The politicization of the public sector in Anglo Saxon nation (UK-US)

تسييس القطاع العام في الدول الأنجلو سكسونية (بريطانيا ـ الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية)

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Abstract :

  The public sector, by nature, operates within a political framework, delivering essential services to citizens. This inherently political environment dictates that decisions around public sector outputs align with the question of "who gets what." While Weberian theory emphasizes a merit-based approach, promoting neutrality and rule-bound actions, the reality often sees political influences creeping into public administration. Politicians, eager to ensure their policies are implemented efficiently, may prioritize loyalty over merit, a practice that threatens the impartiality and effectiveness of the public sector. This trend towards politicisation has fueled debates, with scholars arguing that it damages public confidence and diminishes administrative efficiency.

   In response to failures in service delivery, Anglo-Saxon countries like the U.S. and the U.K. have explored reforms such as New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG). These frameworks sought to improve public sector performance but also revealed and sometimes amplified political influence. By reshaping the relationship between civil servants and politicians, these models highlighted new forms of politicisation. This paper investigates the extent of politicisation in the public sectors of the U.S. and U.K., examining how it affects the dynamic between ministers and senior civil servants and the implications for public administration.

   Keywords: Public Sector; Politicisation; Merit-based Approach; New Public Management (NPM); Civil Servants.

ملخص:

  يعمل القطاع العام بطبيعته ضمن إطار طبوغرافي سياسي، حيث يقوم بتقديم خدمات أساسية للمواطنين. هذا البيئة السياسية تفرض أن تتوافق القرارات المتعلقة بمخرجات القطاع العام مع سؤال "من يحصل على ماذا". بينما تؤكد النظرية الفيبيرية على نهج قائم على الجدارة، يعزز الحيادية ويقوم على قواعد محددة، فإن الواقع غالبًا ما يشهد تأثيرات سياسية تتسلل إلى الإدارة العامة. يسعى السياسيون على تنفيذ سياساتهم بفعالية، ومن ثم إعطاء الأولوية للولاء على حساب الجدارة، وهو ما يهدد حيادية وفعالية القطاع العام. وقد أثار هذا الاتجاه

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نقاشات واسعة بين الأكاديميين، حيث يجادل البعض بأن هذا التسييس يُضعف ثقة الجمهور ويقلل من كفاءة الإدارة. عرفت الدول الأنجلو-ساكسونية، مثل الولايات المتحدة والمملكة المتحدة، إصلاحات التسيير العمومي الجديد (NPM) والحكامة العامة الجديدة (NPG). سعت هذه الأطر إلى تحسين أداء القطاع العام، لكنها كشفت أيضًا عن التأثير السياسي ذلك من خلال إعادة تشكيل العلاقة بين الموظفين المدنيين والسياسيين، سلطت هذه النماذج الضوء على أشكال جديدة من التسييس. تبحث هذه الورقة البحثية عن مدى تسييس القطاعات العامة في الولايات المتحدة والمملكة المتحدة، وكيفية تأثير على الديناميات بين الوزراء وكبار الموظفين المدنيين وانعكاساته على الإدارة العامة

كلمات مفتاحية: القطاع العام - التسييس - النهج القائم على الجدارة - إدارة القطاع العام الجديدة - (NPM) الموظفون المدنيون

I- Introduction:

Since Max Weber, considerable attention has been devoted to the debate between **merit-based** and **political appointments**. Parallel research has focused on the predominance of these two systems and the effects each has on advisory or executive behavior. The underlying assumption is that ministers require responsiveness from the bureaucracy, but such responsiveness is not always forthcoming. As a result, ministers may prefer political appointees, selecting individuals based on their shared political and policy biases. Consequently, the degree to which the **Anglo-Saxon civil services** are politicised has been a long-debated issue.

The history of the **United States** is marked by several disagreements and paradoxes within its civil service. The politicisation of appointments has further complicated the matter. Since **Andrew Jackson's presidency (1828–1836)**, the **spoils system** has become increasingly entrenched. This system fostered favoritism in government dealings and created a culture of rewarding political loyalty over merit. A significant turning point occurred following the assassination of **President James Garfield**, which was linked to the growing discontent among those competing for government positions. In response to this incident, the **Pendleton Act** was adopted, marking the first step toward establishing a merit-based system. However, the act initially applied only to lower-level positions, while high-level appointments continued to serve as political rewards.

In **Western Europe**, the **British civil service** has undergone significant changes, particularly since the early 1980s. The reforms in the UK, much like those in the U.S., reflect a broader trend toward balancing the demands of **meritocracy** and **political control** within the public sector

How do the US and UK systems differ in their approach to balancing political control and bureaucratic autonomy, and what lessons can be drawn from these differences?.

II - Politicisation: a literature review

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In line with Weberian theory, which emphasizes that appointments and promotions should be based on merit systems, civil servants are expected to operate under the rule of law rather than responding to the political expediencies of incumbent ministers. Max Weber highlighted the difficulties politicians face when dealing with bureaucratic officials who develop expertise and have access to information unavailable to both politicians and the public—information that is crucial for effective governance.

However, much of the administrative literature suggests that the separation between civil servants and ministers, as envisioned by Weber, does not exist in practical terms. The ideal of a neutral bureaucracy is often violated, particularly in the context of political responsiveness. These developments are frequently described as the politicization of the bureaucracy. The tension between the notion of a neutral bureaucracy and the reality of politicization reflects a significant dilemma for any democratic government: balancing unbiased expertise with political responsiveness The approach to resolving this dilemma varies, as the structure and regulation of interactions between politicians and civil servants differ across ministerial bureaucracies(Shaw & Eichbaum, 2014).

Returning to the fundamentals of politics as defined by Harold Lasswell—"who gets what, when, and how" (Lasswell, 2018)—the public sector is inherently a political creation. It is, therefore, expected that any political variable (e.g., political parties, ideological beliefs, or leaders' preferences) will influence the public sector. This political influence compromises the neutrality upon which public administration is theoretically founded.

Politicization might be considered appropriate in certain regimes, such as the American bureaucracy, where the president is allowed to appoint officials based on political preferences. As a result, changes in government lead to shifts in the composition of the bureaucracy. One researcher remarked that under these circumstances, "the American government becomes a government of strangers."

On the other hand, politicization can also be seen as a means of controlling the public sector to implement reform programs and advance different ideologies. For example, the imperative alignment of public servants with conservative ideologies may reflect a bias toward "one of us" thinking. It may also be difficult for ministers to separate their political identity from their managerial functions, pushing civil servants to act on the basis of political preferences. In some contexts, politicization is considered a way to uphold democratic values by ensuring that senior positions are filled based on the political preferences of the ruling party.

Politicization involves the interaction between two actors: the politician, who seeks political responsiveness from civil servants, and the civil servants, who aspire to assume senior positions and thus align themselves with the political preferences of their superiors. This disposition is typically termed 'responsiveness,' which refers to the willingness of public servants to fulfill the desires of government ministers(Mulgan, 2008). Some

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scholars argue that political appointees are favored by political leaders as a means of avoiding accountability, ensuring that the appointed officials can implement programs and policies in a way that aligns with the administration's objectives.

Clifford and Wright (2012) conceptualize politicization in two ways: (1) from the top-down, where the government exercises control over civil servants, and (2) from the bottom-up, where civil servants themselves become more engaged in politics. Richard Mulgan suggests that there are two forms of politicization: one concerning the appointment and dismissal of public servants, and the other concerning the activities in which public servants engage. Similarly, Thurid Hustedt and Heidi Salomonsen (2014) categorize politicization into three mechanisms: (1) formal, (2) functional, and (3) administrative.

Formal politicization refers to the traditional definition, in which civil servants work in accordance with the minister's contingent preferences(Rouban, 2012). In this form, political appointments are often used as rewards for party loyalty, ensuring party-political responsiveness.

Functional politicization aims to make the bureaucracy more responsive by integrating politically relevant aspects into the day-to-day functions of public administration. The concept was first introduced by **Putnam** and later expanded by Aberbach et al(Aberbach, Derlien, Mayntz, & Rockman, 1990). A key feature of functional politicization is the provision of political-tactical advice, which requires civil servants to understand how politics works in order to enhance their neutral competencies and navigate politically risky situations (Hood & Lodge, 2006). Mulgan also notes that responsiveness does not necessarily conflict with responsibility, arguing that providing 'free, frank, and fearless' advice is a hallmark of bureaucratic neutrality, particularly in the Westminster system.

Politicians frequently express frustration over the lack of compliance with their decisions. To avoid policy implementation failure and subsequent accountability, politicians often seek loyalty among members of the bureaucracy to ensure effective program implementation. As mentioned earlier, ministers rely heavily on bureaucrats for policy implementation. The question raised by Jorge Christensen is whether this can be achieved through political appointments or merit-based systems.

The neutrality of the public sector is increasingly vulnerable, especially when public officials engage in the politics of the ruling government. Public servants are generally expected to refrain from partisanship, as it may compromise their ability to serve successive governments with equal loyalty.

Richard Mulgan raises the important question of how far public servants should go in responding to the directives of their political superiors. In an increasingly politicized

environment, the search for objectivity and neutrality within the civil service becomes a challenge. Philosophical perspectives, such as those of postmodernists and anti-positivist critical theorists, question the very possibility of objectivity within a politicized bureaucracy.

Mulgan defines responsiveness as public servants doing what ministers want, but this responsiveness can extend beyond ministers to include other political actors, such as the prime minister. In cases where politicization occurs from the bottom-up—where civil servants voluntarily align with the wishes of their political masters—Mulgan describes the advisory role as a 'catch-all' term for all communication between officials and their political superiors(Mulgan, 2008).

Politicized appointment processes cast doubt on the integrity of official advice and may encourage political behavior among public servants, undermining the frankness of their counsel. Another consequence of politicization is the studied silence of officials on certain issues, as well as the spread of misinformation by the media, which raises concerns about the integrity of official advice. The invasion of Iraq serves as a prime example of such a situation.

The deliberate withholding of information or the dissemination of falsehoods by public servants to serve government goals highlights the dangers of politicized advice. In these cases, public servants may withhold the truth to protect their reputation and avoid accountability.

There are significant differences exist between civil servants and political appointees. Civil servants typically enter the system at lower levels of pay and responsibility, gradually advancing based on merit. Political appointees, by contrast, are often drawn from outside the civil service and are appointed to high-paying, high-authority positions(Heclo, 1975).

III- politicisation in the light of political Topography disparity (US-UK):

Studies from various countries indicate that political and bureaucratic power relationships diverge based on political systems and institutional traditions. Cross-national differences are driven by several factors, including constitutional frameworks, developmental trajectories, politicization dynamics, and party systems.

Leonard White described the U.S. civil service system prior to the merit-based system as comprised of "a broad class of gentlemen," wherein individuals were selected for public office based on perceived suitability. A growing concern at the time was nepotism, as positions were often passed down from father to son, raising fears that federal jobs were becoming a form of property or privilege(Van Riper, 1958).

Multiple actors drove the push for civil service reform, often motivated by personal frustration with corruption and inefficiency in government offices. A coalition of

professionals, including lawyers, academics, journalists, and clergy, supported reform, viewing it as a moral crusade against the spoils system and as a means to confront an unresponsive political system(Nathan, 1975).

As the U.S. expanded economically and territorially, Congress and the President faced increasing pressure to establish a professional bureaucracy. This need intensified during times of monetary crises, mass immigration, and technological change, which required the federal government to take on new responsibilities. Public demand for increased government involvement further reinforced the necessity of civil service reform(Lewis, 2004).

Today, U.S. civil servants who enter the federal hierarchy do so based on merit principles. These civil servants enjoy exceptional protections, although exceptions exist, particularly for positions requiring presidential nomination and Senate confirmation (PAS), jobs within the Senior Executive Service (SES), and specific roles categorized under Schedules A, B, and C. These positions are concentrated at the top of the federal hierarchy, we have also, **Presidential Appointments without Senate Confirmation (PA)**: Certain roles, including senior advisors and other close aides to the President, such as some White House staff positions, do not require Senate approval. Approximately 450 of these positions exist. About two-thirds of all Presidential Appointee (PA) roles are within commissions, councils, committees, boards, or foundations, where requirements are generally stricter. Slightly less than one-third of PA positions are part of the Executive Office of the President (EOP), while the remaining positions are distributed across other federal departments and agencies(Thompson, 2001).
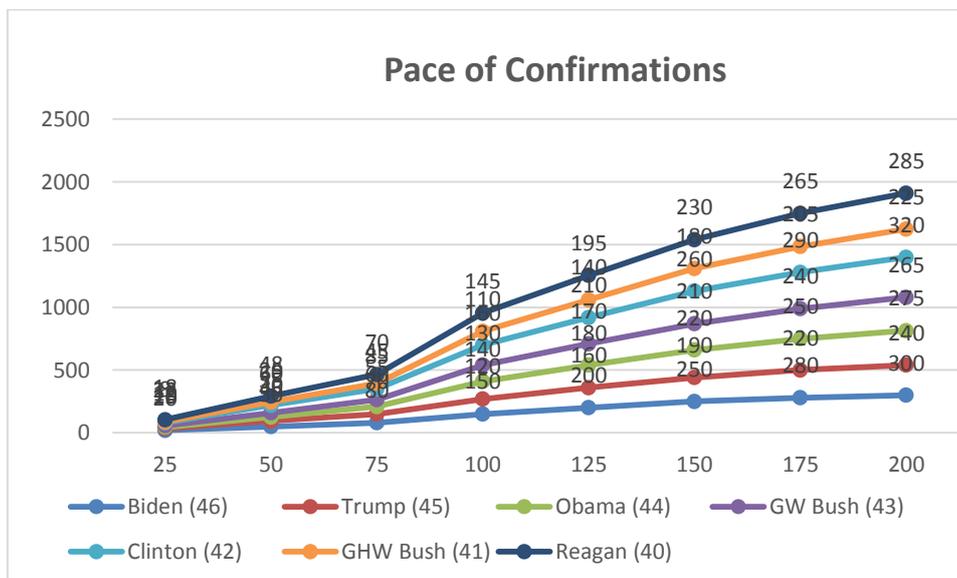
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The chart showing "Total PAS Nominations" reflects the number of across various administrations, and analyzing this data has significant implications for the functioning and politicization of the public sector. Here's how this trend could affect public sector politics:

- **Political Appointments:** (PAS) and (PA) positions are often filled by individuals aligned with the president's political ideology. When a president makes a large number of nominations quickly, there is a stronger likelihood that they are appointing individuals who support their policies and political goals. This can lead to the public sector being seen as more politicized, as leadership positions in federal agencies might be filled by political loyalists rather than career professionals. Presidents who nominate individuals quickly (e.g., Biden and Clinton in the chart) ensure that key government positions are filled more rapidly, allowing the government to function efficiently. Agencies and departments with leadership in place can execute policy directives, manage crises, and carry out the president's agenda.
- **Impact on Policy Continuity:** As each new administration fills PAS roles, the frequent turnover in leadership can create instability within public institutions. These political appointments can lead to significant policy shifts that align with the president's agenda, but this can also disrupt the continuity of long-term programs or neutral administrative processes. But, in another context, Frequent changes in PAS nominations across administrations can lead to a loss of institutional knowledge. Career public servants may feel sidelined if political appointees are prioritized for top roles, and expertise built over years within agencies may be undervalued or lost as priorities shift.

By law, political appointees are restricted to no more than 10% of the total SES positions or 25% within any given agency. Notable examples of SES appointments include roles such as Chief of Staff at the U.S. Agency for International Development and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs at the Department of Defense. The SES was created to provide presidents with greater flexibility in staffing positions critical to the execution of their policy agendas.

Since the U.S. Constitution grants the President limited formal powers, presidents must rely on informal methods—such as bargaining, public appeals, and moral leadership—to achieve their objectives (Neustadt, 1991). Presidents influence bureaucratic policy through various mechanisms, including executive orders, signing statements, and agency reorganization. Of particular importance is the President's control over personnel decisions, which significantly impact policy outcomes (Howell, 2003).

In situations where presidential appointees decisions conflict with Congress, political appointees often serve as intermediaries between the President, civil servants, the media, and the public. In essence, they act as the President's representatives within agencies(Moe, 1982).

The key questions arising from these dynamics include when and where presidents seek to politicize the bureaucracy and who is held accountable for administrative failures. While the

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President shares responsibility for national security and foreign policy with Congress, economic conditions consistently shape voter evaluations of presidential performance, despite the limited direct control presidents have over the economy(Bartels, 2016).

Despite ongoing debates over the merit system's role in American public administration, the expansion of the spoils system continues. Political appointments extend beyond high-level positions to include departmental and agency management roles. These appointments allow for greater political control over public administration, ensuring that policies and programs are implemented as intended. The phenomenon of political appointments has persisted across successive administrations and continues to grow (Light, 2011).

David Lewis identified several patterns in the politicization of U.S. government agencies(Lewis, 2004):

- Presidents are more likely to politicize agencies when their policy views diverge from the agency's, particularly after a change in the party controlling the White House.
- Politicization decreases when agency competence is sensitive to political influence.
- The more divergent the policy views of the President and Congress, the less Congress supports politicization, although politicization tends to increase during periods of unified government.
- Patronage appointments are more likely in agencies whose policy views align with those of the President.

From an ideological perspective, the American political system is distinctive in its competitive, two-party structure. The belief that bureaucracy is the primary obstacle to implementing government programs has led administrations, notably under Nixon and Reagan, to adopt strategies such as the "administrative presidency," aimed at overcoming resistance from both the bureaucracy and Congress(Aberbach & Rockman, 1994).

The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 created additional opportunities for politicization by allowing the President to appoint 10% of the civil service. This reform enabled Presidents and Cabinet officers to shift senior civil servants within the government, granting them greater control over programs(Aberbach & Rockman, 2001). Similarly, reforms under the Clinton administration sought to increase political oversight of the bureaucracy through initiatives like the National Performance Review (DiIulio, 2011).

Subsequent administrations, such as Bush's, have continued efforts to exert political control over the federal workforce, emphasizing performance management and opening public sector jobs to competition with private sector providers (Schmidt, 1996).

The UK has also seen an increase in political appointments, particularly under Thatcher, Major, and Blair. These appointments, often made based on personal or political affiliations,

have shifted policymaking authority away from the bureaucracy (Clifford & Wright, 1997). Successive reforms, such as Thatcher's "Next Steps" program and Blair's "Modernizing Government" initiative, aimed to weaken bureaucratic power and enhance political control.

The growing politicization of UK bureaucratic appointments raises concerns about accountability, responsiveness, and the effectiveness of government operations. Additionally, the rise of semi-autonomous agencies and quangos has further complicated the relationship between local organizations and central government, raising questions about the role of merit in public sector appointments.
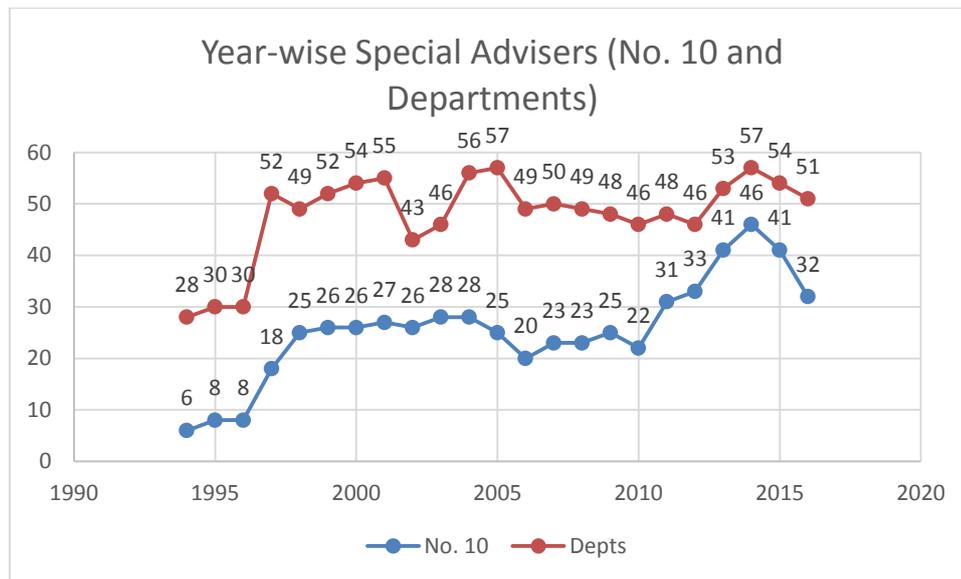
The chart above represents the number of special advisers (SpAds) in the UK government, divided between those working directly in No. 10 Downing Street (blue) and those embedded within various government departments (red) from 1994 to 2016. Special advisers are politically appointed individuals who provide advice to ministers, operating outside the neutrality expected from civil servants. These positions have grown in importance over time, reflecting broader trends in the politicisation of public administration.

- Increase in Number of Special Advisers Over Time:

The number of special advisers increased substantially between 1994 and 2016. In 1994, there were 34 SpAds (6 in No. 10 and 28 in departments). By 2016, this number had risen to 83 (32 in No. 10 and 51 in departments). The most significant jumps are seen after 1997, when the Labour Party came to power under Tony Blair, and again around 2013-2015 under the Coalition and Conservative governments(Connaughton, 2017).

- No. 10 vs. Departmental Distribution:

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The number of SpAds in No. 10 has consistently increased over the period, especially post-2010. This rise indicates a growing concentration of political advisers directly at the center of government, which suggests a centralisation of power and greater political control over policy formulation. Simultaneously, the number of departmental special advisers has fluctuated but generally increased. Departments such as the Treasury, Foreign Office, and Home Office often have several SpAds to support their politically sensitive roles(Gruhn & Slater, 2012).

- Political Appointments and Governance:

Special advisers are directly appointed by ministers, often reflecting the political priorities and loyalty of the appointees. The rise in their numbers indicates a shift toward more politically aligned governance, where ministers rely more on politically loyal advisors than on neutral civil servants. This could undermine the traditional impartiality of the civil service, as decisions might increasingly be driven by political agendas rather than objective policy analysis. The increase in SpAds, particularly under Blair and the Conservative governments, correlates with the rise of New Public Management (NPM) and later austerity policies. Both policy agendas emphasized reform, cost-cutting, and efficiency in the public sector. SpAds were often used to ensure these policies were aggressively implemented, aligning departments with the governing party's ideology.

- Peaks in Special Adviser Numbers:

The most significant spikes in the number of special advisers occurred during periods of substantial policy change or political transition:

- 1997: After Tony Blair's election, the Labour government sought to implement sweeping reforms, including Third Way policies and greater coordination between government departments.
- 2010-2015: The rise in SpAds under the Conservative-led coalition and later the Conservative government indicates a period of political centralisation, with David Cameron relying on more political advisors to manage a fragmented government and austerity reforms(Gruhn & Slater, 2012).

These spikes suggest that governments increase their reliance on special advisers during periods of political and policy complexity, indicating a growing role for political management in the public sector.

- Undermining Civil Service Neutrality:

The growing number of SpAds, especially within departments, could lead to the marginalisation of the impartial civil service. As ministers increasingly rely on political

advisers, civil servants may find it harder to provide neutral policy advice, knowing that political priorities take precedence. This trend risks politicising policy development, where government decisions are driven more by political agendas than by evidence or long-term considerations(Eichbaum & Shaw, 2008).

- **Policy Centralisation and Control:**

The rise in advisers working directly in No. 10 reflects a centralisation of political control. The Prime Minister and their close circle of advisers can oversee and influence departmental policies more directly. This reduces the autonomy of individual ministers and departments, potentially leading to a more top-down approach in decision-making, with a stronger emphasis on the Prime Minister's political objectives(Craft & Halligan, 2020).

- **Increased Partisan Influence in Governance:**

With the rise in political appointments, governments might find it easier to push through their agendas without resistance from a neutral civil service. While this may improve efficiency in implementing political manifestos, it risks making government policy overly partisan and less stable, as the reliance on politically aligned appointees can lead to policy shifts with each change in administration(Pyper & Burnham, 2011).

IV- The subtle politicisation forms in New Public Management and beyond it

Administrative reform plans often lead to a redistribution of power between government agencies, particularly concerning the relationship between bureaucrats and politicians. Some argue that these reforms are a way to assert greater control over bureaucrats. New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG) have emerged as political tools used by politicians to restructure administrative systems and limit resistance within the public sector.

Nils Gunnar Billinger, the chair of the Swedish public enterprise LFV, once remarked, "The best opportunity to steer an agency strategically is when you appoint a new agency head" This reflects the notion that appointments provide a critical point of influence for politicians in controlling public agencies(Molander, Nilsson, & Schick, 2002).

According to the NPM model, the role of politicians is primarily in policymaking, while civil servants are tasked with implementation. Gubler and Osborn have argued that the government should "steer" while civil servants "row." However, critics assert that NPM has had the opposite effect, blurring the lines between politicians and civil servants, which further politicizes the bureaucracy (Rouban, 2012). For example, researchers have observed an increase in politically appointed civil servants, as a form of politicization(Horn, 1995).

Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert argue that the relationship between politics and administration is central to understanding public management. The question remains: how does NPM shift the boundaries between these domains in practice, not just in theory?

The core principles of NPM have shifted, either intentionally by politicians or unintentionally due to the inherent challenges in separating politics from administration.

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Research indicates that in countries where the NPM model has been adopted, this separation has often not been realized. Politicians have been suspected of increasing their control over implementation processes through the politicization of the civil service.

One of the fundamental elements of NPM is "contractualism," which enables politicians to exert more influence over public administration. This model introduces short-term contracts, making the employment and careers of civil servants less secure. Such contractualism is seen as a mechanism to enhance political control and ensure that the civil service is more responsive and productive.

For instance, civil servants appointed as directors-general (DGs) under NPM rarely hold their positions for more than three to six years (Uelese Amosa, 2008) .This contractual approach allows politicians to maintain control over civil servants. In the United States, the Performance Assessment Rating Tool (PART), introduced by President George W. Bush, linked agency performance to budgeting and accountability mechanisms. The PART tool focused on four areas: purpose and design, strategic planning, management, and results and accountability. Some scholars view PART as a tool for politicization, allowing the president greater leverage over agency control and budget allocations(Dull, 2006).

While contractualism increases the potential for political influence over the civil service, managerialism provides the rationale. Under NPM, high-level civil servants are expected to manage agencies based on their expertise, yet politicians seek to ensure effective implementation aligned with government priorities.

Autonomy within agencies consists of two key aspects: financial independence and human resource management (HRM). Governments often seek to ensure that public funds are spent in line with their intentions, particularly when significant investments are involved. To achieve this, individual contracts and political appointments are used to introduce uncertainty for civil servants, compelling them to follow pre-established conditions.

One might question why politicians would pursue a major administrative reform like NPM, which ostensibly limits their control over the civil service, only to later attempt to reassert control. The paradox is that while NPM aims to reduce political interference, it also provides politicians with new tools to retain or regain influence over the bureaucracy.

V- The public sector efficiency: between the politicisation and merit systems:

In terms of the elected government's right to determine the public interest, governments derive their legitimacy from voters. This drives governments to exert greater control over the bureaucracy. Democratic values, in this context, require public servants to defer to the elected government's interpretation of the public interest in policymaking, even when it conflicts with their own views.

Politicization has several consequences, including a loss of public confidence in government fairness. A politicized public administration is also often perceived as inefficient. There are competing perspectives on whether political appointees or career civil servants have a greater impact on agency performance. Some scholars argue that political appointees bring

fresh experience and energy to public service. In contrast, career civil servants offer long-term expertise and skills gained from years of service(Van Ryzin, 2011).

Politicization can also make public sector jobs less attractive. When a growing number of top positions in an agency are reserved for political appointees, it becomes challenging to recruit talented individuals. The situation can be demoralizing for qualified career personnel, who may feel sidelined by appointees who have not worked their way up through the agency ranks (Weko, 1995).

Appointees often serve for a relatively short period, long enough to introduce new preferences and goals but not long enough to see them through to completion. Long-serving careerists, who may have their own ideas for growth and improvement, must endure the constant turnover of political appointees, knowing that their efforts may be undone by frequent transitions. While politicization can be a short-term strategy for enhancing performance, its long-term effects are detrimental.

VI- Conclusion :

This study shows how administrative reforms, such as New Public Management (NPM) and New Public Governance (NPG), have influenced the relationship between politicians and bureaucrats, especially in terms of control and performance within the public sector. These reforms aim to enhance efficiency and responsiveness, but they also raise concerns about politicization, which can undermine the independence of the civil service and erode public trust in government fairness. While NPM promotes a clear division of responsibilities politicians make policies, and civil servants implement them the actual outcomes suggest a blurring of lines between these roles. Politicization has led to increased political control over the civil service, especially through contractualism and political appointments. Although political appointees may bring new energy and perspectives, their short tenures often hinder long-term strategic planning and continuity. Career civil servants, with their institutional knowledge and long-term experience, play a critical role in maintaining stability, but they are increasingly sidelined by political appointments, leading to demoralization and inefficiency.

The U.S. has a higher degree of politicization, with many top public service positions filled by political appointees, whereas the UK maintains a more meritocratic and professional civil service with limited political interference. The UK's reliance on long-serving career civil servants provides greater stability and continuity in governance, while the U.S. system allows for greater flexibility and political control, but at the cost of frequent turnover and potential inefficiency. Both the U.S. and UK have introduced performance measurement systems as part of public sector reforms, but the U.S. has used these tools to enhance presidential control over the civil service, whereas the UK has focused more on improving efficiency without politicizing the administration.

While both the U.S. and UK have implemented administrative reforms aimed at improving public sector performance, the U.S. leans more toward politicization, with frequent political appointments disrupting long-term planning and career development within the civil

service. In contrast, the UK's emphasis on career civil servants ensures stability and professionalism, though it may lack the dynamism brought by political appointees. Ultimately, the balance between political control and civil service autonomy varies significantly between these two systems, with implications for governance, efficiency, and democratic accountability.

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