

Explaining the Variation in Formalization of the Accountability Mechanisms: A Socio-Political Analysis

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Abstract

The paper argues that imposing the accountability mechanism of the “developed” world into the societies in transition may not be an effective way to ensure administrative accountability. Developing countries lack the institutional formalization that works as a prerequisite condition for the application of formal mechanisms of accountability. A rather effective, although not perfect, strategy can be to use the informal mechanism to construct a social environment that is more conducive to ensure accountability in administration. Before developing a prescription for accountability mechanism, it is necessary to understand the existing socio-cultural values of a society, defined as the pattern variables. These variables eventually determine the types of expectation set, level of access of the citizen and their influence on the bureaucracy. The interaction between these three factors eventually determines the degree of formalization, which in turn explains the variation in success of the accountability mechanisms. The paper shows

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the differences between economic, socio-political and administrative structure and their impact on accountability. It also shows the effect on the accountability factors that determine the variation in degree of formalization. These linkages are deconstructed in this paper in order to construct a theoretical framework. The paper eventually creates a theoretical framework which allows further studies to explain why the mainstream accountability mechanisms fail to perform in the context of transitional societies like Bangladesh.

Key words: Administrative accountability, formal and informal accountability mechanism, developing countries, socio-cultural values

1. Introduction

As the role and function of states have expanded significantly over time, the government agencies have gained more power to “satisfy the collective needs of society”. Consequently, the impact of governments’ power is now felt on all aspect of society and with this increase in government’s power, “there has been a corresponding growth in the number of government officials” (Dwivedi & Jabbar, 1989: 1). Existing studies have argued that the growth of government activities has made administrative activities more complex and diverse and as a result, the power of the neutral experts, i.e. the bureaucrats have increased. All in all, an administrative state has emerged in which “public servants play the role of crusaders, policymakers, crisis managers, program managers, humanitarian employers, interest brokers, public relations experts, regulators of the economy, bankers and spokespeople of various interest groups, including their own associations” (Waldo, 2007; Dwivedi & Jabbar, 1989: 1).

However, with the increase in government agencies’ role in the life of citizens, questions have been raised whether the “neutral”, “expert” yet unelected bureaucratic agents can perform their roles in an efficient and effective manner in a democracy. This concern regarding the role of bureaucracy is not new and in the developed democracies numerous efforts have been taken to design institutional arrangements in order to ensure that the bureaucrats are held responsible for their actions. In effect, “the goal of accountability institutions and provisions is to ensure that government programs meet expectations for performances held by their various publics”. Even though existing literature talks in detail about various types and nature of bureaucratic accountability and attempts to analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of these accountability mechanisms, they have one important shortcoming. In most cases, the analysis concentrates on the developed countries and they rarely shed light on the

performance of accountability mechanisms in the context of developing countries. In fact, the conventional wisdom is that the accountability mechanisms that have been developed in the western democracies can and should be transplanted in the developing world. The development organizations, including World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), have prepared a number of policy prescriptions for the transitional democracies, which, according to their view, if implemented will significantly reduce the level of corruption and make the state accountable to the citizen. With the introduction of "Good Governance" literature, accountability issues have become more important and in fact, in the WB's governance indicators, voice and accountability plays an important role. Similarly, the ADB has recently concentrated on developing National Integration Strategy (NIS) and an important part of the strategy is to strengthen the existing accountability institutions.

Instead of this focus on accountability and the transplantation of western accountability mechanisms, a number of studies that concentrate on the developing countries have argued that these so-called "formal mechanisms" are not performing (Newell & Wheeler, 2006; Tsai, 2007; Hossain, 2009; Fox, 2007). Identifying the failure of the formal institutions of accountability, these scholars have explained that in the developing societies a number of informal mechanisms have been developed which are more successful if compared with the formal ones.

These studies are significant for two reasons. Firstly, they confirm the widely-held belief that the accountability mechanisms suggested and developed as per the prescription of the development organizations are not really performing. Secondly, these studies, to a large extent, indicate the "bringing back of society" in the accountability literature. As their analysis shows, the societal norms and values play an important role in defining the expected behavior and at the same time, these societal factors also have a sanctioning power often adhered to by the bureaucrats and political elites. However, these studies also introduce a number of questions- firstly, why does the accountability mechanisms fail to perform in the transitional countries? Secondly, given that the informal accountability mechanisms develop as a response to the failure of the formal ones, how do they develop? How effective are they? Are these informal ones sustainable? Can these informal mechanisms influence the performance of the formal ones? In this paper, we mainly focus on the first question and explain how in the transitional countries, the nature of societal and political development defines the malfunctioning of the formal accountability mechanisms. However, while exploring the interaction between societal and

political factors, we attempt to develop a theoretical framework which sheds some light in the developmental process of the informal accountability mechanisms.

The paper has five sections. In the following section, we operationalize the research question and introduce the relevant variables. In the third section, through reviewing the literature on accountability, we define the concept for the purpose of this paper and categorize the accountability mechanisms in two groups- formal accountability mechanisms (including vertical, horizontal accountability) and informal accountability mechanism (including solidary accountability and rude accountability). In the fourth section, we review the literature of two different streams- sociology and public administration and try to link these two streams in developing a theoretical framework which explains the differences in the performance of the two groups of accountability mechanisms. In the final section, we summarize our argument.

2. Research Question and Identification of Variables

As indicated earlier, the main goal of this paper is to develop a theoretical framework which will allow us to explain why the accountability mechanisms fail to perform (as per expectations) in the context of the developing world. Identifying the reasons behind the failure of the accountability mechanism in the developing world is our main research agenda and while doing that, we make a clear distinction between structure and function. Our goal is to explore the functional aspect of accountability mechanisms. However, our research agenda as stated here requires further elaboration especially in terms of explaining what we mean by accountability mechanisms and performance of these mechanisms.

Let us start by providing a definition of the accountability mechanism. In this paper, we have concentrated on bureaucratic accountability and as the concept of accountability has been described in details in the next section, at this stage, we will just state the working definition as adopted in this paper. We have defined accountability as the responsiveness of the bureaucracy in terms of meeting the expectation of the citizens regarding basic service provisions. This particular definition has two dimensions- on the one hand, it explains that the citizens have an expectation set and based on this, they demand certain types of services from the bureaucracy and on the other hand it argues that a key role of the bureaucracy as an institution is to manage this expectation. Therefore, the bureaucracy will be accountable when they are responding to the expectation set of the citizens and are providing services while maintaining this expectation set as the gold standard. However, as we will argue later, the societal

perspective greatly affects the expectation set and in different societies, citizens have different expectation sets. By mechanism, we mean the devices or instruments that have been set up to ensure that the bureaucracy is responding to the expectation set. These devices include legislative scrutiny through parliamentary standing committee, the auditing of accounts or the role played by specific anti-corruption bodies.

Before defining the performance, it is necessary to discuss the distinction between structure and function. In the literature of social science, this particular distinction is well-recognized and for the purpose of our paper, this distinction is essential. In our study, we have relied on the argument provided by Riggs (1964), who defines structure as a pattern of behavior which has "become a standard feature of the social system". Therefore, the elected or the administrative bodies (e.g. parliamentary standing committees, anti-corruption commission, audit institutions, judiciary etc.) which are in charge of using the instruments of accountability are the structures of the social system. On the other hand, function denotes the consequences of the structures "insofar as they affect other structures or the total system of which they are a part" (Riggs, 1964: 20). Therefore, function indicates the actual action of the structures and the impact of this action on the other actors of the social system or the whole system. From this perspective, function is very similar to performance. In this paper, our focus is on the functional aspect of the accountability mechanisms and as such we are interested in exploring the role of these mechanisms in ensuring the accountability (defined in terms of responding to the expectation set) of the bureaucracy.

It is necessary to point out that there are two different dimensions of the functions of a structure- manifest and latent. Of these two, the manifested functions are those which are coded in the rules, procedure and laws in order to provide a working guideline for the structures in question. On the other hand, the latent functions are the consequences of the "given pattern of behavior". In any society, we are expected to witness three types of manifest-latent interaction. First of all, the manifest and latent functions can be in alignment, i.e. the structure is performing its roles as determined in the codes or procedures. Secondly, we may witness that the structure's latent functions are quite different from the manifested one and finally we may see structures "with latent but not manifest administrative functions" (Riggs, 1964: 33). If we consider the latent-manifest dichotomy from the perspective of the accountability mechanisms, it is possible to develop the following arguments-

- a. In the first case (i.e. when manifest and latent functions are in alignment), we are actually witnessing a formalized accountability mechanism, which is performing as per the expectation

- b. In the final case, we are observing the presence of informal accountability mechanisms whose functions are not codified rather their actions are determined by the socially acceptable norms and values
- c. In the second case, we observe quasi-formalized mechanisms, which have codes to follow but have significantly deviated from their actual roles.

Therefore, in this paper, the key variable is the degree of formalization of the accountability mechanisms as that will eventually determine the function of these. The variation of this element ranges from formalization through quasi-formalization to informalization.

In order to explain the variation in the previous factor, we have relied heavily on Parsons' concept of patent variable sets (ascription/achievement, universalistic/particularistic, diffused/specificity, affectivity/affective-neutrality, self-orientation/collective orientation) and Riggs' typology of societies (fused, prismatic and diffracted). Through developing a framework, we show that different types of patent variables are at play at these three types of societies and this interaction between patent variables and types of societies generates the following three factors that explain the variation in the social structure-

- a. Type of expectation set of the citizens (order maintenance vs. order change)
- b. Access to the political arena (limited vs. open)
- c. Power distance with the bureaucracy (high vs. low).

In the next section, we explain the concept of bureaucratic accountability and while doing that categorize the accountability mechanisms into two groups-formal and informal. This categorization is important as it will allow us to explore what type of accountability mechanisms are in operation in the developing countries.

3. Bureaucratic Accountability: Definition, Operationalization and Categorization

Accountability is an important ingredient of democratic rule and good governance. Historically, the concept is closely associated with accounting though it was first used as a tool by the sovereigns to hold their subjects into account (Dubnick, 2002). However, with the growth of modern state structure, the meaning of accountability has completely reversed and now, "it is the authorities themselves who are being held accountable by their citizens" (Bovens,

2005: 183). Over the period, the concept has achieved an “iconic” status and tends to reflect a “symbolic imagery” attached to a “...wide range of causes and demands” (Posner, 2011; Posner & Schwartz, 2008:1). Therefore, accountability has moved beyond the narrow realm of accounting or book-keeping and a certain normative value has been attached to it which has made the concept a good one and “we simply can’t have enough of it” (Pollitt, 2003: 89).

According to Mashaw (2006), the concept of accountability can be “unpacked” and in his article, he presents three different accountability regimes at the state level. The first of them is political accountability, where elected officials are held accountable by the citizens for their policy choice through the “voting oversight”. Citizens eventually hold the political leaders accountable according to their “ideological preferences” and may approve their actions by electing them or show their disapproval by removing them from the office. The second of them is administrative accountability where the administrative officials are held accountable by their superiors about their performance in implementing policies/programs. This particular type of accountability is ensured through monitoring the action of the administrative officials and based on their performance the officials can be appraised, transferred or dismissed. The final form is legal accountability where officials and individuals are held accountable to the affected persons through legal rules. Judicial review is used to ensure this accountability and different types of actions including affirmation, injunctions, remand, compensation etc. is offered as an outcome of accountability actions. For the purpose of this paper, we have developed the definition of bureaucratic accountability by combining all these. Thus, bureaucratic accountability can be defined as the ability of the bureaucracy to realize and manage the expectation sets as generated by the citizens. There are certain characteristics of this definition-first of all we argue that in this particular type of accountability, the bureaucracy will be accountable to citizens for the quality of services delivered to them. In effect, the societal context of a country will determine specific expectation sets (i.e. what the citizens expect to receive from certain government programs) and this expectation set will be used as a standard for measuring accountability. There will be a number of formal and informal accountability mechanisms in place which will determine the degree of alignment or deviation from the expectation set and based on that, the bureaucracy will be either rewarded or punished. Even though like Romzek & Dubnick (1987), we too have concentrated on the issue of responsiveness, our definition actually narrows down their concept as we only consider the expectation set developed by the actors outside the organization, i.e. citizens. Finally, by concentrating on the responsiveness, we are concentrating on one particular aspect of the bureaucrats’ functions- “administrators are responsible

for serving the public, promoting the broadest conception of the public interest, supporting the democratic process” (Svara 2007: 45). In line of the argument developed by the proponents of New Public Administration (NPA), we envision here a broader role for the bureaucracy especially in terms of establishing “social equity” (Frederickson, 1976).

Until recently, the accountability literature mainly discussed two major types of accountability- the vertical accountability and the horizontal accountability. Of these two, the vertical accountability is considered as the external accountability which includes elections. The concept of vertical accountability is based on the assumption that by virtue of elections, it is possible for the citizen to hold political actors accountable (Malena et al, 2004). The second one, i.e. horizontal accountability is also known as the internal accountability and this includes political, fiscal, administrative and legal mechanisms. The main “givers” through these accountability mechanisms are the policy makers, i.e. the cabinet ministers, the legislatures and the bureaucrats (Shedler et al, 1999; Goetz et al, 2001). The perceived view is that these horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms will ensure a functioning democracy in the following manner- firstly, people will elect their representatives and these representatives will debate on and decide policies. This requires the legislatures to have certain qualities and a fully functioning parliament. Secondly, the administrative machinery will interpret these policies and the people’s representatives will oversee the actions taken by the bureaucrats with the help of a number of public institutions like the parliamentary standing committee, the anti-corruption mechanism, the office of the Ombudsman etc.

For the purpose of this paper, our focus is on horizontal accountability, if we look at the basic pattern of the horizontal accountability, the following issues become evident-first of all, in all cases, horizontal accountability is being enforced through the functioning of a number of institutions, which are called the institutions of accountability. Secondly, the development of institutions of accountability indicates that each of these institutions has specific functions- the audit institutions conducts the auditing of government expenditure and submit its reports to designated bodies including oversight committees. These committees then hold hearing on the relevant issues, and the anti-corruption commission takes on specific corruption charges against executive bodies or individuals etc. Thirdly, there are specific rules or codes in order to guide the actions of these agencies. Either through statutory or constitutional provisions, the independence of these institutions from the executive is being ensured. At the same time, these legal provisions determine how these accountability institutions will perform. Fourthly and probably the most important issue is the

capacity of these institutions in influencing the expectations set of the citizens. Traditionally, the horizontal accountability institutions have mostly focused on the administrative procedures and henceforth, they make efforts to ensure that proper procedures are being followed in performing the administrative functions. However, over time, the accountability mechanisms have shifted focus and nowadays, they are playing an important role in analyzing the performance of different programs. Therefore, the procedural accountability has been replaced with performance accountability, where the executive agencies are held accountable not only for their way of doing business but also for the outcome of the programs implemented by them. Henceforth, how the bureaucratic agencies are performing in realizing and managing the existing expectation set has also become an issue of concern for the accountability institutions. These four basic characteristics of the institutions of accountability ensure that the horizontal accountability mechanisms are extremely formalized.

However, a number of studies on the developing world have indicated that the formal accountability mechanisms are not performing. As Diamond (2008) explains, in the transitional countries, these institutions "...either limp along, starved of resources and bereft of morale and serious leadership, or become instruments of the ruling party and investigate only its political opponents". Hossain (2009), while explaining the case of Bangladesh provides three specific reasons for the failure of formal accountability mechanisms- first of all, in most cases, the poor often do get access to the institutions of accountability. Even when they have something to complain about, they fail to understand where to go and as such, in most cases, they try to make peace with the existing condition. Secondly, in some particular cases, the accountability mechanisms do not perform at all. They have their guidelines and rules but at the end of the day, they simply fail to perform. Thirdly, in some particular cases, the accountability mechanisms exist and do perform but their actual performance is different from what is expected from them.

Though the reasons identified by both Diamond (2008) and Hossain (2009) are not really insightful, in the context of accountability mechanism, Hossain makes an important contribution when she explains how the failure of formal accountability mechanisms is forcing the citizens towards adopting informal ones. While explaining the case of China, Tsai (2007) makes an important observation. She argues that even when democratic governance is non-existent and the accountability mechanisms for holding the government officials responsible is extremely weak, it is still possible to make the officials responsive to the need of the citizens. This can be done through informal rules and norms which are not codified or authorized by the state rather "established by social

groups and enforced by the communities of which they are members” (Tsai, 2007: 4). In this particular case, the bureaucratic officials are embedded within the social network and due to this “embeddedness” they are well aware about what is expected from them. The expectation set is mutually developed and accepted by all and as a member of the community, the officials know that “fellow group members can use the group’s norms and networks to punish them if they fail to do so”. Tsai observes that in absence of a formal accountability structure, there is nothing that can prevent the government officials from misappropriating fund or being unresponsive other than a sense of obligation to the citizen’s demands. In effect, this obligation is similar to “inner check” of the officials working in the developed countries (Friedrich, 1971) but the difference is in case of the developing countries like China, this “inner check” comes not from the professional principles but from the societal values which they share and are a part of. Tsai defines such communities as solidary organizations.

Analyzing the case of Bangladesh, Hossain (2009) also emphasizes on the existing social rules and norms in explaining the development of informal accountability. However, she argues that informal accountability mechanisms can be exercised even when the solidary organizations are not in place. In this particular case, the citizens also rely on social norms and values. However, instead of depending on their enforcement mechanism, the citizens tend to violate the existing social norms in holding the government official accountable. For instance, in most of the developing countries the power distance between the executive officials and the service –receivers is extremely high and the societal norm suggests that the poor and the weak will show their respect and obedience towards the bureaucratic elites. At the same time, “saving the face” in front of the public is a major concern for the elite groups and henceforth, they make efforts to ensure that their higher status is always being maintained. In the rural Bangladesh, when the expectation set of the citizens are not being met, at the extreme level, the individual citizen revolts and blame and shame the government officials in public. From a government officials’ perspective, this is extremely harmful for maintaining his reputation and as such, he generally acknowledges the expectation set of the citizen at least for a short while. On the other hand, for the poor, this is an important step as he/she violates the existing norm and behaves quite “rudely”. This is in essence the concept of rude accountability, which is also informal but quite different from the solidary organizations.

Based on the above discussions, it is possible to identify the following characteristics of informal accountability mechanism. Firstly, the informal accountability mechanisms are neither institutionalized nor codified. Rather

the informal accountability relies heavily on societal network and communities and makes an effort to use the existing values and norms to guide the behavior of the government officials. Secondly, it is important to note that even within the informal mechanisms, there are significant variances. Whereas the solidary organizations depend on the social norms to dictate the obligation of the officials, the rude accountability tends to violate the social norms in order to achieve the same. The reason behind this difference is the nature of expectation set developed by the citizens. In case of solidary organizations, the expectation set is mutually agreed upon and the norms are used to ensure that being a member of the community, the bureaucrats honor this expectation set. On the other hand, in case of rude accountability, the expectation set is not mutually developed. As the bureaucrats are not really a member of the existing social network, there is actually nothing that may prevent them from engaging into corrupt practices. As Hossain (2009) shows, to large extent, the poor of Bangladesh accept the persistence of corruption and at the same time, they develop a minimally acceptable expectation set. When this minimal expectation set is violated, they revolt and eventually violate the social norm by acting rudely. Borrowing Scott's terminology, it can be stated that when this minimally acceptable expectation set is violated, in a politically charged moment, their hidden transcript transforms into their public transcript. Thirdly, Hossain argues that rude accountability is practiced at the individual level and in an ad-hoc manner. However, it is also possible for the poor to organize and protest violently in order to ensure that the bureaucratic officials acknowledge their minimally acceptable expectation set. In that particular case, the rude accountability turns into a violent accountability.

The above discussion indicates that in case of developing countries, the formal accountability mechanisms are not really performing well and in a number of cases, the formal accountability is being replaced by informal accountability mechanisms. However, question remains- why does the degree of formalization vary, i.e. why aren't the formalized mechanisms performing as per expectation in the developing societies? In the following sections, we will respond to these questions.

4. Explaining the Variation in Degree of Formalization: A Socio-Political Analysis

Based on Parson's work, Riggs (1964) points out that values associated with the traditional societies are particularism and ascription and the values associated with modern societies are universalism and achievement-orientation. In other words, in a modern society, we will witness the development of legal regime or

code which will be universally applicable for all and on the other hand, the traditional societies will be driven by societal norms which will determine particular role for particular actors. Similarly, in a modern society, a person's position within the society will be determined by his achievement and in the traditional society, more emphasis will be placed on the ascriptive values. Curiously enough, Riggs does not incorporate the first two patent variables in his analysis. However, in our analysis, we have decided to incorporate all of these.

However, Riggs' work on societal development is quite unique. He criticizes the earlier typologies developed by various scholar by pointing out that these actually provide a dichotomous view and do not really take under consideration what happens in between the transformation, i.e. if certain values can be associated with the traditional societies and the others with modern societies, what happens when the societies goes through the transitional phase? What type of pattern variables can be found there? Responding to this question, Riggs develops his own typology. He also emphasizes on the degree of differentiation and identifies the single structure societies as fused societies as in their cases, the single structure that performs a large number of functions is functionally diffused. He defines the modern societies whose structures are functionally specific as diffracted societies. However, his greatest contribution is the identification of the in-between societies, which he names prismatic societies. According to his argument, the prismatic societies are actually at a highly chaotic stage. As the society is going through transition, the transformation of the pattern variables has not yet completed. As such, the prismatic societies introduce a complex scenario where both sets of dichotomous pattern variables are co-existing and are constantly in struggle with each other.

However, the question is- what are the differences between these three types of society and what are the reasons behind these differences? Riggs have used three different criteria for exploring the differences. They are- economic structure, social structure and the administrative structure.

Economic Structure

The economic structure of the traditional society is characterized by reciprocity and redistribution. These two outcomes are the result of the interaction between three patent variables- collective-orientation, affectivity and low specificity. Due to collectivity-orientation, we will witness periodic exchange of gifts which may "simultaneously affect economic functions, but would also consolidate reciprocal solidarity, accomplish religious functions, perhaps even stabilize power relationships" (Riggs, 1964: 102). Even though due to emphasis on ascriptive values, economic resources could be consolidates in the hands of few ruling elites,

the low specificity sets absolute ceilings “on the extent to which...a small ruling elite can enjoy standard of living much above that of the masses” and the prevalence of affectivity encourages redistribution of wealth. As the reciprocity and redistribution ensures the stabilization of power relationship, both the elite and the mass would want to maintain the existing order. So the expectation set generated through the economic structure is maintenance of order.

In case of prismatic society, a chaotic mixture of economic and non-economic forces will prevail. As the society has started shifting towards differentiation, specific institutions have already been established. As a result, in prismatic society, there will be a market in place which will attempt to sell goods and services in terms of money. However, at the same time, the prismatic society due to the “curious mixes between economic and non-economic factors” will reflect “strong influences from social, political, prestigious and religious considerations” (p. 105). At the same time, as the society is transitioning from traditionalism, the usual means of security gained through societal norms are unavailable and the new institutions have not really been entrenched within the market system. As a consequence, the economic structure of the prismatic society is characterized by negative development which significantly raises the level of inequality. From the citizens’ perspective, the expectation is change in order which can be achieved either by introducing “welfare values” to the affected ones or by changing the way through which the market is functioning.

Finally, in case of diffracted society, the specified market mechanisms are in place. Furthermore, the patent values of self-orientation and achievement-orientation allows the development of competitive practices within the market system. However, the open market system may sometimes result into monopolistic practices. Therefore, the economic structure in a diffracted society is characterized by competition and concern (for monopoly). The expectation set is maintenance of order in case of competition and prevention of the monopoly in case of concern.

Social Structure

In the fused societies, the patent variables of ascription and particularism play the most important role. As a result, social mobility is determined not through achievement but through ascription. At the same time, as the existing norms of the society does not allow universal practices for all rather encourages particular facilities for specific groups, the socio-political arena is dominated by a small group of elites who prevent the access of outside actors within the power position. As such, access towards the political system is extremely limited for the citizens.

In case of prismatic societies, we will witness a combination of ascription and achievement. The social structure will be more open if compared with the fused

societies but more closed than the diffused societies. It will work in the following way- “the ascribed element could take the form of limiting candidacy for elite status to members of certain ethnic, racial, religious, linguistic groups”. However, within the limited elite class, the achievement criteria will apply. Therefore, the socio-political structure of the prismatic society does not really allow access within the political structure. Achievement is important only for those who are already member of the elite group.

Finally, in the diffracted society, social mobility is a common phenomenon. As the society emphasizes on universalism and achievement orientation, anyone can gain access to the political arena if they show enough potential. Consequently, groups and interest groups play a very important role in the political process.

Administrative Structure

Due to lack of differentiation, in fused societies administrative functions are not really being performed by any specialized organization. Administrative structure within this type of society reflects what Weber has called the “prebendial” format. The legal-rational authority has not been established and the bureaucratic functions are performed by officials who are selected by the political elites and serve at the pleasure of these elites. There is no provision of salary, careerism or no specific rules in play. The entire structure reflects an informality.

In prismatic society, due to differentiation, the bureaucratic organizations have been developed and in fact, they reflect all the basic characteristics of “ideal type of bureaucracy” as explained by Weber (1946). However, the problem is in the way these bureaucratic organizations have been developed. In the context of the transitional countries, the bureaucratic structure has not been developed by their political structures rather the bureaucracy has been established as per the necessity of the colonial lord. There are three important consequence of this- firstly, the bureaucratic organization maintains a clear distance from the general mass; they are in effect, the servant of the colonial lord and not the servant of the common mass. Secondly, once the era of colonialism comes to an end, the bureaucracy emerges as the most powerful, technologically sound and efficient group. Consequently, they become an important actor not only in the administrative arena but also in the political arena. Thirdly, the bureaucracy develops a paternalistic attitude towards the necessity of the people and assumes the role of a “bureaucratic elite” which is actually the most powerful group within the society. Therefore, the bureaucracy does not really feel the necessity of explaining themselves to anyone rather they focus more on governing (Riggs, 1963).

The condition is quite different in the diffracted societies. Due to a high degree of differentiation and the role played by the political elites, the bureaucracy is just one of the actors in the political arena and henceforth, they have to interact and listen to their political masters.

Based on the above discussion, the following table can be developed which shows the differences between economic, socio-political and administrative structure and their impact on accountability-

Structure	Types of Society			Effect on accountability
	Fused	Prismatic	Diffracted	
Economic	Reciprocity and Redistribution	Negative Development	Competition and Concern	Development of expectation set
Socio-Political Structure	Consolidation on power	Achievement within ascription	Important role by groups and interest groups	Access
Administrative Structure	Prebendial	Dormant bureaucracy	Bureaucracy one of many actors	Influence of bureaucracy

Source: Authors' analysis based on various literature

However, the question is- how does the effect on the accountability factors determine the variation in degree of formalization? This has been shown in the next table-

Types of society Effect on Accountability	Fused	Prismatic	Diffracted
Degree of differentiation and its impact	Low specificity and reliance on existing social norms	Shift towards specificity and emergence of specified organizations; however the residues of traditional values remain	High specificity; organization with specific functions are in place
Expectation Set	Maintenance of existing order	Change in existing order	Maintenance or control
Access	None	Limited	Yes
Influence on bureaucracy	Non-existent	None	High
Consequence	The expectation set is managed through existing norms and values. Cultural variables determine the roles of various actors and all the actors adhere to these roles	Though there are institutionalized mechanisms in place, they rarely can realize the expectation set of the citizens. The citizens also cannot gain access to the political arena and they have no influence on the actions of the bureaucracy; however, in some particular cases, especially in those portions of the society where the traditional characteristics still prevail, social values substitute the formalized institution	The formalized institutions are in place which can realize and force the bureaucracy to manage the expectation set of the citizens
Degree of formalization	Informal	Quasi-formalization to informal	Formal

Source: Authors' analysis based on various literature

Based on the table above, we argue that as the traditional societies are functionally diffused, i.e. a single structure performs a large amount of functions, social norms and values play the most important role in integrating the societal subsystems. In the economic arena, a diffused structure performs the economic functions and at the same time, the presence of affectivity and collective orientation allows the development of a reciprocity or redistributive system. As a result, the expectation of the citizens can be characterized as order maintenance. Given that particularistic and ascriptive values are at play, the political arena is extremely limited and the bureaucratic functions are mainly controlled by the elite who dominate the political arena. Henceforth, the order maintenance expectation set of the citizens is managed through the societal norms and values and in traditional society, the informal accountability mechanism is witnessed.

On the other hand, the prismatic society reflects the values preferences of both the fused and diffracted society. The differentiation process has started and the society has started establishing specific institutions. The economic structure of the prismatic society incorporates both the economic and non-economic factor which in terms ensure that the "economic transactions are being completed only through the exercise of political influence" (Riggs, 1964: 102). The consequence of this is growing inequality resulting in a negative development. Therefore, the expectation set of the citizen demand a change of order. However, as the political arena of these societies reflect a mixture of ascription and achievement and group formation is very selective, the citizen's expectation set is rarely realized at the political arena. Furthermore, in transitional societies, the bureaucratic elite play the most important role in program implementation and their elite status hinders citizen interaction with bureaucracy. As a result, in transitional societies even though specified accountability institutions exist (due to shift towards differentiation), they fail to realize or manage the expectations set of the citizens and we witness formalization failure in case of bureaucratic failure.

Finally, in the diffracted societies, due to high degree of differentiation, functionally specific organizations exist. The economic arena, due to the impact of pattern variables like self-orientation, achievement-orientation and specificity reflect a competition and concern structure. So, the expectation set as reflected by the citizens is either maintenance of order (in case of competition) or change in order (in case of monopoly). The same pattern variables allow the citizens to gain access within the political arena and high specificity determines specific functions of the bureaucracy. Consequently, the expectation set of the citizens are realized by the bureaucracy and the formalized accountability mechanism ensures that the bureaucracy is managing the expectations in a more effective & efficient manner.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have argued that transplanting the accountability mechanism of the developed world into the developing countries is not necessarily helpful. Before developing a prescription for accountability mechanism, it is necessary to understand the existing socio-cultural values of a society, defined as the pattern variables. These variables eventually determine the types of expectation set, level of access of the citizen and their influence on the bureaucracy. The interaction between these three factors eventually determines the degree of formalization, which in turn explains the variation in success of the accountability mechanisms.

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