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relationship between Irish politicians and bureaucrats at the local government level.

NOTES

¹ For an expanded account of the Irish managerial system of local government and local politics, see C. A. Collins *Powerhouse: A study of the county and city manager system*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration (working title forthcoming 1986).

² Section Four – this refers to the City and County Management (Amendment) Act, 1955 S.4 which gives the council the right to direct the manager to act in a particular way. A resolution to give effect to this right needs a majority vote and must relate to a specific executive act not all cases of a specified kind. See Keane, J. *The Law of Local Government in the Republic of Ireland*, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1982.

³ During the research for this article, the details of the Bax case were specifically denied by the then assistant county manager who was the 'candidate's' direct boss, the then county manager and the Secretary of the IAC. Several other interviewees commented negatively on the account itself; it appears to be factually inaccurate in several places. Though Bax obviously disguises the story by changing details and names, the incident does seem very poorly documented. One manager summarized his colleagues' opinion in a letter to this author: 'There is not the remotest scintilla of truth in the whole thing'.

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NOTES AND SURVEYS

IS THERE A RADICAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION?

Patrick Dunleavy (1982) has contended that there is an emergent radical public Administration (RPA). He detected five main components of a developing radical 'tool kit'. They were as follows: (1) hostility towards individualistic explanations, complemented by favour towards structuralist explanations on the grounds of their greater explanatory profundity, (2) preference for social structural explanations of administrative change rather than explanations based on administrative rationality or neutrality, (3) focus on organizational crises rather than evolutionary processes, (4) the resurrection and rehabilitation of functional explanation, and (5) the promotion of popular participation and communication in administrative design. His manifesto is however, neither distinctively radical nor helpful.

(1) Radicals are free not to be structuralists

There is no necessary connection between structuralism and radicalism. There is no strong historical correlation between being structuralist and radical. Feuer, admittedly a conservative, has argued persuasively that one can detect generational epistemological fashions amongst radicals of the left or right. 'History... shows... that virtually every philosophical tenet has been used at some time or another by every ideology: the same philosophical idea in the course of its history generally moves through the political and social spectrum, from left to right or right to left' (Feuer 1975 19). Socialist intellectuals have obeyed Feuer's laws of epistemological fashion in recent decades. Humanism dominated radical social science in the 1960s, only to be displaced by Parisian structuralism in the 1970s. Arguably a swing back towards humanism is under way (Benton 1984, Thompson 1979).

Dunleavy's RPA may not be just the product of an epistemic trend, but the evidence of intellectual history is against any necessary connection between structuralism and radicalism. RPA – if it existed before the last decade – was informed

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by humanist epistemologies. The collection of essays edited by Marini known as the Minnowbrooke Perspective is a good example (Marini 1971). Indeed the value of 'participation' is psychologically more consonant with a humanist or subjectivist epistemology, as the Minnowbrooke participants illustrate. One value from which the demand for participation stems is that of personal autonomy: the capacity to shape one's relations. However, the notorious problem for structuralism is that any explanation of autonomous action threatens to explain its autonomy away – 'actors disappear'. There appears to be at least psychological dissonance between valuing autonomy and commitment to structuralism especially in its Parisian 'theoretical anti-humanism' guise.

The motivation of radical structuralists is not innocent. They contend that current administrative structures are not under the control of actors. Undeniably, this is often so. However, humanists are quite capable of recognizing that the unintended consequences of actors' actions create an alienated world in which the notion of actors' control is *prima facie* absurd. The strategic inference which some structuralists draw from the conclusion that actors are not in control is that obtaining democratic control is not feasible through piecemeal change. However, such an inference is unwarranted. Structures can change or be destroyed incrementally, unintentionally or in a revolutionary manner. Indeed the structuralist who regards revolutions as the effects of the operation of structural contradictions need not be a revolutionary. Putting the converse, methodological individualism is not normative individualism, and is no more reactionary than structuralism is progressive. Elster, for example, is a socialist happy to embrace intentional explanation as the hallmark of the social sciences (Elster 1983). The utility of either an individualist or structuralist explanation varies with the explanandum. Such philosophical pragmatism does not make one unradical! Radical values, in brief, are independent of epistemic postures.

(2) Neutrality and dead horses

It is incontestable that radicals should demystify dominant ideologies. 'Administrative neutrality and rationality' are often rationalizations for organizational restructuring, as in the proposed abolition of the GLC and MCCs. However, demystification is not a tool. There is no unique methodology for successful demystification, although it is useful to be on our guard. The invocation of 'it is no accident, comrades' in the case of every organizational change easily degenerates into the permanent conspiracy hypothesis, as structuralists would be the first to recognize. Conspiracies have a bad academic press too often, but conscious paranoia is scarcely a methodology.

In any event the radical must demonstrate the unimportance of 'organizational logic' for changes in administrative arrangements. Such considerations may be crucial in elite perceptions. If 'organizational logic' figures in elite motivation it may have real consequences. In accounting for decisions to change public administration, to centralize or decentralize, to create or destroy quangos, organizational logic may be salient, even if the decision is overdetermined by political and ideological motives, or indeed structural constraints. Perhaps orthodox public

administration is too happy to present explanations of administrative change as the outcome of the monocausal working of autonomous organizational logic, though Dunleavy scarcely stuffs his case with references! It is salutary to remind us that such arguments can become rationalizations. However, there is a role for autonomous organizational logic in explanations of administrative behaviour if one accepts the premise of large scale organization. Allison's analysis of the Cuban missile crisis is particularly revealing about the logic of 'standard operating procedures' (Allison 1971). It is strange for a structuralist to deny the impact of what is patently structural: large scale organization!

Finally, radicals are not alone in denying the neutrality of administrative changes. Traditionalists see bureaucratization and the growth of state activity as part of the unwelcome march of equality, destroying traditional hierarchies and social institutions (Siedentop 1983). Neoliberals regard policy outcomes as the product of interactions between utility-maximizing voters, vote-maximizing politicians and budget-maximizing bureaucrats (Tullock 1976) and are scornful of the notion that administrative behaviour and change are motivated by altruistic neutralism. Pluralists see organizational change as the result of prevailing pressure group forces (Truman 1951). There may be some last stranded platoons of academic public administrators who explain everything by administrative neutrality or rationality, but their numbers have been much depleted by defectors to ideological positions which if not radical are not neutral. Radicals should steer clear of flogging dead horses.

(3) The Primacy of Crises?

The notion that radicals should focus upon organizational and administrative crises, rather than evolutionary processes, looks unsurprising. Radicals like change, revolution, transformation and all that! However, once again, such a focus is not a tool. It is, at most, the result of a particular type of structuralism and functionalism, such as that of the early Claus Offe, one of the authors cited by Dunleavy. Offe argued that one can only demonstrate that a state is a capitalist state when it is in crisis. When it is not in crisis, it successfully conceals (even from the subtlest neomarxist!) that it is a capitalist state. It would be more convincing and politically useful to demonstrate that the capitalist state is indeed a capitalist state even when it appears as if it is not. The notion of an object which successfully resists epistemic exposure except in crisis looks like a lazy rather than a new Marxist argument.

Offe's position has since shifted. He now argues that there is a 'crisis of crisis management' in the advanced capitalist states, observable in fiscal, administrative and legitimization crises (Offe 1975, 1984). He identifies two strategies for coping with crises: the productive and the allocative. Allocative strategies are appropriate to (Weberian) bureaucratic administration, productive strategies are not. Standard explanations about why public enterprises in capitalist economies have difficulties in terms of efficiency and accountability are invoked. The alternatives to Weberian administration are, in Offe's view, technocratic planning and/or participation. But, he argues, whatever the mode of policy formulation and implementation (Weberian, technocratic or participatory) there will be costs from the perspective of the

accumulation and legitimization functions of the state. So far so good, and useful too perhaps. Yet all that Offe is actually saying is that there are 'administrative dilemmas' (Self 1976). There is nothing to suggest that these 'crises' are capable of being superseded under socialism. Translation of Offe's account renders the following proposition: 'Whatever the mode of policy formulation and implementation, there will be costs in terms of efficiency, accountability and/or legitimacy to regimes faced with choices between planning, markets and democracy in promoting public policies. Permutations of the above costs are all that is feasible.' Dilemmas are different from crises; real dilemmas cannot be superseded, crises can, or the medical metaphor is being overburdened. There will be administration dilemmas under any feasible socialism (Nove 1983).

Rather than focus upon 'crises' which turn out to be inevitable choices with opportunity costs, attention to routine organizational practices and their evolution may be profoundly important for radical purposes. Such a focus might assist the uncovering of hidden structures of domination, whether capitalist or sexist. March and Simon's focus on latent and unobtrusive controls illustrates how attention to routine, crisis-free processes is revelatory about unintentional brain-washing (Perrow 1979). Focusing upon routine often exposes domination more subtle than that 'exposed' in crises, as work on the labour process makes clear (Litterer 1982). From the perspective of feasible socialism it makes sense to analyse stable routinized behaviour in evolved organizations. It shows how organizations are constrained by relations which radicals dislike (private property in the means of production, sexism and racism) from being organizations which radicals might have more time for. Attention to crisis-free administration may have the 'pay off' of more profound critique. If it is claimed that there is no crisis-free administration then the notion of crisis has lost precision.

(4) Functionalism and administrative theory?

'Functionalism explanation' in the social sciences is inappropriate or in many cases pseudo-functionalism (Barry 1965, Elster 1983). Hard functionalism is the doctrine that all social phenomena have beneficial consequences (intended or not, recognized or not) that explain them. As Elster observes, hard functionalism can be deployed for conservative, radical, or marxist ideologies. If, for example, the net beneficial consequences of an administrative reorganization can be divided into benefits for the ruling class and the ruled classes, we would expect the conservative functionalist to argue that the arrangements are functional for maximizing total benefits, the marxist functionalist that they are functional for maximizing the benefits of the ruling class, and the radical functionalist that they are functional for minimizing the benefits of the ruled classes. Even if the key question 'Who benefits?' could be empirically resolved, the 'winning functionalist' would not have explained why the reorganization occurred. 'Who benefits?' is a question the answer to which does not tell us why they benefit, although it might give us some clues. The reorganizations of local government in the 1960s and 1970s may have benefited managers at the expense of the working class (Dearlove 1979), but that is insufficient to explain *why* they were carried out.

Soft functionalism is the principle that whenever social phenomena have consequences that are beneficial, unintended and unrecognized, they can also be explained by these consequences. Elster argues that a valid functionalist explanation takes the following form: An institution or a behavioural pattern X, is explained by its function Y, for group Z, if and only if: (1) Y is an effect of X; (2) Y is beneficial for Z; (3) Y is unintended by the actors producing X; (4) Y – or at least the causal relation between X and Y – is unrecognized by the actors in Z; and (5) Y maintains X by a causal feedback loop passing through Z. It is crucial to a valid functional explanation that condition (4) be maintained. If actors perceive and reinforce patterns benefiting them, then condition (4) no longer holds, and we have what Elster calls a 'filter explanation', which is a sub-set of the class of 'intentional explanations'. For example, if political elites become aware that a more meritocratic bureaucracy is functional for their continued rule, and they make the bureaucracy more meritocratic, we do not have a functional explanation. The critical failing in most attempts at functional explanation in the social sciences is that condition (5), through which consequences can explain causes, is not met. Most social science 'functional explanations' are poorly constructed objective teleologies, processes with purposes, but without subjects. Thus a functionalist Marxist explanation of the recruitment of higher level civil servants might take the following form. (1) State recruitment practices often act against the short run interests of capitalists (who might want the state to be staffed by their friends and relatives). (2) But, it is in their long run interests of the capitalist class that the state does not always act in their short run interests. (3) Therefore the long run interests of the capitalist class functionally explain more representative administrative elites. Such an argument, which is not untypical, has at least two problems. First, the general functionalist fallacy that consequences explain causes in the absence of a specified mechanism; second, the most plausible mechanism, substantiated in many historical accounts, is the strategic capacity of state personnel to distinguish between the short and long run interests of the capitalist class. The most plausible mechanism makes the explanation an intentional or filter explanation. The 'process without a subject' turns out to require very clever subjects indeed. Most functional 'explanations' are *not* explanations, they are at best connections between consequences of x and beneficiaries of x in search of an explanatory mechanism. (Crucial to a proper understanding of such criticism is that it does not entail that the mechanism requires intentionality. The mechanism could be a rule of thumb which actors follow without being aware of its consequences). A specific feedback mechanism for each social scientific explanation is required because we have no social science analogue of the theory of evolution (Elster 1983). If RPA developed along the lines of Dunleavy's manifesto it would be bereft of the claim to superiority over PA which it desires: explanatory capacity.

Dunleavy appealed to Cohen's notion of 'consequence laws' (Cohen 1980) to rehabilitate functional explanation. However, the idea that consequence laws are explanatory is misconceived. A consequence law is a statement to the effect that whenever some institution or behaviour would have beneficial effects, it is in fact observed. Yet consequence laws make it impossible to distinguish between

explanatory and non-explanatory correlations. Unless we specify the causal mechanism at work we cannot distinguish causation from correlation. Imagine for the sake of argument a consequence law of the following form: 'Wherever a welfare state would benefit the legitimation of a capitalist class, a welfare state occurs'. The first problem would be to operationalize when the existence of a welfare state would be beneficial for a capitalist class, otherwise it is difficult to see how the law could be falsified. But more significantly, if the law were operationalized, the real historical mechanism for welfare state creation might be the actions of socialist and working class parties which have had (let us assume) the unintended consequences of legitimating the capitalist class. So even if the consequence law were true it would not be explanatory. If the argument moves to the proposition that the actions of socialist parties are effects or consequences of the capitalist mode of production it becomes straightforward teleology. Even if the real historical mechanism for welfare state creation was the activity of pro-capitalist forces we would have an intentional explanation or filter explanation not a functional explanation. Such an example is paradigmatic of the pitfalls to which functional explanation, even in its revamped form of consequence laws, is prone.

Furthermore there is no necessary connection between functional explanation and the ability to theorize connections between administrative changes and social conflict. Talcott Parsons was a functionalist who notoriously found it difficult to theorize such phenomena. Doubtless such an aside is 'guilt by association', but that's a functionalist speciality....

Finally, Dunleavy claimed for functional explanation the virtue of facility in crisis identification. That may or may not be the case. Reading Althusserian or Habermasian explanations might make one think otherwise. However, it may not matter how one comes to identify a crisis. Using Christian theology or Das Kapital or the misapplication of analogies from functional explanation in biology may all be ways of arriving at a starting point for analysis of a crisis.

(5) Consumerism, participation and radicalism

There is no disputing the place of participation in any worthwhile conception of RPA. Democratic socialism must supersede both Stalinist and current liberal democratic modes of administration in the respect paid to popular participation. However, Dunleavy's 1982 article leaves the impression that the Old Left's exclusive concentration on the politics of production has not been sufficiently qualified. One of the greatest disasters in socialist planning has been the treatment of consumers and consumerism. Radicals who wish to learn from these experiences must learn the (limited but real) virtues of markets in protecting citizens from administrative despotism and bureaucratic exploitation. The subaltern classes often benefit more from strong consumer protection and market mechanisms than from the reorganization of work or the socialization of private capital. Socialism and markets are not antonyms. Dunleavy's manifesto gives the impression of being too producer oriented in its conception of participation.

Applications?

Dunleavy argued that three subjects in which the radical's tool kit had proved useful were (1) in the development of the dual state thesis, (2) the fiscal sociology of budgeting and (3) in the analysis of professional power. His claims were overstated. First, these subjects either have or can benefit from intentional explanation (e.g. the logic of collective action). Second, they have or can benefit from an analysis of the requirements of administrative or organizational logic (e.g. the logic of incrementalism in budgeting). Third, they have all benefited from analysing routine processes not simply from focusing upon crises. Fourth, for the reasons elaborated, functional explanations cannot have been helpful! An extensive review of the literature is not possible to substantiate my claims. But the empirical gains for RPA as described by Dunleavy are conceivably analytically independent of the tool-kit he identifies, and put into doubt its distinctiveness and utility.

Conclusion

Against Dunleavy's manifesto I have argued that there are no necessary connections between substantive ideological positions and particular epistemologies or methodologies. Further, the utility of functionalism, whether or not one is a radical, has been disputed. Radicalism need not stem from or be strengthened by any particular epistemology or methodology. Moreover, radicals should treat warily the injunction to focus upon crises or the unimportance of administrative rationality. Finally, the arguments of market socialism must enter into radical advocacy of popular participation in administration. Dunleavy's manifesto threatens epistemic and methodological closure for a discipline and for a radicalism which can do without it. May his version of RPA rest in peace....

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THE USE OF INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL ECONOMIC ADVICE: SOME OBSERVATIONS FROM SIZEWELL

UK Governments have used various means to bring independent external economic advice to bear on micro-economic problems facing them, from appointing academic economists as members of Royal Commissions to the selection of staff for the Central Policy Review Staff. Such Government sponsored bodies as the National Prices and Incomes Board, the Pay Commission and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission have also provided external economic advice. The purpose of this note is to appraise such advice as offered by the team of economists assembled by the Electricity Consumers' Council (ECC) to the Public Inquiry into the Central Electricity Generating Board's (CEGB) proposal to build a pressurized water reactor (PWR) at Sizewell in Suffolk to be known as Sizewell B.

It is particularly appropriate to do this because in an inaugural lecture 10 years ago David Henderson described the introduction of the advanced gas cooled reactor (AGR), the predecessor of the PWR, as a major British error and argued that the risk of such errors would be reduced if there were to be a new institution set up by the Government but in no way tied by secrecy or to the Government. Whitehall machine whose job would be to 'analyse and review British public expenditure programmes, looking at past experience – including overseas experience – as well as statistics of the future' (Henderson 1993).

At the time he reported no great enthusiasm for the proposition amongst his fellow economists – which seems curious given the career implications – but the Government continues to be faced with large investment proposals in the public sector and it is relevant to see whether the introduction of the PWR will avoid repeating the error perceived by Mr Henderson in the AGR programme, especially as the Public Inquiry into the Sizewell PWR has to some extent provided an example of how his institution might operate in the evidence put forward on behalf of the ECC. At least, its academic witnesses analysed and reviewed the Sizewell proposal of the CEGB, drawing on past experience here and overseas, predicted themselves the future and made recommendations. They thus acted in a way which can be regarded as one interpretation of the role of a Henderson institution.

In due time, in his report on Sizewell B, the Inspector will indicate explicitly or implicitly the weight he attaches to the ECC evidence and it is not my purpose to anticipate him here. What I wish to discuss is what new perspectives or better

balance were encouraged in the proposers, the CEGB, as the result of the ECC evidence, because as I understand it David Henderson's proposition would secure its results as much by modifying the proponents' approach as by influencing the arbiter's decision.

The Sizewell B proposition

The CEGB has asked for consent to build at Sizewell Britain's first pressurized water reactor (PWR). The application was referred to a public inquiry under Sir Frank Layfield, whose report on all aspects is expected towards the end of this year. His remit included safety and local aspects, but here I am dealing only with the economic aspects. If the CEGB is given consent for Sizewell B, it would probably want to build at least two or three close replicas and since each would cost over £1000M to build, one is certainly dealing with what Henderson could regard as a major public expenditure programme. The main argument advanced by the CEGB is that under almost any combination of future circumstances Sizewell B would more than cover its capital and running cost out of the savings from displacing fossil fuel. Subsidiary arguments are that it would soon be necessary to install new capacity to meet a combination of load growth and plant retirement and that it would desirably reduce the CEGB's system's 80% dependence on coal for primary energy.

The ECC approach

The ECC (i.e. Messrs Mackerron, Jones and Thomas, all academically based economists but specializing in the energy sector) set out to evaluate the CEGB's appraisal of Sizewell B in a properly enquiring frame of mind: 'the ECC has seen its role throughout primarily as a questioning one, in the hopes that by so questioning certain aspects, we can assist the Inquiry'. Indeed its first role was to set out a check list of questions:

- (1) Were the CEGB cost and benefit assumptions adequately based in the light of:
 - (a) history
 - (b) experience elsewhere
 - (c) a priori argument?
- (2) Could plausible alternative hypotheses be set up?
- (3) What was the CEGB's degree of confidence in the range of their estimates?
- (4) Have any important economics aspects been understated in the appraisal?

Two points arise on this check list. In the first place, the questions reflected the fact that the group were all economists: there were no engineering insights and doubtless Henderson would have expected his institution to have been more widely based (see page 186 of reference). Secondly, the CEGB had obviously started out with a check list which also included these questions so that it was the follow-up to these questions that mattered.

(1) (a) Use of history

The ECC made use of CEGB's unhappy experiences in the 1970s when completing the AGRs and oil plant then under construction: it acknowledged that the CEGB