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Charles T. GOODSELL : *The Case for Bureaucracy : A Public Administration Polemic*. Chatham, Chatham House Publishers, 1983, 179 pp., ISBN 0-934540-17-9

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[See table of contents](#)

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L'article de Wilkinson, de son côté, est intéressant par le parallèle qu'il permet de faire avec la situation québécoise et canadienne. Les statistiques qu'elle présente indiquent qu'en Australie la participation féminine au marché du travail et aux activités syndicales a évolué de la même façon qu'au Canada. C'est surtout à partir de la seconde guerre mondiale que le taux d'activité des femmes s'est accru pour atteindre un peu plus de 50% au début des années 1980; comme ici, ce sont les femmes mariées qui ont le plus contribué à l'accroissement. Comme ici également, la participation des femmes aux activités syndicales n'a pas augmenté en proportion de leur nombre sur le marché du travail; ce phénomène s'explique par le grand nombre de travailleuses à temps partiel parmi elles. Autre parallèle, c'est seulement depuis 10 ans que les syndicats se sont véritablement préoccupés de la question féminine; l'Année Internationale des Femmes a été l'occasion d'amorcer la rédaction d'une Charte des Travailleuses qui fut adoptée par l'ACTU en 1977. Déjà des revendications concernant les congés de maternité, les services de garderie, l'égalité des chances, la lutte au harcèlement sexuel, ont été satisfaites en partie. Il reste beaucoup à faire, en particulier du côté de la participation des femmes à la vie syndicale, mais désormais le mouvement syndical est engagé dans la promotion active de l'égalité des hommes et des femmes dans les milieux de travail et dans les syndicats, ce qui constitue un changement radical dans une société aux traditions aussi patriarcales que l'Australie.

La lecture de ce livre permet de noter qu'en dépit de différences institutionnelles considérables, le syndicalisme australien semble confronté aux mêmes questions qui agitent les syndicats canadiens: maintien du pouvoir d'achat, élimination des conditions de travail dangereuses, inégalité des hommes et des femmes, etc. Peut-être est-ce là, pour les syndicats australiens et canadiens, une invitation au dialogue.

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**The Case for Bureaucracy. A Public Administration Polemic**, by Charles T. Goodsell, Chatham: Chatham House Publishers, 1983, pp. XI + 179. ISBN O-934540-17-9.

The author summarizes various accusations of bureaucracy for inefficiency, corruption and other wrongdoing, in order to confront them with the actual state of affairs based on performance records, surveys, etc. He comes to the conclusion that especially the U.S. bureaucracy is actually not so bad. Indicators of client satisfaction and efficiency are quite often favourable. It is true that bureaucracies suffer from contradictory goals; being responsive to one audience they are not able and willing to satisfy other audiences. «Bureaucracy cannot win. It responds not to market demand but to political process, which means it must always be judged by multiple and inconsistent standards. Hence it must inevitably dissatisfy at least somebody» (p. 67).

Bureaucrats are just people like others, and the bureaucratic institutions do not necessarily show lower effectiveness than other organizations. However, does it really mean that all criticism of bureaucracy does not have any validity whatsoever? The author seems to be himself misled by the vagueness of the concept «bureaucracy».

In the **Dictionary of the French Academy** published in 1789, bureaucracy was identified with the power and influence of the heads and staff of government bureaux. Too much of this power obviously may endanger the public interest. On the other hand, Max Weber identified bureaucracy with the rational organization. It is a reasonable question whether or not specific institutions act rationally.

The tendency to rationalize world around us quite often means the projection of our own wishes on all others. What looks rational from one perspective may appear irrational from another perspective. A government may appear as fussy and meddlesome from the perspective of people who pay heavy taxes but not receive much for them. The rule

of the minority which pretends to represent the interests of the majority may be a nuisance.

In this book Goodsell misses all these aspects. His preoccupation is to check whether the accusations formulated by various critics of bureaucracy are justified by empirical facts. For example, he shows that quite often the clients are satisfied with what bureaucracy offers them, many bureaucratic functionaries are democratically oriented, most of the bureaucratic offices are quite small, only a minority of the bureaucracies are very big, by no means larger communities with their larger bureaucracies perform more poorly, aging institutions do not necessarily produce rigidity. «Available evidence does not support concepts of constantly expanding government bureaux or inevitable bureaucratic decay» (p. 125).

It is true that quite often the expectations of the public imposed upon bureaucracy are just unrealistic, especially when agencies practice the «administration by proxy» and have only a limited control of events. However, Goodsell does not compare the bureaucratic form of administration with the alternative forms which are already available and should not be neglected. The public sector does not necessarily have to depend only on the bureaucratic tradition as presented by M. Weber. For example, in Israël the kibbutz movement plays quite effectively a major public role and almost certainly is more efficient than the agencies run directly by the government.

The practice of the state farming out various projects to the self-governmental teams of people who show a collective initiative, or just to the private business, has several advantages. For example, what is the purpose of government offering postal services which are expensive, inefficient, full of conflict, and in general dissatisfactory for the population? Even if several social scientists exaggerate the negative role of bureaucracy, there are still genuine problems related to the dehumanisation of organization, too much dependence of subordinates on the super-

visors, decision making oriented more to specific vested interests than to public issues, external pressures distorting the functioning of organization, etc.

Goodsell seems to ignore these issues. It is relatively easy for him to do it because he deals with bureaucracy in a very rich country where the waste of resources is relatively less painful than in the countries which are worse off. Also he ignores the fields particularly sensitive in the U.S. to the negative aspects of bureaucratization, particularly public education. The mediocre educational results of the U.S. high schools are quite obviously related to the security orientation at the expense of efficiency orientation. The school administration does not want to rock the boat; the school discipline is too much relaxed; students are not expected to learn much; teachers bother about their own interest and do not have courage to promote the professional values; the internal weakness of the schools is covered by the administration in order to keep good public image at any cost; schools become more unemployment shelters than the institutions of learning.

Of course, this is an open question whether or not schools organized on the non-bureaucratic principles would be virtually much better. However, without providing a suitable organizational conditions, it is almost impossible to upgrade the U.S. high school education.

My main critical point against Goodsell is that he ignores the historical character of bureaucracy. With the changing socio-historical and economic conditions of society there is an obvious need to modernize adequately organizational forms and principles. All around in the Western world the role of the state has grown very considerably. In the period 1961-1981 the share of the state, including social insurance, has grown in the Gross Domestic Product in West Germany from 34 percent to 49 percent, much similar to the growth in France, U.K., and Italy, but much less than in Japan (from 17 percent to 34 percent) and the U.S. (from 29 percent to 35 percent). In the period 1970-83 the average

cost of the German labour hour has doubled, among others, due to the growing load of social costs. The market economy remains in conflict with the welfare economy; there is not any effective way to eliminate the misuse of various welfare activities by people who actually do not deserve them; politicians in order to remain popular defend various privileges or even extend them; in order to defend their living standard, many taxpayers involve themselves into activities not accepted by the state (moonlighting, tax evasion, etc.); there is no economic incentive to keep welfare services cheaper and more efficient.

These are very important and difficult problems of the modern welfare state; even more dramatic are the difficulties of the omnipotent socialist state bureaucracy in the Soviet bloc countries. Goodsell is right showing that the public administration is not necessarily so malfunctioning and sinister as its critics claim. However, he should make his readers aware of the challenges facing the public administration which make necessary organizational innovation. (See Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *The Change Masters*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1984). It is not enough to defend public administration but it would be worthwhile also to show new developmental potential hidden in the alternatives to bureaucracy.

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**Comparative Industrial Relations. Ideologies, Institutions, Practices and Problems Under Different Social Systems with Special Reference to Socialist Planned Economies**, by Jozef Wilczynski, London, The Macmillan Press, pp. VIII + 256, ISBN 0-333-33430-2

This book, written by the late professor of economics at the University of New South Wales at Duntroon/Australia/, has a very broad scope and contains a large amount of information. The role of labour within

various social systems is presented. Employment, unemployment and labour mobility, work discipline and conditions of work are covered in a cross-cultural perspective. Next follow trade unions and collective bargaining, industrial democracy and workers' participation, technology and labour, wages, incentives and living standards, inflation and labour, industrial disputes, international migrations of workers.

This is an ambitious attempt to cover the whole world scene and make the readers aware of the global dimensions of industrial relations. The comparative study of this field is long overdue even with the existence of the International Institute of Labour Studies in Geneva since 1960.

The author does his best to be informative and neutral but he is only partly successful in this respect. Missing is a developmental perspective which would show the nature of civilizational confrontations and transformations arising from them.

The contrasting features of capitalism and socialism are stated by the author already at the beginning but the readers are not warned how actually misleading these concepts may be. The author admits that «both capitalism and socialism have been departing from their original extreme models» (p. 5) but he comes to a very doubtful conclusion that these two systems become increasingly similar to each other. Another debatable view of the author is that the idealistic Marxian goals largely explain the policies and practices of the socialist countries today (p. 7). He quotes various sources from the communist countries without enough criticism regarding the reliability of facts and sincerity of insights. The author makes the readers aware that the communist party élite on many occasions has proved to be insensitive and even vindictive to popular demands for better working and living conditions (p. 12) but this does not prevent him to treat socialism as a highly socialized system. Too much dependence on empirical facts quoted uncritically from various sources and not