pros and cons of differing areal levels of government and so on. It is beyond his vision, however, even to conceive of the prospect now facing metropolitan Britain: the dismantling of a democratic system of urban region government without any clear assessment of the economic, organizational or political consequences of so doing.

*Planning the Urban Region* does not provide all the answers. What it does, however, is to demonstrate the need to ask the questions, to recognize the complexity of metropolitan government, and to avoid over-simplistic solutions. As an overview of planning considerations this book will be invaluable to students and researchers for many years to come. As a reminder to those who are currently seeking to abolish democratic metropolitan government in Britain it will hopefully offer some more immediate cause for reflection.

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### BUREAUCRACY AND DEMOCRACY: A POLITICAL DILEMMA

E. Etzioni-Halevy

Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983. 266pp. £14.95.

Michels was one of the first modern social theorists to spell out the potential contradictions between bureaucracy and democracy. 'Who says organization, says oligarchy' encapsulates his fatalistic ruminations. Etzioni-Halevy's work is a series of meditations on the same themes, but she is both more sanguine and more stoic about the democratic prospect than Michels. She is a democratic élitist, a neo-Weberian less anguished than Max Weber by bureaucracy's iron cages.

She is correct to believe that the élitist theory can be deployed for 'radical' rather than conservative possibilities, and her book is best described as élitist theory in search of pluralism. Marxists, we are told, neglect the autonomy of state and bureaucratic élites. Pluralists over-emphasize their subordination to civil society. New Rightist prescriptions are unrealistic. And so it follows that the task of democrats is to preserve the regulation of élitist power achieved by state bureaucracies, and to make 'the democratic rules for élitist action clearer and more consistent and... the élites' closer adherence to such rules pay off as part of their struggle for power' (p. 5). Democracy is Schumpeterian: élitist competition for the support of the masses. Bureaucracy is public bureaucracy structured courtesy of Max Weber. The somewhat Dr Pangloss-like conclusion is that their combination offers the

best possible in this the best possible of all industrialized worlds. How very convenient. . .

Part I is a survey of classical (Marx, Michels, Mosca and Weber) and modern (pluralist, technocratic, corporatist and neo-Marxist) theorists and theories of bureaucracy and democracy. The conclusion to this section, 'Theoretical Perspectives', is provided by her own apparently novel theses. Bureaucratic power creates a dilemma for bureaucracy. The 'dilemma' turns out to be plural rather than singular. Thesis one: bureaucracy is a threat to, but also indispensable for, democracy. Thesis two: democracy asks the impossible of bureaucracy, demanding both its independence and its subservience, both its politicization and its neutrality. Thesis three: all the above causes strains in democratic systems. Of course, this will hardly be news to readers of *Public Administration* but the argument is set forth with admirable clarity.

The author's clarity eases the task of the critic. The survey of theories is flawed by lacunae and errors of exegesis. Why are Michels' critics like Gouldner ignored? The get-out paragraph on p. 24 is not convincing. Weber, of course, is well summarized. However, it is time that the lessons of a generation of Weber scholars, from Aron to Turner, were absorbed. Weber's famous typology (tradition, charisma, rational-legal) should be understood as a typology of domination (Herrschaft) rather than as a typology of legitimate authority. A fair précis of pluralist perspectives is spoiled by a failure to distinguish clearly the neo-pluralist position (Lindblom) from the anti-pluralist perspectives embedded in either the neo-conservative (Bell, Huntington et al.) theses on 'overload', or the neo-liberal New Right. Indeed a great failing of the book is its inadequate treatment of the New Right (p. 131 ff.). The intellectually rigorous 'New' Right, from Vienna to Virginia, from von Mises to the Public Choice school (Buchanan, Tullock and Niskanen) are neglected and the reader is left with the impression of the New Right as a rather crazed set of reactionaries. This may well be true, but the Public Choice school are at least rigorously crazy and should be included in any contemporary survey of theories of bureaucracy.

The neglect is perhaps symptomatic of Etzioni-Halevy's failure to address questions of economic theory as they pertain to both democracy and bureaucracy. Market socialists and the New Right have in common the desire to reduce the scale and consequences of bureaucracy, without being utopian. Kafka is reputed to have said that 'Every revolution evaporates leaving behind only the slime of a new bureaucracy'. Etzioni-Halevy is trapped into defending the current bureaucratization of the world because she believes that the choices are between what Kafka predicts and what the New Right want. There are other ways to de-bureaucratize the world than by senile Leninist maxims on state smashing or by public policies designed to create Pareto optimal Victorian social structures.

Part II, 'Empirical Perspectives', is a rather eclectic, albeit stimulating, set of case studies of the interaction between bureaucracy and democracy in various liberal democracies. For students the chapters on 'Bureaucracy and Party Politics' and 'Bureaucracy and Electoral Manipulation' will provide useful overviews. The penultimate chapter is a résumé of conflicts between bureaucrats and politicians in the US, Australia and Israel. The material is interesting, but purports to show that Marxists are wrong to believe that civil servants are conservative and status quo oriented, and that the boundaries between bureaucratic policies and party politics are hazy. The latter, I presume, is incontestable. However, criticizing Marxist errors, which like those of other sinners are legion, should not be done by misrepresentation. Marxists regard civil servants as conservative and status quo oriented insofar as they do not organize to alter the mode of production. S/he who is not with me is against me. Even if Etzioni-Halevy showed that all civil servants in Britain, say, voted Labour, the Marxist would remain unmoved. Only positive proof that Michael Bettaney was the tip of an iceberg would start to move her.

Whilst I have been harsh in some of my criticisms, Etzioni-Halevy's work should be added to libraries and reading lists, given the paucity of recent good surveys of this field. It is well presented and very accessible. However, I prefer my élite theorists rare and

rigorous like Eric Nordlinger; but that just goes to prove that there is an élite amongst élite theorists.

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## COMPONENTS OF WELFARE

Stephen Hatch and Ian Mcroft  
Bedford Square Press, 1983. 152pp. £9.95.

In the first 30 years of the Welfare State, the voluntary sector was relatively neglected by policy-makers and researchers alike. Thus the Wolfenden Committee (1978), in the first comprehensive post-war review of this field, soon found that it was entering uncharted waters. More recently, however, as voluntary action has experienced a major political rehabilitation, academic research has increasingly begun to explore this hitherto little-known corner of the Welfare State. At the same time, the organized voluntary sector has enjoyed a substantial expansion, fuelled, in particular, by short-term resources from various employment and urban programmes. This growth has given added substance to the debate about welfare pluralism which Wolfenden helped to initiate while, at the same time, reinforcing the need for the better understanding of local voluntary action which Wolfenden found lacking.

Hatch and Mcroft's book is specifically intended to help fill this gap and especially in respect of relationships between local authorities and voluntary organizations. Their study, commissioned as part of the Personal Social Services Council's response to Wolfenden, sought to identify the policies of two Social Services Departments (SSDs) towards the voluntary sector and the mechanisms through which they related to it. Two contrasting authorities were chosen as fieldwork sites: high spending, inner city Islington and low spending, rural Suffolk. Islington was selected both because it provided an exceptionally high level of grant aid to voluntary bodies and, more importantly, because it possessed an explicit policy for developing voluntary action as part of a wider policy to encourage a more open and pluralistic form of politics. Thus the voluntary sector was seen as an instrument for community development and a source of pressure on otherwise unresponsive official bureaucracies. In practice, its main resource was a 'small army' of paid workers providing specialist information and advice and promoting community involvement in statutory services.

Not surprisingly, the voluntary sector in Suffolk was a very different animal. To the limited extent that community development was an objective of the authority, it was pursued by workers within the SSD itself. Voluntary organizations employed few staff, their key personnel comprising mainly the retired or women with grown up families. More particularly, the essential role of the voluntary organizations in Suffolk was to provide direct services, such as meals on wheels and luncheon clubs, which in Islington were primarily the province of the SSD.

Hatch and Mcroft's case studies are, therefore, of considerable interest and significance since the localities studied were broadly representative of what we may term the 'old' and 'new' voluntary sectors. The growth of short term funding for voluntary bodies has been accompanied by a shift in the balance of voluntary activity: from direct service provision, through Wolfenden's 'intermediary' or enabling role, and into campaigning and self help work at grassroots level. It is a shift which, as Hatch and Mcroft's account shows, raises important questions about accountability and inter-sector relationships. Thus the growth of grass roots organizations certainly increases the number of potential participants to the local political process: but how representative are such groups and to whom are they

