

embark upon programs that would either increase social tensions or adversely affect traditional values. The general tenor of the bureaucracy was clearly one of caution, hardly a characteristic to be associated with the innovative pursuit of far-reaching social and economic development programs. Inasmuch as the reluctance to pursue conflicting programs appeared to be deeply rooted within the Egyptian bureaucratic culture and varied little on the basis of education, job level, or training, it is difficult to suggest modes of improvement. The change of institutional values is a slow process.

The analysis of decision-making innovation also reflected low levels of innovation. Indeed, less than 1 percent of the respondents could be considered active innovators. The analysis of the most innovative elements within the bureaucracy and their attributes will be examined at length in chapter 7.

6

*Bureaucracy and the Public*

Most bureaucratic activity, directly or indirectly, involves interaction with the public. This is particularly the case in regard to the Egyptian bureaucracy, for it is the Egyptian bureaucracy that must modernize, mobilize, and otherwise integrate the Egyptian masses into the developmental programs of the state. It is inevitable, accordingly, that the developmental capacity of the Egyptian bureaucracy will be shaped by the quality of trust, cooperation, and mutual respect that exists between the bureaucracy and its clients.

Unfortunately, mutual trust, respect, and cooperation between the Egyptian bureaucracy and its clients appear to be in short supply. Indeed, President Mubarak's 1985 address to the Egyptian Parliament urged Egyptians to have faith in their bureaucracy. Many Egyptians, judging by the intensity of President Mubarak's comments, seriously doubt the ability of the bureaucracy to solve Egypt's economic problems.¹

Egypt's political leaders, as President Mubarak's comments indicate, are keenly aware of the need to improve the quality of rapport and cooperation between the bureaucracy and the masses. Indeed, Dr. Ali Lutfi, former chairman of the Department of Economics at Ein Shams University and recently the Egyptian Prime Minister, listed improved cooperation between the bureaucracy and the masses as the first of ten preconditions essential for Egypt's economic development. Toward this end he urged that the following measures be initiated:

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1. Providing the masses with frank information on the economic problems confronting the state and convincing them that the problems are capable of solution.
2. Discussing the required solutions with the masses in a simple and understandable manner.
3. Enlisting mass participation in finding solutions to the country's major economic problems, such as price supports and population growth.
4. Selecting officials (leaders) able to provide a positive example for the masses, leaders that will exemplify "clean hands, moderate tongue, decency, honesty, reliability, and frankness."
5. Selecting officials (leaders) who will provide true and scientific information concerning solutions to the nation's problems.
6. Distributing the burden of development justly and fairly among the masses.
7. Eliminating all "exceptions" to rules and policies in order that all Egyptians may feel that everyone has equal rights and equal opportunities.
8. Creating confidence among the citizens by making all citizens aware of their rights and obligations, so that Egypt can put an end to outdated customs which block the road to development.²

Dr. Lutfi's comments were but the latest in a long series of pleas for increased "public awareness" on the part of the bureaucracy. During the era of Sadat's administrative revolution, for example, an *Al Ahram* editorial called for an abolition of "All those regulations and laws governing economic activities (which) assume that every single Egyptian is a thief, every citizen is oblique and every human being is fraudulent."³

The lack of rapport between the bureaucracy and the Egyptian public has two basic components: a mass component and a bureaucratic component. The masses, as discussed in chapter 2, tend to view the bureaucracy with a skepticism born of decades of bureaucratic arrogance, self-service, and obstructionism. The bureaucracy, for its part, is wont to view the masses as critical, demanding, and obsessed with the pursuit of *wasta* and special favors. Each is content to blame the other for Egypt's burgeoning economic and social problems.

The improvement in rapport and cooperation between the bureaucracy and the Egyptian public demanded by President Mubarak clearly necessitates changes in the behavior of both parties to the conflict. From a realistic point of view, however, it is doubtful that mass attitudes toward either the bureaucracy or the government will change markedly without clear if not dramatic improvements in bureaucratic performance. The masses are passive and without a direct focus. It is the bureaucracy that has the capacity to act.

As a first step in addressing the conflict between the masses and the bureaucracy, the *Al Ahram* project sought to assess bureaucratic attitudes toward the Egyptian public. Just how do Egyptian bureaucrats view the masses? From the bureaucratic perspective, just how large is the gap between the two entities?

Four measures were used to examine the attitudes of the Egyptian bureaucrats toward the public they serve: (1) peer evaluations of bureaucratic behavior, (2) bureaucratic perceptions of the public, (3) bureaucratic explanations of the tensions that exist between the bureaucracy and the masses, and (4) an allocation of blame. Do bureaucrats believe that the root of the problem lies with the bureaucracy or with the masses?

Bureaucratic Evaluations of Bureaucratic Service

As an initial step in assessing the level of conflict between the bureaucracy and the masses, the respondents were requested to evaluate the quality of bureaucratic services. This step serves a dual purpose. First, it provides an empirical assessment of bureaucratic performance as viewed from the perspective of the bureaucrat. If bureaucrats rate themselves poorly in terms of their treatment of the masses, it may be safely assumed that their service to the masses is poor, indeed. Second, a poor self-assessment of bureaucratic service might provide some indication of the bureaucracy's willingness to acknowledge that bureaucratic treatment of the masses has been substandard. The more bureaucrats are willing to make such an acknowledgment, the easier it may be to modify their behavior. It is difficult to treat patients who deny that they are ill.

Four items contained in the group dynamics scale (Table 3.2) provide peer evaluations of bureaucratic service to the public. In these

four items, respondents were requested to use Likert scale items to express the level of their agreement or disagreement with statements suggesting that their peers (1) treat the public with respect, (2) are more concerned with public service than job security, (3) listen to public opinions, and (4) solicit public opinions.

The questionnaire item suggesting that bureaucrats treat the public with respect resulted in a "strongly agree" rate of 26 percent, a figure indicating that respondents found little fault with bureaucratic behavior in this area.⁴ There is little reason to judge this figure excessive, for as President Mubarak indicated in his address to the Parliament, one of the difficulties in dealing with the Egyptian bureaucracy is the tendency of most Egyptian bureaucrats to be superficially cooperative and to promise more than they can (or are willing to) deliver as a means of being polite and avoiding confrontation.⁵

The laudable figures for "treat the public with respect" drop rapidly in reference to the remaining items. Only 9.3 percent of the respondents "strongly agreed" that their colleagues listened to the view of the public, a figure that drops to 8.9 percent in terms of their willingness to solicit public opinions. The lowest of the four items and the lowest score on the group dynamics scale in general, was the meager 4.5 percent of the respondents who "strongly agreed" that their peers placed public service above concerns of job security. The job-security figure does not mean that Egyptian bureaucrats are unwilling to serve the public, but it does suggest that public service is not their primary concern.

In sum, the results of the peer evaluations support the general assumption that Egyptian bureaucrats tend to be insensitive to mass demands and are preoccupied by concerns of their own security and well-being. On the positive side, the results *may* indicate that the bureaucracy has not deluded itself into believing that its service to the public is satisfactory. If the results do indicate an awareness among bureaucrats that their performance is less than satisfactory, this awareness, of itself, may suggest a willingness by the bureaucracy to improve its public image. As later stages of the analysis will indicate, however, such a conclusion may not be justified.

Bureaucratic Perceptions of the Public

In assessing bureaucratic perceptions of the public, the Al Ahram project had two basic concerns. The first concern was to assess the self-perceived social status of Egyptian bureaucrats. Does the present generation of bureaucrats continue to believe that it enjoys the awesome respect that accrued to bureaucrats in decades past? The second concern was to ascertain the level of bureaucratic negativism toward the Egyptian public. Negativism breeds negativism. Indeed, the negativism and hostility on the part of even a minority of officials could well undermine the efforts of the majority. How negative, then, are bureaucratic perceptions of the masses?

Bureaucratic perceptions of bureaucratic status are important to the question of rapport between the masses and the bureaucracy inasmuch as they have a direct influence upon bureaucratic morale. Low morale does not bode well for a high level of bureaucratic service to the public. All things being equal, the morale of individuals in high-status occupations is likely to be far higher than the morale of individuals relegated to occupations on the lower rungs of the status hierarchy. This is even more the case among highly educated individuals living in a poorly educated society, not to mention individuals who believe themselves to be severely underpaid. Feelings of status deprivation do undermine morale. If present, they would offer at least a partial explanation of the intense apathy and low public concern manifested by Egyptian bureaucrats.

Bureaucratic perceptions of bureaucratic status in the public eye were assessed by two questionnaire items. The first item asked respondents to express their level of agreement with the statement that "the public respects civil servants." The second item asked respondents to assess the statement that "the public appreciates the efforts of civil servants." The results of both items are presented in Table 6.1. Collectively, they indicate a relatively low assessment of bureaucratic status. While 17 percent of the respondents did strongly agree with the statement that the public respects civil servants, this figure was judged by the research team to be a clear drop in prestige from the era of socialism and the monarchy. Particularly alarming, however, was the mere 7 percent of the population that felt that the efforts of the bureaucracy were appreciated by the masses.

Given the above results, there can be little doubt that it is

Table 6.1

Self-Perceptions of Bureaucratic Social Status
(n = 555)*

		Weighted*	Strongly Agree	
1.	The public respects civil servants.†	44	17.4%	(nr = 17)
2.	The public appreciated the efforts of civil servants.	22	7.2%	(nr = 14)

*Respondents not interacting with the public were not included in the calculations.

†Weighted scores represent a combination of "agree" and "strongly agree" responses in which the "strongly agree" responses have received twice the weight of "agree responses."

increasingly difficult for Egyptian bureaucrats to perceive themselves as members of a high-status profession. Moreover, when one combines the perceptions of declining occupational status with the abiding bureaucratic concern with prestige discussed in chapter 3, a strong case can be made for the argument that Egypt's bureaucrats do, indeed, suffer from acute feelings of status deprivation. Dismally paid and minimally appreciated, what is the incentive for Egypt's bureaucrats to improve their level of service to the masses? Perhaps more important, what is the incentive for Egypt's bureaucrats to provide the "doubled effort" called for in President Mubarak's 1985 speech to the Egyptian Parliament.⁶

Turning to bureaucratic negativism toward the masses, the Al Ahram project assessed three areas of mass/bureaucratic interaction: cooperation in providing information, honesty in dealing with the bureaucracy, and pressures for special treatment (*wasta*). The results of these items appear in Table 6.2 and leave little doubt that one of the primary sources of tension between the bureaucracy and the masses from the bureaucratic perspective is the pervasive desire of the masses to acquire special treatment. Demands for *wasta*, among other things, disrupt the bureaucrat's routine. *Wasta* also requires the bureaucrat to expend personal "credits" with his peers and supervisors, credits that

Table 6.2

Bureaucratic Perceptions of the Egyptian Public
(n = 555)*

	Weighted score†	Strongly Agree Score	
1. The public is cooperative in providing officials with information.	46	14.3%	(nonresponse = 14)
2. People are honest in dealing with the bureaucracy.‡	29	10.4%	(nonresponse = 18)
3. Most people are always trying to pull strings and get special treatment.	54	35.5%	(nonresponse = 8)

* Respondents not interacting with the public were deleted from the analysis.

† Starred items were presented in inverse order in the questionnaire.

‡ See explanation of weighting procedure on Table 6.1.

might be better spent for the bureaucrat's personal needs. Moreover, the more demands officials place upon their colleagues and supervisors to assist their friends and relatives, the more demands they must service in return and the more the tranquillity of their bureaucratic routine will be disrupted. In assessing the magnitude of this problem, one might recall the analysis of informal communication presented in chapter 4, an analysis which indicated that the foremost basis for interaction between the bureaucrats and their supervisors was the need for assistance in dealing with a government agency (Table 4.5).

Assessments of public honesty in dealing with the bureaucracy were also on the negative side, albeit far less so than concerns about *wasta*. Assessments of mass cooperation elicited little enthusiasm, yet the summary scores indicated that this was a matter of minor concern. As our panel of experts pointed out, the public has little choice but to provide government officials with minimal levels of cooperation and

information if they hope to achieve their petitions. Bureaucrats, for better or worse, hold all of the cards.

Taken collectively, the three items relating to mass interaction reflect negativism toward the public, a negativism that does little to enhance the quality of the mass/bureaucratic relationship. Negativism toward the public, however, may be difficult to alter, for the major complaints of our respondents appear to be accurate reflections of mass behavior. If the bureaucracy reacts to the masses in an adversarial manner, it is not entirely without cause. Not only must the bureaucracy take the initiative in improving its relations with the masses, but it must do so in spite of less than total support from the masses.

Assessing the Causes of Mass/Bureaucratic Conflict

It is difficult to address the tension extant between the bureaucracy and the public without a clear understanding of its origin. Moreover, it is particularly important to know how the members of the bureaucracy perceive the problem, for, as noted above, it is the bureaucracy that must take the initiative in alleviating it.

As discussed at length in chapters 1 and 2, the causes of conflict between the bureaucracy and the public are many and varied. From a cultural or historical perspective, the conflict originated in the era of the monarchy, an era in which the bureaucracy ruled rather than served. As the role of the bureaucracy was largely to regulate and tax, tensions and distrust between the bureaucracy and the masses were to be expected.

Feelings of tension and distrust that found their origin in the era of the monarchy were further reinforced by the informal alliance between the political elites and the masses that evolved during the revolutionary era. The bureaucracy, in short, was made the scapegoat as both the Nasser and Sadat regimes found it impossible to achieve their social and developmental goals.

In the present era, conflict between the bureaucracy and the masses continues to be reinforced by the apathy, rigidity, and other dimensions of bureaucratic behavior discussed in the preceding chapters. So, too, is it reinforced by the ubiquitous red tape and routine

that has become the hallmark of the Egyptian bureaucracy. To deal with the Egyptian bureaucracy is to be frustrated.

Finally, one must add mass behavior to the equation. The Egyptian public is relentless in seeking special favor. As a casual drive through Cairo's crowded thoroughfares will indicate, the average Egyptian does not score high on voluntary compliance with rules and regulations.⁷ Aggravating, too, from the bureaucratic perspective, is the pervasive demand of Egyptians to go directly to the "boss," bypassing subordinate officials readily capable of addressing their problems.

While the causes of tension between the masses and bureaucracy are easily described, the critical question centers on the willingness and the ability of the government and the bureaucracy to take corrective measures. The Mubarak government, for its part, is keenly aware of the role of red tape in aggravating tensions between the bureaucracy and the masses and has embarked upon a program to simplify regulations and procedures, the simplification of procedures at the Cairo airport being a case in point.

While the government is cognizant of the need to improve trust and cooperation between the bureaucracy and the masses, it is not at all clear that the bureaucracy feels the same sense of urgency. This is a particularly critical issue, for it is the bureaucracy, when all is said and done, that must play the major role in recasting mass attitudes toward the bureaucracy.

The willingness of the bureaucracy to take the lead in recasting its relationship with the masses will depend in large measure upon the manner in which bureaucrats perceive the root causes of the problem. What, from the bureaucratic perspective, are the main causes of the tension between the bureaucracy and the masses?

Responses to this question are presented in Table 6.3 and have been divided into four basic categories: systemic problems, communications problems, mass behavior, and bureaucratic behavior. The data presented include both "first-choice" responses and the mean score of first-, second-, and third-choice responses.

Clearly the biggest problem area from the bureaucratic perspective was poor communication between the bureaucracy and the masses. The masses, in the bureaucratic eye, simply do not understand that the ability of the bureaucrat to facilitate their demands—legitimate and illegitimate—is circumscribed by the formal rigidity of

Table 6.3

Bureaucratic Explanations of Conflict between the Bureaucracy and the Public
(n = 555)*

<u>Systemic Explanations</u>	<u>Mean Score†</u>	<u>First Choice</u>
Public frustrated by red tape	11.4	18.6%
Impossible to help effectively	<u>5.7</u>	<u>2.2</u>
	17.1	20.8
<u>Communications</u>		
Public does not understand job of bureaucrat	19.4	52.8
Public does not understand role of bureaucrat	10.1	5.5
Public does not understand pressures of bureaucrat	3.1	.7
Mass demands unclear	<u>7.2</u>	<u>5.3</u>
	39.8	64.3
<u>Mass Behavior</u>		
Masses attempt to use influence	9.7	2.5
Masses impatient	5.7	.9
Masses avoid responsibilities	4.4	.6
Masses disobey rules	5.3	.9
Masses hostile	<u>1.6</u>	<u>.3</u>
	26.7	5.2
<u>Bureaucratic Behavior</u>		
Officials corrupt	3.9	1.5
Officials incompetent	3.3	1.5
Officials do not care about public	<u>3.1</u>	<u>1.2</u>
	10.3	4.2
<u>Other</u>		
No problems	3.8	3.7
Miscellaneous	<u>2.0</u>	<u>2.8</u>
	5.8%	6.5%

*Officials not interacting with the public were deleted from the analysis. Totals may vary from 100% owing to rounding error.

†The mean score represents the mean of the first, second, and third most important reasons for conflict between the bureaucracy and the masses.

the system, not to mention the behavioral rigidities resulting from the excessive concentration of authority and the unwillingness of most bureaucrats to assume unnecessary responsibilities. Contrary to mass expectations, average bureaucrats cannot do as they please. Indeed a large share of the structural rigidity within the Egyptian bureaucracy is the result of procedures instituted to prevent officials from granting special favors (and other forms of corruption). The results of this situation are twofold. First, the masses are resentful because their petitions have been denied or delayed by bureaucrats whom they believe could have done otherwise had they so desired. Second, as the results illustrate, the bureaucrats are frustrated by the enormity of mass demands that they either cannot facilitate or that they cannot facilitate without more effort or risk than they care to expend.

The communication category was distinguished from the mass behavior category on the logic that communication problems convey far less hostility on the part of bureaucrats than do the accusations of mass maleficence implied by the mass behavior items. Moreover, problems of communication are, presumably, more amenable to change than deeply set behavioral problems. It is encouraging, accordingly, that the majority of the bureaucrats surveyed did not manifest overt hostility toward the masses.

The mass behavior category, however, was far from negligible. A full 26 percent of those respondents who interacted with the masses blamed the poor rapport between the bureaucracy and the masses on items such as mass demands for *wasta*, mass hostility, mass avoidance of responsibility, mass violation of rules, or mass pushiness. The more bureaucrats harbor negative perceptions of the masses, the less likely they are to walk the extra mile needed to generate greater understanding and cooperation between themselves and their clients. The willingness to walk the extra mile is particularly important, for as stressed above, it is incumbent upon the bureaucracy to take the lead in improving their relations with the Egyptian public. It is the bureaucracy that must rekindle the masses' faith in its ability to solve Egypt's dire economic and social problems.

Viewed in this light, the most disappointing aspect of this phase of the analysis was the reluctance of our respondents to acknowledge bureaucratic behavior as a major source of tension between the bureaucracy and the masses. As indicated in Table 6.3, only 4.2 percent of the respondents cited bureaucratic corruption, incompetence, and

apathy as their first-choice explanation of mass/bureaucratic conflict. Even worse, only 10 percent of the sample listed bureaucratic behavior as one of three causes of the problem.

Also of some interest was the relatively low tendency of the respondents to list bureaucratic red tape as the source of tensions between the bureaucracy and the mass. While red tape did garner 18.6 percent of the first-choice scores, it nevertheless faded to 11 percent of the averaged responses across the three choices, finishing a poor third to mass behavior problems and communications problems. This finding, in conjunction with the low score on the bureaucratic behavior items, manifests a clear propensity on the part of the bureaucrats to place the blame for any conflict between the bureaucracy and the masses squarely on the shoulders of the masses. It also suggests that the average bureaucrat does not see the need to markedly rethink his or her own attitudes toward the masses.

Who is to Blame?

At an earlier point in the analysis it was suggested that the respondents' acknowledgment that their treatment of the masses was sub-par might well be interpreted as a positive sign of their willingness to make a concerted effort to improve their service to the public. At the very least, it was suggested that such an awareness might be considered as the first step in designing a solution to the problem on the grounds that it is difficult to solve problems that are not acknowledged. As we have seen, however, bureaucratic explanations of the poor rapport between the bureaucracy and the masses cast serious doubt upon this theory.

In order to bring the question of bureaucratic attitudes toward the masses into clearer focus, respondents were explicitly asked to indicate which party they felt was responsible for the tension between the two entities, the masses or the bureaucracy. The results of this item are presented in Table 6.4 and indicate that 75.6 percent of the respondents felt that the masses were primarily responsible for the problem. In spite of acknowledgments that its own behavior toward the masses is flawed, it is doubtful that the bureaucracy is predisposed to take the first step in improving relations with the Egyptian public.

Table 6.4

Who Is to Blame?

Mass is the problem	75.6%
Bureaucracy is the problem	24.4

n = 555 (Respondents not interacting with the public were deleted from the total "n" of 796.)

nonresponse = 3

Summary and Conclusion

Enhancement of Egypt's bureaucratic capacity is inextricably linked to the level of cooperation and trust extant between the bureaucracy and the masses. Indeed, former Prime Minister Lutfi listed improved cooperation between the masses and the government as the first of ten steps required to achieve Egypt's goal of sustained economic growth. The bureaucracy must, of necessity, take the lead in improving levels of trust, confidence, and cooperation between the masses and the diverse agencies of the Egyptian government.

A peer assessment of bureaucratic behavior vis-à-vis the masses supported general perceptions that the Egyptian bureaucracy was not overly responsive to either the needs or the views of the Egyptian masses. Added to this finding were the results of parallel questionnaire items suggesting that the bureaucracy was generally negative in its perceptions of the masses. In particular, the bureaucracy was frustrated by pervasive mass demands for *wasta*. These findings, of themselves, suggest that the bureaucracy may be less than willing to either initiate or sustain a program of improved public relations.

Two additional findings strongly support this view. First, it was strikingly evident that the majority of the bureaucrats surveyed severely underevaluated the role of bureaucratic behavior as a factor shaping the lack of rapport and trust between the bureaucracy and the masses. They placed the blame squarely on the masses. If the fault lies

with the masses, what can the bureaucracy do? Second, the data suggests that the bureaucracy suffers from feelings of status deprivation. It is truly unlikely that a marked improvement in mass/bureaucracy relations will occur unless the government addresses the problems of bureaucratic morale analyzed in chapter 3.

7



The Attributes of Bureaucratic Performance

Chapters 3 through 6 examined four behavioral components of bureaucratic capacity: productivity, flexibility, innovation, and relations with the public. The objective of this chapter is to examine the correlates of these components. In particular, we will address three basic questions: (1) which areas of the Egyptian bureaucracy rank highest in terms of behavioral capacity? (2) what factors are associated with higher levels of behavioral capacity? and (3) how can behavioral capacity be strengthened? Toward this end, the questionnaire items and scales used in the earlier stages of the analysis were correlated with a variety of independent variables hypothesized to influence bureaucratic performance including: job unit, job level, education, training, age, sex, recruitment, place of birth, religion, morale, media habits, reference groups, group dynamics, supervisor dynamics, and systemic support. Income proved to be a reflection of job level and was dropped from the analysis. The results of the cross tabulations are presented in summary form and include only those results that were significant to at least the .05 level and in which the strength of the relationship exceeded a Gamma coefficient of plus or minus .200.¹ The results of cross tabulations not meeting this standard are of negligible importance and have not been reported.

The following indicators of behavioral capacity will be used in this stage of the analysis:

1. Productivity. Productivity was measured by four indicators. The first indicator was based upon job satisfaction. Individuals who found their greatest source of job satisfaction in professional growth and development were assumed to be more productive than individuals that found their greatest satisfaction in nonprofessional areas such