

BUREAUCRACY AND SOCIAL ALIENATION: THE CASE OF KING ABDUL AZIZ UNIVERSITY

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Despite the abundance of literature dealing with bureaucracy as a system of civil service, as a system utilizing power for decision-making, or as a system for the development of society, nothing, if anything, has been written about the relationship between bureaucracy and social alienation, particularly in the developing countries. The essential purpose of this study is to attempt to answer the following questions which are considered relevant to the study of bureaucracy: Is social alienation a consequence of the misuse of bureaucratic power? Does the citizen feel subjected, misused, burdened, and neglected by the mismanagement of bureaucracy? Does his alienation imply a withdrawal, active or passive, from social considerations? In other words, does he become aloof and uncaring for his society, a stranger in his own state?

It is hoped that an answer to these questions would fill a vacuum in social science research. In so doing, we will, first define the terms bureaucracy and social alienation. This will constitute the theoretical part of this work. The second part of this study will show how these concepts will be applied to a study of public administration at King Abdul Aziz University (KAAU)

This analysis is not an attempt to solve the problem of alienation. How can it be? It is an attempt to pin-point the issues involved in the concept of alienation as applied at King Abdul Aziz University. To cure the ills of the University will be the responsibility of those in authority.

The field methodology applied consists of a questionnaire distributed to KAAU administrators, teachers, and students. Out of a total of 300 questionnaire distributed to the administrators, ten Saudis and fifteen non-Saudis responded, five Saudi teachers and eighteen non-Saudis responded out of a total of 300, and ninety-three Saudi and twenty-three non-Saudi students out of 500 responded. Refer to chart below:

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	First group	Second group	Third group
	Administrators	Teachers	Students
Saudis	10	5	93
non-Saudis	15	18	23
Total	25	23	116

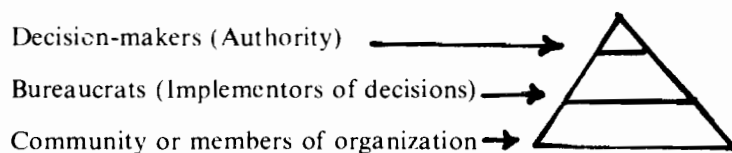
The students were asked eleven questions, eighteen were given to the teachers, and ten were submitted to the administrators. Two main factors were taken into account in the composition of the questions: First, the questions were to take into consideration the problems all three groups face as a consequence of bureaucratic misuse of prerogatives; and, second, the questions take into account the phenomenon of alienation which would be reflected in their responses.

Having collected the relevant data, the processes of classification and statistical analysis were used to attain the correlation coefficient between the various groups. Z Test was employed to evaluate the correlation coefficient with $r = .05$.

Terms Defined

A. Bureacracy: Bureaucracy is a system created to serve a community or a group of individuals. It is governed by laws and by-laws legislated by the authorities, either in government or outside of government. The bureaucracy functions according to adherence to those laws governing its work. It is motivated by the desire to maintain order in and continuity of the system, and it must conform to the mores and ethical standards of the society.

The structural bureaucracy functions pyramidically, where decisions are derived from the top or are initiated from the bottom of the pyramid, as illustrated below:



Theoretically, such pyramidal organizational structure cannot be described as tending to be pathological. It is a system composed of components related to and dependent on each other. It is similar to an

organism in which each component has specific and defined duties and functions. To be able to function properly and adequately, all other components must be working in harmony. Any disturbance within the system has an ill-effect on the rest of the components. As an organism, the system contracts, expands, and grows according to what it is fed. To experience continuity, the interrelated sub-systems of the system must be cohesive and integrated. The entire system, therefore must work to serve those it was created to serve.

However, a more practical definition of bureaucracy was offered by Max Weber, the German sociologist. Is it a question of practicality ? He defined bureaucracy as an administrative system operated by official administrators, who have great technical abilities, and who behave rationally.¹ The officials of a bureaucratic system are appointed by the legitimate authority of a given society. The authority designates those qualified and able persons capable of transferring theoretical laws into practical ones aimed at serving the ruled. The laws are explicit. Confusion in the transformation of theoretical laws does not stem from doctrinal guides, but rather from bureaucrats unable to satisfy a public need.

It is true that public administration as a system is an ancient order that existed side by side with the state. The bureaucratic system, however, is a recent phenomenon. According to Weber, it is a rational method created by the political system to help it carry on its affairs, to care for the welfare of its subjects, and to insure that the laws and rules of the state are applied with judiciousness. However, Weber explained that the bureaucratic system has gone astray because the political system has expanded too rapidly, giving rise to corruption within the bureaucratic system.²

Theoretically speaking, a rational, functional bureaucracy operates on the premise of "the right person for the right place." This assumption presupposes that unqualified persons will not be placed in positions not in conformity with their qualifications. In the Third World, this premise has no validity. It is cast aside and neglected. In its place, the principle of "intermediates," has evolved, those persons who intercede on behalf of someone in order to obtain for him a position not in conformity with his qualifications. The "intermediary" practice is prevalent in developing states and gives rise to an abundance of contradictions. Moreover, corruption and inefficiency dominate and a spoils-system becomes embedded. Those privileged few become holders of a "pass-card", which grants them opportunities that are not available to most others. Civil servants in developing states advance their self-aggrandizement by accumulating as much wealth as they can, and in as short time as possible. Joseph la Palombara refers to an example of a governor of a local

government in a developing nation who endeavors to accumulate wealth during his tenure, which generally lasts but a short time, in order to satisfy his quest for material riches.³ This practice can be said to be general in the developing countries.

B. Social Alienation: The twentieth century, despite the abundance of scientific discoveries, developments, and progress, has been defined by sociologists, psychologists, scientists, and men of letters as the age of alienation. John Galbraith, in a B.B.C. documentary series, described the present century as the "Age of Uncertainty". Although man has put his feet on the surface of the moon, he has lost touch with his own world. What are the causes behind man's alienation? To be more specific, what is alienation ?

The term alienation has a long history. It has been used in psychology to indicate the "detachment of the self from others", and in law to refer to the transformation of ownership from one person to another.⁴ Alienation for our purpose will mean the estrangement of an individual from himself, others, work, and society. It is, as Eric Fromm writes, "total pervading the relationship of man to his work, to the things he consumes, to the state, to his fellow man, and to himself."⁵ In other words, the process of alienation is that which encompasses man's psyche, ego, and id. It is a process leading to a loss of identity.

It is both a psychological and sociological problem. In order for man to regain his values, he must undergo a reevaluation of his daily interactions with his fellow man, search for those cultural values having significance in his own preservation as a unique individual, and strive to preserve those cultural values deemed essential. With any form of breakdown in those prominent cultural values, which might lead to a vacuum or a missing link in an individual's life in society, alienation becomes acute and poignant. In addition, feelings of "loss of self, anxiety states, anomie, despair, depression, depersonalization, ruthlessness, apathy, social disorganization, loneliness, atomization, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, pessimism, and the loss of beliefs and values"⁶ are the impending results of alienation.

RESEARCH ANALYSIS: KAAU AND ALIENATION

Political scientists in the behavioral disciplines have dealt with the concept of alienation. Among them are David Easton, Gabriel Almond, Sidney Verba, and Lucian Pye. They measured alienation by calculating the degree to which the individual participates in the political system⁷. Scholars writing on the subject of political alienation in the Middle East measure political alienation through what they termed "recognition

through rejection." Halim Barakat and Robert Cunningham studied alienation and its effects in Jordan. Tawfiq Farah and Faisal al-Salem dealt with the concept of alienation by evaluating Kuwaiti students in Kuwait.⁸ Our measurement for the term alienation, however, concentrates on the degree of social harmony among the three categories: Students teachers, and administrators at King Abdul Aziz University. In other words, to what extent do the groups care for each other? Three different questionnaires were submitted to the three sets of groups. The questionnaires were given to 300 students; one-hundred and eighteen responded. The number of respondents, according to nationality, is listed below:

Nationality	Number of Respondents
Saudi	93
Yemeni (South and North)	12
Jordanian	3
Egyptian	7
Somali	1
Mauritanian	1
Sudanese	1
Total	118

(Palestinians were omitted because it is felt that they are already alienated).

Statistical analysis shows that the Saudi student correlated with the alienation indicators at .992 while the non-Saudi correlated with it at .904. Although both seemed to be highly alienated by the administrators, the non-Saudi shows less alienation. Table I shows the correlation among the sample of Saudi and non-Saudi students:

Table I
Correlation Coefficient among
Saudi and non-Saudi students at KAAU

Groups	Correlation	Sample	ZValue at $\alpha=.05$
Saudi	.992	93	2.7587
non-Saudi	.904	23	1.4937

Chi square analysis, however, indicates the acceptance of our hypothesis. The participants are equally treated by the administrators and University personnel. As indicated in Table II (below), both Saudi and non-Saudi students feel alienated:

- 34 -

Table II
Chi Square analysis of Students
at KAAU

	Yes	No	Total
Saudi	496	497	993
	(500.94)	(492.05)	
non-Saudi	124	112	236
	(119.05)	(116.94)	
	620	609	1229

$$X^2 = df = 1 = .5128 < p. 05 < 3.841$$

Chi square critical value with one degree of freedom and probability of 5 percent = 3.841 less than the table value which = 0.5128. Thus we accept the hypothesis that Saudi and non-Saudi students are both alienated.

Why do students, especially the Saudis, feel alienated? It is obvious they do have too many problems which are not properly solved by the University administrators. Housing is one major problem. Even for those fortunate enough to attain housing, they have to share their rooms with seven or more students. Moreover, water and electricity are cut off quite often. Furniture is a luxury that students cannot afford and which the University rarely provides. Payment of the monthly allowance of Saudi riyal 525.00 given to Saudi students by the government is at times delayed for months. To some students, this allowance is important in their lives. When it is not made available at the proper time, the student has no recourse but to wait until it becomes available. All channels for directing grievances on any matter is tedious, time consuming, and cumbersome. He is helpless to do anything and powerless to expedite his personal matters.

What about the University administrator? Does he feel the same alienation that the Saudi student experiences? In order to answer this question, the researcher distributed a questionnaire composed of ten questions to approximately 300 University administrators. The respondents thought the research to be a joke. Some offered no answers and others circled both answers. Those who answered properly were as follows:

Nationality	Number of Respondents
Saudis	10
Egyptians	12
North Yemenis	1
Omanis	1
Sudanese	1
Total	25

(Palestenians were omitted)

Statistical analysis clearly indicates that both Saudi and non-Saudi administrators are alienated, but with a great degree of variation. Saudi administrators were correlated with .765 as opposed to .993 for their non-Saudi counterparts as shown in Table III.

Table III
The Correlation Coefficient of KAAU
Administrators

	Correlation	Sample	Z at $\alpha = .05$
Saudi	.763	10	1.0082
non-Saudi	.993	15	2.8207

The chi square test, however, clearly indicates the rejection of the assumption that both samples are alienated. It shows that the Saudi administrator is less alienated than his non-Saudi colleague. Table IV (below) indicates the difference:

Table IV
Chi square Test of the KAAU
Administrators

	Yes	No	Total
Saudi	67 (59.90)	31 (43.87)	108
non-Saudi	75 (82.09)	73 (60.12)	148
	142	104	256

$$X^2 = df = 1 = 7.987 > p.05 > 3.841$$

Thus, the chi square test with one degree of freedom and the probability of accepting rather than rejecting the null hypothesis with five percent is 7.987 larger than 3.841. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that Saudi administrators are less alienated than their non-Saudi colleagues.

The questions submitted to the teachers numbered eighteen. The answers were somewhat confusing. Most of the teachers refused to cooperate, especially the Saudis. Consequently, the sample was small.

Nationality	Number of respondents
Saudis	5
Egyptians	16
Sudanese	1
Yemenis	1
Jordanian Americans	1
	24

(Palestinians were omitted)

Statistically, the groups of teachers were alienated. While the Saudis have a degree of correlation of .708, the non-Saudis correlated with .608 as shown in Table V:

Table V

	Correlation	Sample	Z when $\alpha = .05$
Saudi	.708	5	.8832
non-Saudi	.608	19	.7057

The chi square test shows that the degree of alienation among the two samples is almost equal. It was hypothesised that there was no difference between the Saudis and the non-Saudis with respect to alienation. The hypothesis proved correct as shown in Table VI:

Table VI
Chi Square Test of KAAU
Teachers

	Yes	No	Total
Saudi	51 (55.21)	28 (23.78)	79
non-Saudis	209 (204.78)	84 (88.21)	293
	260	112	372

$$X^2 = df = 1 = 1.355 < p.05 < 3.841$$

Chi square with one degree of freedom and $p = .05 = 1.355$ less than the actual table of 3.841. Thus one must accept the hypothesis that there is no difference between the alienation felt by the Saudi and non-Saudi teachers.

The question must now be raised, does the KAAU teacher feel removed and isolated from the University ?

The accumulated answers assert that teachers at KAAU do not cooperate with each other. Nor are they cooperative with the students or administrators. It needs to be added that the sample shows only five Saudi teachers responded out of a total of fifty. This does not reflect a general consensus on the feelings, attitudes, and beliefs of Saudi teachers. For all practical purposes, the percentage of Saudi respondents could be said to be negligible. Moreover, the Saudi teacher's problems are diametrically different from those of his non-Saudi colleagues. While a Saudi might feel alienated because his superiors do not adhere to his political, economic, administrative, and social beliefs, the non-Saudi teacher's problems are compounded by the fact that their personal life, happiness, security, peace-of-mind, and ethics are not considered pertinent by their superiors. The non-Saudi teacher is in a foreign nation, albeit an Arab-speaking country. He feels he does not have a role in the decision making process of the University while his Saudi colleague does. Those Saudis who responded showed a feeling of helplessness in their attempts to change the policies of the University. But while they can voice openly their disagreement with University policies, their non-Saudi colleagues are not even asked to give their opinions on such matters. Moreover, the non-Saudi teacher is often told that he should refrain from demanding things lest he endanger his position. Furthermore, the non-Saudi teacher spends a great deal of his time trying to have the University honor the terms of the contract. Often,

his housing, which the University is supposed to provide, is not available upon his arrival. He must search for schools for his children which, the contract specifies, will be financed by the University. Often the University reneges on this term. Only after long hours and days, endless arguments with the University administrators, going from one office to another, and urging Saudi teachers to intercede on his behalf can a non-Saudi teacher pressure the University to pay for his children's schooling. Consequently, the non-Saudi feels helpless, neglected, despondent, atomised, powerless, regretful, and generally useless. Implicitly and explicitly, the non-Saudi teacher feels alienated - a non-entity in a University in disorganization.

NOTES

1. Reinhard Bendix, **Max Weber: an Intellectual Portrait** (New York: Doubleday, 1962), p. 452.

2. See for instance, Max Weber, **Theory of Social and Economic Organization**, translated by Henderson and Parsons (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), and H. H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, **From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946).

3. Joseph La Palombara, **Politics within Nations** (New Jersey: Englewood Cliff, 1974), p. 255.

4. Eric and Mary Josephson (eds.), **Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society** (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1966), p. 12.

5. Eric Fromm, **The Sane Society** (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1955).

6. Eric and Mary Josephson (eds.), **op. cit.**, pp. 12-13.

7. David Easton, **A System Analysis of Political Life** (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965); Gabriel Almond and S. Verba, **The Civic Culture** (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); Lucian Pye, **Personality and Nation Building** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

APPENDIX I

Students were asked: circle either yes or no.

1. As a student at KAAU, do you feel that all your activities at the university are restricted by the university administrators ?
2. Do you feel you are treated badly by the administrators ?
3. Do you feel you are treated well by the administrators ?
4. Do you desire change in the personnel of the university administration ?
5. As a student at KAAU, I do not know on whom I should depend.
6. Do you think the administrator has the right to be indifferent towards your needs ?
7. Do you think that the administrators of this university have no merit ?
8. Do you believe they are qualified for the job they hold ?
9. As a student, I suspect the administrators mainly because they do not show responsibility.
10. As a student, I believe that all student problems stem from the fact that the university is staffed by inefficient administrators.
11. Do you think that the university administrator should/should not leave his office to drink tea or to accompany friends on walks during office hours ?

Administrators were asked:

1. Do you think that the majority of the administrators are inefficient?
2. Do you believe that administrators of this university do not know what is going on because they lack organizational skills ?
3. Do you think that administrators lack leadership ?
4. Do you think that the leadership of this university comprehends what goes on at the lower levels of the administrative hierarchy ?
5. Do you believe that arbitration, reconciliation and compromises are the main factors behind the complicated university bureaucracy ?
6. Do you think that administrators of the university lack training and experience ?
7. Do you think that increasing the number of administrators will not solve the complicated university bureaucracy ?
8. Time has no important effect on the administrator's work. Do you think that it is preferable for the administrator to spend the least time for his job ?

9. Do you ascribe to the opinion that students and teachers are to be blamed for our complicated bureaucracy ?

10. As an administrator, do you think that the business of those related to the university depends largely on what you accomplish ?

Teachers were asked:

1. Do you think that your work depends largely on the administrators?

2. Do you think that the university administrators are careless about the teacher's business ?

3. Do you believe that administrators attempt to help teachers ?

4. Do you think that the university administrators are indifferent to teachers personal needs ?

5. As a teacher, do you think you should concern yourself about the students problems ?

6. Do you think that the students cooperate with you ?

7. Do you think that students know what their duties are ?

8. Do you believe that teachers should act according to what they think is right when dealing with students problems without referring to the administration ?

9. Do you think that the students, generally speaking, are scholastically inclined ?

10. Do you think that the university library contains a sufficient number of books, journals and magazines ?

11. Do you think it is part of the teacher's duty to visit the library everyday ?

12. Do you think that it is also his duty to interest the students to visit the library ?

13. Do you think that statistics and computers are essentials in the study of humanities ?

14. Do you think that the teachers are troubled by the university administrators ?

15. Do you think that you have good relationship with other teachers?

16. Do you think that your colleagues are efficient ?

17. Do you think the majority of the teachers are honest with respect to their duties and advice ?

18. Are you prepared to publish on a cooperative basis with your colleagues ?

البيروقراطية والاغتراب الاجتماعي بجامعة الملك عبد العزيز بجدة

د. احمد ظاهر

على الرغم مما كتب عن البيروقراطية في أجهزة الخدمة المدنية كمساهم في تطوير المجتمعات أو كعائق في تطورها، إلا أن أحداً لم يتطرق لدراسة البيروقراطية وعلاقتها بظاهرة الاغتراب الاجتماعي.

بمعنى آخر ان البحث يحاول الاجابة على الأسئلة التالية:
ما معنى مفهومي البيروقراطية والاغتراب الاجتماعي؟ وإلى أي حد يمكن ان يؤدي سوء تصرف القائمين على الجهاز الاداري الى انتشار ظاهرة الاغتراب الاجتماعي؟

تقوم الدراسة الحالية على عينة من طلبة ومدرسي واداريي جامعة الملك عبد العزيز بجدة في المملكة العربية السعودية، وقد فحصت اجابات العينات احصائيا لمعرفة درجة العلاقة بين الفئات الثلاث في الجامعة المذكورة.