

Governance, State, and Living Labour

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A theory of the state as Class dominance, i.e. the dominance of the bourgeoisie, is expressed in the state's dependence upon banks and capitalist sectors, and in the dependence of each worker upon his employer. But it should not be forgotten that in the political class struggle most evidently, at its critical phases -- the state is the authority for the organized violence of one class on another. The legal state, on the other hand, reflects the impersonal, abstract and equivalent form of commodity exchange. The legal state is the third party that embodies the mutual guarantees which commodity owners, *qua* owners, give to each other.

-- E.B. Pashukanis, 1923

Reterritorialization and Governance

In a lead article in a recent issue of *Radical Philosophy* the geographer Neil Smith identified what he called the 'superimperialism' of new American state power, the reassertion of centralized power in the face of an unstable mix of weakness and strength (Smith, 2004). And one issue later in the same journal, the scientist Les Levidow lamented the struggle between the 'verticals' and the 'horizontal' that nearly

overwhelmed the most recent European Social Forum, as the 'verticals' re-linked the Forum to state power and the 'horizontal' responded with an exodus from the formal gathering (Levidow, 2004). This resurfacing of the state takes place against ongoing state-led globalizations and regulatory reorganization producing staggering concentrations of capital in the media, banking, and telecommunications (Wood, 2003). Yet the shock and awe of centralized power's new world order occurs against the steady production in the universities of abundant theories of post-bureaucracy and network governance. Such theories have become predominate in the academic disciplines of public administration and public sector and non-profit management, to say nothing of their ubiquity in business studies and the study of global civil society. Governance in particular has come to stand for the advanced state of thinking on the state-form in these academic disciplines. That governance discourse appears out of step with this reterritorialization, however, is not a recent anomaly of these fields. As I will show below, these fields have a history of neglect when it comes to the state-form. Moreover, I will argue in this article that a critique of this historical and contemporary neglect reveals not only something of the reasons for the state's eclipse in these literatures, but more importantly it lights a path toward another theory of the state-form, a renewed Marxist theory of the state.

The established journal *Public Administration Review* now devotes a section virtually every issue to governance and networks, a new journal *The Journal of Management and Governance* is explicitly dedicated to these paradigms, and a major conference at the Cardiff Business School called *Governance Without Government* recently billed itself as an international agenda-setting gathering. Many theorists seem unable to link what seems like a cruel reterritorialization of hierarchical and sovereign state power to their observations and prescriptions on network governance and post-bureaucracy. But on closer examination this gap in theory-building was predictable because one could argue that public administration and management theorists have rarely concentrated on a theory of the state. For 'the administrative sciences' in general, the state has been a particularly hollow signifier, an absent presence. Indeed it is in searching for a theory of the state with which to evaluate these claims to deterritorialization and reterritorialization that one comes up against the limits of analysis in the administrative sciences, limits that spring from the central concern, the central problematic, of these allied disciplines. This central problematic concerns the growth of rational bureaucracy. But in pursuing this concern the administrative sciences persistently, I will argue, substitute government for the state, and bureaucracy for government, effacing the state and precluding any more comprehensive understanding of the state-form.

Indeed, perhaps because they are characterized by more explicit theorizing, one can identify those limits most readily in the critically oriented scholarship, as for instance in the recent special issue in the journal *Organization* on 'Bureaucracy in the Age of Enterprise' (Courpasson and Reed, 2005). Though full of sceptical questioning of governance and post-bureaucracy, the issue is instructive in the self-limiting way it frames this questioning. The editors set the stage by proposing to 'engage with the broad historical sweep, and at least some of the sociological propositions, of *this post-bureaucratic/network organization* thesis.' They accept that 'since Weber

bureaucratization and bureaucracy have been recognized as *the* central process and structure characterizing 20th-century *organization* under the generic rubric of *rationalization*.' They add that 'the latter has been the compulsory point of departure for any analysis of modern organization in any kind of social context, whether it be in the lecture theatre, the television studio or the democratic assembly' (6, 2004). The editors are no doubt right about the influence of such a view of organization, and a good deal of rich scholarship has been one result, including several of the articles that follow in that special issue. But there is an important tradition in thinking about the organization of modern society that has not felt compelled to start from this point, work in this frame, or ultimately to substitute bureaucracy and rationalization for a more comprehensive understanding of the state. This other tradition is evident in part in what would appear to be a forgotten classic in the field in which the scholars in this special issue work. The opening chapter of Michael Burawoy's *Manufacturing Consent* (1979), it may be remembered, sets itself against a whole tradition of organizational sociology, particularly but not exclusively in the United States, that would see 'the central process and structure characterizing' modern organization as rationalization and the creep of bureaucracy. Instead Burawoy rejects the normative unity of either the capitalist organization or of capitalist society. Burawoy concludes his opening chapter by saying 'industrial sociology and organization theory proceed from the facts of consensus or social control. They do not explain them' (12, 1979). Instead Burawoy starts his study from the proposition that an capitalist society is irreconcilable term, that any accomplishments of such a society can only be temporary and comes at a high price in human freedom and dignity, and that the organization is the mark of this price more than the mode of accomplishment.

Unfortunately there was a price to pay in Burawoy following Gramsci's hint that in America 'hegemony here is born in the factory' (Burawoy, 1979, vii). The subsequent attention to the divided workplace and its relations in production ceded the study of how the relations of production were organized to other perspectives. Only a very few scholars like Bob Carter (2000) have attempted to bridge this gap by studying labour process among state workers. But for the most part what Nicos Poulantzas (1980) called the 'institutional materiality' of the capitalist state has not received in the administrative sciences the attention necessary to evaluate the bureaucracies and post-bureaucracies that are just some of its most visible parts.

Thus in what follows I want to use a critique of recent public administration theory, as the component of the administrative sciences closest to the state, to begin the task of re-engaging a more expansive theory of the state. It would stand to reason that a discipline such as public administration would require an object called the state. That it does not require such an object, and in fact cannot abide such an object, provides a first opening. As Louis Althusser said about the classical political economists, the public administrationists can describe the state, but they do not have a concept for what they describe (Althusser 1970). To ask why they do not have a concept of what they describe is perhaps a first step toward a self-critical concept of the state necessary to assess the current discourse of governance, and to renew a Marxist critique in this area.

I will make the case that a series of substitutions have allowed this discipline to ignore the need for a contemporary theory of state, and consequently left theorists of public administration, and now 'post-bureaucracy' and 'governance', unable to distinguish forms of state power today. There are both political reasons and political dangers in this act of substitution, now culminating in the act of substituting the fashionable term post-bureaucracy. But I will also argue that there are structural and disciplinary reasons that make the stakes of this politics particularly high. After reviewing a number of prominent public administration and public sector management theorists and journals, this article will go on to outline the kind of state theory that a discipline devoted to studying what it means to labour in, for, and through the state might produce (Harney, 2002). Finally I will argue that public administration is uniquely placed to provoke renewed efforts in a theory of the state that begins from the premise that *in capitalist society the organization is an anti-social form*. As Marx wrote in *The Jewish Question*, 'only when man has recognized and organized his "own powers" as *social* powers, and, consequently, no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of *political* power, only then will human emancipation have been accomplished' (Marx, 2005). An emancipatory premise that does not seek to politicise the already political, anti-social organization, but to depoliticize it begins elsewhere from the politics of bureaucracy. Perhaps such a premise for state theory can make some sense of this reterritorialization and avoid the embarrassment of promoting post-bureaucracy and governance theories without an articulation to the age of superimperialism. The article ends with some speculation on disciplinary origins and limits, and on a future project of Marxist state theory that might inform critical management studies.

Public Administration and Public Management

One gets a hint of the political reasons for this act of substitution in recalling some recent disciplinary history. Prior to the rise of post-bureaucratic and governance thinking, public administration theorizing revolved in the Anglophone developed world around the New Public Management. The New Public Management brought a heightened level of concentration on bureaucracy as both the object and limit of public administration theory. Developing out of a convergence of economic theory and implementation studies, the New Public Management refocused politics around bureaucracy and vanquished the ghosts of New Public Administration in the United States and council socialism in Britain. This earlier transition in public administration is not the topic of this article but it is worth gesturing toward some of what produced front-line New Public Administration in particular. Social movements in the United States had reached the point by the early 1970's where they were not only demanding still more of the Great Society programs put into place in the preceding years but more importantly were demanding a de-linking of work and income through welfare and unemployment support. George Caffentzis has pointed to the power of this combination of an expanding claim on what is public and a rejection of the Keynesian productivity bargain in this period (Caffentzis, 2001). Indeed the Nixon administration even considered such a basic income. Whatever the manipulations of that administration, it is still remarkable to think that a demand currently figuring in popular autonomist Marxist books *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude* (2004) by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, should have been considered in any form by

Nixon, and it is a mark of the power of those social movements. In those moments, New Public Administration allowed itself to think that bureaucracy might be used to expand the idea of the public without reference to either the private or to work as ideals. This would eliminate a politics of bureaucracy, of how much or how little to have of it, of what is good and what is bad about it, which in turn was based around notions of privacy and productivity. With neither privacy nor productivity as the focus of politics, bureaucracy could no longer confront public administration as the limit of politics. Politics instead might move into the realm of society where expanding what is made public and allowing that public to emerge as what Friedrich Engels called self-acting organization might begin to replace the government of men, to eliminate the state. Of course, this did not happen. But it would be naïve not to consider its tendency in turning to the reactionary emergence of New Public Management or the more recent and affirmative post-bureaucratic formation. In short, the stakes of maintaining a politics of bureaucracy through substitution are high, and are maintained, it will be argued, even the face of much academic insufficiency and inconsistency.

As the New Public Management dies a slow death with governance, post-bureaucracy, and network paradigms waiting in the wings, this substitution of bureaucracy for state, and staging of politics strictly on that plane persist. In an authoritative review of the field in the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, Christopher Hood and Guy Peters identify three broad approaches to the new public management as the substance of contemporary theory about public administration over the previous decade (Hood and Peters, 2004). They distinguish a Mertonian approach, concentrating on how efforts in public management have had unintended consequences; a 'cultural surprises approach,' puzzling over irrationality in some organizations and it would also appear in some 'national cultures'; and, thirdly, a complex systems theory, noting the difficulty of simple and rapid prescriptions. Significantly the authors conclude by speculating on why public management theory seems rife with paradoxes and contradictions, writing that 'three of those features are the casual adoption of poorly grounded models, the disregard of historical evidence, and a selective approach to evidence and indeed active resistance to learning in any meaningful sense' (Hood and Peters, 2004, 282). One might think such a widespread indictment would lead to reflection on what has produced 'administrative science' as the authors continue to call it -- in the manner that the sociology of scientific knowledge undertook a disenchantment of science or in the manner cultural studies undertook a disenchantment of canonical literary teaching. No such opening is offered. The article is 'pre-post-bureaucratic' in that it does not attempt to find solutions to the paradoxes and contradictions it encounters in network theory or new forms of governance and sovereignty. At the same time, it does not seek to open up administrative science to a deeper examination of its premises. The article gestures neither toward a modest opening to social theory where an examination of state-society relations might resituate and illuminate the conditions of administrative sciences. Nor does the article take the more adventurous step of using political theory to question the notions of state and society as concepts, something one can find in the new literature in development theory (e.g. Hibou 2004). The authors' review of the New Public Management literature suggests, accurately, that no one else in the orthodox field is engaged in such deeper questioning either.

But the persistence of such substitution today even with front-line radicalism of the New Public Administration long gone, poses its own dangers, particularly in light of what might well be a reterritorialization of state power. The politics of bureaucracy effected by effacing the state is no friend even to the liberal ideal of privacy (though perhaps no stranger to productivity). One is reminded of Lenin's principle political fear at the end of his life, the persistence of bureaucratic hierarchy. He wrote in 'Better Fewer, But Better' that 'we must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy . . . by reducing to the utmost everything that is not absolutely essential in it' (Lenin, 1922). The next year as he was usurping Lenin's position, Stalin presented a report that identified 'an end to bureaucracy in government institutions' as an ideal of the Party (Stalin, 1923). That same year, Trotsky opposed Stalin saying 'bureaucratism' would lead the party off 'the right road, the class road' (Trotsky, 1923). Bureaucracy, it appeared, was the enemy of the enemy, but not a friend. Today looking back on the endless Trotskyite debates on the nature of the Soviet state, they seem the epitome of intellectual vanguardism. But it is worth remembering that the reason Trotsky and Trotskyites were so obsessive about characterizing the Soviet state was precisely to overcome the self-referentiality of 'bureaucracy,' as a static, descriptive category of no analytic value, every enemy's enemy. Without a theory of the state, bureaucracy has no social meaning and no political content and is consigned to the manipulation of reterritorializing political power, or in the American case, to the political quietism of a Merton or a Simon, or to the viral positivism of systems, three positions that may in the end not be very different epistemologically. But despite the danger, again and again in the public administration literature a politics of bureaucracy replaces a more robust politics that would take in state and society. In the discipline, to be for or against or unsure of bureaucracy is the limit of politics. It is not just that to enact politics as 'bureaucracy versus freedom' forecloses the pursuit of a more serious engagement with what Marx called the realm of freedom. It is that it allows actually existing state power to operate outside of this enunciated politics, at least within the field of public administration. For all his limits, Trotsky understood this, but those who engage the term have rarely understood it since.

The Pervasive Politics of Bureaucracy

Indeed a brief review of key articles in other prominent journals in the discipline yields only more bureaucracy, more reduction of the state to the public sector, or to what sometimes goes by the deceptive name of the 'administrative state.' An apposite example comes from the pages of *Public Administration* and a special issue in 2003 on 'Traditions of Governance: Interpreting The Changing of the Public Sector.' Here Mark Bevir, R.A.W. Rhodes and Patrick Weller describe the issue as 'exploring the changing role of the state in advanced industrial democracies.' The issue 'focuses on the puzzle of why states respond differently to common trends' (Bevir, Rhodes, and Weller, 2003, 1). In the next sentence, however, the state suddenly becomes 'the public sector' with the article announcing that the issue intends to look at the changing role of 'the public sector' to answer the question of why states respond differently. The article does not say the issue will look at the public sector as an aspect of the state-form. It simply substitutes public sector for state. It proceeds, as do all the subsequent contributions, from this substitution. Not a single acknowledgement that the public sector is only a representation of the state-

form can be found throughout. This article, and all of the subsequent contributions, epitomizes the public administration slippage perfectly. Promising to speak of the state, the authors immediately reduce the state to the public sector, and changes in the state-form become public sector reform. Bureaucracy stands for the state, and behind bureaucracy at best stands government or what the authors call 'advanced industrial democracies' of which the state is here merely its bureaucratic feature.

In a special issue of the American journal *Public Administration Review* called 'Democratic Governance in the Aftermath of September 11,' sponsored principally by the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University and opening with an article from George H.W. Bush, the editors Larry D. Terry and Camilla Stivers offer another lesson from the literature in substitution (Terry and Stivers, 2003). Throughout this special issue, the idea of 'democratic governance' stands opposite to 'teleocratic governance,' or bureaucracy. Thus Michael W. Spicer can summarize his fears this way:

Conditions of war lead to a style of teleocratic governance and administration that is at odds with the idea of civil association reflected in the American constitutional state. As a result, war can put our traditional notions of humanity, pluralism, and limited government at risk. (Spicer, 2003)

In other words the fight is against both terrorism and bureaucracy. But the idea of democratic governance is elaborated only as a normative argument about what kind of polity the United States, in this case, should be. This normative condition is sometimes called the state in this special issue, but the bureaucracy that threatens 'humanity, pluralism, and limited government' is also sometimes called the state in this set of articles. Confusion reigns here. Staging politics around the ethics of privacy and pluralism versus the necessity of security and productivity, that is, around a politics of bureaucracy, may not be intentionally reactionary, but it is certainly reactive and confused. It can neither account for nor acknowledge the field upon which such a politics of bureaucracy is staged. To put it bluntly, it does not allow one to theorize how those very 'traditional notions' cited by Spicer might be connected to the 'conditions of war.'

Michael W. Spicer elsewhere does use communitarian thinking and the work of Michael Oakeshott to write about the state as purposive association. Oakeshott uses the ideological state apparatus itself, the sites of the state's biopolitical production, to project back the image of the state as similar, according to Spicer, to 'managed cooperation toward common substantive ends' such as occurs in 'unions' 'armies' and 'political parties' among other parts of the apparatus (Spicer, 2004, 353-362). This is a theory of government, and an unintentional theory of governmentality, but it is not a theory of the state. (If by governmentality, one means, after Foucault, the struggle over the homology of state and society, then communitarianism's repression of the state returns in society.) Such a position cannot account for the social reproduction of a given society, much less for the specific persistence of what Deleuze and Guattari called the 'civilized capitalist machine' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). Better is a recent piece by Peter Traintafillou on

governmentality, normalization, and governance networks. Traintafillou (2004) uses Foucault to understand norms as social accomplishments that secure surplus. But he does not explain how these social accomplishments secure the dominance of private profit-taking under social conditions of production (Brown 1986).

A Critical Turn?

The communities of public administration scholars explicitly dedicated to theory certainly offer more intellectual adventure, and might be expected to question the foundations of a field so rent by paradoxes and contradictions. (Despite its title, the aforementioned *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* tends to emphasize incremental debates in research approaches rather than hosting anything approaching sustained theoretical or meta-theoretical dialogues.) If one turns to the critical journals *Administration and Society* or *Administration Theory and Praxis*, one can indeed break with bureaucracy as enemy, but one is not free of bureaucracy as a substitution for state. Much of the work in these journals is more questioning than the orthodox scholarship in the discipline. But the process of substitution that avoids a confrontation with a theory of the state persists in these journals. There are three ways this substitution works here. In the first instance, bureaucracy is substituted by a history of thinking about bureaucracy, one that appears to promise to move beyond bureaucracy, but in fact only legitimizes bureaucracy as the horizon of knowledge. The second technique also reinforces bureaucracy as limit -- in this case by using ethics to argue for bureaucracy. The third and most sophisticated substitution replaces bureaucracy with governmentality, understood in the literature as the instating of society, but often applied as merely the bureaucratization of society. All of these techniques throw up interesting scholarship, and more importantly the work brings one closer to the dark secret of public administration scholarship. These techniques mix conscious political proclivities with the structural disciplinary conditions of their production, something to be considered at the end of this paper.

At the top of the list of engaging scholarship is the work of Mark Rutgers. His attention to the history of thinking on bureaucracy is both erudite and enriching. However, his is not a project of building a theory of the contemporary state, but rather a history of the gradual separation of the administrative sciences from state theory. In one his papers he even appears to ask whether public administration can prosper without a theory of the contemporary state, but in fact goes on to write about the origins of the connection between administration and state (Rutgers, 1994). If his paper was intended for others to pick up the contemporary context, it has gone unheeded, or worse, misunderstood. Because others have also pursued the state by doing these archaeologies as if what was set down in the Federalist Papers or in the work of Woodrow Wilson, or that of Lorenz von Stein and Max Weber could, without contemporary analysis and critique of the state-form, offer anything approximating a workable theory today. (See for instance Gale and Hummel, 2003 and Spicer, 2004.) This is not to say of course that Weber in particular could not be the basis for a theory of the state (note for instance the revival of interest in Carl Schmitt) but rather to note that his state theorizing has not been so taken up in public administration. Rather this substitution of an archaeology of

bureaucracy for a theory of the state dominates public administration, and finds its major dissemination in texts for university teaching, where the state is essentially an object formed in the past, whose legacy is bureaucracy (Bouvard and Loeffler, 2003; Flynn, 2001).

If the archaeology of bureaucracy appears to substitute for a politico-economic analysis of the contemporary state, a second tendency in what might be called critical public administration, in line with its cognate and now well-established discipline critical management studies, a second technique appears to bring the political back in through ethics. Whether coming out of revisionist readings of Weber in Britain or republican traditions in the United States, this 'ethics as defence of bureaucracy' has at least an implicit critique of capitalism. A specific, flexible ethics suitable to bureaucracy, in the case of neo-Weberians (Du Gay, 1999), or the recovery of yeoman farmer equality of citizenry, in the case of anti-modernist Jeffersonians (Wamsley, 1990), both these tendencies see bureaucracy as a bulwark against the less than ethical and fair operations of the world market. There are numerous practitioners of the ethical position in favour of bureaucracy found in these two journals. Typical here is an article by well-known public administration ethicist George Frederickson on 'Confucius and the Moral Basis of Bureaucracy' where Confucius is said to provide a better defence of democratic administration than American founding fathers (Frederickson, 2001). Terry L. Cooper on the other hand tries to balance an interest in administrative ethics with a warning against 'organizational dominance' (Cooper, 2004). In both cases, the bureaucracy is again the terrain of struggle, the horizon of this ethical politics.

Perhaps the most promising technique of substitution uses the work of Michel Foucault. Unfortunately though, it is not Foucault's state theory, represented in the lectures published in English as *Society Must Be Defended* (2002) and exploring the idea of the race war as the ongoing movement of the state, but his work on governmentality that informs this last technique. Even here though, this critical public administration certainly makes claims about the state. A telling example is an exchange in *Administrative Theory and Praxis* around a polemical article by Charles J. Fox called 'The Prosecutorial State.' Starting with a conventional American reading of Foucault's term governmentality, Fox asserts that trying to improve public administration makes one complicit with an administrative state: 'knowledge by his rendering is not a separate untainted realm of pure Truth by which, among other things, power might be challenged and resisted. . . . Said another way, power creates the knowledge that it needs to sustain itself' (Fox, 2003). Needless to say, one does not need Foucault for this assertion, nor is it Foucault's assertion. As Campbell Jones as devastatingly shown in the context of critical management studies, this reading of Foucault is in fact just a reading of Weber (Jones, 2003). And the importance here is not that Foucault also saw power as precarious and enabling, but that a Weberian reading allows bureaucracy to sneak back in as the object at the horizon.

One sentence near the conclusion runs: 'this is the nanny state with iron gloves.' That the presumably progressive author felt it necessary to borrow the contemporary rightist and masculinist phrase 'nanny state' and implicate it with the phrase iron glove, a mix of

iron fist and velvet glove, with echoes of the iron cage, reveals something of the danger of the slide of signifiers in public administration. More certainly for the purposes of this article, despite the title of Fox's piece, the operation of *etatisation* is taken as a sufficient theory of the state. But the bureaucratization of society as the truth of co-production of citizen and administrator, even without the Weberian nightmare of the iron cage, is hardly a sufficient substitute for an analysis of the state. Unfortunately, the subsequent commentators are seduced once again into seeing bureaucracy, this time implicated in knowledge production in society as a whole, as the horizon. Thus Michael Spicer returns to Oakeshott. And once again a communitarian public sphere is called a 'less grand' idea of the state, rather than what it is, a one-dimensional theory of the state. Louis E. Howe follows Fox, and Judith Butler, in extracting the thinnest slice of the work of Louis Althusser, neglecting a much broader body of work and even other aspects of the article in question (Howe, 2003). Like Butler, he focuses on the moment of subjectivation by the state in Althusser's article, in the hailing of the citizen, ignoring what makes such moments possible. Althusser does not ignore those moments nor dwell only in this image most easily assimilated into a liberal politics of privacy (Althusser, 1970, 1971). Adrian Carr writing from Australia seems less burdened by the American reading of Foucault and notes that Fox 'fails to overtly acknowledge Foucault's idea that with the exercise of power the seeds of resistance are ever-present' (Carr, 2003, 85). He notes that Fox seems to attribute 'knowledge as though it were the province of the state' (Carr, 2003, 85). But for a dialogue about something called 'the prosecutorial state,' that is it. There is nothing else on the question of the state. It reminds one of the earlier efforts on 'the managerial state' (Clarke and Newman, 1997) that similarly remained either descriptive or sociological, but did not explore the way the socialization of labour provoked a reorganization of the public and private to expand the state-form to resist and reduce this socialization. But more on that shortly.

Governance Without the State?

Turning to the new literature on governance and post-bureaucracy does one find a definition of the state through which something like a network might emerge? Predictably not. Another issue of *Administrative Theory and Praxis* contains a symposium section called 'Post-Traditional Bureaucracy and Governance' (Farmer, 2006). It adds nothing to thinking about the state. The post-bureaucracy and governance literature has inherited precisely this absence at its heart and retains the slide from state to government to bureaucracy, although bureaucracy is now alternately its foil and its condition. And it is perhaps not surprising to find a publication like the *Journal of Management and Governance* utterly devoid of theorizing on the changes in sovereignty and the state. This journal draws on management scholarship where the state is understood simply as problem of regulation versus market freedom. More worrying, political theorists of post-bureaucracy and governance are taking an equally circumscribed and technocratic approach as evidenced by a recent special issue of the journal *Governance* on deliberative democracy. Here Weberian worries over multilateral bureaucracy lead Marco Verweij and Timothy E. Josling, the special issue editors, to propose a new pluralism in which decision-making will be based 'on a search for consensus among all those with a distinct opinion on the matter at hand' (Verweij and Josling, 2003). It seems wearying to have to

remind these authors of the uneven development that historically has created structural barriers to such an approach, not to mention the Eurocentric and masculinist rationalism of a decisionist politics of the putative public sphere. More to the point, bureaucracy once again stands for government in this model of post-bureaucracy and governance, and government stands in place of the state. One would search in vain in this major journal for a politics that starts anywhere else than this neo-Weberian worry, this politics of bureaucracy writ large on the globe now. Numerous other examples of this substitution in public administration literature on the new public management, on ethics, and on post-bureaucracy might be explored if space permitted. There is no lack, and almost no exception.

Toward a Theory of the State

Thus far this article has itself been elusive about state theory, focusing only on its absence. But now it is time to make a proposition. The reason public administration scholarship pushes away the state with substitutions is precisely because the state is so close in public administration. Far from being a more distant concept than bureaucracy or government, far from being the province of other disciplines, the state is immanent in public administration. Moreover the resistance of public administration scholars to bureaucracy is precisely a resistance to the potential of labour in the state. In this sense, public administration is different from management studies or organizational theory whose resistance to the state can function through neglect, through presumed distance. Public administration is so close that it must constantly push away, constantly substitute for the state.

In other words, it may be argued that the state is close because it is daily made by what Marx called 'living labour.' By living labour Marx meant to capture the separation between labour and its past appropriations, especially dead labour. What interested Marx was that although these past appropriations -- the means of production and use of nature -- were the product of social labour, what he called in *The Grundrisse* that 'social brain with its 'powerful effectiveness,' they appeared as separated from living labour, ruling living labour, and living labour seemed to be commanded by capital and to live for it alone. Nonetheless Marx noted that capital constantly and progressively tried to free itself from living labour, to do without it. But as much as it appeared to succeed, technology, science, and capital itself needed living labour to give it life, and its act of separation, Marx felt, could well 'blow the foundations sky high' (Marx, 1974). The idea of a labour that is both constituent of society and disowned by that society is the idea of living labour. The state too in such a capitalist society is composed of labour and disowns it, with much help not only from public administration theorists, but also from contemporary Marxist theorists of the state. Holding to a notion of the state derived really from Engels and Lenin, not Marx, prominent contemporary Marxist theorists like Paul Thomas and Bob Jessop re-enact the politics of bureaucracy just as surely as public administration theorists. Whatever the merits of their analysis, the state is only 'other' to living labour in their work. In the case of Thomas, he moves from an analysis based on Engels to find that the state has become an alien force, and thus moves later into a politics of networked social movements, toward what one might call the privacy end of the

politics of bureaucracy (Thomas, 1994, Thomas and Lloyd, 1996). For Bob Jessop, despite starting his career with Nicos Poulantzas, the state becomes more and more autonomous from capital but somehow no closer to labour, and Jessop ends up toward the productivity end of the politics of bureaucracy (Jessop, 2002, 1990). Both theorists wind up with the state over there. But a more fulsome reading of Marx cannot permit this neglect of living labour in the midst of the state, producing its effects. The effects of the state are the work of public administration and its living labour is what truly must be repressed in public administration scholarship (Harney, 2002). Without this living labour what Sartre called the practico-inert of the state comes to look like the foundation stone of a natural category, and the effects of the state stand against living labour like marble walls, instead of for it, like the accomplished world (Sartre, 2004).

Of course public administration scholars do not for the most part stand intentionally against those who work in the state. But they do stand against what those who work in the state might stand for. And to see this, it is necessary to theorize state work as a particular kind of labour produced in the struggle arising from the social character of production and of surplus, in a way theorists like Thomas and Jessop cannot. State workers produce the public out of a field of struggle, and by doing so, they simultaneously produce the private. They produce this public in particular ways, drawing on struggles in cultural, economic, and political domains that permit social labour to be recognized as such. They produce this private in particular ways too, naturalizing as private what cannot in struggle be maintained as public. In this way the public continues to rule men on behalf of a private that asserts the equality and rightness of that rule through the general equivalent. And this is where the opening quotation from the great Soviet theorist of law, who would perish like so many of his brilliant generation under Stalin's reterritorialization, begins to make sense. With only a public left to them from the fullness of their social labours and private tyranny renewed, women and men grasp the general equivalent to survive as that barest of commodity owners, those whose commodity is their labour-power. 'The legal state, on the other hand, reflects the impersonal, abstract and equivalent form of commodity exchange. The legal state is the third party that embodies the mutual guarantees which commodity owners, *qua* owners, give to each other' to repeat Pashukanis. The legal state offers them a way to survive as sellers of labour-power. Women and men grasp this legal state because the trace of their social labour, called the public, is so weak. They have not the strength to administer things and must submit to being administered, to a politics of men as Marx called it. But when they do, they strengthen the private foundations of this legal state. And they enter the politics of bureaucracy.

But state workers offer a particular threat to all this (though by no means the only threat). State workers always threaten to produce an excessive public, one that allows social labour to be recognized as such and allows women and men to see all that is private as privatization, as an act to make private what begins as social. The very labour of producing public and private threatens to undermine the universality of the general equivalent and reveal it as a merely private matter. And the very collective labour of abstracting something called public and something called private opens the door to the collective conceiving of another abstraction of association. The threat is that this

excessive public might lead to what Marx called an administration of things, by breaking away from this general equivalent produced in private and asserting a new principle of association. This is the fear of public administration scholarship. This would mean the end of law as Pashukanis understood, and the real end of bureaucracy through the administration of things, the real end to the government of men. It is why all public administration scholarship is, at some level at least, against bureaucracy, against its excessive move into the administration of things.

For public administration, a serious and contemporary theory of the state must start here with labour in, of, and through the state, where the state is nothing other than that labour that engages most directly with the incessant struggle dividing the social into public and private. It must examine the struggles over what is made public and what can then be made private. It must understand that these struggles take place in labour, but not as understood in the narrow sense of workers in the workplace. Instead, labour must be understood as living labour suffused throughout the circuits of capital and struggling for self-activity in the face of persistent efforts to direct activity toward private profit. The state is that incessant activity that privatizes socialization by the production of the public. Nothing is ever private or public but instated with degrees of privacy or publicity. With the growth of socialization comes therefore, under capitalism, the growth of the state. The public and the private are not just a matter of property of course, although property tends to be central, often operating through the sign of the domestic and the civil. Thus the Soviet Union retained the public and private without property relations and indeed state growth was a result of it being more difficult to privatize socialization without the benefit of property relations. Nor is this a matter of always of control but often of consent -- through what Randy Martin called the manipulation of meaning represented by cultural commodities (Martin, 1990). Nonetheless the resistance to labour's socialization produces more publicly instantiated instances of the private, that is more state, to capture this expanded cooperative ability, an ability that Italian autonomist Marxists call 'mass intellectuality' (Virno and Hardt, 1997).

This resistance means today that what the state produces as public and how it does so remains a matter of struggle, but not accident. Definite concrete forces are at work in any reterritorialization, and in any dispossession. It might be more useful to understand networks as that speeding up of circulation that Marx described in the second book of *Capital*, and to understand attempts to make such networks public currency -- in management curriculum, theories of democracy and civil society, and in objects of puzzlement to public administrationists -- as forms of state thought that hide what is being privatized. What then is being privatized behind this showy publicization of the network society? Nothing less than the labour's ability to navigate all of Marx's circuits of capital with a superfluity that workplace labour, grounded in the productive circuit, could never imagine. But there will be no politics made of this superfluity so long as the network joins bureaucracy as substitutes for the state-form creating them. And, there will be no chance to take a properly political distance from the description of a network to question what its promotion might serve, and in the age of superimperialism, this would seem a chance worth wanting.

And this absence raises even more serious questions about the field and the surrounding fields in which it is embedded. Are the disciplinary fields of the organization -- organization theory, management studies, public administration -- so inevitably Weberian that no understanding of labour as world-making activity may ever emerge from them? Is it possible that despite all the fine efforts to think about organizations with post-structuralist theory and labour process theory, that one can never arrive at labour from the starting point of Weber? In other words, is to begin with an object called organization, however one subsequently wants to destabilize it, to begin at the wrong end from labour? Certainly for Marx, organizations were always mere appearances hiding social relations and historical processes that might reveal the collective labour making and remaking these appearances everyday. In this view, bureaucracy for Marx, unlike for Weber, was a problem only insofar as it remained tied to the political. Bureaucracy became a vehicle for freedom the moment it passed into the realm of the directly social, of production for production's sake. The disciplinary fields of the organization submit, as Weber did, bureaucracy to a political analysis, and in so doing submit labour to the political. Bureaucracy can then stand against labour in a politics that promises more politics against bureaucracy -- now called post-bureaucracy -- and thus all these fields end up strangely in the same place as Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky.

Marx wanted to see the day when the government of men would be replaced by the administration of things. This is the movement from the political to the social. Pashukanis wrote:

the role of the purely legal superstructure, the role of law -- declines, and from this can be derived the general rule that as (technical) regulation becomes more effective, the weaker and less significant the role of law and the legal superstructure in its pure form. (1929, 271)

At the very least, the unstable productions of publicity represented by superimperialism and by manufactured civil society suggest struggles might also be producing an unstable regime of the private. Such an unstable private regime would offer little support in the way of a secure general equivalent for use in public. Confusion about who initiates production and controls its means, two conditions so important for securing the capitalist state-form for Nicos Poulantzas, seems to grow with the rise of what those working in the Italian *autonomia* tradition might call mass intellectuality, a socialized expertise that cannot be measured, managed, and deskilled (Harney 2006).

What public administration, and what a renewed project in Marxist state theory, could indeed investigate is precisely the labour of making publics under an insecure general equivalent, a labour both of and about such insecure publics and privates, such visibly anti-social organizational forms. It might allow us to think superimperialism and verticality together with post-bureaucracy and networks as a movement simultaneously fleeing living labour and centralizing itself, a frightening, but perhaps also futile prospect.

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