

CARVING A SPACE FOR ELITE REPUBLICANISM: Hierarchy, Deference and Paternalism in American Political Development

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Abstract

The present article is a review of the American Political Development literature dealing with the issue of national administrative politics and development in late nineteenth century American history. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which historical institutionalists discount the importance of elite republican ideology as an explanation of national administrative growth. Attention is also paid to the ways in which sociological institutionalists view republicanism as a viable ideological alternative only for far flung and marginalized social interest groups. The article argues for studying the ideology also in terms of its elitist tradition and the tradition's application to national administrative politics and development in the American context, emphasizing categories of hierarchy, deference and paternalism. As a review of seminal works related to the research program of American Political Development, this article is of particular use to those studying American development at the turn of the twentieth century.

Introduction

This article grew out of an interest in studying the historical development of national administrative politics and government in America. The research program of American Political Development (APD) offers a rich source of studies related to this topic. Yet as I immersed myself in the literature, I noticed that some of the most important studies dismissed ideological explanations of national administrative development, and dealt exclusively with structural explanations. Reassuringly, some important APD studies did include, for instance, republican ideology in their analyses, but too often these studies saw the ideology as emanating from far-flung social interest groups. With respect to the development of the American national government, these studies viewed republican ideology's purposes and uses largely in terms of a particular interest group's motives for either emancipation from national government, inclusion in national government or the implementation of special services from national government. They did not view the ideology as having any place in the administrative apparatus of the national government itself. I thought it would be interesting and useful to explore this missing ideological element

in the APD literature dealing with the development of national administrative politics and government.

Republican ideology certainly contains emancipatory and egalitarian language. Yet its uses in the context of American political development have not always been articulated for populist, grass-roots causes. In fact, the historical transmission of republican ideology in the English speaking world includes a complex and at times Janus-faced set of conceptual categories useful for an array of both populist and elitist political motives and goals. National political elites and administrative insiders, no less than marginalized social groups, have expressed their misgivings about American politics and motives for political reform through the language of republican ideology. Republicanism has always been present in the rhetoric and policies of both major American parties.

Elitist uses of republican ideology emphasize a different set of conceptual categories more closely attuned to the establishment of an administrative hierarchy of individuals of merit and earned acumen, and a degree of popular deference to administrative paternalism and intervention. Particularly during the period of the American constitutional founding, and again during the Gilded Age of national administrative reform, this set of categories resonated with many of the governmental concerns that national administrative elites held as important for the development of the American national government.

These administrative elites had a persistent historical interest in instituting a hierarchy of earned acumen and merit in national administrative government, particularly in the executive branch. These elites viewed the infusion of this type of national administrative excellence in the executive branch as benefiting the common security, prosperity and unity of the American national polity. For these administrative elites, national security, economic prosperity and political unity were very much republican goals, as was carving a place for the disinterested service of men of ambition, merit and acumen in the elite corridors of executive administrative power.

This article is a selective review of the American Political Development literature dealing with the issue of national administrative politics and development in late nineteenth century American history. Particular attention is paid to the ways in which historical institutionalists discount the importance of elite republican ideology as an explanation of national administrative growth. Attention is also paid to the ways in which

sociological institutionalists view republicanism as a viable ideological alternative only for far flung and marginalized social interest groups. The article argues for studying the ideology also in terms of its elitist tradition and the tradition's application to national administrative politics and development in the American context, emphasizing categories of hierarchy, deference and paternalism.

Republican Ideology Reconsidered: Elite Republican Thought in Historical Context

A focus on late nineteenth century institutional reform of the American national government is certainly not new. A number of new institutionalists working in the research program of American Political Development have invested considerable time to this topic. Yet these same new institutionalists have typically not explored the impact that an elitist brand of republicanism had on the formulation and promotion of national institutional reform policy of the late nineteenth century. The reasons for this are 1) that most new institutionalists working in this American period do not think republican ideology had an important bearing on late nineteenth century national institutional reform policy decisions and outcomes, and 2) the limited number of new institutionalists who do think republicanism had an important bearing on national institutional reform, by and large view republicanism as a populist, rather than elitist, ideology.

For instance, the most common type of new institutionalist working in this American historical period, the historical institutionalist, has demonstrated how prior political institutional arrangements helped structure the outcomes of reform decisions intended to partially free the American federal government from the demands of states, courts and parties, and allow the government more administrative capacity. These institutionalists have made considerable headway in uncovering the historical institutional constraints that were imposed on national administrative reformers who wanted to improve and expand the national government beginning in the late nineteenth century.

Nonetheless, these same historical institutionalists typically offer only passing reference to the specific ideological content of the reform policies the late nineteenth century national administrative reformers sought to implement. Particularly with respect to republican ideology and its possible uses in articulating a national administrative reform strategy in

late nineteenth century America, historical institutionalists tend to look upon the ideology, at best, as a residual category.¹

On the other hand, another type of APD new institutionalist, the sociological institutionalist, takes ideology seriously in her historical accounts of American political development. This institutionalist typically takes a state-in-society rather than state-centric view of the federal government's relationship to social actors. In this way, APD sociological institutionalists commonly see ideology emanating from social forces, and directed toward the attainment of social purposes. They view republican ideology in particular as an emancipatory ideology used for popular mobilization by local state political actors and national parties, as well as party interest groups.

Importantly, sociological institutionalists doing work on late nineteenth century American politics see republican ideology mainly in terms of its egalitarian-rooted concepts of individual liberty and broad-based civic participation.² However, because they focus nearly exclusively on these emancipatory republican ideas (hereafter referred to as the Jeffersonian republican tradition), sociological institutionalists have tended to neglect studying the ideology in terms of its other, less popular concepts of hierarchy, deference and paternalism.

Despite the tendency by APD sociological institutionalists to adhere to the simplified Jeffersonian variant sketched above, the historical transmission of republican ideology has in fact produced a complex and richly contested collection of ideas. The controversies generated from some of its conflicting core concepts, "hierarchy", "equality" and "liberty" for instance, during the Enlightenment and for a century after in England and America contributed greatly to this complexity.

Caroline Robbins' examination of the "eighteenth century English Commonwealthman", or "Real Whig", is often cited as seminal important in the study of American republicanism. For Robbins and those who have researched and written in her wake, the "revolutionary tradition" of the

¹ For examples from the historical institutional literature, see Skowronek (1982); March and Olsen (1989).

² For sociological institutional accounts dealing with republicanism in nineteenth century majoritarian politics, see Banning (1978) and Wilentz (1984). For sociological accounts dealing with Progressive era interest group uses of republicanism, see Skocpol (1992).

Commonwealthman linking the histories of England and America was the “radicalism” of classical republican civic virtue emphasizing individual liberty and popular participation, the Machiavellian form of small-scale “hyper-citizenship” that Jefferson advocated.

Nonetheless, the Commonwealthman’s intellectual impact on American understandings of republican ideology was complicated by a more popular English intellectual tradition contemporaneous to that of the self-styled “Real Whig”. Steve Pincus (1998, 716) has convincingly demonstrated that the majority of English Commonwealth Whigs of this time period, while defending liberal institutions over classical virtue, and celebrating commercial utility over agrarian austerity, “borrowed many of the old tropes of classical republicanism – especially devotion to the common good and hatred of tyranny” and blended them with a newly appropriate vocabulary of rights and interests comcomitant with modern liberal institutionalism.

These early English institutionalists, Hume among them, were not merely content with securing what Berlin has called “negative liberty” (private freedom). The institutions themselves were not simply conceived of in terms of limiting government’s role to the neutral regulation of social conflict, of eliminating government’s historical, constitutional task of providing authoritative direction to the forces of social change. Rather, the majority Commonwealthmen viewed republican institutions not as impediments to authority but rather as impediments to tyranny, be it monarchical, aristocratic or democratic. Having defined the distinction thus, they were not opposed to the principle of maintaining a theoretical space in government for sovereign prerogative directed toward the preservation of public freedom, maintained through government’s active pursuit of the public interest. Thus even Robbins’ own quote of the seventeenth century Commonwealthman Somers, from his *Just and Modest Vindication*, could be demonstrative of the convictions of a mainstream Whig as much as of a more radical “Real Whig”:

If they mean by those lovers of Commonwealth *Principles*, men passionately devoted to the Public good, and to the common Service of their Country, who believe that kings were instituted for the good of the People, and Government ordained for the sake of those that are to be governed, and therefore complain or grieve when it is used to contrary ends, every Wise and Honest man will be proud to be ranked in that number. (1961, epigraph)

To understand what links the English Commonwealthmen, mainstream and radical, one must understand the nature of their political ambition. They were all, to a man, political dissenters and pamphleteers purposive in their diatribes against the political status quo. They considered themselves in large part self-made men whose earned acumen and personal and professional merit were being ignored by the established English Court aristocracy. These Commonwealthmen held the Court aristocracy in contempt, but not because the latter held political power. Rather the Commonwealthmen resented the fact that the English king and lords were born into their titles and positions, without earning either. The Commonwealthmen viewed this kind of political nepotism as detrimental to the public good.

Kramnick (1980, 14) notes that in excluding the dissenters from political office, the English aristocracy and its reliance on political nepotism “violated the fundamental assumptions of the ethos of the self-made individual and of society disinterestedly rewarding people of merit and talent, people of hard and useful work.” He continues that the Commonwealthmen believed this kind of traditional political order “rewarded idle and unproductive people of leisure and lineage.” In Kramnick’s view, the English Commonwealthmen saw themselves as the early progenitors of a new political order based on principles of merit and demonstrated excellence.

It is important to note then that a primary aim of the Commonwealthmen was the institutionalization of a political hierarchy of merit and earned acumen, to replace the previous one based on privilege and leisure. The Commonwealthmen’s position of exclusion from English high society and their confidence in themselves and their abilities informed their hope in the coming of a new political order in which political and social deference would be paid to them and their political prowess. Such deference would not be given only out of a sense of patrilineal habit or obligation, but also in recognition of a superior individual’s leadership qualities as well as his demonstrated commitment to the public good. Unified in their conviction that political merit and excellence were not relative categories, the Commonwealthmen viewed society’s (including political society’s) deference to and trust in their wisdom and capabilities as forming a paternalistic bond.

It was this interest in reforming the seventeenth and eighteenth century political order along lines of earned acumen and professionalism, and thus

substituting the old hierarchy of privilege with a new one based on merit, that anticipated the later thought of American constitutional framers like Hamilton and Madison. The framers were interested in creating through the Constitution a more hierarchical political structure, one in which the most qualified would have the opportunity to watch over and determine what was in the best interest of the common welfare. And like the Commonwealthmen, framers like Hamilton were convinced that their demonstrated political excellence would resonate positively with the people, and the people would naturally to defer to their informed judgment.

Instead of taking account of this other set of republican concerns and concepts, sociological institutionalists focus their efforts on nineteenth century American uses of Jeffersonian republicanism in local and national level majoritarian party politics. Moreover, they interpret turn of the twentieth century Progressive interest group uses in local and national plural politics, coming on the heels of the late nineteenth century, through the same Jeffersonian tradition. In both cases, analysis of other aspects of republican ideology in American politics of the late nineteenth century has been neglected.

Before the Civil War, the Jeffersonian variant of republicanism, stressing individual liberty and popular participation, is thought to have been a potent ideological current tapped into and exploited by the antebellum Anti-Federalist, and later Jeffersonian Republican and Jacksonian Democratic parties. Each is thought to have done this to garner party loyalty from small-scale rural farmers and urban artisans in an effort to stem off centralization of the federal government and uphold the principle of states' rights.

This sociological understanding of the American republican tradition asserts that the federal government underwent slow but definitive restructuring in the late nineteenth century to include an expanded role for a bureaucratic-rational national administrative arm. Consequently, as the federal government became increasingly rationalized, and thus less susceptible to party influence, the emancipatory uses of Jeffersonian republicanism were thought to have shifted.

The increased rationalization of the federal government, and its concomitant anti-majoritarian structure, was surmised to have helped

redirect the ideology from a tool used by antebellum local state actors and major parties to a fragmentary interest group instrument used primarily by the Progressive third party of the early twentieth century. In this commonly held view, the late nineteenth century reassertion of the Federalists' anti-majoritarian liberal and plural intentions, the establishment of a bureaucratic federal government, had spelled a new beginning for the emancipatory uses of Jeffersonian republican ideology in American politics. After this, Jeffersonian republicanism is thought to have been primarily used in peripheral social and political discourse as a means to promote far-flung interest group demands. (Skocpol, 1994)

Yet it is also here, in the late nineteenth century, that other republican ideas emphasizing administrative hierarchy, popular deference to its authority and paternalistic government intervention appeared in the rhetoric of national administrative reformers as part of their prescription for the improvement and enlargement of the national government itself. Moreover, the late nineteenth century administrative reformers discovered these republican ideas through their interpretations of the intentions of the high Federalists of the constitutional republic. (Nelson, 1982) Far from simply an emancipatory ideology, republicanism, as understood through its historically and intellectually articulated concepts of hierarchy, deference and paternalism, was in the process of being reborn in the late nineteenth century as a salient national government ideology and served as an ideological basis for national administrative reform policies.

All three republican concepts, hierarchy, deference and paternalism, were drawn upon and invoked in the intellectual writings and policy prescriptions of national administrative reformers of the late nineteenth century partly as a response to the perceived dissolution of traditional social and economic relations concomitant with increases in industrialization. (Weibe, 1967) Yet they were also in large measure a response to the perceived legacy of factionalism and corruption inherited from the majoritarian party politics of the Jacksonian Age.³

The latter was thought to have helped undermine not only the Federalist plan for a stable, balanced constitution, represented most obviously in its separation of powers scheme and system of checks and balances, but also the federal government's ability to actively serve the national interest. For

³ For works dealing with antebellum political institutions, see Bridges (1984) and Crenson (1975).

the reformers, as with the Federalists, an important component of the national interest amounted to the collective prosperity and security of its citizens through national developmental, security and unifying policies. Thus the reformers' civic intervention was concerned with transforming the pell-mell "people's bureaucracies" of Jackson, largely party-run, patronage-based and serving at the local state or citywide levels, into a meritocratic national government administration. The otherwise liberty-regarding American masses, it was thought, would defer to the authority of a merit-based elite bureaucracy instituted at the national level and serving the national citizenry.

In this way, the late nineteenth century national administrative reformers, as with their Federalist forbears, were not attempting to transcend the republican institutional condition of maintaining a balanced constitution, representing a diversity of interests and opinion. They were, as Pocock (1975, 234) asserts of republicans generally toward their governments, "intensely conscious of its own fragility and instability". Yet they were equally predisposed to foster a national administrative environment in which the most qualified could "associate themselves in an independent sovereign body of decision-makers," for the purpose of actively serving the national citizenry. Predictably, this idea was not without its detractors, particularly from those Jeffersonian quarters that questioned national administrative accountability, the rather elitist conception of civic participation and its perceived close ties to the "monied interest".

Nonetheless, this government restructuring was, whether they were aware of it or not, an appropriate republican response by the reformers to the perceived problems of too much party patronage, local state factionalism, and electoral majoritarianism in national government politics; it was designed to penetrate all three branches of government, the executive especially, and while not expressly intended to altogether eliminate interest politics, party, local state or plural, it was thought capable of keeping these and other factional influences in check, thereby meeting the coincident demands of national government autonomy and its capacity to serve the national citizenry. The late nineteenth century administrative reformers would have agreed with Hume (1953, 70) that it was the partial dependence of popularly elected legislatures on national-interest-regarding administrative authority that was thought "inseparable from the very nature of the constitution and necessary to the preservation of our mixed government." To reiterate, this was a view embraced in the ideology of the

majority of seventeenth and eighteenth century republican English Commonwealthmen, concerned with preserving a delimited space for the intervention of a national administrative government.

Unconcerned with this alternative republican tradition, sociological institutionalists studying American political development adhere instead to an understanding of the late nineteenth century switch in uses of Jeffersonian republicanism from local state and national party to interest group politics. Moreover, in at least one sense, their interpretation fits well with older Progressive and pluralist understandings (and historical institutional understandings) of the American federal government during this period. Each premises that the late nineteenth century American federal government was conspicuously non-ideological.⁴ Yet it is through all of these theoretical rubrics that a contemporary puzzle concerning the American national government of this time has escaped fuller explanation: the ideological rationale behind late nineteenth century national administrative reformers' calls for a) increases in the national government's administrative autonomy as well as b) increases in its capacity to serve an interventionist role.

Pluralist theorists view the American federal government, from its constitutional inception, as decentralized, liberal and ideologically neutral: merely a processual political entity, providing order and balancing the myriad interests of a multitude of competing factions within a mass-based society. In this ahistorical view, the rapid advancement of late nineteenth century industrialism, fostering a deepened emphasis on the liberal values of individualism and the satisfaction of personal and group preferences merely made pluralism all the more essential. Here industrial bureaucratic administrative government is viewed as a necessary social complement for ordering and processing the enormous demands of a complex, highly differentiated industrial society.

This argument is essentially society-centered, privileging social inputs (largely absent conflict) which are seen as fundamentally plural, and deduces from these a government which responds to these demands. Yet this argument does not fare well with respect to elite calls for late nineteenth century American federal government intervention. How, if the federal government of this time was merely a pluralist ordering and

⁴ On bureaucratic rationalization during the late nineteenth century, see especially John (1995).

processing mechanism for diverse and divisive interest group demands, can we explain those instances when national administrative reformers endeavored in and received broad popular support for national government reforms apparently serving a broad national, not specific individual or group, interest?

To this question, Progressive accounts underscoring group conflict have contended that the late nineteenth century administrative reformers—irrespective of their reform rhetoric—were out to produce policy favoring primarily one interest: an elite capitalist class. Progressives saw the national government of this time as a non-ideological economic arena through which powerful vested interests asserted their will.⁵ In this instrumental state view, the egalitarian aspirations of modern industrial democratic republics are frequently undermined by the machinations of powerfully situated economic elites, who capture the national government and steer policy-makers in directions which best satisfy their own economic agendas. Importantly, Progressives argued that the antagonistic and fragmented structure of the federal government of the late nineteenth century was meant to thwart social progress and obscure from view “back room” deals made between politicians, bureaucrats and industrial capitalists. Progressive accounts of the late nineteenth century American federal government are in many respects the mirror image of the pluralist explanations and have a mirror problem: their inability to explain those instances when administrative reform elites attempted to move on reform policies that did not have a clear connection (or actually ran counter) to the rational goals and expectations of economic elites.

Historical institutionalists have attempted to minimize these analytical difficulties in their renderings of late nineteenth century political development of the American federal government. They view the American federal government of this time as a constitutionally circumscribed political entity. Rather than focus on social causes of political action, historical institutionalists have looked to the historical pathway of a decentralized national government whose origins did not account for a national administrative arm as the primary explanation for late nineteenth century national administrative outcomes.

⁵ On progressive history generally, see Richard Hofstadter (1968).

Accordingly, these institutionalists tend to emphasize the constitutional constraints such a pathway created for such outcomes. Seen no longer as a neutral broker of competing interests or as a captured instrument of capitalist elites, the late nineteenth century American federal government is seen by these institutionalists as largely stymied in its attempts at “structuring the character and outcomes of group conflict.” (Hall and Taylor, 1996, 947) However, historical institutionalists do not typically go beyond analysis of the structural processes and outcomes of policy decisions during this period. Therefore their focus on historical pathways disinclines them from exploring the ideological bases that gave these administrative reform policies meaning and direction.

Sociological institutionalists dealing with turn of the twentieth century polity analysis – that is, analysis of state-society relations during this period – have made attempts to integrate their studies with the contributions that other kinds of factors, such as republican ideas, have made on policy processes and outcomes. However, sociological institutionalists whose analyses deal with the American federal government of the late nineteenth century and after, conceive of republicanism as influencing the purposes and choices of interest group reform activists making demands on national government rather than the purposes and choices of national administrative reform activists themselves.

Because sociological institutionalists focus largely on republican ideology’s influences on turn of the twentieth century social rather than institutional processes and outcomes, they tend to defer to the historical institutionalist view that late nineteenth century attempts to reform the national administrative government were more often than not stalemated by its historically-articulated liberal structural constraints. Thus sociological and historical institutionalists each tend to privilege historical pathways over ideological intentions in their views of late nineteenth century American federal administrative development.

The following examples from the historical and sociological institutional literatures deal with late nineteenth and early twentieth century American political development. They are instructive of the combined literature’s focus on historical pathways of institutional change, as well as the sociological literature’s turn of the twentieth century understanding of Jeffersonian republican ideology as primarily an interest group instrument. Both literatures tend to foreclose the possibility that ideas, specifically the

republican ideas of hierarchy, deference to authority and paternalistic government intervention, might have had a conditioning effect on late nineteenth century American national administrative purposes, practices and outcomes.

New Institutionalism: Historical Pathways and Jeffersonian Republicanism

Stephen Skowronek's *Building a New American State* is a classic historical institutional example of a focus on institutional processes and outcomes "...tied to constraints imposed by institutional settlements arrived at long ago in political decisions often far removed from the issues that come to be posed down the line." (Orren and Skowronek, 2004, 97) Skowronek explains late nineteenth century national institutional development through what he calls a "historical pathways of change" analytical framework. That is, he takes the standard historical institutional view of political institutions arising out of, innovating from and constrained by previous institutional arrangements.

Skowronek (2004, 97) argues, contrary to Weber's general insight, that democracy arrived well before bureaucracy in American political development. From this, Skowronek deduces "problems encountered by efforts to expand national administrative capacities." The fact that the early American federal government made little provision for a national administrative arm has impeded future efforts to create one. Skowronek argues that late nineteenth century administrative reformers, in their efforts to reform the patronage-based civil service, were "...foiled by parties and by justices aggressively exercising their own prerogatives to fashion responses to problems of the day."

Here then, ideas counted for less than did the historical-constitutional constraints imposed upon the development of late nineteenth century national administrative institutions. Moreover, Skowronek argues that only with a structural shift in electoral conditions around the turn of the twentieth century, were reformers given the opportunity to pursue their administrative designs. Yet, it is important not to fall prey to the temptation of confusing intentions with outcomes. Somewhat relaxing the focus on outcomes enables exploration of some of the ideological foundations of national administrative design of this time. And as McCormick (1986, 23) writes elsewhere, although anti-party sentiment was not widely shared during the Gilded Age, and was expressed only by a handful of

administrative reformers, by the "...early 1900's, thousands of Americans had reached the same conclusion: if political parties were weakened, government could be improved and enlarged."

It is of course correct to assert that "institutions are not ideas" (Orren and Skowronek, 2004, 83). Ideas tend to be more fluid than institutions, and "can change without a corresponding change in the purposes of an institution." By the same token, however, the diversity of ideas debated, drawn upon, and even rejected in the process of framing institutions can also produce historical pathways of their own, having a long-range impact on future institutions' roles and purposes.

Skowronek himself implicitly argues this point. The very constitutional omission in providing for a national administrative arm is in fact the product of a republican idea, namely, the revolutionaries' fear of centralized authority. Moreover, even if this one republican idea had been "institutionalized" in the constitution, making the distinction irrelevant, what of other, less popular (but no less relevant) republican ideas, such as hierarchy, deference to authority and government intervention? What impact did these ideas have on the framers of the constitution? In the case of the American constitutional framing, popular ideas limiting centralized authority (and thus the extension of a national administrative apparatus) were weighed against less popular ideas underscoring the importance of national administrative hierarchy, deference to its authoritative autonomy, and an active, paternalistic national government. To what extent and in what manner were these less popular (but no less important) ideas drawn upon by future late nineteenth century national administrative reformers?

This last question is of particular importance when looking at Theda Skocpol's sociological institutional account, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*. Her analysis of American welfare provision is also structured within an "historical pathway" framework. Skocpol disputes the standard argument that the United States has always been a laggard in welfare policy and administration. However, she concedes that America has been exceptional in its historical pathway of welfare development. Rather than follow the path of other Western nations of the mid-nineteenth century, the American welfare state was not chiefly formed to provide benefits to all working-class men. Similar to Skowronek, Skocpol sees the fact that America's democracy developed decades prior to its bureaucracy as a critical factor in the creation and expansion of a patronage-based welfare bureaucracy

which amply benefited veterans (particularly Union veterans) following the Civil War.

Skocpol further argues that the early twentieth century Progressives' reaction against patronage similarly did little for working-class men. In the process of dismantling the soldiers pension system, reformers took up the cause of Jeffersonian republican middle-class women's interest groups to gain support for women and children and constructed a "maternalist welfare state".

One key point about Skocpol's analysis deserves special attention. Her reliance on historical pathways—in this case the historical path of patronage bureaucracy—obscures the very real differences in circumstance between mid-nineteenth century welfare provision for soldiers and that for mothers and their children in the first decades of the twentieth century. Whereas the first case was clearly a patronage-based arrangement meant to garner party loyalty, the second case, while certainly an interest, was not a party interest as such. On Skocpol's own admission, neither women nor children were eligible to vote, making their successes all the more extraordinary.

Skocpol's understanding of the Jeffersonian republican tradition, its egalitarianism and emphasis on participation might serve to explain the motivations of Progressives and far flung middle-class women's groups of the early twentieth century, but it does not serve to fully explain a key point of her thesis, that "there simply never was a 'night watchman state' in U.S. capitalism or in American society." (1992, 36) Skocpol leaves unexplored the elite republican motivations of the late nineteenth century national administrative reformers whose efforts helped shape future Americans' understandings of the federal government's role as more than merely a "night watchman state".

Ignoring the late nineteenth century rhetorical justifications for greater national administrative autonomy and capacity makes process-and-outcome-oriented forms of institutional analysis possible but it misses an important piece of the American political development story. Analysis of the administrative reformers' republican rhetoric sanctifying the importance of the national administrative government's hierarchical autonomy and its deferential legitimation process, is critical in helping to explain later generations' popular faith in its paternalistic capacity to move

on and implement policies of its choosing within an otherwise liberal and antagonistic federal institutional setting.

James Morone's *The Democratic Wish* is in some respects an amalgam of these two institutional approaches. Morone at once argues from the historical institutional position that the American Constitution set in motion an antagonistic liberal national institutional setting, and the sociological position, explicating the emancipatory uses of Jeffersonian republicanism in popular discourse. Morone's analysis centers on the fundamental paradox this disjunction between a society-based ideology and bureaucratic-rational federal government has created: periodic popular longing throughout American history for an egalitarian and solidarity-based Jeffersonian republicanism has had the unintended consequence of producing, through social calls for communitarian-style reform, the monolithic, impersonal national administrative government of the twentieth century.

For Morone (1998, 40), the cyclical process begins where it ends in the "...political stalemate of American liberalism." Invariably, the communitarian ideals are subverted by the release of partisan politics, predicated on the divisive institutional design of the constitution. What remains is an ever expanding, yet ever ineffectual, bureaucratic apparatus, wholly absent a communitarian core or mission.

Morone's characterization of republicanism as "consensus about the common good, direct citizen participation in civic affairs, rural independence, small homogeneous communities, natural hierarchy, and popular virtue," is meant to expose its impracticability in the context of American political development. Especially his analysis of the degradation of "natural hierarchy" during the colonial period, with its reliance on artificial standards "by which existing leaders (and their ascent) might be weighed", is thought to further buttress his claim that the Revolutionaries' call for "natural leadership" (derived from the people), and objective standards for its evaluation, was a liberal step away from the republican tradition, so defined. And yet Pocock (1975, 256) argues that for the high Federalists, the attributes of natural leadership came to be increasingly seen as emanating from intellectual rather than party sources. While certainly not commensurate with natural aristocracy, such intellectual aristocracy shared one key attribute with the former, the presumption of disinterestedness. This point is more fully developed in the next section.

At no time does Morone attempt a synthesis of these (or other) categories. Instead, he attributes to other “recent historical scholarship” the notion that Federalist theories of representation have revealed elements of the republican tradition, such as “Hamilton’s insistence on hierarchy and deference to natural leaders...”⁶ Thus, Morone (1998, 70) does concede that “republicanism was by no means egalitarian. Members of the community were expected to acknowledge their place in the natural order”. Yet Morone’s analysis does not fully explore the historical innovations imposed on republican concepts, such as the one connecting natural and intellectual aristocracy. English and American Enlightenment notions and uses of the republican tradition cannot be properly understood without reference to these revisions.

Against this, Morone contends that the last years of the American colonial period had seen a *liberal* erosion of this republican embrace of “natural aristocracy”, replaced by new, objective, standards for measuring leadership. This is held as evidence that an agrarian, proto-Jeffersonian republicanism (the only kind Morone considers) was in the process of becoming a dead political ideology for Americans even prior to the revolution. Moreover, the fact that such leadership was increasingly being projected and evaluated (through improved modes of communication and transportation) on the national, rather than regional or local, stage, meant that the agrarian republican condition that leaders retain a close link to a geographically situated constituency was also being undermined.

Morone’s understanding of American republicanism does not have much affinity with a territorial, juridical understanding of the American federal government, emphasizing the creation of a more meritocratic, disinterested intellectual administrative elite, to which Hamilton and other Federalists subscribed. His interpretation holds, however, only if the American republican tradition is mistakenly conceptualized as exclusively concerned with local community autonomy and popular participation, and if Federalist elements of intellectual, rather than natural, hierarchy, deference to its authority and national administrative paternalism—elements essential to the administration of large, territorial governments—are left out of the analysis. Hamilton in particular never conceived of republicanism in such unadulterated terms.

⁶ For a partial list of the other “recent historical scholarship” Morone refers to, see Appleby (1984); Berk (1994); Watts (1987).

And yet Morone (1998, 85) characterizes Hamilton as a wholly modern eighteenth century positivist, and quotes him as such: “the test of good government [is its] tendency to produce good administration.” To this, Morone (1998, 87) then implicitly contrasts Jefferson a few pages later through a passage meant to reveal his republican reluctance over “...strengthening [Federalist administrative] principles which I deem radically vicious, but...what is practicable must often control what is pure theory.”

Moreover, Morone contends that however republican Hamilton’s theories may have appeared vis-à-vis the question of “the role of representatives and the mechanisms that link them to their constituencies”, they were decidedly pluralist (like Madison’s) with respect to what mattered most, their notions of the people. He writes:

Within the *Federalist* papers, Madison and Hamilton seem to portray political constituencies in significantly different ways: contrast the re-latively fixed social orders in Hamilton’s *Federalist* 35 with the apparent flux in Madison’s 10 and 51. However, each analysis abandons the notion of a single people with a shared interest and turns instead on factions applying the calculus of economic self-interest. (1998, 86)

According to Morone, the Federalists foresaw that the antagonistic institutional realities of the Constitution would mirror and likely nurture an antagonistic social setting. Any political philosophical exposition of republican purposes, however clever, was simply esoteric against such a liberal and rational institutional arrangement and society. It is precisely this, the “imagined” nature of republicanism in American history that Morone is asserting in *The Democratic Wish*. Ultimately he is skeptical that either the Jeffersonian republican theory of individual emancipation and community autonomy or the Hamiltonian republican theory of natural leadership and popular deference has had much of a place in American politics on the ground.

In one sense, the national administrative plan Hamilton advocated, with its system of separated federal power and filtered representation, was indicative of a negative liberal constitutional design and contrary to many core republican tenets, concerned as it was with institutionally controlling, but not eliminating, factionalism. Moreover, it was designed to undercut the national popular will by preventing the occurrence of majoritarian factionalism, what Tocqueville aptly called the “tyranny of the majority”.

Federalists viewed this monist political doctrine as undermining individual and minority rights.

Yet, in other respects Hamilton's "good administration" doctrine came closer to republican theory than it did the Lockean liberal doctrine of limited government, or for that matter a pluralist's understanding of government. Rather, it was from the start intended, and later understood by late nineteenth century administrative reformers, as a largely top-down and civic-oriented national interventionist program, to be carried out via the qualified counsel of highly educated and civic-minded bureaucratic elites.

Nineteenth Century National Administrative Reform: Hierarchy, Deference and Paternalism

William E. Nelson's study, *The Roots of American Bureaucracy*, centers on the intentions of the late nineteenth century American administrative reformers. It argues that their primary goal was to recapture through reform the institutionalized pluralism of the federal government intended by the Federalist framers, and which had become compromised during the intervening years of Jeffersonian and Jacksonian majoritarianism.

Nelson's (1982, 93) thesis deserves special attention for its apparent similarity to the present study. Contra Nelson, however, the late nineteenth century reformers were not merely motivated by a desire "to provide individuals and minorities with protection against what they perceived to be an increased threat of majoritarian tyranny". Nor were they motivated exclusively by economic self-interest. They derived another lesson from the early Federalists, namely paternalistic national government intervention, one that would inspire and promote elite-led reforms having far reaching consequences for the entire polity.

Nelson (1982, 94) is careful to point out that the late nineteenth century national administrative reformers were not utopians; they understood that "...concentration of population in some geographic areas, the economic interdependence between different areas, and the ease of sustained communication rendered impossible a return to an idyllic past of geographically compact communities inhabited by small numbers of people well acquainted with one another." In other words, the reformers were well aware that industrial conditions of the Gilded Age foreclosed a

return to the form of republicanism based on “geographic propinquity” revered and promoted by Jefferson.

Nelson (1982, 100) further contends however that the very advances in transportation and communication that made a return to pre-Jacksonian agrarianism impossible, “made new sorts of communitarian authority structures possible.” Specifically, such advances allowed communities to organize based on “intellectual affinities”, whose best members would occupy nationally prominent, rather than local or regional, leadership positions. It would be these “communities of affinity” which would feed the reformed, and newly created, bureaucracies within the three branches of government. Pointedly, Nelson quotes the late nineteenth century reformer E.L. Godkin, with respect to his consideration of the political advantages accruing from such intellectual communities; Godkin believed that they would help forestall legislation enacted by “multifarious conflicting interests”, something he saw as “a positive hindrance...to healthy progress” (Nelson 1982, 102).

Moreover, Nelson argues that these two moral principles of government, “reliance on aristocratic leadership and its communitarian structure”, were rediscovered through the reformers’ study of early American political leadership. According to Nelson, through re-establishment of what the reformers believed were essential principles of government, aristocracy and community, late nineteenth century intellectual authority was in a position to use the contemporaneous focus on inductive inquiry, by which facts were gleaned and analyzed in the cold light of scientific disinterest, to “classify legal and governmental problems in categories that would dictate the solution or proper outcome” (Nelson 1982, 104). It was thought that inductivism, applied to law and government, would tend to the stability of a pluralist national government, which in turn would attend to the presumed intention of the framers, the protection of individual and minority rights.

It is on this last point that my contention with Nelson rests. The late nineteenth century national administrative reformers were not entirely concerned with embedding elite intellectual “communities of affinity” in national administrative government for the purposes of making government more pluralistic, though this was of course an intention. As with the Federalists, the administrative reformers also drew heavily on elite republican conceptualizations of national administrative hierarchy, popular deference and paternalistic government intervention. Their aim was not

only to increase efficiency and fairness in government, but also to promote and install national policies shaped by the national government's highest-ranking political officers in the executive branch. Such national policies were to tend toward what Godkin called "healthy progress", and were aimed at the national interest.

Yet Nelson's understanding of the reformers as industrial age scientific positivists and legal-rational pluralists forces him to focus on their interest in non-majoritarian national government stability and he determines that:

In all branches of government, training and expertise came substantially under control of the universities, themselves quite independent of the national political process and allied to several different segments of American society, ranging from state political establishments through the business community to intellectual elites. With the development of these new institutions, power within the federal government became fragmented. This fragmentation of power institutionalized pluralism. (1982, 168)

Admittedly, the emphasis the reformers placed in their intellectual communities on technical proficiency and administrative efficiency was indicative of their struggle to remove majoritarian politics from national bureaucracy, especially in the executive branch. Yet these very same reformers also often joined and recruited membership in their intellectual circles under the auspices of aspiring to the national executive's highest-ranking political class, and shaping collective national policies through their elite moral sense of paternalistic judgment.

Paternalism was a key component of the administrative reformers' ideas. It was not tantamount to a socialist or, to use an expression of the time, "ethical economist" view of collectivist state domination; rather it was, as Godkin saw, derived from and had parallels to a more traditional understanding of a father's familial responsibility: "...the question what things government should take charge of itself, and not leave to private enterprise, is to be settled by judgment, just as the question what things the head of a family should buy and what make at home, has to be settled by judgment" (Godkin, 1982, 327). In both cases, paternal judgment was thought in aid of the collective good.

Rather than take account of these elite republican categories and their relationship to the common good, Nelson concludes that the penultimate

concern of late nineteenth century reformers like Godkin, and the Federalists who inspired them, was essentially negative: anti-majoritarianism. Yet the Federalists and the late nineteenth century administrative reformers were equally concerned with implementing their own visions of the good society, in which the unity, wealth and security of the national citizenry would be attributed to the administrative paternalism of its most gifted citizens. In this respect, Hamilton's developmental policy of "internal improvements", decried by Jefferson and others as tending toward the corruption of the people's virtue, can also be understood and appreciated as a republican means of pursuing the common good through paternalistic government administration aimed at national development.

While always vigilant against the true enemy of liberty, centralized authority, late eighteenth century high Federalists and late nineteenth century national administrative reformers were careful to delineate between despotism, serving the interests of one or a few in power, and what they deemed progressive government, acting on behalf of the national interest. It is important to note that this was not tantamount to the popular interest, the unchecked tyranny of the masses, which they believed dangerous not only to individual but to collective liberty. Nor were they concerned only with the satisfaction of individual or special interests. Rather it was the material interest and security of the polity that was of prime concern to both generations, the attainment of which was thought to redound positively on its individual citizens.⁷

Conclusion

Rather than study the republican moral foundations of American government, many contemporary historical institutionalists referring to the American federal government instead subsume the republican ideological features of hierarchy, deference and paternalistic government intervention into Weberian institutional concepts of autonomy, legitimacy and capacity, respectively.⁸ These Weberian political institutional features are more often than not analyzed in purely pragmatic and functional terms, neither given much interest in terms of their philosophical origins nor with respect to the complex ways in which they have been invoked to justify and maintain political order, stability and development.

⁷ For a detailed discussion of this republican principle, see Daniel Walker Howe, "Introduction" (1979).

⁸ See for example, Evans, Reuschmeyer, and Skocpol (1985).

Nonetheless, the republican concepts of hierarchy, deference, and paternalism were rhetorically employed by the Federalists of the early constitutional republic and then again by the late nineteenth century national administrative reformers in an effort to increase the prerogative of national administrative institutions, especially in the executive branch. In the case of the late nineteenth century reformers, they saw themselves confronted with what they perceived to be the crude politics of Jacksonian majoritarian rule, particularly its effects on creating what Skocpol has called the “plebiscitarian bureaucracy” of that era. In response, they set out to re-establish a republican moral basis for government rooted in the reinstatement of a national executive hierarchy and popular deference to its legitimate authority as well as a conscious regard of its paternalistic responsibility to the national citizenry.

The reformers were not merely concerned with protecting individual and minority rights, or for that matter with merely letting the unadulterated facts present the solution; rather they formulated their vision of better government and a better society from the republican “vocabulary of motives” which underscored the importance of civic intervention directed toward the promotion of national progress. Such a lexicon defined this brand of progress as involving the refinement of the commonwealth through the administrative paternalism of its best members.

Doubtless, the administrative reformers were motivated by their goal of institutionalizing pluralism. Yet they also felt that their administrative paternalism would serve national developmental, security and unifying purposes, which in turn would redound positively on the nation’s citizenry. Their goals, while at once pluralist, focused on creating a government whose province and purpose would include intervening on the national society’s behalf.

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