Characteristics of Bureaucracy: Examining the Relations between Bureaucrats and Politicians in Lesotho

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: *Bureaucracy* *Bureaucrats* *Politicians* *Corruption* *Lesotho*	Bureaucracy represents an ideal form of public administration. Its robust structure facilitates the attainment of public goals. It introduces fairness, rationality, discipline and equity into the public administration. Regardless of its desirability, it is not conveying the expected outcomes in Lesotho. This paper is largely based on secondary data and content analysis to unearth the causes of the poor performance of bureaucracy in the country. It found out that the rent-seeking behaviour of elected public officials taints the merits of bureaucracy so that scholars are lured to believe that it is dysfunctional. The behaviour of the political office-holders in Lesotho demonstrates that they are determined to intimidate technocrats who hamper their interests. Such practices overshadow the desirability of bureaucracy. Top political office-bearers in the country prefer infiltrating the bureaucracy with unqualified civil servants for political gains. They have even coopted the judges so that they can manipulate the public administration with impunity. However, the government of Lesotho can correct these abnormalities by reinforcing the existing laws and strengthening the impartiality of the judiciary.

1. Introduction

Bureaucracy appears to be a symptom of a pervasive disease because of the rent-seeking behaviour of particular individuals. Bureaucracies are simply structures that political office-holders develop and employ for conducting the multifaceted activities of the state (Wood & Waterman, 1991). Concerning bureaucrats, Şimandan (2009) argues that their management style and performance cannot be juxtaposed against the ones of profit-seeking enterprises and therefore it makes no sense to criticize the activity of public bureaus. When problems are spotted in a bureaucracy, the only available route to take is to curtail the powers and restrict the behaviour of political office-holders (Mises, 1994). The confusion about bureaucratic performance derives mainly from the absence of a theory that shows that bureaus are an apparatus of the preferences of its constituents (Niskanen, 1971).

Since the 1980s, the literature concerning bureaucracy mainly examined it from two angles. One perspective demonstrated the extreme difficulties experienced by elected officials in directing the massive and lumbering bureaucracy (Wood & Waterman, 1991). The other emphasized the way elected officials systematically shape and manipulate bureaucratic behaviour (Farazmand, 1997; Svara, 1999). Little attention is paid on the dimension of public behaviour where elected officials compete with each other for rents and state revenues so that each rent-seeker strives to outcompete others even at the expense of the performance of bureaucracy (Rowley, 2013; Brooks & Heijdra, 2013).

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This paper argues that the rent-seeking that takes place in the political process can only be curtailed by limiting the powers of elected officials. According to Buchanan (1990), rent-seeking refers to the behaviour in an institutional environment where individual efforts to boost value generates social waste instead of social surplus. The paper does not seek to redesign or redirect state activity but merely attempts to deflect the subtle criticism raised against bureaucracy and shame the rent-seeking behaviour of elected officials. North (1986) and Samuels and Mercuro (1984) raise concerns that seeing a government as rent-seeking is tantamount to considering it as an extortionist activity and is an endeavour to change the structure of the social power. By these arguments, they participate in a process that condones the rent-seeking behaviour of political-office holders.

Rent-seeking in this paper is examined in relation to corruption because the latter has worse welfare implications compared to other alternative rent-seeking activities (Lambsdorff, 2001). Corruption is a special case of rent-seeking because it can be addressed through the law (Phakela, 2020). It occurs when an agent breaks the rules, promulgated by the governing body, by colluding with the third party to maximize personal gains (Lambsdorff, 2001). This paper demonstrates how those who are in charge of the legal framework and the elected public officials together engage in corruption, nepotism, and favouritism and the implications of this behaviour on bureaucracy.

There are clear assumptions undergirding the operation of politicians and bureaucrats in a political domain. First, the relationship between political office-holders and bureaucrats is hierarchical so that the former has leverage over the latter (Wood & Waterman, 1991). The bureaucrats are bound by a contract to serve the public and attempt to faithfully implement the law to avoid sanctions (Hall, 1963). Second, during policy implementation, the elected officials' interests push them to increase their profit as in personal welfare, and political support. They maximize their gains by engaging in unproductive behaviour which destroys value and wastes valuable public resources thereby affecting the performance of bureaucrats (Tullock, 2013; Wood & Waterman, 1991). The aforementioned propositions that demonstrate how elected office-holders develop interests that attempt to alter policy implementation and how bureaucrats attempt to shirk their demands are embedded in agency theory (Nan, Mampilly, Bartoli, & Ihsanoglu, 2012).

2. Methodology

This paper attempts to demonstrate the desirability of bureaucracy which is embedded in its characteristics. It argues that due to its robustness, bureaucracy has stood the test of times. Taking Lesotho as a case study, the paper assesses the literature following content analysis. The data is collected from books, journals, reports, online sources, newspapers and legal documents. The first part of this paper is an introduction to the discourse on the subject of bureaucracy and the relations between the bureaucrats and politicians. It is followed by the methodology section. In the subsequent section, the paper offers a conceptualization of bureaucracy and a description of its characteristics. The next section is a review of the literature where the paper presents various viewpoints of scholars on bureaucracy. It discusses the perspectives on bureaucracy and presents Lesotho as a case study to demonstrate how the relations between politicians and bureaucrats impact on the performance of bureaucracy. The sections that follow the discussion of findings are constituted by the conclusion and recommendations, respectively.

3. Understanding Bureaucracy

An office or administrative department of government is a bureau. The office together with the non-elected staff, technocrats or public servants under a hierarchical system of strict rules and procedures signify bureaucracy (Goodsell, 2005; Mihăilescu, 1993). It is a system that

organises the affairs of public administrations (Hoggett, 2005). In contrast, a bureau refers to government departments, subunits and ministries which operate in a hierarchical system and are assigned administrative responsibilities. These bureaus are operated through public expenses and are not financed by individuals in most cases (Goodsell, 2005).

Generally, the term bureaucracy is attributed to Max Weber (864-1920) who is a German Sociologist (Vliet, 2017). The contemporary literature on bureaucracy stems from the works of Max Weber who recognized bureaucracy as a resemblance of public administration. His writings developed the standard definition and characteristic form of public administration by focusing primarily on the behaviour of bureaucrats, who are also known as civil servants (Niskanen, 1971). However, Weber pays little attention to the rent-seeking behaviour of politicians and how it affects the behaviour of the bureaus. Weber's bureaucracy prefers the popular modern system of authority used by governments around the world. After analysing the existing systems of governance around the world, Weber maintained that there are mainly three types of sources of authority (Merton, 1940). The first one emanates from a person's charisma (McIntosh, 1970). It is mainly based on personal characteristics. The likes of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Thomas Sankara, Muammar Al-Gaddafi and King Haile Selassie, among others, were leaders with charisma (Shaban, 2016). Such leaders were heroic or sacred (Chipea & Banciu, 2013).

Max Weber identified another category as the traditional authority. This type represents monarchs and traditional rulers like chiefs and kings (McIntosh, 1970). Basically, they draw their power from traditions, customs and faith (Chipea & Banciu, 2013). The likes of Shaka Zulu, Moshoeshoe I and Mansa Musa are some of the popular kings in Africa who are epitomes of traditional sources of authority. In recent times, the likes of King Mswati III and King Letsie III of Eswatini and Lesotho, respectively, represent the traditional sources.

Weber also identified legal-rational authority. This source of power sets the basis for modern forms of administration. The typology of Weber emphasised the legal-rational because it is an anchor of bureaucracy (Altay, 1999). According to Mihăilescu (1993), the latter represents an administration where the persons vested with powers and responsibilities are given strictly defined rules and procedures. The management of this body of persons, specialising in stated duties, is organised in a hierarchical structure (Mihăilescu, 1993). For this article, bureaucracy is the hierarchical organisation of bureaucrats or civil servants who take instructions from elected public office-holders and execute them with respect to stipulated rules. Bureaucrats are public personnel charged with various tasks depending on their department and are recruited based on merits. In most cases, they are not appointed or elected. They usually execute policies handed down by political office-holders who have leverage over them.

Bureaucracy is "the ideal form of public administration" identifiable by many characteristics. According to Weber (1947), it is distinguishable by the standard operating directives and procedures. Usually, governments stipulate rules and expectations for bureaucrats. This avoids meddling through or relying on the rule of thumb. For a system to function well, written regulations have to be universally accepted and applied impartially (Guy, 2001). The universality of these instructions introduces justices and fairness in the administration (Thompson & Alvesson, 2005). The behaviour of bureaucrats is rule-governed (Hall, 1963). This introduces discipline in public administrations. There are rewards and sanctions which bureaucrats are subjected to when performing their duties (Panday, 2017). The latter is designed to instil discipline while the former is intended to motivate workers.

Bureaucracy is also known for a well-defined hierarchy. The hierarchy is characterised by different levels of authority, divided in terms of superiority and inferiority, which implies vertical accountability (Reed, 2005). Most of the modern administrations are structured in such a way that instructions flow from the top to the bottom (Guy, 2001). The hierarchical system

signifies two things notably, different referral points and differences of competency. Civil servants are promoted in accordance with a vertical line of superiority based on achievements, experience and qualifications.

Also, recruitment based on qualifications or merits is common with bureaucracy. People join the administration based on their competency and capacity to perform specified roles (Thompson & Alvesson, 2005). There is a separation between the person and the prescribed duties. The linking element is the ability to deliver as expected. Civil servants are recruited based on their technical expertise. Their promotion is awarded based on advancement in career or education. The skills of technocrats provide the basis for complementarity between them and politicians. The sphere of the former is within the administration whereas that of the political office-holders is within politics (Panday, 2017).

Moreover, bureaucracy is recognisable through specialisation and division of labour. In bureaucratic systems jobs are divided and broken down for employees so that they become a routine (Weber, 1947). Work broken down into small parts can stimulate efficiency in one way or the other (Goodsell, 2005). It has the potential to increase one's competence since he or she performs the same line of duties regularly. Hence, governments create different ministries instead of clumping the work under one big ministry. Each ministry has technocrats who perform different tasks depending on their field of expertise.

In a bureaucratic system, rules, sanctions, rewards and procedures are applied uniformly. As far as they are concerned, a public administrator's status or personality does not matter (Weber, 1947; Chipea & Banciu, 2013; McNamra, 2010; Warwick, 1975; Olum, 2004; Hall, 1963). All workers are supposed to be subjected to equal treatment. Discrimination is avoided by applying the aforementioned principle of impartiality. The following table below condenses the aforesaid characteristics of bureaucracy:

Table 1.

Characteristics and principles of bureaucracy

Characteristics	Description
Formal rules and procedures	A system of rules clarifies the rights, responsibilities, duties and benefits of employees
A clearly-defined line of Hierarchy	Accepted chain of command directs the staff's efforts towards the accomplishment of task
Recruitment based on merits	The staff is employed and promoted based on education level, competence and technical expertise
Division of labour	Work is broken down and divided among the staff to increase efficiency
Impersonality	Rules and procedures are applied uniformly regardless of an individual's personality

Source: Adapted from Weber (1947) and Hall (1963)

4. The Viewpoints on Bureaucracy

Whenever the term 'bureaucracy' is used, scholars think of the characteristics common in every public administration. Among such features is the domination of hierarchical levels where the personnel act under inflexible rules (Guy, 2001). Another one is the consultation of superiors before decision-making and reporting to them afterwards (Chipea & Banciu, 2013). Also record-keeping, merit-based recruitment and adherence to official rules and procedures are common attributes of bureaucracy (Altay, 1999).

The complexities of a bureaucratic environment compelled scholars to argue and advance that bureaucracy is bound to collapse. All those who expected its death were convinced that its demise is certain and inevitable (Meier, 1997; Merton 1940; Simon 1946; Thompson, 1967). However, those claims were issued prematurely since it continues to be embraced by world governments. Hence, Guy (2005) affirms that bureaucracy has proven remarkably resilient. Besides, Haggott (2005) asserts that there are different bureaucracies and some forms have not yet emerged.

A voluminous scholarship misread bureaucracy and take it to mean a lot of things. The confusion results from the mismatch between theory and practice. Bureaucracy is associated with red-tape, hierarchy and authoritarian ways of governing (Mahmood & Basharat, 2012; Olsen, 2007). However, bureaucracy was developed to ensure equal treatment of persons in the public sector and not the imposition of a superior's discretion on the subordinates (Guy, 2001). By keeping records, bureaucrats lay a foundation that serves as a justification for implemented policies. Documentation facilitates the attainment of justice in the public administration. Such a feature may be overlooked yet it makes bureaucracy an ideal.

The complex relationship between bureaucrats and politicians pose a lot of challenges to public administrators. The good side of bureaucracy is overshadowed by the interaction of technocrats and political office-holders (Enahoro, 2016). Studies show that unfavourable policies and political environment undermine implementation of policies. For instance, Enahoro (2016) found out that Nigerian bureaucracy is hampered by constitutional lapses and poor conditions of service which result from the interaction between politicians and technocrats.

Regardless of its few challenges, Max Weber's bureaucracy has survived tough times. Throughout history, scholars have been expecting its imminent collapse (Thompson & Alvesson, 2005; Reed, 2005). However, talks about its death are illusions. Surveys and case studies continue to indicate that most of the systems of government still adhere to hierarchy, recruitment based on merits and strict rules as well as procedures (Guy, 2005; Reed, 2005). Whenever governments attempt to deviate from bureaucracy, they replace its hierarchy with loose networks (Sennett, 1998). Some merely flatten its hierarchy without completely eliminating the system (Reed, 2005). Administrations that struggle to replace bureaucracy have decided to accept it as though it was a necessary evil (Reed, 2005). Bureaucratic weaknesses flow from its paradoxical features that manifest a contrast between theory and practice.

The disparagement levelled against bureaucracy is misplaced because it attempts to overshadow its desirability based on one-sided view. Jaques (1990) observed that most critics underestimate the value and essence of an exquisitely structured hierarchical system that curbs the whims of human beings. It is necessary to have a system able to deal with complexity and large size without compromising accountability. Thomas Hobbes rightly perceived that human nature is filled with brutish tendencies, therefore it ought to be restrained (Glover, 1966). Left on its own, a public administration is bound to be disorderly and ineffective.

The failure of an organised system like bureaucracy cannot be justified unless human beings manipulate it. Sekulow (2016) sustains that the system fails because people fail. The failures of an ideal public administration are largely attributable to individuals and not necessarily the organisation or structural flaws. The arguments raised by various scholars against Max Weber's ideal type of public administration are largely misplaced, misleading and flawed (Merton, 1940; Simon 1946; Thompson, 1967; Olsen, 2007). Hence, Sekulow (2016) asserts that where bureaucracy fails, it is because politicians believe that 'more money' means 'more bureaucrats.' Sometimes, more power is associated with rent-seeking behaviour which is characterized by pervasive corruption, nepotism and lack of accountability (Bratton & van de Walle, 1994; Rakolobe, 2019).

The aforementioned characteristics of bureaucracy make it desirable, magnificent and attractive to an extent that governments cannot imagine other forms of administration. The test of times it has withstood makes this evident (Reed, 2005). This point is made clearer by Niskanen (1971) who argues that bureaus are the oldest form of organization which stands above the communal tribe. The author maintains that the earliest Egyptian literature was dominated by principles of bureaucracy which include the rule of conduct. Bureaucracy remains admirable because it attempts to make institutions efficient (McIntosh, 1970). It organises human activity and processes systematically. It also structures institutions hierarchically to introduce order, maximise efficiency and eliminate favouritism (Heady, 1959; Daft, Willmott & Murphy, 2017).

Governments prefer bureaucracy over other systems of administration because it lends rationality to the public administration (Weber, 1947). The rationality of the administration is implied when discipline is introduced within an institution (O'Neill, 1986; Daft, Willmott & Murphy, 2017). Orderliness and stability are reinforced through the emphasis on regulations and sanctions. The bureaucratic system is stabilised by standard and elaborate rules and procedures (O'Neill, 1986). The regulations cause a change in behaviour and encourage discipline.

Governments adopt a bureaucratic administration because of the superiority of bureaucracy over other types of public administration. Its characteristics facilitate continuity, reliability, precision, predictability, rationality and efficiency (Gajduschek, 2003). Its principles are scientific and result in the disengagement from soldiering and application of the rule of thumb (Taylor, 1917). When bureaucrats adhere to bureaucratic principles, meddlesome behaviour is minimised. In addition, division of labour and specialisation help employees to become competent, efficient and faster in performing their work.

Governments admire bureaucracy because of its capability to curtail patrimonialism and enhance effectiveness. Bureaucracy enshrines meritocracy which curtails and curbs nepotism in the public administration wherever it is respected. Its application reassures equity and equal treatment and implies a modicum of fairness and impartiality (Daft, Willmott & Murphy, 2017). Solutions to problems are better attained when institutional challenges are handled by competent individuals (Frederickson, 2000).

4.1. The Relationship Between Bureaucrats and Elected Public Officials in Lesotho

Owing to the aforementioned merits of bureaucracy, the government of Lesotho embraced it since independence. It divided different roles and responsibilities across all the ministries. Each ministry of government is tasked with special responsibilities (GoL, 2018). The country has established the following ministries: ministry of agriculture and food security, communications, science and technology, defense and national security, education and training, employment and labour, forestry and reclamation, law and constitutional affairs, public works and transport, local government and chieftainship, environment and culture, social development, mining, tourism, finance, home affairs, public service, health, tourism, environment and culture. Each ministry has a minister, deputy, principal secretary, and bureaucrats under a comprehensive chain of command (GoL, 2018). There are currently about 26 ministries in the country (GoL, 2018).

The government of Lesotho hires bureaucrats on contractual bases. They are recruited based on their qualifications in most cases. The Lesotho Labour Code Order No. 24, 1992 stipulates the criteria for recruitment and dismissal of bureaucrats (GoL, 1992). It orders employers to adhere to written rules and procedures. Even when dismissing employees, the records have to be kept. The code enshrines most of the principles of bureaucracy and sets the basis for its practice. It also enshrines the principles of impartiality.

In addition, the government of Lesotho developed ways of disciplining bureaucrats. Besides the hierarchical accountability, the Public Accounts Committee investigates and questions public servants on their day-to-day operations. Sometimes, it broadcasts the questioning sessions to ensure transparency (Lesotho Broadcasting Service, 2018). After deliberating issues and identifying offences, the Public Accounts Committee refers the identified cases to corresponding authorities such as the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences and the police. However, at times politicians try to manipulate the system to undermine justice. There are instances where they misused their power by dismissing bureaucrats although the courts intervened to protect the victims. For instance, the dismissal of the Commissioner of Police Holomo Molibeli and Justice Kananelo Mosito by Prime Minister Thabane reveals how far politicians would go to undermine justice in the country (Phakela, 2020; Ngatane, 2020). The interaction between politicians and bureaucrats poses a lot of challenges.

The complementarity of politics and administration is dysfunctional most of the time, particularly in Lesotho. Advocates of this relationship underestimate the injustice that might result from the absolute control of bureaucrats by politicians (Svara, 1999). The latter perceive the former as mere executors of policies which are developed by ministers, yet bureaucrats have well-known expertise (Farazmand, 1997). Eventually, bureaucrats are disgruntled by policies developed by politicians.

In Lesotho, bureaucracy is not yielding the expected outcomes because of the way the relationship between bureaucrats and politicians is working out. The latter determines policies which need to be implemented and executed by the former (Goodin, Humber & Shipan, 2011). Bureaucrats are compelled by their duties to implement dictated programmes even when they are immoral. Unfortunately, in Lesotho, most of the policies have not curbed unemployment. The bureaucracy is bloated to an extent that over 10 000 graduates have to wait for at least 10 years to get a job from the government (CIA, 2018). The unemployment rate stands at 23.48%. From 1999 to 2019, it has been fluctuating from 36.81% to 23.48% (Plecher, 2020). The country's bloated bureaucracy and high unemployment results from corruption and nepotism that has always been a norm in Lesotho (Moletsane, 2017). The country's recruitment continues to follow particularistic criteria that are characterized by favouritism and corruption (Moletsane, 2017). This behaviour probably results from the politicians' desire to garner public support and maximize votes even at the expense of bureaucratic performance.

The unsuccessful rapport between bureaucrats and politicians leads to maladministration and poor policies that fuel cynicism and anger. Protests of salary increase are widespread across the country (Pheko, 2019). In 2018 and 2020, parliamentarians attempted to double their salaries despite being among the best-paid public servants. They earn, at least, M 37000 (Maluti) per month and a few years ago, they were entitled to many benefits that included an interest free-loan of M 500000 (Maclean, 2018). The parliamentarians of Lesotho are trying to copy Kenyan and Nigerian parliamentarians who earn the highest salaries in Africa and are dubbed 'MPigs' instead of MPs (Nyamori, 2018; Maclean, 2018). Meanwhile, politicians attempted to augment their salaries, Basotho teachers, lecturers and police officers also clamoured for salary increase but were denied it. Their demonstrations compelled the government to dock their wages (Motsoeli, 2019; The Post, 2019). These events partially illustrate the dishonesty of politicians and their inclination to corruption in the country.

In Lesotho, corruption permeates many ministries and undermines the operations of bureaucrats. Although the former Prime Minister Thomas Thabane's catchword purported that "*Corruption is Basotho's worst enemy*," he seemed very loath and reluctant to curb it (Motsoeli, 2013; Ardigó & Transparency International, 2014; Pring & Vrushi, 2019). Moletsane (2017) revealed that as many watched how Thabane's government would combat corruption, charges were filed against him and his cahoots for defrauding the country M19

million (Maloti). The minor efforts that he took during his tenure of office are the resistance of the civil servants' demand for salary increase and decreasing salaries of ministers by five percent. Moreover, he proposed to restrict costly international trips but the practice continued unabated until the dawn of coronavirus which led to a complete lockdown in many countries (Motsoeli, 2019; Aljazeera, 2020).

Furthermore, nepotism and patrimonialism counteract the effectiveness of bureaucrats in Lesotho. Recruitment to public service is based on political party affiliations even when posts are advertised (The Post, 2017). The then Deputy Prime Minister Monyane Moleleki confessed that these practices are perpetuated by politicians. When there were vacancies for police officers, top politicians let 22 000 Basotho to be scorched by the sun despite knowing that all the 250 vacancies were already filled behind closed doors (Mohloboli, 2018). Meanwhile qualified people were busy following formal processes with the hope of securing the jobs, political party leaders had already picked unqualified people from political parties. Mr Moleleki also revealed other cases where people were employed in this fashion (Mohloboli, 2018). Similarly, former Minister of water affairs, Ralechate 'Mokose was accused of hiring staff based on political affiliations. Equally, some ministers were charged with recruitment and payment of ghost workers (Pheko, 2019). It is almost a custom to fill public posts with ruling political party followers without public advertisement of vacant positions (Pheko, 2019). This practice is done to garner the support of those whom public resources are transferred to, instead of the general public that deserves them. This kind of behaviour is rent-seeking because it tries to increase the welfare of elected public officials in the form of public supports without creating new wealth.

The problem of bureaucracy starts when officials do not separate their political affiliations from the public office. Hence, the lack of impartiality characterises the public administration of Lesotho (Rakolobe, 2019). Once in public office, the public servant represents the family, ethnic members and political associates. An office-holder becomes a ladder to the public arena for his kinship. This practice is common in most of the African countries (Bratton & van de Walle, 1994). This is contrary to Weber's observation that for a bureaucracy to be desirable, officials have to know how to separate public office from their values (Mahmood & Basharat, 2012; Kali & Muchie, 2020).

Apart from that, politicians develop policies that do not help downsize the bureaucracy. The public sector policies do not essentially support the growth of the private sector. They attempt to kill small businesses instead of sustaining them. Meanwhile successful countries like Botswana nurture private sector to disburden bureaucracy, Lesotho stifles it without mercy (Boubekeur, 2016). For instance, the government restricted the sale of wool and mohair despite being aware that it is the main source of income for many farmers (Motsoeli, 2019). Sometimes, the victims protested to no avail when their payments were deferred. The bureaucrats unwillingly executed the directives of the top officials. Later, they accused ministers of defrauding the farmers of their means of survival with the purpose of enriching a chines entrepreneur (Motsoeli, 2019).

The demoralising relationship of the politicians and bureaucrats in Lesotho overshadows the good side of bureaucracy. Therefore, making a distinct separation between the two actors is complicated by the power wielded by former (Panday, 2017). Although the rules and procedures outline the expectations, the influence possessed by ministers cannot be underrated. Owing to the power wielded by politicians over bureaucrats, Lesotho's public administration resembles a hybrid of the patronage system and bureaucracy (Rakolobe, 2019). With the former, the bureaucrats are fired and hired based on the whims of a ruling political party. After the ruling political party loses elections, a new party that takes over terminates the contract of incumbent bureaucrats to employ its followers (Johnson & Libecap, 1994). There are such

cases in Lesotho. Those who obtain jobs under patronage are expected to demonstrate support to those who distribute benefits (Bratton & van de Walle, 1994).

Due to patrimonialism, lack of accountability in the country undercuts the effectiveness of bureaucracy. No one holds top political office-holders accountable (Kali, 2020). Any modicum of control that is present is limited to the lower ranks of office. Parliamentarians increase their salaries as and when they please (Maclean, 2018). They have created a situation that allows them to take interest-free loans from the public coffers. When their term of office ends prematurely, they write-off their loans (Latela, 2019). This practice cost the government of Lesotho more than M32 million and nearly M72 million, during the eighth and ninth parliament respectively (Ntsukunyane, 2016; Latela, 2019). These immoral acts were condemned by civil society organizations and Basotho who vented their frustrations to no avail. In the aftermath, civil servants' salaries were not increased. Besides the salaries, teachers complained of working under unfavourable conditions and without necessary facilities (Writer, 2019). In such circumstances, poor service delivery and inefficiency are inevitable.

Although these challenges persist, the government of Lesotho put in place laws that protect bureaucrats from political influence. Politicians can only over extent their powers to manipulate and threaten bureaucrats indirectly. Laws limiting the control of top officials over bureaucrats can only be undermined by a few corrupt bureaucrats. Some judges are not impartial and are often biased in judgments. For instance, Acting Justice 'Maseforo Mahase backed Prime Minister Thomas Thabane when he strived to fire Justice Mosito for allegedly refusing to judge cases in his favour (Kabi, 2019). Similarly, Acting Justice Mahase granted a controversial bail, which was revoked by the court of appeal, to the first lady despite the police's efforts to pursue justice (Phakela, 2020; Ngatane, 2020). Due to the courts, the Prime Minister unsuccessfully attempted to fire the Commissioner of Police Holomo Molibeli, for allegedly investigating a case of murder compromising him and the first lady- Liabiloe Ramoholi.

The relationship between bureaucrats and politicians can easily be described using agency theory (Nan, Mampilly, Bartoli, & Ihsanoglu, 2012). The theory underscores the different interests of the former and the latter. Politicians are concerned about winning elections and mobilising support while technocrats' objectives are efficiency and effective service delivery (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1992). The political office-holders' influence is consequential because they create the structures governing the bureaucrats. Politicians also develop policies to be implemented by civil servants (Panday, 2017).

5. Conclusion

This paper tried to portray the robustness of bureaucracy and to uncover the causes of its criticized performance. It puts a special emphasis on the relationship between bureaucrats and elected officials. Taking Lesotho as a case study, the paper established that in spite of bureaucracy's robustness, it is not conveying the expected outcomes in the country for different reasons.

The paper argues that the rent-seeking behaviour of elected public officials blemishes the intrinsic values of bureaucracy and lures scholars to assert that bureaucracy is dysfunctional. The elected officials have the predisposition to transfer the public resources for personal gain by engaging in unproductive behaviour which wastes public resource value through corruption. They engage in corruption, nepotism and patrimonialism to increase their welfare and garner public support at the expense of the performance of bureaucracy. This behaviour undermines the performance of bureaucracy and attracts unsolicited and unnecessary criticisms.

The behaviour of the political office-holders in Lesotho demonstrates that they are determined to intimidate technocrats who hamper their interests. Such practices overshadow the

desirability of bureaucracy. Basically, politicians exert their influence in two ways. First, they demonstrate their power through public policy. This is a strategy which civil servants find difficult to resist. Any attempt to sabotage public policies has to be done indirectly. Second, politicians can exercise their influence indirectly by co-opting corrupt bureaucrats to subvert justice. However, the rest of the bureaucrats can still safeguard their integrity because there are laws to protect them against unfair dismal and maltreatment.

 In summation, bureaucracy's desirability continues because it has withstood the tests of times. Its qualities render public administration rational, fair and organised. However, it is confronted with several challenges. It disadvantages the bureaucrats and subjects them to manipulations by the elected public officials. Although bureaucrats possess the skills to render governments effective and efficient, their operations are undermined by politicians who infiltrate the system with unqualified staff. Also, the poor policies which favour political office-holders over bureaucrats weaken their capability. Briefly, the literature demonstrates that bureaucracy continues to be the superior form of public administration because it resembles the end of a human's imagination. Its qualities make it an ideal system of administration. Hence, any identified flaws need to be rectified without replacing it.

6. Recommendations

The government of Lesotho has to improve the functioning of bureaucracy by implementing the following suggestions: First, the parliament has to develop stronger sanctions to discipline corrupt politicians and bureaucrats. This will ensure that they refrain from engaging in any illegal practice since the penalties will be high. Second, the government has to re-examine the judicial system to safeguard the impartiality of judges so that corruption can be combatted effectively. Third, it has to review the remuneration of bureaucrats and politicians to make it equitable so as to put an end to the protests in the country. Fourthly, the Public Accounts Committee has to assess the public administration to eliminate unqualified civil servants that are hired through nepotism and political affiliations. The implementation of these recommendations will ensure a smooth relationship between politicians and bureaucrats and enhance the effectiveness of bureaucracy.

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