

# The Ecology of Public Administration & Management in Africa

The Ecology of Public Administration  
& Management in Africa

AAPAM



African Association for  
Public Administration and Management

VIKAS PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD

This book identifies and examines the major ecological factors of public administration and management in Africa. It also attempts to provide a deeper understanding of the environmental parameters and the constraints these parameters impose on administrative and managerial behaviour and performance.

Specific areas covered in the book include political environment of public administration; the economic and socio-cultural environments; and the impact of international environment on public administration and management in Africa.

The public services of Africa have a leadership role to play in the development process of the continent. They do not only formulate policies but also implement, monitor and evaluate them. The expansion of the public sector and governments' reliance on the public sector as a vehicle for development demand nothing short of a virile, efficient, effective, responsive and achievement oriented public service.

The book is a major contribution to the study and understanding of public administration and management in contemporary Africa, for it brings together a group of African scholars and practitioners writing with hindsight.

The book will be of great value to the politicians, policy-makers, administrators, managers and students of public administration and management.

**THE AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT** is an international professional association for African public administration and managers. The Association was formed in 1971 at Freetown, Sierra Leone. Its headquarter is in Africa Hall, P.O. Box 60087, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

It has a membership of over 500 top administrators and managers from many independent African nations and fifty corporate members which include Institutions and Schools of Public Administration and Management and Parastatals in Africa.

The Association was formed to provide a forum for exchanging ideas and experiences between public administrators, managers, scholars and teachers of public administration and management in Africa; to foster professionalization of Public administration and management in Africa; to assist, encourage and contribute to the study of the problems and techniques of public administration and management in the African continent; to promote research in public administration and management in Africa; and to foster affiliation and maintain liaison with other international bodies and organizations interested in public administration and management.

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## FOREWORD

The African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) as a professional body of administrators, managers and scholars of public administration and management continues its search for the factors that propel or hinder effective management in Africa; and recommending ways and means of improving public administration and management.

Public Administration and Management in Africa is growing in importance because of the changes taking place. Given the politicization of the public service, the emergence of new goals and new tasks, increased awareness and different aspirations of the people, efforts must be made to reorient public programmes accordingly. The high turnover of governments and the entry of military into the political arena in some African countries are partly caused by the inability of governments to meet the basic needs of their people and maintain national cohesiveness.

In the recent past AAPAM conferences, it had been pointed out that improvements in structures, personnel systems as well as new approaches to public policy making may not result in total administrative and management improvement if the ecology within which public administration and management systems operate is dysfunctional or vice versa. The 1983 AAPAM Annual Roundtable held in Arusha — Tanzania, whose proceedings are published in this volume, probed into the question of the Changing Ecology of Public Administration and Management in Africa.

The main objectives of the Arusha Roundtable were to identify major ecological factors of public administration and management in Africa and to provide a deeper understanding of the environmental parameters and the constraints these parameters impose on administrative and managerial perfor-

mance; and to sensitize senior administrators, managers, politicians and scholars to the changing environmental issues which influence the art and practice of public administration and management.

In publishing the proceedings of the Arusha Roundtable, the AAPAM Secretariat would like to express its gratitude to all contributors, one of whom – Dr Jide Balogun – must be singled out. The APPAM Secretariat is indebted to him for his ability to complete within a record time, the task of editing and putting the manuscript together for publication. The Association is most grateful to The Ford Foundation, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) who generously supported the Roundtable and the publication of this volume.

Finally, the Association wishes to express its indebtedness to the Government and people of Tanzania and particularly to the Principal Secretary and officials of the Ministry of Manpower and Administration for hosting the Roundtable and for support that they gave to ensure its success.

Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia

Cornelius K Dzakpasu  
Secretary-General,  
AAPAM

## WELCOME ADDRESS

By Hon. Edward Moringe Sokoine, M.P.  
*Prime Minister of Tanzania*

I am aware of the very important role your association (AAPAM) plays in trying to sort out how political, economic and administrative problems in Africa can best be tackled for the realization of our peoples' aspirations. Indeed your past four Roundtable Conferences, have produced important and relevant papers and articles which are a great help at least in identifying the sort of problems besetting us and the ways to tackle them. It is, therefore, important for me to give you a hearty welcome to Tanzania, hoping that this particular conference will diagnose Africa's economic and administrative problems and recommend relevant solutions to them.

The theme of this conference is "The Changing Ecology of Public Administration and Management in Africa". There may be different definitions of "ecology" one of which is "the totality or pattern of relations between organisms and their environment, as manifested by natural cycles and rhythms, community development and structures".

Africa as a continent is beset with problems of enormous magnitude. The importance of your conference lies in the nature of your deliberations. In analysing the problems caused by the African environment and its changing relationships with other factors, you are in fact diagnosing the disease from its roots. The problems caused by the African environment touch the entire spectrum of economic, cultural and political life. These problems pose challenges not only to our development but to our very survival as independent and respectable peoples. Most of you attending this conference hold high posts as senior officials in government, parastatal

sectors and in institutions of higher learning. You are expected not only to identify national problems or to formulate public policies but also to implement such policies for the ultimate realization of national goals. We realize that you, as managers of public business operate in a difficult political and social environment.

This conference's *aide memoire* rightly points out that the main tasks which face African administrators and managers in the 1980s are:

- (a) The building up of national unity from different ethnic groups;
- (b) The promotion of socio-economic development to achieve material well-being of the people.

I need not reiterate the difficulty inherent in fulfilling these tasks because of the "cycles" and "rhythms" of our ecology which is characterized by economic stagnations, recession and depression. Although most of these problems are common to all of us, their precise nature and complexity vary from one country to the other. While the conference has to consider problems common to all, there is a need to identify peculiar problems and their solutions to meet individual countries requirements.

There is also the delicate role of the post-independent African states. In Marxist thinking, the capitalist state is "a mere committee for the managing of the affairs of the bourgeoisie", implying that the state belongs to a minority section of the population, "the chosen few", who run the state for their selfish ends. It is relevant for us to whom African states belong — to "the chosen few" or the majority of the masses?

Are African states truly independent and autonomous? While retaining state's freedom to reconcile competing claims, African top executives and managers should not turn African states, into instruments of the strong or the chosen few. It is also the task of this conference while appraising

“the changing ecology of public administration and management in Africa”, to say something about the role of African states, and how these states could best perform their duties for the benefit of the African people.

### *The Historical Role of Public Administration and Management in Africa*

About 20 years ago, most of us and our fathers were not concerned with problems of policy-making of development plan formulation. We were then mere “objects” of colonial native administration. In the African environment, two distinct phases of public administration can be identified. The first phase coincided with the period of colonial administration in Africa. The second is the post-independent administration which reflects the present situation in our various countries. A few questions may help us to differentiate the environment of public administration and management prevailing in the two phases of public administration. The first question concerns the goals and objectives which public administration set to accomplish, while the second question concerns the institutions and the personnel that were created to manage public administration. The third question concerns the relationship between the public administrator and/or manager, on the one hand and the public or the natives in the case of colonial public administration, on the other.

In answering these questions we can best understand and appreciate better the changes and the changing ecology. There are therefore two aspects of the ecology of public administration and management. On one side are the goals, objectives and values of the nation that the public administrator strives to achieve. On the other hand, the ecology of public administration refers to the cluster of relations between and among different social segments in the nation-states.

Needless to say that the goals of the colonial administrators were self-seeking and mostly at variance with the

interests of the "natives". Almost all development projects, plans and programmes which were introduced during the colonial administration largely served the interests of the alien rulers.

Colonial administration, having created the peasant (from a free cultivator) proceeded to condition him to produce what the colonial economy wanted. As a matter of fact, the Colonial Public Administration created a permanent situation of exploitation and dependency. The relationship which existed between the alien ruler and the servant was characterised by contempt, suspicion, mistrust and hatred. Because of the absence of good-will and understanding between the ruler and the ruled, colonial administration was essentially one of law and order, at times employing the most brutal means available. Due to these excesses, it was necessary for the colonial master to create, through indirect rule, a buffer zone between him and the native. The colonial public administration was thus strengthened by native rule. Yet, the independence formula insisted, as a pre-condition for the granting of independence on the retention of the same system of public administration, regardless of its relevance to the new states.

#### *Post-Independence Changes*

African independence brought both jubilation, and expectations of a better life to come. Our destiny was finally in our hands and we all worked hard to transform our national economies, our social systems and our political organizations to achieve a better and dignified life for our people.

Independence also brought with it new objectives and goals. The law and order administration had to be replaced with the administration of development plans. The new perception of administration puts the public manager in a central role as opposed to colonial administrators who had created a buffer zone between them and the natives. What are the new relationships between the politicians and the public administrators and also between the public adminis-

trators and the social environment? We in Tanzania have tried to introduce several reforms with a view to making the public servant part and parcel of the political system. But we are not sure whether by politicizing the public administrator, we have improved his efficiency! In examining the changing ecology of public administration, I invite you to look critically at the African efforts at reforming the Civil Service and Parastatal Organizations. As I hinted earlier on, we are looking forward to your analyses and observations in this important field.

Secondly, independence created new patterns of relationships between the public officials and the masses. During the colonial administration, the colonial master was not in the least responsible to the people. With independence, we in the political and administrative leadership groups assumed the positions of servants of the people, because it is from the people that we derive our mandate and legitimacy. For peoples' participation is closely linked to the concept of true independence. With independence the people rightly or wrongly expected miracles from their leaders. The leaders unaware of the complexities of national development fell into the trap of promises which have proved difficult to fulfil. Thus, emerged the crisis of unfulfilled expectations.

It is rational that governmental services to the people must be accompanied by the fulfilment of the people's socio-political obligations. The people are expected to fulfil their obligations and perform their duties to the state just as the state is obliged to offer essential services to the people. This emphasizes the fact that the people have no rights without obligations. Rights and obligations must go together.

Coming back to the concept and relevance of peoples' participation, we believe that administrative and policy-making machinery is meaningless if it is not extended to involve the people. We in Tanzania have tried to extend people's participation to the village level. Village governments have been created enabling the villagers to participate fully in all spheres of activity — political, economic, and cultural. The villages have been given legal and administrative powers to

run their own affairs.

And yet this genuine political move has been misinterpreted by some scholars. The Tanzania government was accused of penetrating the villages with a view to disciplining the peasants so that they might produce more, not for their own good, but for the benefit of the public administrators and their urban partners!

### *Tasks Ahead*

In spite of the environmental problems, you as patriots and devoted servants of the people can still conceive relevant goals and objectives for the good of our society. You possess the know-how, the essential information and you occupy strategic positions in society. You are in fact the core of public policy formulation. The conflict which normally exists between politicians and administrators is often blown out of proportions. While the politicians claim to know the genuine interests of the people, being elected representatives of the people, it is also true that the administrators are the ones who know how to utilize the scarce national resources for the realization of the peoples' aspirations. Therefore both the politicians and the bureaucrats need each other. No single group can stand alone. The question of the relationship between the two groups is very vital for the development of our states. There is no way out except for the two groups to work in mutual trust and co-operation.

The environment still presents obstacles to development. It is our duty to find means and ways of rectifying these problems. Irrespective of different political and economic systems within our nation-states, it is necessary to look for effective institutional devices which will involve workers and peasants in both decision-making and its implementation. For we can only serve the people better when we know their problems. They will also appreciate our roles better if they understand us from close co-operation. There is no substitute for peoples' participation if independence and development is to have any meaning to the people.

The local environmental problems are worsened by the present world recession which threatens to make a mockery of our resolve for rapid development. This is a great challenge to us all. Our people are looking up to their governments with eagerness to have the situation improved. It is in fact public administration and management which can best deal with this challenge. This emphasizes the current role of public administration and management as a vehicle for development. We have to arm ourselves with modern knowledge and skills if we are to overcome the problems that militate against our development.

There is, therefore, great need for all of us to organize, and participate in training courses, seminars and symposia for senior as well as junior managers. I am delighted to inform you that even as we are sitting here, there are amongst you, top executives, general managers currently attending courses at the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) here in Arusha. It is through continuous learning that we can equip ourselves with knowledge to solve our problems. Administration and management in its current and future form calls for specialized knowledge and skills.

In general, the tasks ahead of us are difficult and challenging. Irrespective of the complexities of such problems, Africa alone is the master of its own destiny. Being top executives and managers you are best placed to assist the continent in mastering that destiny. I remain convinced that this being a congregation of experienced senior officials, you will at the end of your deliberations, come out with practical and relevant solutions and suggestions which will be of great help in easing our problems.

## OPENING ADDRESS

By Professor Adebayo Adedeji

*President, African Association for Public Administration  
and Management (AAPAM)*

It is expected of one to begin a statement such as this by saying how pleased he is to be in the host country and by expressing his profound thanks and appreciation to the host government for their hospitality which "is in the true spirit of African tradition". On this occasion, I intend to move away from protocol and the normal diplomatic clichés to say publicly that for me, coming to any part of the United Republic of Tanzania is like a home-coming. Since this is not an inter-governmental conference but a professional one of distinguished public administrators and managers (whose academic and professional discipline is my second love — coming only after economics and economic development and of course closely related to it), I need not be diplomatic and can, therefore, speak the truth, the whole truth, as I know it.

Until I took over my present job in ECA which involved living in Addis Ababa, I used to say that, apart from native Nigeria, the only African country in which I had lived is Tanzania. That was in 1971 when I was Rockefeller Visiting Professor to the University of Dar es Salaam for a period of six weeks. My contract required of me three tasks — to assist in the preparation of a post-graduate programme and curriculum for development administration and management; to give a series of seminars to third-year undergraduate students; and, to deliver three public lectures on a theme of my choice. It was the last of these tasks that brought me into public notice, and, with it, some joyous trouble. I say joyous trouble because it provoked and made possible my first

meeting with Dr Nyerere. I doubt if he remembers it but that meeting has left an indelible impression on my mind as all my friends to whom I have related my Tanzania experience will testify. It was also joyous trouble because every academic likes to be at the centre of public controversy because of his heresies.

A professor is not a professor worth his salt if he does not feel strongly on issues within his field which he believes in, in the light of his research. And such strong feelings inevitably make him the subject of controversy, of criticisms and condemnation. He is lucky if he occasionally enjoys public approbation. Accordingly, when I delivered my three public lectures under the theme of the future of economic development in Africa, I became the subject of controversy, and of both public and private criticisms. Indeed, one of the Tanzanian newspapers, in a series of editorials, nicknamed me the "bourgeois professor from Nigeria". All because my views challenged the conventional wisdom of those days.

I believe it was this public controversy and occasional editorial attacks that made the University authorities and the diplomats in the Presidency to organize an audience for me with Mwalimu Nyerere before I returned to Nigeria. And that turned out for me to be an unforgettable audience. Although I have had the privilege and opportunity of several audiences with Mwalimu Nyerere since then, that first one is the one that I remember most.

I have narrated this story simply to underline the fact that when I say it is a pleasure to be here in Tanzania I am not just being diplomatic or polite. I really and truly mean it.

And as far as the venue of our Roundtable is concerned, it was ECA's rare privilege to hold the first-ever international conference at the very Centre in 1978 and thereby open it up as a venue for major international conferences. Indeed, since then many historic conferences have taken place here but the credit of opening up Arusha International Conference Centre belongs to the Economic Commission for Africa. I do hope that our brethren of Arusha remember this. On our part, we

are very proud to have played this role.

It was in Dar-es-Salaam in 1962 – 21 years ago – that the first inter-African Public Administration Seminar was held. That was an occasion of great historic significance. It was the first time that top public officials from different English-speaking African countries got together to exchange views on matters of common interest and concern. One of the wonders of our time – in these days when almost everything that we start or touch is shortlived – is that the bold initiative of 1962 has grown from strength to strength. The informal annual inter-African public administration seminar became institutionalized a decade after it began when the African Association for Public Administration and Management was established in Freetown in 1971.

Without doubt the 1960s are proving to be Africa's golden age. It was, first and foremost, the decade of independence for the overwhelming majority of African countries. It was, therefore, the decade when Africa emerged into international scene full of hope and confidence about the future. It was a decade of rebirth, of the emergence of modern Africa, sovereign and independent. It was also the decade when there was agreement that the next challenge was economic emancipation and the emergence of an Africa that is self-reliant, dynamic, prosperous, egalitarian and just – an Africa which sooner rather than later would become a true and equal partner in the international economy, instead of being dependent and peripheral.

During those years of hope, faith and confidence in the future of emergent Africa, it was not surprising that among the thousands of initiatives taken, was the Dar-es-Salaam Inter-African Public Administration Seminar. In those days, a lot of hopes were placed, and a lot of demands made on the public services. The public service in each African country was to be in the vanguard of the economic, social and political revolution. The public service was expected to engineer the new socio-economic and political order that Africa badly needed at the national and regional levels if it was to become

self-reliant and a true and effective partner in the international economy and not a marginal and marginalized and dependent member of the international community.

But the optimism of the sixties was soon found to be misplaced. Things began to fall apart in different parts of Africa; coups d'état, insurrections, political instability and economic mismanagement became daily occurrences. By the middle of the 1970s, Africa was no longer at ease. The continent had become stricken by a variety of economic crises — chief among which are the food crisis, the energy crisis, the external debt crisis, and the menacing drought crisis which threatens to turn Sub-Saharan Africa into a vast desert. Indeed, the revolution of rising expectations bred and nurtured by the defeat of colonialism and the emergence of independent African states had given way to economic frustration, despair and mass poverty.

It was in these circumstances that the ECA started in 1975 to reassess the whole of the socio-economic development strategy that Africa had been pursuing, and this exercise culminated in 1979 in the promulgation of the Monrovia Strategy and in 1980 of the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos by Heads of State and Government. It was also in these circumstances that AAPAM, the institutionalized successor to the Inter-African Public Administration Seminar, launched in 1978 its Roundtable series because the malaise that had infected our body-politic had naturally spread to the public service and had not only considerably incapacitated it but had also almost rendered it virtually unresponsive to the rapidly changing socio-political and economic environment of Africa. Indeed, it looked as if the philosophy pervading our public services was that if you cannot beat them you should join them! The themes of the Annual Inter-Public Administration Seminar from 1967 to 1977 reflect the spread of the debilitating malaise of our public services as they are indicative of the growing concern of AAPAM and its membership.

The themes between 1968 and 1971 were *Improving the*

*Effectiveness of the Public Service* (1968); *Delegation and Control in the Public Service* (1970); and *Professionalization of Public Administration and Management* (1971). Between 1972 and 1977, we deliberated on such issues as *Administrative Reform in the Public Service* (1972); *Management of Public Enterprises* (1973); *Managing Unemployment in Africa* (1974); *Indigenization of African Economies* (1975); *Regional Co-operation in Africa: Problems and Prospects* (1976); and, *Managing Rural Development in Africa* (1977).

And since 1978 when we instituted the Roundtable Series, we have chosen themes such as the *African Public Service: Prospects for the 1980s* (1978); *Profile of African Public Services in the 1980s* (1979); *African Public Service and Public Policy-Making in the 1980s* (1980); *Personnel Development, Management and Utilization in a Performance-oriented African Public Service in the 1980s* (1981); and, *Ten Years of AAPAM and State of Public Administration and Management in Africa: Review and Prospects* (1982). We have also attempted to widen participation at these seminars by extending invitations to professional politicians and Cabinet Ministers.

This year, during our Fifth Roundtable which Your Excellency, Ndugu Prime Minister, is about to open, our theme is the *Changing Ecology of Public Administration and Management in Africa*. Indeed, it can be argued in view of what I have already said, that the theme should have been the *Changed* (rather than the *changing*) ecology of public administration and management in Africa.

After all, millions of gallons of water have passed under the African socio-economic and political bridge since our first Dar-es-Salaam seminar in 1962. But such a title would have turned our Roundtable into a historical exercise and the reminiscences of old and ageing men of public affairs. It would have been a static exercise in a dynamic society where changes are taking place very rapidly, even if, more often than not, they are for the worse.

Because today, perhaps more than ever before, Africa is at

the cross-road of economic survival or economic collapse, of social revival and rejuvenation or social conflict and unrest, of political cohesion and unity and growing political muscle, or violent revolution, political incapacitation and recolonization and neo-colonization. Which way we turn will determine for good or evil, for the next 25 to 50 years, the fortunes or misfortunes of the African policy.

Whether we turn right towards the path of economic survival or wrong towards economic disaster depends on a variety of factors — on our collective will as a people not only to survive economically but also to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps and become a true and effective member of the international economy — dynamic and prosperous. It also depends on the quality of leadership that exists at all levels of our society. And, finally, it depends on the effectiveness and responsiveness of major public institutions which constitute the instrumentalities for translating policies into plans and programmes and for implementing such programmes. And chief among these institutions is the public service.

There is no gainsaying the fact that our ability to respond successfully to the challenge that we face depends *inter alia* on the quality, capability and capacity of our public service. Hence, the significance of the theme of this Roundtable. The public service is both an engine of change and a product of change. It is both a propeller of, and reactor to, ecological changes. But given the current crises that engulf our economies, it is of utmost importance that our public service should be the motor, propeller and engineer of socio-economic change.

But evidence abounds to show that the public service in almost every African country has long ceased to see itself playing this role. What are the inhibiting factors? How can they be removed? How can we revitalize our public services so that they become reliable engines of growth in our society? And how can we ensure that the prevailing socio-economic environment at any given time is such as to stimulate and inspire our public administration and management

systems to greater performance heights?

These are some of the questions to which we must find some answers during the Roundtable. And it is my hope that whatever answers we may come up with, imperfect as they will no doubt be, will be examined carefully by our respective governments with a view to their being implemented. If this is done, our effort at this Roundtable will not have been in vain.

Ndugu Prime Minister, let me thank you most sincerely for being with us today in spite of your multifarious official engagements. Your presence here confirms what we have known all along – that is Tanzania's commitment to an effective, efficient, dynamic and incorruptible public administration and management and its government's determination to do all in its power to create the necessary socio-economic environment for this. This is the philosophy of the African Association for Public Administration and Management. It is its *raison d'être*. And it is to the relentless pursuit of this objective in all African states that the entire membership of AAPAM dedicates itself.

## INTRODUCTION

The time was not far in the past when Africa was looked upon as a continent with promise and tremendous opportunities. Especially as from the 1960s when an increasing number of countries became independent, the hope was entertained that the oppressed peoples' tribulations were finally about to end, and that, in no time, governments administered and controlled by Africans would undo the damage wrought by centuries of slavery and colonialism. As Africa took its rightful place among the self-governing nations, the forces of freedom would deal a fatal blow on economic backwardness, political subjugation, mental enslavement, and all forms of deprivation. In response to late President Kwame Nkrumah's battle-cry, the African peoples sought and attained political kingdoms, the nature of which varied according to each people's peculiar history, the circumstances prevailing at the period of independence, and the leaders' vision of development.

To give meaning to independence, the various cadres of the inherited administrative systems were Africanized, training and staff development schemes were actively promoted, and administrative reform measures were introduced. Above all, development planning became an article of faith.

Yet, barely two decades after the emergence of a new Africa, the erstwhile mood of optimism started to give way to frustrations and cynicism. The realities of the time were finally beginning to catch up with the dreams and illusions of a prosperous and tensionless society. In place of economic growth, Africa had to face economic adversities and deal with the basic symptoms of under-development, e.g. large-scale poverty, high rates of illiteracy, and low rates of economic growth. To confound the problems facing the various African

countries, the rates of population growth tend to outstrip the countries' capacity to feed, clothe, and generally cater for the health, welfare and biological needs of the people. The situation is so bad today that many African countries are smarting under the pains inflicted by hyper-inflation, unfavourable trade balances, commodity shortages, shortage of basic raw materials, factory closures, mass unemployment, etc. As pointed out in one of the contributions to this volume, Africa today faces a plethora of crises – the food crisis, the energy crisis, the balance of trade crisis, the debt crisis, and the crisis of economic management. Added to these are the climatic and ecological crisis as reflected in the increasing desertification of the continent, in persistent droughts, and in crop failures, hunger and famine.

The flight from rural to urban areas does not in any way help to stem the decline in food production. As a matter of fact, rural exodus contributes in no small measure to the prolonged recession in agriculture, and opens the door to other types of problems, notably, unplanned urban growth, deteriorating housing and living conditions, open unemployment, criminal tendencies, social mobilization, and political instability.

It has been necessary to make the preceding excursion into Africa's expanding problem-areas in order to put in proper perspective the background against which the contributions to this volume were made. The African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) was convinced that no matter how Africa's mounting problems were viewed, the critical variables were likely to be the systems of government adopted at any point in time, and particularly, the capacity of political and administrative systems to anticipate and respond to environmental pressures. It was this conviction which led the Association to decide at its Tenth Anniversary Conference held at the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, Badagry, in December 1982 that the subsequent (Fifth) Roundtable ought to analyse Africa's socio-economic problems, examine critically the various governments' respon-

ses to the problems, identify the nature of the problems facing the administrative systems, and evaluate the solutions proposed from different quarters. The consensus was that an "ecological" approach offered one of the most effective means of coming to grips with Africa's problems.

As intended, the Fifth Roundtable which took place at the Arusha International Conference Centre in Arusha, Tanzania between 28 November and 2 December 1983 provided an opportunity for critical self-examination. The theme of the Roundtable was the *Changing Ecology of Public Administration and Management in Africa*. More than thirty papers were presented on different aspects of the subject but only fourteen have been included in this volume.

In examining Africa's problems, the authors of the various papers pulled no punches, and what was more significant, no holds were barred in the discussions which followed each presentation. The aim of all delegates was to raise vital issues, and in the process, come up with answers to burning questions.

The format adopted in this book coincides roughly with the structure of the Roundtable. While Jeggan Senghor's contribution has been transferred from its original slot, the remaining chapters are now reflected as they appeared on the Roundtable programme. Thus, the volume is divided broadly into five parts. The first part comprises chapters by Messrs Gelase Mutahaba, Solomon Kagwe, and Jeggan Senghor, and attempts to provide a conceptual framework. The second part is made up of presentations by William N. Wamalwa and Anthony H. Rweyemamu, and the focus is on the political environment of public administration. The third part surveys the economic environment, and the relevant chapters are those by Adebayo Adedeji, Goran Hyden, the Public Administration, Management and Manpower Division of UNECA, and Z.J. Ngwenya. The fourth part of the book looks at the theme from the point of view of the cultures, traditions and institutions of pre-colonial Africa, and the impact of the traditional setting on contemporary systems of public

administration. The chapters which trace the link between the traditional society and modern administrative practices are those by M.J. Balogun, K.E. de Graft-Johnson and Abdoul Aziz Dia. In the fifth and final part, Michael Bentil and Walter Oyugi scan the international environment and assess its impact on national public administration systems.

The comments which appear at the end of each part of this book represent not just the salient points raised in different chapters, but also residual problems which the delegates felt very strongly about. The first set of chapters define the ecology of public administration as a network of political, economic, socio-cultural, and physical sub-systems which are in dynamic relationship with the public administration and management sub-system. The recurring issues are those of system interaction, direction of system change, and pattern of inter-dependence. The authors of the first three chapters agree on the concepts of system interaction or inter-dependence. Solomon Kagwe's contribution particularly emphasizes the holistic nature of ecology, and the lessons this suggests for the study and practice of public administration. Jeggan Senghor's chapter traces the relationship between the ecological movement and the systems-oriented comparative (and subsequently, "development") administration school. What sparked off a heated debate was the re-appearance, in a different form, of Fred W. Riggs' "balanced growth" thesis. In his presentation, Gelase Mutahaba argues that while the early days of independence saw the bureaucratic sub-system as being wholly dependent on, and moulded by, other social sub-systems, the changes which took place after independence reversed the relationship in favour of the bureaucracy. The process of administrative modernization and reinvigoration coupled with the increasing tendency toward social and political enlightenment, had the effect of making the bureaucracy more powerful and less dependent than before. In plain language, the bureaucracy is now a master rather than a captive of its environment. If this thesis is correct, it raises the question what the bureaucracy has done (or could do)

with its new-found power and freedom. It was Riggs who, in carrying his argument forward, maintained that "heavy weight of bureaucratic power" was likely to invite "egocentric normlessness" and administrative prodigality. Gelase Mutahaba does not argue that because it is powerful, the bureaucracy would for that very reason become self-serving or corrupt. His central proposition is that if the bureaucracy is beset with problems, it is about time it looked at itself (its internal organization, training policies, service ethos, work conditions, regulations) and desist from inventing scape-goats outside. The controversial question is whether the bureaucracy in Africa has come of age in the manner described by Mutahaba, and whether the values governing its day-to-day operations are clearly defined and "institutionalized". The debate will no doubt continue for a long time to come.

The second part of this book concentrates on the political aspect of ecology. The major concerns of the chapters included in this part are purpose of government, legitimacy of regimes, the relative status of "politics" and "administration" in the process of nation-building, the loyalty of career officials, and the development of competent and professional public services. W.N. Wamalwa's argument is that in a period of rapid transition, the will of the people must be ascertained through political means, but the translation of the common weal into concrete programmes requires the mutual co-operation of politics and administration. The basic thrust of A.H. Rweyemamu's argument is that responsive and dynamic political leadership, supported by a team of competent, well-trained and skilled administrators and managers constitute the prerequisite for the transformation and economic development of the less-developed societies of Africa.

The economic problems confronting African countries are discussed in the third part of this volume. Adedeji calls attention to the crises facing present-day African societies, notably, the food crisis, the energy crisis, the balance of trade crisis, the debt crisis and the crisis of economic management. Unless urgent remedial measures are taken, the situation is

likely to get worse, not better. Adedeji therefore advocates a normative development strategy. The essential element of this strategy is the creation of public services which are:

- (a) totally and unquestionably committed to engineering social change;
- (b) not handicapped by bureaucratic red-tape;
- (c) achievement-oriented, and managed by persons with "brains in their heads and fire in their bellies";
- (d) staffed with the most able, public-spirited, and morally upright men and women.

Whereas Adedeji's normative development strategy emphasizes the role of the public sector, Goran Hyden is of the view that the burden of development is too heavy for that sector to carry on its own. According to Hyden, African policy-makers are not in control of the environment. It is time therefore for governments in Africa to divest themselves of many of the existing responsibilities, and make increasing use of non-governmental agencies — particularly, co-operatives, private companies and voluntary agencies. Hyden is far from postulating a general theory to guide policy-makers on what constitutes the optimum level of state intervention. Nonetheless he maintains that when the funds allocated to essential factor inputs are no longer forthcoming and when, due to financial constraints, plant and machinery can no longer be maintained, "the rationale for government involvement must be questioned." This message is particularly relevant to the situation described by Z.J. Ngwenya in his contribution on Zambia. This country started with a prosperous economy, and the benefits of economic growth were soon ploughed back into government and the parastatal sector. The expansion in the scope of government was slowed down (if not completely halted) by the reverses suffered from 1975 by the country's major foreign exchange earner, copper. Nonetheless, privatization in the way suggested by Goran Hyden is likely to be ruled out in Zambia where the ideology of

humanism is a factor to reckon with.

The contribution by the Public Administration, Management and Manpower Division of UNECA focuses on the economic and social conditions in Africa. The Division believes that in combatting the problems of poverty, destitution, illiteracy, etc., governments in Africa would need to put their administrative agencies on a war-footing. The Combat-readiness of these agencies would depend to a large extent on the effectiveness of administrative reform and *debureaucratization* measures, the ethical orientation of governments, the productivity of public agencies, the extent of commitment to the doctrine of collective self-reliance and the promotion of policy and strategic studies.

The amorphous but vital area of tradition and culture is examined in the fourth part. The chapter by M.J. Balogun does not deal directly with the subject of contemporary public administration. It focuses instead on what lies in the inner recesses of the African mind in the hope of tracing the relationship between thought and action. The assumption then is that the issues of administrative (and indeed, economic) development cannot be placed in the right perspective unless we explore the mental and spiritual antecedents to behaviour. For instance the African's attitudes to power, authority, and public morality have been defined not just by history and latter-day experiences, but also (perhaps, most especially) by the religious beliefs and superstitions. In any case, while some aspects of a religion or culture might promote authoritarian and corrupt tendencies in society, other aspects might work in the opposite direction. This probably accounts for why traditional despotisms flourished in many African societies at the same time as citizens were imposing 'checks and balances'. The problem is how to separate the positive, development-oriented features from the negative (corrupting, primitive) ones.

It is the negative aspects in the African social systems which attracted K.E.de Graft-Johnson's critical comments. He regards primordial values and loyalties and the tendency

toward "fictive thinking" as antithetical to the goals of development.

The final part of this book traces the impact of the international environment on public administration. While Michael Bentil proposes measures aimed at maximizing the benefits of Africa's participation in the international organizations, Walter Oyugi questions the basis of the participation. The latter is particularly critical of the unfavourable bargaining position occupied by African nations in their relations with the technologically advanced nations, the technical co-operation agencies, and the multinational corporations.

This book does not supply all the answers to Africa's problems. As a matter of fact, some of the options suggested by the various authors may turn out to be impracticable. However, the views have been expressed, and AAPAM has chosen this medium to pass them on to African policy-makers and administrators. It is hoped that they, as the practitioners confronted with real problems, will derive as much benefit from reading the book as the various faculties of management, politics and administration.

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## *Chapter One*

# ECOLOGY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN AFRICA: A REVIEW OF THEIR RELATIONSHIPS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

GELASE MUTAHABA

## INTRODUCTION

Many reviews of the relationships between African public administrative systems and their ecology have tended to portray the former as being under seige from an irritant and frustrating ecology.<sup>1</sup> Whether one has focused on the cultural and social variable, the political variable, the international variable as well as the economic variable, the ecology has been depicted as a major constraint on the effective operation of the administrative system. Without minimizing the importance of ecological variables in the operations of the administrative system in Africa or indeed in any part of the world, it is the contention of this chapter that the adverse effect which ecological variables have on the performance of administrative organizations in Africa has been exaggerated. Indeed if one reviews the situation obtaining in the preceding ten years, the exaggeration is even more serious.

In the last ten years public administrative organizations in Africa have gone through many changes in structure and composition, at a time when the character of the ecology was also going through many changes. The changes in both the administrative system as well as the ecology have affected significantly the relationship between them in favour of the administrative system. The latter is definitely now "stronger" than it was twenty years ago. The ecology has also changed in structure, composition, and characteristics, and it is "weaker" than it was twenty years ago. The administrative

system is definitely not under "seige" from the ecology.

In the pages that follow, therefore, we shall review the relationship between the African administrative system and its ecology as it has changed over time since independence, paying particular attention to the forces which have occasioned the changes. We start with the period after independence.

### NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP AT INDEPENDENCE

There is no doubt that public administrative organizations in Africa were weak at the time of independence. This weakness was in part engendered by the colonial state and colonial ideology. Thus, at independence all African public services suffered from a paucity of indigenous public service, personnel, a lack of other administrative resources, weak administrative infrastructure, and potentially explosive relations between bureaucrats and politicians.<sup>2</sup> The paucity of indigenous public service personnel is indicated by the following data. In Nigeria, at independence in 1960, only 15 per cent of established superscale posts were held by Nigerians, 0.7 per cent by other West Africans, and 83 per cent by Europeans.<sup>3</sup> In Zambia, the composition of the upper civil service in 1964, when she became independent, was as follows:<sup>4</sup>

<i>Division grade</i>	<i>European</i>	<i>African</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
I	1,256	39	3	1,298
II	2,692	1,882	11	4,585
Total	3,948	1,021	14	5,883

In Swaziland, established posts stood at 3,062 at the time of independence and of these about 500 were senior civil service positions. Of the latter, Europeans accounted for more than 90 per cent, with the Swazis accounting for the remaining 10 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

The smallness in numbers of public service personnel was exacerbated by the paucity or non-existence of training facilities.<sup>6</sup> Tanzania, Zambia, Swaziland, Malawi, to mention a

few, did not have a university of their own. They had to rely on universities in neighbouring countries. Only Nigeria, of all the countries in English-speaking Africa, had an institute for training senior administrators.<sup>7</sup>

The weakness of the service was moreover accentuated by the weakness in the rules, regulations and procedures, all of which had been established for managing a public service with different objectives — a colonial service.<sup>8</sup> Immediately it might not have been possible to change these rules; indeed the majority have not been changed, but there was a feeling on the part of those who had to operate them that these rules and procedures were not legitimate and this tended to undermine their efficacy.<sup>9</sup> This was true for example of rules for hiring, firing and disciplining public service employees which might not have been strong enough to withstand pressures coming from the social and cultural milieu.<sup>10</sup>

Another major phenomena indicative of, and contributing to, the weakness of the administrative system, at the time of independence and beyond was the relative youthfulness of the service. In the rush to Africanize the positions held by Europeans many positions were filled by young men and women, sometimes below thirty years of age. In East Africa the average age at which Africans became permanent secretaries was between 33 and 35.<sup>11</sup> In a few countries this may not have been much of a problem since the politicians were also equally youthful but in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya there was a major age gap between the political class and the administrative class, which tended to reduce the latter's effectiveness.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, this factor could also reduce the standing accorded to the civil servants by citizens who placed a high premium on old age.<sup>13</sup>

The weakness of the public administration system emanating from its internal structure, which we have just reviewed, were compounded by turbulence within the administrative systems, a turbulence which was a result of independence.

First, the struggle for independence had generated a crisis of expectations on the part of the citizens. This crisis

reached a high level when independence was attained. Almost everywhere the public service had to respond to the demand for expanded educational facilities, health facilities, agricultural extension services and infrastructural facilities. The politicians fuelled these demands and looked up to the public services to satisfy them. But as we noted, the public service was already going through a crisis, even without the demands by the citizens. The demands further complicated the problems facing the public service and called the capability of the service into serious question. In Kenya for example, the first three years of independence witnessed the primary school system expand by over 30 per cent through unplanned self-help activity and the public administration system was expected to service the expansion.<sup>14</sup> In Tanzania the primary school system expanded through self-help programmes also by 45 per cent during the three-year plan of 1961/1964.<sup>15</sup> This called for a commensurate response from the public administration system. Resources in terms of teachers, finances to pay them, and equipment had to be provided to complement the self-help efforts of the citizens. As we noted earlier, it was not easy to provide them because of the limitation on the capability of the system and the resource constraints.<sup>16</sup>

The second ecological pressure emanated from the absence of a definition of a proper relationship between the civil servants, notably the top cadre, and the politicians. Uptil independence there was no division between the political and administrative arms of the government; career officials were performing both functions in so far as there was any division at all. Independence saw the roles separated at the national level but since there was no tradition, there were problems to begin with.<sup>17</sup> The argument by politicians was that they did not see how they could discharge their ministerial responsibilities without controlling civil servants who were responsible for the execution of their policies. They wondered how they could be held responsible for the official actions and conduct of civil servants if they had no part in their appointment,

deployment and discipline! In support of their position they cited the case of Great Britain, where a whole department is under the minister's control, including responsibility for promotions within it. But whereas in Britain the minister was apt to rely on the advice tendered by senior civil servants, the African Ministers tended in the early years of independence to interpret ministerial control as "absolute discretion". This "absolute discretion" could, moreover, be exercised even in total disregard of established conventions. This sort of situation tended to breed conflict between, not only individual ministers and their top civil servants, but between the politicians as group and civil servants as a class. In a number of countries, steps were taken to politicize the administrative system either by appointing political "commissars" to oversee the activities of governmental agencies, or as in the case of Tanzania, blurring the distinction between the politicians and civil servants by allowing civil servants to contest for political offices without loss of benefits, and by moving personnel back and forth.<sup>18</sup> The position of the civil servant vis-a-vis the politician in those early days has been described most graphically by Chief Udoji who wrote:

...A great deal of the status and prestige belonging to the service has been lost to the politicians.... In the early sixties a permanent secretary was among the top brass of society and his appointment usually made headlines in local newspapers. It did not take long for the situation to be reversed... The politician is not prepared to share his status and prestige with anybody, much less the civil servant. He is jealous of whatever respect and confidence the public may have for the public servant and he does not lose an opportunity in putting him in his place and exposing his shortcomings and magnifying his mistakes. The lack of regard and respect has hurt the pride of ambitious civil servants and driven some of them to frustrations....<sup>19</sup>

That then was the position of the public administration

systems in almost all African countries. Very weak internally, it was hemmed in and harassed by all sorts of forces from the environment, making it difficult for them to attain much. Twenty years after, the position has changed dramatically; it is definitely no longer "besieged". In the next part of the chapter we shall review the changes which have taken place as well as attempt to draw a profile of the public service today vis-a-vis its ecology.

### ECOLOGY AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE 1980s

As we have already indicated the changes which have taken place in the internal structures of the administrative systems as well as in their environment have made them "powerful".<sup>20</sup> Career administrators have not yet become a "ruling class" as some observers are suggesting, but they are no longer under siege from the environment.

#### *The Public Administrative Systems: Internal Dimensions*

Internally African public services have grown in numbers — in some cases by more than three-fold.<sup>21</sup> The Nigerian federal civil service increased in size by 122 per cent since independence, while the civil service of Guinea more than doubled its size during the same period. In Tanzania the average annual rate of increase was over 11 per cent during the 1960s, and in the following decade it was close to 13 per cent. In recent years, in Uganda, it averaged 10 per cent, Ethiopia 6 per cent, Kenya 5 per cent. The domination of the services by expatriates which we noted to be a feature at independence was, in most instances, quickly reversed, eliminating a major weakness in the system. Thus in Nigeria, the number of established super-scale posts held by Africans increased from 15 per cent against 83 per cent held by Europeans in 1960, to 74 per cent by Africans the following year and certain ministries were completely Nigerianized. By 1962, all but 2 per cent of top public service posts were

occupied by indigenes. In Zambia the number of Africans in senior civil service positions had increased from the small percentages noted earlier in this chapter to 76 per cent by 1969 and to 85 per cent by 1976. In Tanzania Africans in established middle-level and senior posts increased from 547 (12 per cent) out of 4,378 established posts in 1961 to 8,042 (56 per cent) out of a total establishment of 14,300 by 1970. Thus localization was seen as an urgent priority and had been tackled accordingly. The service, therefore, had not only expanded in size but it had done so under the leadership of indigenous officials who had a stake in policies and programmes espoused by the independent governments. It did of course lack the experience of an established service, and the increase in size complicated the problems facing it.<sup>22</sup> However, its commitment to the goals and aspirations of the government compensated for other deficiencies it might have.

The growth in the size of the civil service was moreover accompanied by a concomitant expansion in the scope of state activities. This is partly attributable to the phenomenal expansion of services and partly to the increasing involvement by the government in economic activities. As one observer put it:

It (the state) produces goods and services, transports them, buys and sells them and consumes them. It is an important source of finance and it borrows from the public. In addition the public sector plans, regulates and oversees the functioning and development of the economy and is one of the main agents for the transactions with the rest of the world. It is also an important agent of innovation and the spread of technology.<sup>23</sup>

The expansion which has been well described above can be illustrated further by a review of statistics on public investment levels in a number of African countries.<sup>24</sup> Public sector expenditure on gross capital formation as a proportion of gross domestic product has increased in all countries as

J. Senghor points out in a recent study which we have referred to earlier. In 1976, it was 9.7 per cent for Botswana and 14 per cent for Ethiopia (central government only). In 1978, it was 14.1 per cent for Ivory Coast and 14.8 per cent for Kenya. Similar increases can be noted with respect to government consumption expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product. At 1975 prices, consumption grew by about 100 per cent between 1970 and 1978 in Gabon, Libya, Mauritius, Rwanda and Togo. In Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria and Zimbabwe the ratio grew between 50 and 99 per cent.

This expansion in the role of the state has not, in many cases, been shouldered by traditional bureaucratic organizations. A new form of organization commonly referred to as the "parastatal" has become a major instrument of the state fulfilling a range of objectives. They are either supposed to generate investible surpluses, reduce dependence on foreign firms, promote income redistribution, provide specific goods and services, and fill gaps created by the absence of local private entrepreneurs. They have also grown tremendously in numbers.

In Nigeria, in 1960 there were about 50 parastatals. By 1982, they were estimated to be about 800.<sup>25</sup> In Kenya there were in 1982, 60 parastatals without including subsidiaries and they handled more than 50 per cent of visible exports and an equally sizeable share of imports.<sup>26</sup> It is also noteworthy that they are now an all-pervasive factor in the economy of almost all African countries. They are in public utilities, in manufacturing, construction, trade, housing, hotels, wholesale and retail distribution.

The growth of parastatals has further expanded the size of the public service over and above the expansion already noted. Available data show that in seven countries (Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi and Uganda) the public sector employed between 40 and 74 per cent of those in paid employment. In all the seven countries, public sector employment grew at a faster rate than the private sector.<sup>27</sup> In Nigeria the size of the public service (including

federal and regional governments) stood at 200,000 in 1960. By 1980, personnel strength stood at approximately 2,000,000. Zambia's personnel establishment increased from 22,561 in 1964 to 74,621 in 1976. In Kenya public sector employment increased by 6 per cent per annum in the period 1962-1969, almost equivalent to the rate of growth of total national income.<sup>28</sup> As accounts of developments in some countries seem to show, the growth especially in the parastatal sector, has increased the resources that are at the disposal of senior public servants, who can now use the control they wield over these public organizations to increase their independence of the politicians and of the public.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, another development, internal to the administrative system, which has strengthened the administrative system vis-a-vis the ecology, is the training and development of public service personnel, which has taken place since independence. In the early years of independence, public services had to rely on personnel who had little or no training. In Tanzania, for example, only 18.0 per cent of principal secretaries and administrative officers, who were in service in 1968, had received university education, indeed 8 per cent of them had had no post-secondary education at all, although the scheme of service provided for the possession of such a qualification to be appointed to the positions.<sup>30</sup> In Zambia, independence was attained with only 104 Africans having college degrees and just over 1,200 with secondary school certificates. The position was much better in west Africa but definitely inadequate even there. This made the administrative system lack the requisite capacity and confidence.

Measures were, invariably, taken to deal with the situation. In Tanzania, for example, a University started admitting students the year the country became independent and by 1970 it was graduating an average of 300 students every year. An Institute of Public Administration, later renamed Institute of Development Management, was by 1975 graduating middle-level personnel in Accounting, Economic Planning, Public Administration, in numbers averaging 500 a year.<sup>31</sup>

In Zambia, government gave high priority to the provision of educational and training facilities. The University of Zambia began accepting students in 1966 and by 1970 had a student body of over 1500. To meet the need for semi-skilled artisans, the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education was established in January, 1969. To meet the training needs of the higher levels of the administrative service, the National Institute for Public Administration (NIPA) was established and in the first seven years since 1965 a total of 2,500 students attended courses at the college.<sup>32</sup> A recent study reviewing the state of administrative training in Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone has revealed that in the first two countries, training in Administration has been vigorous in the last decade and it has had a positive impact on the quality and effectiveness of their public services.<sup>33</sup>

We do recognize the fact that the increase in numbers of trained manpower took place at a time when the scope of public sector activities was expanding tremendously and to a great extent might even have reduced the level of improvements which it might have had otherwise. This, however, in itself could not have significantly altered the advances in capability which the service had made as result of the effort in training and development of personnel.<sup>34</sup>

### *Changes in the Ecology*

Earlier on it was suggested that, in the early years of independence, the ecology of African public administration was characterized by a crisis of expectations, on the part of the public and politicians, which had been generated by the colonial struggle; a political milieu which was very critical and unsympathetic to the administrative system and a socio-cultural milieu that was completely at loggerheads with the very foundations upon which the administrative system was supposed to be built.

The twenty-odd years which have passed since independence did, to some extent, satisfy the crisis of expectations. The number of children who now go to primary and secondary

schools and universities in many African countries, has increased and much of the credit goes to the public service. This in itself may, of course, have generated different and even more critical crisis of expectations but the public service must by now have acquired some skills on how to handle them. In some countries, for example, such as Kenya, self-help groups have been encouraged and there is reduced reliance on the state to provide certain services.<sup>35</sup> In Kenya recently a Commission of Inquiry into parastatals recommended that some public corporations be handed over to the private sector. Although the effect of this might be to reduce the scope of public administration system the fact that this was proposed reflects the extent to which the public felt that the crisis of rising expectations did not necessarily have to be attended to by the public administration system.

The political milieu has in fact undergone more fundamental changes, which have tended to reduce ecological pressures on the administrative system. The days when the political class and bureaucratic class could not talk partly because of the different socialization experience which each class had gone through, have now passed. Invariably, either the politicians have lost the clout by being overthrown and replaced by the military, whose traditions and principles of operations are closer to those of the bureaucracy than the politicians, were, or the politicians have ended up relying on the administrative system because the political institutions have remained generally weak or have been left to wither away, whatever the case, there has been substantial increase in the power of the administrative system.<sup>36</sup>

Finally we turn to the socio-cultural milieu. Have changes in this area significantly affected its influence on the administrative system? We did note that at the time of independence the socio-cultural milieu was adversely affecting the performance of the Administrative system, making it difficult for it to function as expected, i.e. as a bureaucratic organization. As Okoli has noted the bureaucratic organizations in Africa lacked scientific and instrumental rationality which are important facilitators of the task of administration and

management.<sup>37</sup> The administrator was invariably faced with factors which frustrated any serious effort to perform. The organizational doors were wide open to influences from outside and the principles of scientific and instrumental rationality are blurred. As a result, many of the African administrators tended to operate on norms which were quite apart from rationality and bureaucracy, at least as understood in the west, and as both Onyemelukwe and Jon Moris have observed.<sup>38</sup> To this extent, management functions such as personnel management, decision making, materials management, planning, and controlling could not be performed professionally, and "scientifically".

The growth in facilities making it possible for so many more people to be educated at increasingly higher levels than was the case previously, has of necessity changed the socio-cultural outlook of these people. More and more people now are shaking off traditions, tribal barriers are breaking apart and the "culture of affection" is no longer as strong as it was twenty years ago.<sup>39</sup> A university graduate would understand why a village mate in charge of an organization will not hire his cousin when the approved establishment is full whereas somebody who has never been to school would not. The organizational doors have not quite been closed to environmental influences, but the influences that are coming in are increasingly in harmony with the internal structure of the organizations and therefore are not so harmful to the organizations.

## CONCLUSION

In the foregoing review we tried to demonstrate that Africa's public administration systems have witnessed profound changes during the last twenty years. These changes have strengthened them and made them more powerful vis-a-vis their ecology or environment. The ecology has also witnessed many changes and these changes have to a great extent made it more amenable to the administrative systems than

they were in the period soon after independence. These changes, have in some cases, resulted in strengthening certain ecological factors which have adverse influences on administrative performance but these situations have been the exception rather than the rule. In any case, on balance the administrative systems are emerging stronger than the environment and it is now not valid to suggest that "the administrative system is under siege from the environment."

We are of course, not suggesting that public administrative systems in Africa have become more efficient and effective as a result. Indeed as Balogun points out in the recent paper on this issue (especially in so far as the Nigeria case is concerned) the level of efficiency and effectiveness in public administration systems may have declined.<sup>40</sup> The decline may, however, be a function of factors internal to the administrative systems rather than the ecology. In future, therefore, students and practitioners of public administration in Africa ought to address themselves, increasingly, to those internal, organizational factors.

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## *Chapter Two*

# THE ECOLOGY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN AFRICA: A REVIEW

SOLOMON KAGWE

Attempts have, in the past decade, been made to move away from the hierarchical tradition of line control and supervision to a network concept of administration integrated within a complex of economic, social, political and technological systems, that in this chapter we call "ecology".

This tendency was recently manifested in the AAPAM Conference of Senior Civil Servants and Directors of Schools of Public Administration held in Lagos in November 1982 when it was widely argued that the environment of public administration had been neglected by both Practitioners and teachers of Public Administration in Africa. In similar meetings held by CAFRAD, participants have often observed that in administrative reform proposals and the accompanying administrative training programmes, too much emphasis has been placed on the internal dynamics and processes of public administration such as recruitment, promotion, grading, remuneration, personnel and management without relating these aspects to the wider economic, social and cultural contexts which sustain and are sustained by public administration. Thus, in a major conference in July 1974 the participants recommended *inter alia*, that:

CAFRAD in association with OAU and other regional organizations should assist in the development and distribution of instructional materials that reflected African

cultural background and the social, economic and political milieu.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to review the antecedents to the preoccupation with the ecology of administration. This review will be based principally on training in public administration in its different phases of development as the ecological argument has found one of its most frequent expression in this area.

Administrative training in anglophone colonial Africa was left largely to experience gained through trial and error. The knowledge acquired by colonial administrators was not taught directly by reference to an established body of knowledge but was acquired by potential recruits to positions of authority through observation and imitation of superiors. In the words of Wraith, an administrative officer in the field "would learn from the Provincial or District Commissioner to whom he was first posted, from whose predilections and prejudices he probably never recovered, and whose virtues and eccentricities he passed on to the next generation".<sup>2</sup> The new recruit usually began his career in some remote country station. He would be encouraged to display qualities of personal initiative, but his actions and attitudes would nevertheless develop within narrow limits of established ethics. This approach was based on the assumption that administrative skill is an art either innate in the individual or which could best be learned on the job with performance and future progress depending on one's general intelligence, personality and educational background. This view was modified somewhat in the late 1920's when the Oxford overseas Services Courses were introduced for those destined to serve in the colonies. The courses exposed the participants to a wide range of subjects including government, history, local government, economics, tropical agriculture and forestry, criminal law and evidence, anthropology, etc.

They thus had the character of extended university programmes; they were of a general and academic nature and

they initially aimed at giving participants an intelligent introduction to subjects they were expected to develop for themselves, in action and in study, for the rest of their working lives. Originally, these courses were aimed at potential recruits from the metropolitan countries but with the approach of independence, the African became one of the target groups.

The pressures for Africanization and localization of former expatriate posts in nearly all African countries were linked to local requirements, many of the courses offered to colonial administrators and their successors did not take into account the African environment and where this formed part of the curriculum it was invariably approached from the viewpoint of the metropolitan scholars and administrators. The ecological argument was further strengthened by the observation that administrative training only served to create an in-group of administrative elite that was by and large remote from the wider society which they never adequately understood. This was linked to the by now familiar argument that the colonial administration was essentially law-and-order-oriented while what independent countries needed was development-oriented administrators. "Good Government" as the guiding principle had to give way to development ethos.

In the academic world and that of technical assistance, questions arose in the 1950's and 1960's regarding the suitability of the principles which had been derived from the western model. The "Universalists" had no difficulty in answering this question. Thus, a public administration specialist is quoted by Weidner as stating that:

There is ... a large body of universally valid knowledge and practice in public administration which should be part of any curriculum. Despite differences of history, development and moral codes, all countries fundamentally need to secure certain similar administrative results within the limitations of available trained manpower, equipment, and finance. While administration lacks the certainty of science, there are masses of practices which work well in any

country, and others which are fatal everywhere. Even where we cannot yet distil out the universals, we can be of great service in presenting comparative practice and forcing out trainees to assess the transferability of that practice. Thus, if we use decent and choose our samples wisely and widely we can talk much the same administrative language anywhere in the world.<sup>3</sup>

Weidner draws attention to the distinction between concepts using the same administrative language, on the one hand, and the existence of countless differences, country to country, on the other, which common administrative language should not obscure. A more thorough defence of the ecological argument is to be found in the work of Fred Riggs who in the early 1960's approvingly referred to Professor John Gaus "who stressed the importance of ecology in explaining administrative behaviour".<sup>4</sup>

Riggs's subsequent work was an attempt to follow Gaus's advice through the construction of a model of "transitional societies". Implicit in this effort was the assumption that the principles derived from the western model could not fit transitional (prismatic) societies in which the old standards, based on custom, decline before the new norms, based on "universal" standards, could become well established. This produces shapeless, amorphous or unstructured "formlessness". Hence, the need for an ecological approach though according to Riggs, there is no consensus on "the relationships between administrative change and corresponding processes of economic, political, social and cultural development".<sup>5</sup>

## ECOLOGY AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The attainment of independence was accompanied by efforts at designing comprehensive economic plans. Central to these plans was the establishment of public enterprises which came to be regarded as the prime movers of economic growth. In

many cases these public enterprises covered a wide span of economic and social activities including basic public utilities, infrastructure, industry, production of consumer goods, transportation services, marketing and trading operations as well as agricultural projects.

These enterprises were justified by the low level of development of the private sector as well as by the need to change the nature of the colonial economy through the creation of agencies for enhancing indigenous participation in commerce and industry to serve as the means for enabling the state to participate in distributive activities in the interests of social justice and welfare. These bodies were expected to realize the aims of national development plans. As autonomous entities, managing their finance according to commercial rules, employing specialized staff, but nevertheless sharing, to a certain extent, the power and sovereignty of the state, they were perceived as ideally suited to implement government policy in the sphere of economic development and thus enable the state to be in a position to assert its control over the economy.

The performance of the public enterprises, however, did not correspond to expectations and the anticipated growth in most cases did not occur. Further, despite the fact that development plans that were prepared were highly sophisticated in terms of economic model building and statistical data base, they were not implemented. The failure to implement these plans was blamed not on the plans themselves but on administrative inadequacies and this diagnosis led to greater emphasis being given to questions of implementation and administration of development plans. The previous Nurse's<sup>6</sup> explanation of failure of development — the lack of capital and the low rate of savings and investment — was supplemented with sociological and administrative explanations for the failure of development planning. Thus, by 1962 senior government officials were calling for "a critical review of civil service structures and standards." The reviews that followed indicated that many administrative bottlenecks were major

obstacles to the success of development plans. The reviews focused on the organization of government whose functions, offices and responsibilities were found to be dispersed, diffused, overlapping and duplicated. The planning of administration was inadequate and above all experienced and trained administrators were lacking. The inherited administrative organization did not therefore measure up to the standards of development administration whose new role was that of formulating plans, policies, programmes and projects for rapid social and economic growth.

With the help of technical assistance schemes, many African countries established agencies for steering and servicing administrative reforms. In certain cases full-fledged Ministries were established to instigate government-wide and comprehensive reforms whereas in others commissions were set up to inquire into the management of civil services. These activities resulted in many recommendations that had implications for administrative training. A principal recommendation was the introduction of the techniques of management, such as job description, position classification, management by objectives, PPBS, Performance Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT), Organization Development (O.D.) and performance Improvement Programme (PIP). Thus, the Ndegwa Commission in Kenya advised the Government to, *inter alia*:

Give serious attention to Management by Objectives (MBO) as a priority programme to accept and implement. This is a method based on the human aspect of the management of individual manager as a human being, operating in a network of human relations with fellow managers. It required setting clear and precise objectives for each manager, a timetable for achieving these objectives, standards of performance required, and job improvement plans to enable the manager to proceed in meeting these objectives...<sup>7</sup>

The interest in management techniques was not confined

to Kenya; nearly all African countries came up with projects on administrative reforms. Thus in the Sudan, the programme on administrative reforms adopted in 1973 focused on internal requirements of the civil service including personnel systems and practices and the creation of a network of supporting management services units in the ministries, public sector, corporations and local government organs. The Udoji Commission in Nigeria also recommended the adoption of management techniques, including Management by Objectives, project management, programme and performance budgeting. Similar recommendations were contained in the Wamalwa Report on Swaziland in which Programme Performance Budgeting (PPB), Management by Objectives, Organization Development, Programme Evaluation and Review Techniques (PERT) were proposed.

The recommendations of such authoritative commissions were bound to have an impact on administrative training. Nearly all African administrative training institutions, not to mention Management Centres, have programmes on management either subsumed under public administration or as separate and independent core courses.

The experience with management techniques like the "universal principles" of public administration discussed earlier gave the feeling that the specific and unique ecological setting of Africa was not taken into account and it has been frequently stated that one of the problems that managers in Africa face is in applying managerial sciences and standard categories of problem-solving which were largely developed and designed in the industrialized countries with reference to the socio-cultural conditions obtaining there. There has been a tendency to transplant such methodologies wholesale to African countries which have often found them unworkable and impracticable in a context that is largely agrarian. Quite often it has not been recognized that the socio-cultural contexts, not to mention the technical-economic environments of Africa, are vastly different from those of the industrialized countries. The classical managerial sciences hardly

take into account the African value systems and a host of traditions and customs which had developed over time.<sup>8</sup> Apart from ecological contentions, it has been questioned whether the reorganization of governmental machinery based on technical and skill criteria is an accurate reflection of the nature and processes of any institution whatsoever unless it takes into account the political context. This is a crucial question that the rationalist and technical approach associated with Scientific Management clearly did not deal with. Concerned as the adherents of the Scientific Management movement are with the questions of productivity and efficiency the best way of performance is to be discovered empirically and experimentally and this becomes an underlying concern in the belief that an organization, like any other part of reality is governed by definite regularities which can be discovered by observations and experiment. Thus, a combination of scientific knowledge and intuition replaces the rule-of-thumb method in organizational behaviour.

Bernard Schaffer has pointed out several major errors of the rationalist approach to governmental reorganization singling out an easy belief in deduction, analogy, and axiom, in the course of which a few hypotheses are treated as an exclusive and sufficient set of rules.<sup>9</sup>

Ladipo Adamolekun commenting on a report advancing managerial techniques has observed that:

...a major consequence of its application of a managerial philosophy to governmental administration was that little or no attention was paid to the political context within which public organization operate. Specifically, the activities that the new style of public servant are expected to de-emphasize are precisely those which constitute the hallmarks of those civil servants who are intimately involved in policy formulation.<sup>10</sup>

Managerial sciences in their Taylorist version have tended to define and solve problems in purely technical terms, the

handling of which would demand a more comprehensive conceptual framework. This is much more so in Africa which the ECA has characterized as having experienced "decades of political upheavals resulting in more frequent changes in Government than any other region".<sup>11</sup>

The experience of the decade of management sciences has thus demonstrated the need to include the social, economic, political and cultural elements along with the undoubtedly important scientific and technological elements to form a complex whole within which each individual elements has its own meaning and significance.

### ECOLOGY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

It is in the discussion of rural development that the ecological approach has been most needed. Already in the early 1970s there were calls for "integrated rural development" and researchers like Mbithi were stressing the need for "social definition" of rural development<sup>12</sup> contending that rural development is a social as well as a technical or economic process. Earlier, McLaughlin stated that rural development should be viewed as a problem-solving strategy, with improved technology as but one aspect of that strategy. "Development", he wrote, "is the integration of new technology into an already ongoing socio-cultural process"<sup>13</sup>

Reviewing the strategies adopted by African governments in the 1960s, participants at a meeting organized by the Economic Commission for Africa in Moshi (Tanzania) found it necessary to stress that:

African governments must take into consideration special sociological, cultural, political and ecological conditions before adopting systems of rural development which attempt a complete restructuring of the socio-economic system.<sup>14</sup>

This recommendation had clear implications for training

generally and administrative training in particular. In the words of the Report:

Training for the integrated approach to rural development must touch upon the economic, social, cultural and political life of the community. The main fields training must include are civic education, functional literacy, agricultural education, community development, health education, education for the co-operative movement, trade and business management and rural social welfare. Such training should not be contained within a single ministry unless it is independently organized.<sup>15</sup>

It was the general view that a principal weakness of rural development actions during the colonial period as well as the early post-independence years was to reduce rural development to isolated programmes of "community development", "rural animation", "mass education", "agricultural extension", health and "nutrition extension", "road repair" or any other terms applied to sectoral programmes. These important sectors were not related to each other in the wider context of the ecology. Hence the call for a comprehensive development of the rural area which was to be regarded "as an integrated milieu, calling for a set of policies and projects so designed and co-ordinated that it will raise and sustain the standard of living of the rural population as a whole." Such a strategy was also geared towards developing knowledge and attitudinal bases which would facilitate an "automatic and continuing expansion of man's capacity to deal rationally with the environment."<sup>16</sup> Further, it was recommended that rural development should be approached from "the standpoint of increased production which logically promotes revenue and from the standpoint of social advancement" which should then lead "to the satisfaction of human needs above the basic".

Ten years after the Moshi meeting ESAMI, CAFRAD and CPASG organized a Workshop in Arusha at which it was

observed that "discussions throughout the week had made it clear that it was important to consider the fundamental problems underlying rural development before organizational, structural or institutional strategies and solutions could be considered."<sup>17</sup> Administrative training should likewise be addressed to the wider economic, social, political and cultural milieu in which institutional arrangements are embedded. It was stated that the problems of development administration at national, regional and local levels needed to be continually addressed but mere administrative reforms could not be expected to lead to a high net contribution to the rural economy unless there were viable programmes and projects in operation there.

It was clear to the participants at the Arusha workshop that there was a commitment to rural decentralization, which had been accepted as a *sine qua non* for successful national development. Decentralization with the principal aim of providing equal levels of opportunity and access to services, functions and resources and as a means of facilitating participation of the people in decision-making and institutions. In order to realize any form of development in the rural areas, people must in the first instance be able to determine their own development goals and have the necessary capacity to implement those goals.

Whether in the form of devolution or deconcentration, decentralization is faced with severe difficulties, particularly strong tendencies to rural-urban migration, limited infrastructure, manpower and finance. These difficulties are compounded by the increase in population and the particular constraints of providing services in the remote areas and by problems related to equity. These constraints increase the demand for manpower resources at a time when world economic changes put capital and recurrent budget under exceptionally great stress. Despite these difficulties commitment to decentralization and rural development remains strong. This Commitment raises questions about the degree to which central authority can trust local institutions and the capacity

of these institutions including their ability to affect the centre. Thus, the question of efficiency of the institutions need to be given priority if the capacity to influence the centre is to be enhanced. Particular solutions would have to be discovered in the reform of information systems.

### CONCLUSION

In 1969 the U.N. observed that "to be able to deal with great environmental complexity is as an important element in administrative capability as any other. Yet it is one of the most neglected and one of the most difficult to improve."<sup>18</sup> This implied that the development administrator required a thorough knowledge of his own society in all its principal dimensions notably:

Agriculture	natural resources
Business	population
Class structure	religion
Communications network	science
Economic institutions and	social mobility
Political education	technology
Kinship system	urban characteristics
Labour	values

Considering that these elements are influenced by the wider international environment, the list constitutes a formidable requirement indeed. Yet given the pressure of needs described in this chapter administrative training will have to take into account in the 1980s physical, technological, economic, human, social, political and cultural – i.e. ecological – processes taking place inside and outside Africa.

There is a wide measure of agreement about the need to relate all development efforts to the African environment. For administrative training the task of designing a curriculum is faced with a number of difficulties. Vasant Moharir has recently drawn attention to the problem of fragmented

disciplines in the social sciences which in their separateness can hardly be expected to provide those trained in these sciences the holistic approach that the theme of ecology requires. Following Dror he identifies 22 social sciences as being relevant to the study of society, such as economics, political science, public administration, law, sociology, history, philosophy, management sciences, psychology, strategic studies, geography, etc.<sup>19</sup>

The resultant differing perspectives pose a practical problem to policy-makers and senior administrators who have to make decisions in the face of this disciplinary diversity.

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### *Chapter Three*

## THE IDEAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECOLOGY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN AFRICA

JEGGAN C. SENGHOR

### INTRODUCTION

All African countries are committed to the use of governmental authority for articulating national development objectives and formulating implementation strategies for their realization. Public administration and management systems are the principal vehicles for undertaking these tasks and, consequently, they occupy pivotal positions in the development process. This means, in turn, that public administration systems now have to combine conventional responsibilities with new extractive, allocative, regulatory, service and facilitative functions.

An analysis of conditions in public administration and management systems in African countries reveals shortfalls — sometimes of alarming proportions — in capabilities and capacities.<sup>1</sup> Though many governments have initiated administrative modernization programmes to strengthen administrative infrastructures the results have not matched expectations. Several reasons can be adduced for this, among which the accumulation of demands and the thrust and content of administrative reforms are, perhaps, the most prominent. These and related factors continue to make themselves felt even as African governments increase their commitment to accelerated economic and social development. It thus becomes all the more urgent for public administration and

management systems to constantly adapt themselves and evolve new institutional arrangements, new styles and methods of operation and, ultimately, new models specifically geared to national needs for development.

No public administration and management system exists in a vacuum. It is an integral part of the range of systems in society. These constitute the national environment of public administration and management, as distinguished from that generated from the internal activities of various parts of public administration and management systems themselves. Impinging on this domestic environment is the external or international environment. More than other developing regions, Africa has been exposed to forces and influences from the international environment. Colonialism as a framework for legitimizing these influences bequeathed administrative systems which, in numerous ways, are intractable obstacles to the achievement of the new goals of post-colonial society. In general terms, precolonial administrative systems in Africa were direct products of their environments. Though more focused research is still necessary on the subject, evidence from the writings of historians and anthropologists point to close integration of administrative institutions and processes with the environments in which they operated. Without doubt, the value basis of behaviour — both individual and organizational — had its roots in local society. The character of colonial administrative systems precluded any such relationships. As regards their impact, what is of interest is the extent to which they were inspired and shaped by the values and aspirations of the administered. Were the colonial administrative systems adaptive to changing circumstances? Were they responsive to changing needs? Were they accountable to local authority and local populations? Answers to these similar questions are relevant to our understanding of post-colonial administrative experiences. Most significant, they provide an appropriate perspective for examining the impact of the international environment on national public administration and management systems in the post-

independence period.

This chapter focuses on only one aspect of the international environment, i.e. the ideas environment. Obviously, this limited focus does not underrate the importance of other forces and influences. It cannot be doubted, however, that for African countries, the international environment has been a source of ideas whose transmission is facilitated by increasingly sophisticated communications technology. A limited focus also permits in-depth study and analysis. Finally, the international ideas environment, in its impact, is a basic starting point for understanding the nature and operation of other elements in the international environment and their impact on African administration.

### THE INTERNATIONAL IDEAS ENVIRONMENT

Over the last 30 years the international ideas environment, as it pertains to public administration in developing countries, has been dominated by interest in instrumentalities by which standards of development can be achieved. This interest built on certain assumptions about backwardness and progress which greatly influenced conceptions of development problems in Africa and the third world. It influenced the distribution of power between groups in society. It influenced the type of structures and processes for formulating and executing policies. It influenced the content of policies. In such ways, this interest continues to have significant practical impact on public administration and management systems in Africa and, most relevant, their capabilities for playing a lead role in eliminating mass poverty and underdevelopment.

Much of the ideas of relevance fall under the "development administration" rubric. Essentially, the distinctiveness of public administration in African and other developing countries (i.e. development administration) was stimulated by experience in planning and running specific developmental agencies. The emphasis is on the methods used by government organizations to achieve developmental goals. It asserts

that development-oriented programmes must be administered. Governmental capabilities must be enlarged to support "organized efforts to carry our programmes or projects thought by those involved to serve developmental objectives."<sup>2</sup>

Flowing from this, development administration focuses heavily on goals and objectives of public policy, extending beyond traditional responsibilities for the maintenance of law and order, tax collection and provision of minimum services. Public policy concentrates, particularly, on the mobilization of national resources and their apportionment among a multiplicity of developmental requirements.

Underlying much of development administration thinking is the premise that state formation involves, partially, the achievement and upholding of legitimacy.<sup>3</sup> Administrative systems are part of the mechanisms for the furtherance of legitimacy through their application of the rules of the game. This means a major role in the pursuit of abstract values such as justice and equality and of more concrete goals such as improving the welfare of the population. In other words, the administrative system has an activist role — as an agent of the state for implementing pre-determined goals. It is action-oriented. It is practical, purposive and field-determined.

Some scholars have raised questions about distinctions between development administration and public administration.<sup>4</sup> It is argued that the basic concerns are no different, i.e. how to increase the administrative capacities and capabilities of public organizations. While admitting areas of overlap, development administration theorists also identify peculiarities of their "field". It is noted, for example, that though both are interested in system improvement, public administration pursues this through more rational and optimal performance; the emphasis is on implementation rather than on policy formulation because the goals are not much questioned.<sup>5</sup> Much stock is therefore laid on efficiency and economy. In turn, competent skills, neutrally employed, are necessary. These attributes (neutrality, competence, economy, efficiency) ensure the isolation of administrative

organisms from political and public pressures. On the other hand, development administration, while also concerned with problems-solving gives greater prominence to problem-defining, policy-making, and choice among alternative programme goals.<sup>6</sup> Providing systems of actions and methods for operating them is also the task of development administration.

Several other claims for distinctiveness have been made. First, that public administration is formal in that it pays much attention to institutions, organizational arrangements, and procedures for decision-making rather than the content and results of these decisions.<sup>7</sup> Development administration deals with both. Second, there is the assertion that development administration is more integrated and multidisciplinary in method. Third, development administration is said to require from those who study it a higher degree of sensitivity to broad social dynamics and to the normative dimensions of administration. In this respect, development administration has much affinity to what has been labelled "the new public administration."<sup>8</sup>

Development administration also has a sibling relationship with comparative administration. On a first level, this is exemplified in the fact that the most productive purveyors of the development administration doctrine were also leading students of comparative administration. They primarily reacted to established wisdom about public administration and to attempts at transferring principles borne out of Western experience in public and private sector organizations to settings of underdevelopment. As practical experience had demonstrated that principles of Western public administration — American, in particular — were inapplicable to conditions prevailing in developing societies, it was felt necessary to understand these conditions and modify the principles accordingly. "Comparative administration" was the basis for highlighting the peculiarities of administration in different categories of cases. Development administration was a product of efforts to understand, explain and deal with those in developing countries.

Comparative case studies have produced findings portray-

ing, for example, the relevance of broader environmental factors to administrative phenomenon and the relationships among the network of institutions within the administrative system. They have also been useful for "testing" simplistic hypotheses about complex administrative realities. Cross-national studies have particularly dealt with issues such as correlations between system-level indicators and administrative performance as a basis for more refined hypotheses. Survey methods used in comparative case studies have mainly dealt with the influence of characteristics of individuals (attitudes, values, or social categories) on administrative behaviour. In particular, "previous association" theories in development administration have attracted much interest.<sup>9</sup>

Against this backdrop, the contents of "development administration" are predictable. First, there is the singular importance of the environment (ecology) as a variable determining the nature and character of administrative systems. On this, of course, the work of Fred Riggs are well known.<sup>10</sup> Most other writers on development administration have adopted this as a take-off point. The "ecological" perspective in development administration has in fact found expression in other areas, notably:

- (a) institutional development — through "institution building", "administrative development", and "organization design";<sup>11</sup>
- (b) improving the quality and quantity of human resources, the value systems and behaviour of personnel — through training and educational programmes;<sup>12</sup>
- (c) redefinition of functions and redistribution of powers — through decentralization (deconcentration, delegation), co-ordination and organization of communications links;
- (d) reformulation of processes — in personnel administration, financial management, records and supply management;
- (e) restructuring relationships, e.g. politics-administration dichotomy.<sup>13</sup>

## IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

Given the orientations and contents of thinking on development administration as sketched out above it was natural that public administration systems in African and other developing countries would be viewed as virgin territory for direct action by external agents. Public administration principles and practices were to be exported from the developed Western to underdeveloped countries. What Siffin calls the "international transfer of public administration" became a major business.<sup>14</sup> In the main the mechanism adopted was technical co-operation.

The modalities were essentially threefold. First, bilateral and multilateral aid and technical assistance projects in public/development administration were embarked upon. Strategies adopted in these projects, as discussed by David Brown, included the beachhead, power elite, multiplier effect, institution-building, grassroots, programme integration, and cultural accommodation. Tactical approaches and methods varied according to the particular country's situation: persuading and selling; advisory; demonstration training; use of third parties; direct action; and use of leverage.<sup>15</sup> In its limited sense, technical assistance refers to the personnel provided by donor countries, under contract, to perform specific assignments, in the course of which training is also supposed to be provided to local counterparts. For the vendors of development administration ideas, these projects provided opportunities for testing them out.

Secondly, technical co-operation projects invariably included components involving the setting up of training institutions in public administration. One writer has noted:

Effective management is only possible to the degree that it operates through the use of training techniques and the realization that training is more important than commands and directives, warnings and disciplinary threats or actions,

or even the institution of systematic procedures.<sup>16</sup>

Again, staffing, training philosophies, methodologies and material were imported.

The third strategy was the training of top-level practitioners and their potential successors in the operation of Western institutions. Scholarships, liberally given, attracted a whole generation of students from African countries for education in universities and specialized management institutions, followed by attachments in private and public organizations.

Some observers have argued that from the mid-1960s on, there was a shift in interest in developing public administration in less developed countries in general; the decline in government financing of technical assistance projects in this area is the evidence often cited.<sup>17</sup> Among the reasons for this are said to be growing conviction that economic growth rather than public administration was the key to development.

Failure in experiences with public administration projects were also of consequence. This observation is incorrect for Africa, at least. Despite failed experiments in Asia, in particular, conventional wisdom prevailed in Africa. Supporting this point Z.S. Allen has concluded from his evidence on one major aspect that:

Administrative training has therefore by no means withered away, though it has apparently ceased to expand. The noticeable change is the shift in geographical area. Except for Iran, the earlier projects were in Asia and Latin America. By 1967, however, one-third of the resources devoted to administrative training were deployed in Africa (mainly Nigeria and Kenya). This marks the extension of training activities to areas which were formerly colonial prerogatives.<sup>18</sup>

The groundswell of theoretical writings abated somewhat. Now they concentrated more on refinements based, (to some

extent) on experiments in African countries. Whatever slack existed was picked up by multilateral programmes of technical co-operation in public/development administration which experienced sustained growth. Besides, as local institutions for training and research multiplied, indigenous "trained" proxies now took up from where the foreign experts left off.

### *Factors in Technical Cooperation*

Several developments in African countries encouraged increased technical co-operation in public/development administration. Four deserve brief mention. First, at independence, a paucity of indigenous public service personnel, lack of other administrative resources, weak administrative infrastructures, were inherited objective conditions. Localization of Africanization was seen as one solution. In Nigeria, for example, at independence in 1960, only 15 per cent of established superscale posts were held by Nigerians and 83 per cent by Europeans. One year later, 74 per cent of these posts were held by Nigerians and certain Ministries were completely Nigerianized. By 1962, all but 1 per cent or 2 per cent of top public service posts were occupied by indigenes.<sup>19</sup> In Zambia, the composition of the civil service in 1964 was as follows:<sup>20</sup>

<i>Division</i>	<i>European</i>	<i>African</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
I	1,256	39	3	1,298
II	2,692	1,882	11	4,585
Total	3,948	1,921	14	5,883

By 1969, 76 per cent of total civil service establishment was Zambian. And, by 1971, it had increased to 83.7 per cent.

The second factor is the expanded role of the public sector. On this, one source captures the situation in developing countries in general thus:

(It) produces goods and services, transports them buys and sells them and consumes some. It is an important source of

finance and it borrows from the public. In addition, the public sector plans, regulates, and oversees, the functioning and the development of the economy and is one of the main agents for transactions with the rest of the world. It is also an important agent of innovation and the spread of technology.<sup>21</sup>

The expanded role of the state is directly linked to the extensive demands of "development" and the absence of alternative institutions for coping with these demands. In fact, as shown in an earlier section of this chapter, "development administration" is built around this theme: "development administration refers not only to a government's efforts to carry out programmes designed to reshape its physical and cultural environment but also to the struggle to enlarge a government's capacity to engage in such programmes"<sup>22</sup>

The third factor is the growth of the parastatal sector as an instrument for implementing public sector policies. In all African countries the parastatal sector has grown dramatically since independence. For example, in Nigeria, in 1960, there were only about 50 statutory corporations and state-run companies. By 1982, they were estimated to be about 800.<sup>23</sup> In Kenya, in 1982, there were 60 parastatals plus 6 nation-wide co-operative; this did not include government companies and the subsidiaries of parastatals. Agricultural marketing boards handle a significant portion of domestic production. Parastatals are responsible for about 50 per cent of visible exports and consume large amounts of foreign exchange for imports of equipment and machinery.

In general, the parastatal sector is assigned responsibility for achieving allocative, distributive and development objectives of governments. The objectives set for parastatals tend to be wideranging. They include generating surpluses for investment, reducing dependence on foreign firms, remedying regional or sectoral imbalances in development, promoting income redistribution, providing specific goods and services, filling gaps created by the shortage of local private sector

entrepreneurs.<sup>24</sup>

As regards their distribution, parastatals have penetrated almost every sector of economic activity. Traditionally, public utilities, communications, non-road transport and natural resources industries have been run as parastatals. More recent expansion has been in the manufacturing sector (mainly heavy industry), but also in others such as agro-based industries. Going beyond these sectors they are also to be found in construction, trade, housing, hotels, wholesale and retail distribution.

Given the size and scope of the parastatal sector its performance is an important factor determining national economic health. However, throughout the continent, parastatals have performed dismally; they have been a drain on national exchequers. This is, increasingly, a cause for concern in all African countries.

Fourth is the growth in the size of public bureaucracies. The expanded role of the state and of the parastatal sector has meant a rapid growth in the size of public service bureaucracies. Again, in Nigeria, for example, the personnel size of the civil services of federal and regional governments in 1960 was about 200,000. By 1980, personnel strength of federal and state governments was estimated at about 2,000,000.<sup>25</sup> Between 1964 and 1972 the Zambian public service expanded from 72 departments within 14 ministries to 102 departments and 16 ministries. Personnel establishment increased from 22,561 in 1964 to 51,497 in 1969.<sup>26</sup> In Kenya, in the 1965-1969 period, there was a six per cent annual increase in public sector employment, i.e. approximately the same as the rate of growth in total national income.<sup>27</sup> Public sector employment as a whole increased from 424,800 in 1979 to 497,600 in 1982. For parastatals and enterprises with government majority ownership there was a 24 per cent increase. Parastatal employment is now equal to that of the regular civil service, if teachers are excluded.<sup>28</sup>

For dealing with administrative and managerial problems arising from these four developments the modalities of technical co-operation in public administration have been widely

used. Institutionalized training, accompanied by the application of a whole gamut of public/development administration principles, has been viewed as a panacea for dealing with human resource development problems. Administrative reform programmes, again in line with imported ideas, took care of the other problem areas.<sup>29</sup>

### *Need for Caution*

The imperialistic underpinnings in organized efforts to shape public administration systems in African countries — through technical co-operation — in the framework of thinking on development administration, are obvious, George Gent has rightly noted:

There is even a tendency on the part of aid-giving agencies, both national and international, to oblige their experts to press for certain systems whose values are held high by the donors but which are not considered so immediately relevant by the recipients, especially in the form advocated.<sup>30</sup>

He adds, quite perceptively, that:

The fields of planning and administration readily attract offers of technical assistance because they are at the centre of a nation's decision-making about its vital social and economic policies and activities. These are the prestige areas for technical assistance, and they are also the points at which external agencies may most readily influence decisions friendly to these external interests, whether those interests be selfish or philanthropic in purpose.<sup>31</sup>

In the early years, technical co-operation in public administration was primarily concentrated on the transfer of skills and, as noted above, establishing training institutions. Emphasis was almost wholly on personnel and financial management, and organization and methods. The content reflected the state of public administration as a discipline, based mainly on the thinking of people like Luther Gulick

and F.W. Taylor. The thrust of programmes have been subsequently influenced by "advances" in the discipline and, in particular, "modifications" embodied in development administration. In any case, as far as recipient countries in Africa are concerned, the Weberian legal-rational bias persists.<sup>32</sup> Belief in the Weberian doctrine among technical assistance personnel is strong. It is admitted that the context of administration in African countries is different. Nevertheless, in technical co-operation activities, such deeply internalized old knowledge about formal organization is not easily discarded.<sup>33</sup>

Ironically, in the developed Western countries themselves the Weberian model and its derivatives have long been under severe criticism and lost much value. However, major elements are contained in the body of knowledge transferred in technical co-operation programmes. For example, it is commonly noted that the model downplays human aspects of administration.<sup>34</sup> It is therefore clearly at variance with prevailing realities in administrative systems in African countries. Ignoring these make it more difficult to understand key processes in policy formulation and implementation in these countries and the ever-present interface of politics and administration.

There is also the preoccupation with the "bureaucratic style" which has its roots in Weber and late 19th century administrative reforms in the West. As Bernard Schaffer has pointed out, certain patterns of hierarchy and formalized rules are inherent in the bureaucratic style: "The emphasis is on repetition and reiteration rather than innovation... The prime concern is not the product but the value of certainty".<sup>35</sup> This makes for stability. It makes for reliability. It is instrumental, though not necessarily as far as programme realization is involved. Both Schaffer and Merton, among others, have noted that for developmental purposes this style involves tremendous costs: it is adaptive not innovative; it sacrifices individual needs to organizational needs; its control measures have unanticipated dysfunctional consequences;

it bureaucratizes personality; means and procedures are institutionalized whilst goals are displayed.<sup>36</sup> It is questionable if African administrations can afford the bureaucratic style, given the unhappy paradox confronting them, i.e. "there are unusually extensive needs....precisely where there are peculiarly few resources and exceptionally severe obstacles to meeting the needs."<sup>37</sup>

Some components of technical co-operation in public administration are said to be neutral. Siffin, for one, declares that "tool aspects of administration have transferred most readily across national and cultural boundaries — especially the budgetary and financial technologies."<sup>38</sup> If so, a linkage is established between the administrative and economic aspects of development assistance. Instead of one superceding the other, as some have argued, it is possible for a major item in the development administration package (i.e. the budgetary and financial technologies) to be employed to penetrate into the core economic area which, in the final analysis, determines the destiny of African countries.

Siffin also points to some other attractions of the administrative technologies in the following quotation:

They promise increased order and control, plus compatibility with a wide range of policy orientations. Fiscal technologies serve the needs of people, often among the most potent and purposive in a government, responsible for managing finances... Technologies are rather readily learnable. And every package of administrative technologies worthy of the label is a coherent combination of procedures, norms, and partial organizational specifications. The technical norms must be honoured if the technology is to work. Their content and effect are closely linked with outputs. As a result, it is sometimes possible in a technological field of action to institutionalize arrangements and behaviours consistent with the values of rationality, effectiveness, and responsibility, even when the larger bureaucracy is not much imbued with such values.<sup>39</sup>

Several issues arise. The broad one of the relevance of these administrative technologies to the context of underdevelopment and possible limitations on their application have been sufficiently covered in the literature. We merely note three others. First, that by making for order and control, administrative technologies favour system maintenance rather than system change. They make for incremental advances in existing systems rather than the transformation of the colonial-bequeathed administrative systems in Africa. Second, success in their use makes for dysfunction in the overall system, given that corresponding changes in other parts may not be forthcoming. Third, they provide the wherewithal for the rise of administrative technocrats with values, norms and behaviour patterns which qualify them for membership in ruling alliances in African societies. These now constitute important sections of the bureaucratic class in Africa.

There are numerous points of weakness in the technical co-operation process which have both short- and long-term impact on public administration and management systems in Africa. These exist at every stage in the process — planning and programming, implementation, follow-up and evaluation. They are familiar even to the beginner. They have been discussed at length over the years and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that technical co-operation is based on the principle that the recipient nation requests the assistance and has ultimate responsibility for the use of such assistance. This assumes that a sound administrative framework exists for identifying requirements and determining priorities, in relation to socio-economic development goals. A framework for development is a *sine qua non* for efficient utilization of incoming resources. Adequate absorptive capacity also ensures that external assistance is of bearable volume. Since external assistance makes some demand on limited national resources, discrimination in types of assistance acceptable is always called for. In Africa, especially in the early period, it was because of the absence of such prerequisites that international assistance was solicited in the first place. Technical

co-operation in public administration and management was assigned the task of setting up machinery for determining needs and methods for optimizing returns. Subsequently, the need for creating efficient planning and programming machinery and co-ordinating mechanisms generated added burdens. And, in time, the domestic economic, social, and political environments have thrown up their own complex challenges and constraints. All these call for finding solutions to the many practical problems involved in technical co-operation in public administration and management, over and above the ideological issues raised in the main part of this chapter.

### CONCLUSION

In Africa, critical debate on the nature of the knowledge imparted and received in public administration and management has hardly begun. Neither has there been any sustained and concerted efforts at dissecting the impact of such knowledge on the overall public administration and management systems and constituent parts thereof. The international environment in its political, economic and social dimensions has, to a great extent, conditioned development in corresponding areas in African countries and, subsequently, on national public administration and management systems. The contention, however, is that this can best be understood when related to the international public administration ideas environment and the vehicles employed for the propagation of such ideas in African countries.

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## COMMENTS ON PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE FIRST PLENARY SESSION

At this opening session the Roundtable attempted to examine the theme from different angles. Participants considered different definitions of "ecology", its impact on public administration and management systems and discussed how to resolve some of the basic problems arising therefrom.

The ecology of public administration and management was defined as consisting of a network of political, economic, socio-cultural, physical sub-systems which are in dynamic relationship with the public administration and management sub-system. It was emphasized that public administration and management systems were not passive recipients of external influences. Rather, they were part and parcel of the ecology and, as such, had their own impact on it. This reciprocal relationship and mutual interdependence must be recognized from the outset.

The Roundtable noted with regret that in spite of the many years of political independence, the inherited colonial structures and institutions persisted in many African countries. In addition, political influence and interference in the public services have created insecurity and uncertainty among public servants. Poor personnel policies and practices resulting from the absence of effective criteria for employment, deployment, development and retirement have resulted in low morale among public servants. Poor and deteriorating educational standards have also affected the quality of performance in the public service and have further created difficulties in managing the public sector.

Coupled with structural problems, the African public services continue to operate with inadequate facilities and

with poorly trained and ill-motivated personnel. This has affected the productivity of civil services. In addition, poor data base has resulted in poorly framed and unrealistic development plans. Contrary to expectations on regional and collective self-reliance, African countries were perceived as being increasingly inward-looking and moving towards autarky. The gap between top civil servants and the public continues to grow and the civil service continues to be dominated by an elite group in society.

The Roundtable examined the role of the public service in African countries and agreed that African public services contain some of the best brains in society. It argued that instead of merely adapting to changes in the environment, public servants should consider themselves as change agents and help "direct" change.

The Roundtable observed that recent debates and discussions on development administration in Africa have attempted to move away from the traditional approach of examining structures and institutions in isolation and have begun viewing administration as a system integrated within a complex of economic, social, political and technological subsystems. This approach is generally labelled the ecological approach. The Roundtable further examined various African countries' experiences with administrative reform and observed that some failures in plan implementation could be traced to the failure to link new management techniques and systems to the African environment.

The Roundtable discussed at length the question whether the administrative system was a captive of the external environment. One view was that though the importance of the ecology and its constraining effects should not be minimized, when the relationship was viewed in dynamic terms, administrative systems in Africa were in a stronger position. Four reasons were cited to support this position, namely, the dramatic growth in the size of the public service, the expansion of the parastatal sector, rapid localization and Africanization and heavy concentration on training and human resource development. Administrative systems have increased

in complexity and in scope of activities and this makes for additional strength. It was argued that changes in the ecology had not been inimical to increased administrative strength. For example, politics/administration dichotomy was an important issue in the early independence period. The more sophisticated politicians of today are more amenable to norms of rationality and objectivity in public administration. Changes in the socio-cultural environment have had similarly beneficial results on public administration. To round up, this viewpoint stresses that if the concern is with the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative systems, then one must look into factors internal to the administrative systems themselves and not the external environmental factors.

A contrary view is that administrative systems were under seige. This viewpoint was strongly argued by many participants. It was stressed that the very factor which were said to have strengthened administrative systems have in fact been the causes of weaknesses in public administration. Even if the earlier viewpoint was accepted, one must not ignore the impact of the factors cited on performance standards, which are widely accepted to have declined. Many participants felt that environmental factors have impinged heavily on public administrative and management systems, and this accounts for the frequent diviation from the norms of rationality. Public expectations are high and demands on government have increased considerably. Altogether, the environment is much more complicated than before. As a result, instead of rising to the resultant challenges, public services have developed a seige mentality.

The Roundtable also considered the subject of power, authority and influence. It was felt that more attention should be paid to their origins, the way they are exercised and the various forms they take. In other words, the way power, authority and influence are exercised in the political environment should be closely examined in relation to their impact on administrative and management systems. This brings into focus the realities of political systems, particularly,

the different types of party systems, instability of regimes and military rule. These realities make it necessary to ask questions such as: What are politicians for? What are civil servants for? Whose interest do the politicians and the career officials serve? If these questions are not addressed, then the relationship between the ecology and public administration and management systems will be seen in purely legalistic terms.

In this connection, participants raised several points that were critical of civil servants and civil services. Civil servants are an elite and are very conscious of their status. Over the years they have become more self-centred and self-serving. They have lost their sense of service and their commitment. They are good at looking after themselves and not serving the people. Politicians are commonly known to display unwholesome tendencies but then public servants must not emulate them or unwittingly collude with them. Quite commonly, in situations where public duty conflicts with private interest the latter prevails. This is partly because of the element of instability facing public servants. In fact, it was argued that, as the civil servant becomes more vulnerable, there is a natural inclination for him to pursue private goals rather than the public interest. These and related items must be addressed.

Whether public servants understand the roles they are expected to play was an issue raised by several participants. Can they depend on politicians to define these roles for them? Can they do so themselves? Whatever the case, expectations continue to rise and the people are losing their patience. These questions should, therefore, be urgently dealt with.

The view was expressed that some aspects of the systems inherited from the colonial era were not at variance with the task of building development-oriented systems. However, because of the extensive and rather onerous responsibilities of socio-economic development, there was a general need for restructuring and re-orienting rules and regulations. For a

better understanding of ways in which these are being tackled, the national context should be the point of focus.

The argument that Africa's ailing public enterprises should be sold to private investors was sharply criticised. The parameter within which they operate — including the ideological — should be carefully considered. Also, privatization of public enterprises assumes that the private sector has the capability to operate the enterprises efficiently and to serve the basic objectives for which the public enterprises were established in the first place. There was also the real possibility that foreign capital, in its various forms, would take over these enterprises and thereby increase external domination and control of African economies. At this point in time, what is important is to implement the series of recommendations that have been submitted for improving the performance of public enterprises.

A suggestion was made that ministries be operated on business lines. It would then be possible to evolve criteria and standards by which performance could be judged.

The Roundtable advocated that more resources be devoted to research. Multinational corporations have been successful in their operations partly because of the vast resources spent on research. The corrupting influence of multinationals on public servants was, however, stressed by participants.

Another issue emphasized by the Roundtable was the complicity of public servants in the wilful destruction by politicians of public services and what they stand for. The consciousness of the power they exercise have, in cases, led politicians to deliberately undermine public services. Yet, no voice of protest is raised by public servants. This gives rise to another question of division of labour between politicians and public servants, given the different skills each is supposed to possess.

As regards politicization of the public services, the Roundtable concluded that it has gained popularity in Africa. There is a pressing need for a careful study of the different experiences of African states in this area.

Finally, the Roundtable recognized that AAPAM was part of the ecology of public administration and management in Africa. Individual members were in leadership positions in their countries. Some have been responsible for formulating detailed programmes of administrative reform and advising governments on strategies for administrative improvement. If the measures recommended had been *faithfully and consistently implemented*, public administration and management systems would have been in a better situation today. Unfortunately, career officials – as the primary administrators of reform programmes – have contributed in no small way to situations that are responsible for deflecting the impact of these programmes. The Roundtable appealed to politicians, business and military leaders to attend AAPAM meetings and exchange ideas with leaders of thought in public administration.

## *Chapter Four*

# THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA

W.N. WAMALWA

## INTRODUCTION

There is no administrative system which is completely immune to environmental pressures and influences. However, in Africa, the environment plays such a significant part in the administrative process that one might be tempted to ask whether it is not the dominant force in the administration of each country – i.e. a force that is capable of determining the methods and the outputs of public administration. An important aspect of the environment is the political one. In nearly all the countries of Africa – including those under military rule – administration is a focus of intense political activity.

With the constant and insistent demands which “politics” makes on administration, two major issues need to be resolved. The first, which is of a general nature, concerns the role and status of the “career” civil service in the process of nation-building. The second issue is more specific than the first, and it is that of how the administrative system might adjust to the changes taking place in the environment.

This chapter attempts to confront the issues raised above under four headings. The first section of the chapter discusses in general terms the environmental influences impinging on, or shaping, the systems of public administration in Africa. The second section focuses on the politics and administration of development and examines three main hypotheses on the

roles of the political and administrative elites in coping with the challenges of nation-building. The third section seeks to complement the conceptual orientation of the preceding one by furnishing empirical data on the patterns and trends in the relationship between politics and administration in some African countries. The fourth and final section suggests how the bureaucracy might cope with some specific changes in the environment.

### THE ECOLOGY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW

The environment exerts tremendous influence on public administration in Africa. By the environment is meant not just the general atmospheric conditions, but also the social, cultural, historical, religious, demographic, economic, geographic, climatic and political factors all of which extend the scope, and simultaneously restrict the capability, of public administration.

#### *The Societies of Africa*

The social pressures, for instance, suggest immense possibilities for, and definite restraint on, the work of public administration. The pressures most frequently take the form of divergent claims, competing interests and conflicting orientations. The diversity with which African public administrators have to live is in the very nature of the African society which is highly pluralistic rather than monistic. As a continent, Africa is made up of different racial groups and nationalities. The polarization of the society is most visible at the level of the nation-state where linguistic, ethnic, cultural and religious differences sometimes threaten political stability. In Liberia alone, there are no less than 16 ethnic groups (among them, the Kpelle, Bassa, Gio, Kru, Grebo, Krahn, and Mandingo). In nearby Sierra Leone, the Creole co-exist with the Temne, the Mende and many other ethnic groups. In Nigeria, three ethnic groups (Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba) are most frequently mentioned, but there are over

two hundred and fifty other "tribes" speaking among them three hundred odd languages and dialects. The Horn of Africa is a mixture of Hamitic and Semitic peoples among whom are the Beja tribes of the Red Sea Coast, the Somali and Danakil of Somalia; the Oromo, Sidama, Amhara, Gurage, Tigre and many other tribes of Ethiopia. In the southern part of the Horn — especially in Kenya — Kiswahili serves as a medium of communication and a powerful unifying force. All the same, ethnic differences tend to manifest themselves when the Luo, the Gikuyu, the Masai and the remaining language groups interact and compete with one another.

It is not just language that distinguishes one ethnic group from the other. Cultural differences are also a potent factor. It is true that in nearly all the traditional societies of Africa, much deference tends to be accorded to age and seniority. Belief in superstitions and the worship of ancestral and non-ancestral spirits are other common features of these societies. Ironically, what they have in common also happens to be what divides the various African societies. The Gikuyu, the Mende and Ibo may worship at the shrines of their ancestors, but since the ancestors are different, it stands to reason that their gods and faiths would be different. In view of the fact that each ethnic group's world outlook is shaped largely by the traditional values and institutions, one cannot fully appreciate the problems facing African administrators unless one has an insight into the cultural setting. This in any case is a subject that is discussed in other *papers* to be presented at this Roundtable.

In addition to the cultural pluralism are the differences in history and colonial experience. Whereas some of the traditional societies of Africa (like the Banyoro of Uganda, the Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria and the Ashanti of Ghana) had a tradition of government and administration long before their contact with Europeans, a few others (like the Tiv of Nigeria, the Tallensi of Ghana, and the Pakot of Kenya) possessed egalitarian and "republican" systems of political organization. Yet another group of traditional societies fell

in between the totally organized and hierarchical governmental systems, on the one hand, and the segmentary patterns, on the other. The differences in the systems of government certainly influenced the traditional societies' latter-day (especially, colonial) experiences. In contrast to the societies in which the colonial authorities ruled directly and established completely novel systems of government were those where the system of Indirect Rule was adopted.

In ordinary circumstances, the diverse character of African societies should be regarded as part of the challenges of nation-building. The "tribal", cultural, religious and linguistic differences pose immense challenges to the political and administrative elites and compel them to devise solutions to the problems of national integration. Yet, as new solutions are attempted and as complex socio-economic development programmes are introduced, the diverse nature of the society poses a new set of problems — notably, how to reconcile competing demands, and how to develop and/or institutionalize a uniform world outlook together with the required universal standards.

The task of social integration is frequently made very complex by the demographic factor. As an environmental factor, population pressure demands urgent attention. Africa, for a number of reasons, has one of the highest rates of population growth. A study carried out by the ECA reveals that on the basis of the observed levels in fertility and mortality around 1980, the total population of Africa would rise to approximately 1.1 billion by the year 2008 — meaning an annual growth of 3.2 per cent.<sup>1</sup> The consequences of a continent inhabited by an increasing number of hungry, poverty-stricken, disease-ridden and jobless persons are not good even for the imagination. Yet the realities of the future may be worse than this imagination. The signs are already becoming visible — large-scale starvation and food crisis in 22 African countries as at 19 October 1983; mass unemployment in nearly all African countries; energy crisis, water shortage; the collapse or imminent collapse of over-burdened health-care

delivery systems; the explosion in school enrolment; worsening housing and urban conditions; and rapid increase in the number of refugees, the poor and the destitute. No matter how one chooses to look at the situation, the scale of human suffering ought to bother the conscience of African political and administrative elites, and it should compel a frantic search for new ways of coping with these additional challenges of nation-building.

### *The Economic Environment*

But then the various African states have to reckon with a major limitation — the economy. The political and administrative elites may plan to wipe out starvation, illiteracy, disease and all traces and manifestations of poverty. They may even wish to join the nuclear race and send their own people to the moon. The only snag is how to find the resources. Of all the economic regions of the world, Africa records the lowest rate of economic growth. The oil-producing countries of Africa are sometimes classified as 'middle-income' economies mainly because of the contribution made by petroleum to their GDPs. However, the recent slump in the oil market has revealed how vulnerable these middle-income countries' are. Like their less-endowed counterparts, they too have had to come to terms with serious deficits and balance-of-payments problems.

The economic situation in Africa has been worsened by the decline of the primary production sector. In the early part of the 1960s, agriculture was the mainstay of many African economies. By the early 1970s agriculture had lagged so terribly behind that many of these countries became net importers of food.

The geographic and climatic factors may be two of the factors responsible for the recession in the agricultural sector. For better or worse, large portions of Africa's land area are divided between swampy creeks and arid zones. The Atlantic coast of West Africa, down to the Bight of Biafra and the Equator belong to the wet, thickly-forested zone. The Sahara

Desert in the north, the Sahelian region (stretching from Mauritania in the west to parts of the Horn of Africa in the east), the Kalahari Desert in the south, and the Namib Desert in the south-west all of these belong to the arid zone. It is, however, possible (as demonstrated by the Libyan Arab Jamhariya) for man to "tame" the desert and cope effectively with ecological disasters. Formulating and implementing such a policy as would reverse the major natural disadvantages are consequently part of the responses to the challenges of nation-building.

#### *Political Environment*

As the functionalist school is wont to emphasize, the functions of political systems include interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, political recruitment, resource mobilization and policy formulation.<sup>2</sup> The environmental factors identified in the preceding sections naturally fall under the category of problems which are of interest to the political elites. While the external environment may sometimes restrict the options available to the political class, it undoubtedly provides the political class with a limitless scope — perhaps, a *raison d'être* for their very existence. Thus, members of the class tend to be engaged in endless debates over what to do with the environmental problems — ranging from the problems of "tribalism" to those of economic and social development. In between these two categories are the problems of "nepotism", "corruption" and mismanagement none of which escape the attention of, or fail to attract comments from, the politicians and the politically active elements in society.

One problem which the African administrator frequently faces with his political environment is traceable to the lack of consensus on major socio-economic and political issues. The experience of Africa over the past 20 years or so reveals that the continent is still searching for a *developmental* ideology. At times, the capitalist West serves as an inspiration to development planning. At other times, Africa looks up to the

Soviet Union and/or Red China in matters pertaining to plan formulation and implementation. In our attempt to tackle the multifarious problems facing our societies, it might be necessary to start with an ideology of "national interest". This pragmatic approach has the advantage of forging a consensus among conflicting viewpoints in each nation. At the same time, it serves to protect the sovereignty of each country in Africa.

The second problem associated with the political environment is the nature of the political system in which an administrator operates. In response to the various environmental pressures, the countries of Africa have adopted different political models, viz. multi-party democratic model, one-party participatory model, the praetorian (military) model or "zero-party" option. The question is where does the career bureaucracy fit in?

### **THE POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION OF DEVELOPMENT: A CONCEPTUAL SCHEME**

The preceding section focuses on the external environment of public administration, and in so doing, identifies the socio-economic and political challenges of nation-building. What constitutes the optimum relationship between politics and administration, especially within the framework of the challenges of nation-building?

Conflicting views have been expressed as to what should be the pattern of relationship between politics and administration in a period of rapid transition. Whereas a school of thought prefers to resolve the dilemma from the 'political' angle, another school carves out a definite role for administration. Yet another point of view visualizes a situation whereby both politics and administration would work in perfect harmony. For analytical purpose, let us examine the three hypotheses frequently advanced:

- (a) In coping with the challenges of nation-building, which

- are essentially political, administration has to be subservient to and assessed from the angle of politics;
- (b) The challenges of nation-building and the problems of rapid transition warrant a technocratic response; as such professionalism must be accorded due importance, and technical decisions must be "insulated" from the "corrupting" and extraneous influence of politics;
  - (c) In a period of rapid transition, the will of the people must be ascertained through political means, but the translation of the common weal into concrete programmes requires the mutual co-operation of politics and administration.

#### *The Political-Control School*

The argument in favour of the political control of the bureaucracy starts on the basis of the premise that representative government is preferable to other forms of government. It then proceeds to identify the primary facilitators of representative government, viz. political parties, interest groups, legislative bodies, judicial institutions, the mass media, etc. In the context of the experience of the erstwhile colonial territories, the bureaucracy was not regarded as one of the agents of representative government: It was perceived as the principal instrument of colonial repression. It was the colonial bureaucracy that clamped the nationalist leaders into jail, muffled the press, collected and squandered poll taxes, and did everything possible to block the colonies' independence. It is little surprising that while fighting for political independence, the nationalist leaders were at the same time insisting on the Africanization of the civil service as well as on local political control of the bureaucracy.

The introduction of the cabinet system of government especially in the former British territories, and the appointment of Africans into ministerial positions witnessed the first major attempt to make administration a 'servant' of policy. With cabinet government, came the doctrines of parliamentary supremacy, collective responsibility and of the political neutrality of the civil service. The first doctrine, parliamen-

tary supremacy, is nothing but a reaffirmation of the principle of popular sovereignty and a constant reminder to technocrats and bureaucrats that their authority derives from the will of the people. The doctrine of collective responsibility reinforces that of popular sovereignty. The contrast to the early colonial days when bureaucrats were virtual heads of departments and were in no way accountable to a representative body, the doctrine of collective responsibility presupposes that the ministers — as political heads of their ministries — would be collectively responsible for the policies of the government, but individually responsible for the administration of the departments within their portfolios.

To support the twin doctrine of parliamentary supremacy and collective responsibility, a third doctrine — that of the political neutrality of civil servants — was introduced. It was this doctrine which formed the basis of the “career” service. As explained in various documents, the concept of political neutrality requires the career service to be loyal to the government of the day. Members of the service are also expected to subscribe to the traditional ethos of anonymity and impartiality. In return, they are to enjoy “security of tenure” which in effect means that no matter which government is in power, their appointments could not be determined unless on grounds of misconduct or inefficiency.

Two issues keep cropping up when the matter of the political neutrality of the civil service is raised, viz. loyalty, and security of tenure. It is all well and good for the bureaucracy to keep professing its political neutrality, but when this concept is held up against the realities in which the bureaucracy operates, the political-control school spots a big discrepancy. Even after ministers had been appointed to serve as political heads of departments, the career bureaucracy still retained much power and commanded a lot of prestige. In Kenya, civil servants were posted to the provincial administration to serve as District Commissioners. In this capacity they came in close contact with the citizenry and made pronouncements of great political significance.<sup>3</sup> In Nigeria,

thirteen years of military rule pushed civil servants into political roles thus calling into question the idea that career officials could ever be 'neutral' or 'anonymous'.

What the advocates of political control of the bureaucracy probably object to is not the growing influence of career officials – which in any case is an inevitable development in a period of transition – but their claim to absolute neutrality. The political class frequently believes that the challenges of nation-building are not merely of a technical nature but are also of great political moment. Flowing from this premise is the politician's view that if at all anyone is to exercise power, it must be himself or someone that is very much on his own side. Therefore, if civil servants wish to continue to occupy a strategic position in the process of nation-building, so the argument goes, they know what to do – that is, demonstrate absolute loyalty not just to the government of the day, but also the ruling party and its policies. However, if a civil servant as much as indicates his preference for a political party or programme, his security of tenure disappears. In other words, his loyalty to a political party might mean his having to tender his resignation in the event of that party being thrown out of office. The civil servant can hardly regard that as a tempting proposition.

Apart from the threat to the career officials' jobs, political control (tending towards politicization) might demote the rational sense and upgrade mediocrity. Many of the decisions frequently taken "on political grounds" might in fact be nothing more than mere apologia for ineptitude, corruption and extravagance. Hence, the technocrats' plea that *professional* decisions be "insulated" from politics.

### *The Technocratic Viewpoint*

In contrast to the political-control school which rests its case on legitimacy and popular sovereignty, the technocratic viewpoint anchors its position on professionalism. The technocrats seek to puncture the political-control argument by pointing to instances whereby policy-makers derive their

legitimacy not from the ballot box but from the barrel of the gun. What difference is there, for example, between a political head of department *appointed* by military decree, and civil servant appointed on the basis of his qualifications and experience?

The technocrats further maintain that even when the legitimacy of a government is not in doubt, the survival of any democratic policy depends on how ingenious the policy-makers are in identifying and utilizing expertise in different areas. As the argument goes, the more complex the issues of development and nation-building becomes, the greater the need for persons with specialized knowledge and/or skills. The technocrats turn the political-control school's argument round and insist that the challenges of nation-building are technical and technological rather than political. To this extent, not only should career officials continue to occupy important positions in the policy process but should also derive their authority from being professionals rather than from the political sphere. This is probably one of the very few attempts ever made to justify a person's eating his cake and having it.

The technocrats' argument seems very convincing: the challenges of nation-building actually point to the need for professionals and experts. Nonetheless, how can career officials at one and the same time expect to be influential in the policy process and be "insulated" from what might to all intents and purposes be the consequences of their policies? The second point against professionalism — of shall we say, professionalism for its own sake — is that such a concept is ridden with far too many limitations. As Harold Laski once argued, a political system that fails to keep the expert under control,

will lack insight into the movement and temper of the public mind. It will push its private nostrums in disregard of public wants... It will mistake its technical results for social wisdom, and it will fail to see the limits within

which its measures are capable of effective application. For the expert, by definition, lacks contact with the plain man.<sup>4</sup>

We have so far argued as if every career officer is an "expert" or "professional". In actual situations, this may not be so. The administrative and general executive classes, for instance, tend to comprise persons with general educational backgrounds. It is also likely that the bulk of officers in these classes are posted or seconded to positions without regard to their backgrounds and experience in the service. Unless the various career (services) develop a professional ethos, their claim to merit and objectivity will never be taken seriously by the political class. What do we mean by the professional ethos? According to Adebayo Adedeji, the main features of a profession are:

...specificity of expertise; higher qualification; self-education; ethical sustenance; fiduciary relations; colleague control; and recognition.<sup>5</sup>

*Politics and Administration: Need for Mutual Co-operation*

Perhaps the best way of resolving the long-drawn conflict between politics and administration is to work out a system which promotes mutual respect and co-operation between the political class and the bureaucracy. Nothing will be gained by emphasizing the importance of one to the exclusion of the other. As Adedeji advises,

...the politicians should strive assiduously to politicize the civil servants while they (the civil servants) on their part should use every available opportunity to civilize the politicians.<sup>6</sup>

The civil service by nature is averse to politicization or attempted politicization. Yet, there is something to be said for the bureaucracy acquainting itself with the basic policy and programmes of all political parties, in general, and of the

ruling party, in particular. Politicization should also include political education — especially in the area of ethics and values. Certainly, in addition to technical competence, many classes of government employees (among them immigration and customs personnel, agricultural extension workers and the staff of security agencies) need to be imbued with the values of discipline, courage, patriotism, loyalty, commitment and dedication to work, and probity.

How the civil service goes about “civilizing” the politicians depends largely on the political environment. Some political systems are such that do not admit of any interference with, or deviation from, a chartered course. In such systems, career administrators would simply have to be content with the implementation of laid-down policies. In many other systems, it is possible for the bureaucracy to extend the frontiers of administrative rationality by presenting along with their submission, facts, figures and content analyses of divergent opinions on any given subject.

We have so far examined from a conceptual angle the question of how politics relates to administration. The next section focuses on actual trends in some African countries.

### **POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION IN AFRICA: PATTERNS AND TRENDS**

It is not possible to describe the patterns prevailing in Africa within the compass of a chapter such as this. However, we shall focus attention on experiences in, and lessons from, a few countries — notably, Kenya, Zambia, and Nigeria.

#### *Legal, Constitutional Basis*

By and large, the idea of a career service has taken firm roots in many African countries. One major reason for this is the foundation laid in the final days of colonial rule, that is, before the process of gradual dismantling and “reconstruc-

tion" began. In nearly all African countries, it is possible to point to constitutional provisions and/or special enactments confirming the position of the career service. The Constitution of Kenya of 1969 provides that the loyalty of the civil servant was to the State and the government of the day. In Zambia, government officials cannot hold executive positions in the United National Independent Party (UNIP) while in the civil service. In Nigeria, the status and functions of the Civil Service Commission are "entrenched" in the Constitution.

#### *Changes in the Status of Civil Servants*

The legal, constitutional provisions notwithstanding, changes have taken place in the status and role of the civil service in Africa. The direction of change and its impact on the work of administration depend on three major factors, viz., the nature of each political system, the ideological orientation of the ruling group, and socio-political changes.

One factor conditioning the status and role of the career service is the political model adopted at any point in time. A one-party participatory system or a praetorian, military model narrows down the area of political differences and, as such, makes it less distasteful for the career service to be "politically involved". In contrast, a multi-party system leads to polarization of views, and therefore confronts the bureaucracy with a problem of choice.

#### *Zambia: Controlled Politicization?*

The one-party states in which the civil servants are likely to be involved in political or quasi-political roles include Tanzania, Zambia, Kenya, and Sierra Leone. In Zambia, the Head of the Civil Service is not just a political appointee; he is a political functionary. This position was explained by President Kaunda in a major reorganization of the administration carried out in 1968, viz:

the Civil Service should have, at its head, a Secretary-General to the Government who was a politician and, for

that matter, of Cabinet rank. In arriving at this decision, I was alive to the fact that the Civil Service was the principle vehicle for translating Government policy into actions and that it needed a head who understood the aspirations of the Party as well as those of the Government.<sup>7</sup>

In other reorganization carried out ten years after (i.e. in December 1978), the various service commissions (civil service commission, teaching service commission, police service commission, and prisons service commission) came under direct political control. As part of this (1978) reorganization, the four service commissions were transferred to a new office of the civil service in the Prime Minister's Office. The Head of the new civil service office has the status of Secretary of State and he is a member of parliament as well as of the UNIP Central Committee.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Kenya: Aborted Politicization?*

In Kenya, another one-party State, the clamour for the political control of the bureaucracy dates back to the period of nationalist struggle. At that time, the bureaucracy was perceived as one of the instruments of coercion and intimidation in the hands of the colonial authorities. Political independence witnessed an enhanced position of the bureaucracy, rather than what the radical wing of KANU expected – the bureaucracy's total submission to the will of the ruling party.<sup>9</sup> The top hierarchy of the provincial administration was dominated by career officials. At the headquarters level, the permanent secretaries performed functions which the politicians (especially back-bench members of parliament) believed to be theirs' (the politicians'). The friction between politics and administration was carried even to state ceremonial occasions at which the personnel on both sides argued over the order of precedence and protocol arrangements. In March 1965, the then MP for Butere constituency, Mr Martin Shikuku moved in parliament that:

civil servants in all constituencies be required by law to be

responsible to the elected representatives of those constituencies.<sup>10</sup>

The motion (though extreme in its demand for political control) was endorsed by the majority of the back-bench MPs. It represented a backlash against what was regarded as the bureaucratic invasion, and imminent take-over of the political kingdom.

On other occasions, the criticism of the Kenyan civil service centred not on its growing power and influence, but on how the power and influence were misused. Oginga Odinga for one felt that the civil service tail was always tempted to wag the political dog:

The civil service, I found, could frustrate the best plans of the best intentioned government. Given a chance, top civil servants can direct a minister, not the other way about. An inexperienced, naive or unconscientious minister can be committed to a policy in flat contradiction to the overall policy of his government...<sup>11</sup>

All the same, the attempt to give the Kenyan bureaucracy the desired political direction has not been entirely successful. At least three factors account for this — the lack of an ideological rallying point, the loose structure of KANU, and the bureaucracy's corporate assertiveness.

Although Kenya is a one-party state, the ruling party, KANU, does not have the revolutionary zeal of Tanzania's *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* or the disciplined and grass-roots oriented organization of *Partie Democratique du Guinea*. The rallying point is *Harambee*, but each faction within KANU has its own idea how the philosophy should be operationalized.

If the ruling party is weak and loosely organized, the bureaucracy is held firmly together not only by the principles of chain and unity of command but also by a comradeship which waxes strong in the face of 'external' threats. Any

attempt by the political class to move against a single career official might lead to a closing of ranks by civil servants and a deliberate slowing-down of government operations.

*Nigeria: Systematic De-Politicization?*

Nigeria is another good example of a country where political actions unfavourable to the civil service had adverse consequences on the morale and productivity of officers. Unlike Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania and Sierra Leone which are one-party states, Nigeria adopted a multi-party system. Also, in contrast to the one-party states where ideology and/or party organization affect the role of the career bureaucracy, the dominant factor in Nigeria is socio-political change. In other words, the position and status of the civil service have fluctuated with changes in the socio-political environment.

The Nigerian civil service started with immense powers. In the colonial era, its role extended beyond mere implementation of policy to the spheres of policy formulation and policy adjudication. The strategic positions in the central Secretariat and in the provincial administration were occupied by expatriate officials — the Political Officers and the staff of professional departments such as Public Works, Education, Survey, Health and Medical, and Judicial. The approach of independence witnessed a re-examination of the role of the bureaucracy. The main nationalist groups (among them, the then National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, the Action Group, and the Northern People's Congress) decried the situation whereby decisions affecting the destiny of the people were taken by non-representative bodies. The colonial authorities responded in 1952 with a token concession: ministers were to be appointed from among the political parties, but the career officials would continue to be responsible for the administration of their departments. This compromise formula was rejected by many of the nationalist leaders. The Action Group, for instance, came out with a policy of 'non-fraternization' with the colonial regime over the issue of individual and collective responsibility. With the promulgation of the Federal Constitution in 1954, the basic features of the West-

minister, parliamentary system of government appeared at the federal and regional levels — viz. parliamentary supremacy, ministerial and collective responsibility, and the political neutrality of the civil service.

The Westminster model was applied until environmental pressures began to undermine its effectiveness. By 1962, the system had broken down — at least, in the then western region of Nigeria. As a result of the crisis in the ruling party, the Action Group, a state of emergency was declared in that part of Nigeria. The regional parliament was dissolved, and civil servants became *de facto* policy-makers. If this was an aberration, the nine years of technocratic resurgence under Gowon's military regime — 1966-75 — actually confirmed the political leadership role of career officials. During this golden age of technocracy in Nigeria, literally every rule of British parliamentary democracy was broken. The government ruled by edicts and decrees rather than through legislative bodies. Commissioners were hand-picked to serve as "political" heads of ministries. Civil servants made ponderous statements on government policy. In the meantime, the military regime was trying in vain to fend off increasing allegations of corruption, and the major public utilities were plagued by serious operational problems and crippling inefficiency. At the height of public resentment against Gowon's regime, a group of officers led by the late General Murtala Muhammed effected "a change of leadership" on July 29, 1975. In the subsequent house-cleaning carried out by the Muhammed regime, approximately 10,000 government employees lost their jobs. The career public servants had eaten the forbidden fruit by flouting the principle of anonymity. They were now atoning for that sin through the direct assault on their security of tenure. Moreover, the new military regime sought to clip the wings of the civil servants by instructing them to take the back seat. From then on, permanent secretaries were not to attend meetings of the Executive Council unless in the company of their Commissioners. Naturally, the humiliation suffered by the career officials adversely affected their

morale, their willingness to take discretionary decisions, and their over-all productivity. General Obasanjo who was then chief-of-Staff, Supreme Headquarters, had to go on the air to appeal to public servants to leave the Great Purge behind them and settle down to work. Whether it was ever the same again is left for future in-depth studies to determine.

Probably as a result of the experience under the military, the 1979 Constitution took great pains to "insulate" the career service from politics. Government employees (including university lecturers and professors!) are forbidden to identify publicly with any political party or platform. They can contest elections only after relinquishing their positions in the career service.

The Constitution also distinguish between the office of Secretary to the Government (which is essentially political) and that of Head of the Civil Service (which is administrative).

The issues which the 1979 Constitution did not completely resolve include the tenure and status of permanent secretaries and the political neutrality of civil servants. The position of permanent secretary, like many others, was a "post of confidence" in that the President or Governor could appoint whosoever he wished into it. However, many civil servants were still labouring under the impression that it was a "career post". At the Workshop on the Relationship between Policy-makers and the Higher Civil Service (ASCON, 1981) it was agreed that the post was indeed one of confidence, and that appointment into it was at the discretion of the Chief Executive. If a person ceases to be permanent secretary, he would revert to the position he was holding in the civil service before his appointment.

The question relating to the status of permanent secretaries vis-a-vis the Ministers was not so easy to answer. The 1979 Constitution made glib references to "chief executives" of ministries, departments, divisions and offices of government. The ministers felt that the term "chief executives" referred to them since they were the President's principal agents in the ministries. The permanent secretaries countered

by saying that as Chief Accounting Officers of ministries and as persons vested by the Constitution with the authority to manage and control personnel matters in these ministries, they, the permanent secretaries were the genuine "chief executives". Again the Workshop produced a compromise: the ministers were the President's "Principal Agents" in the ministries, but the permanent secretaries were the Chief Accounting Officers. In any case, both the ministers and the permanent secretaries were required to work in harmony and in an atmosphere marked by mutual confidence and respect.<sup>12</sup>

The issue of political neutrality is not yet resolved. The multiplicity of political parties in Nigeria and the past experience of the civil service in assuming political roles certainly dictate extreme caution in the matter of political involvement. Nonetheless, the period of rapid transition is such that the bureaucracy has to be actively involved not just in policy implementation but also in the evaluation of development strategies, options identification and policy formulation. It must be noted that when the civilian regime was again overthrown by the military on December 31, 1983, civil servants were appointed as secretaries to Government and Heads of Civil Services thus combining the *political* with the conventional *administrative* roles.

### ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS TO THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT: A SUMMATION

The public services in Africa do not constitute autonomous systems. They are part of an ever-changing socio-economic and political environment. The following is a check-list of the types of environmental changes that will need anticipating or adjusting to:

#### *The Society*

Diversity is the rule rather than an exception in African societies. The administrator will have to anticipate and cope

with conflicting demands. The various ethnic communities, the interest groups, the constituency interests — all of these make constant and insistent demands on government. Therefore in addition to carrying a universalistic-oriented slide rule, the administrator must be conscious of pluralistic tendencies and take cognizance of factors making for national integration.

### *The Economy*

While the demands on government are limitless, the resources are not simply limited but are decreasing at an alarming rate. The bureaucracy must be prepared to pioneer the much-needed managerial and technological revolution. It must also develop effective Early Warning Signals (EWS) on the general and specific performances of the economy. It is, however, not enough to possess sensing devices unless “the results of the analysis of economic trends are communicated to the policy-makers promptly and in clear, lucid language”.

### *The Political Class*

The relationship between the political class and the career service hinges on the two sides understanding each other's points of view. The politicians place a high premium on loyalty and commitment. The bureaucratic class emphasize professionalism. Certainly between the two claims an acceptable balance can be worked out. Loyalty is important, but so is professional competence. If the bureaucracy can sell this idea to the political class, the long-drawn battle between the two would be over in no time.

And, if one may ask, what is the end which the constant struggles for power seek to attain? The political class constantly looks for ways to maximize its power. So does the bureaucracy. The question which is not yet satisfactorily answered is “power for what purpose?” It is not possible that behind the claims and counter-claims are unabashed drives for sheer naked power? The political class (including military

rulers) most frequently take vital decisions without regard for facts, figures or the benefits of rigorous analysis of intervening variables. The bureaucratic class is perhaps no better. It too is not incapable of arrogant and thoughtless exercise of power. Is it not about time that each public service in Africa worked towards a national consensus which would underpin major policy issues? The interest of the people ought to be paramount in the minds of both the political elites and the Higher Civil Service. As a first step towards providing a definition for that nebulous phrase, "national interest", we should examine the challenges of nation-building as realistically and objectively as possible.

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## *Chapter Five*

### THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN AFRICA

A.H. RWEYEMAMU

The political environment of public administration in Africa has not been static over the past two decades when the majority of the African countries attained their independence. Equally true is the proposition that the factors and forces which constitute the political environment of public administration tend to vary both in their nature and their intensity as far as the various African countries are concerned. In part this is because the African countries themselves are not homogeneous. We are referring to the 50 independent African states which because of their differences in political culture, socio-economic structures, organization of political power and historical experiences, have developed differing capacities to respond to internal and external opportunities as well as destabilizing shocks.

The size, normative values, and organizational behaviour of the public service in Egypt, Mozambique, Swaziland and Togo are not quite the same. While the administrative systems of these countries can be compared and contrasted with one another, every analytical category of comparison would tend to show different experience for each of the countries, thereby rendering the comparative analysis superficial. As we make generalizations about the ecology or political environment of public administration in Africa we should bear in mind the diversity of the continent.

## ADMINISTRATION AND POLITICS

There are a number of theoretical and practical issues which we have to resolve or at least appreciate with reference to the study and analysis of public administration. In view of the differences in our educational background and the cultural context in which we acquired our education, including differences in ideological orientation being pursued by our various governments, we are likely to hold conflicting views as to how one should proceed to analyse the role of public administration.

The universal principles about public administration which are relevant for our discussion are three. First, in every government there are political as well as administrative functions, and public administration is presumed to be an instrumental apparatus in the performance of government functions. Whether in Washington or Moscow, public administration or the bureaucracy is perceived as an instrument for the execution of public policy as formulated by political authorities, irrespective of the nature of these authorities.

This view of the role of the bureaucracy, requires more clarification. The old school of thought in which students of public administration tended to emphasize the dichotomy between policy-making and policy-implementing functions of government has long been forgotten. This view while useful for analytical purposes, in reality tends to be misleading. Senior administrators do influence, and in most cases shape, the direction of public policy. This is more so in recent years in response to the expansion and complexity of the business of government. Few politicians anywhere have the time and know-how to formulate public policy relating to technical aspect of science and technology. Thus there is an intimate relationship between politicians or policy makers and the senior civil servants in matters relating to public policy-making.

Secondly, public administration can only be understood in its political context.<sup>1</sup> This is obvious in the sense that one cannot appreciate the role of public administration say in the

Soviet Union without some understanding of the political framework in which it functions. The issue has greater relevance for Africa in view of the political turmoil we have experienced since independence. Efforts to improve administrative performance in a country are likely to be hopeless if they did not take into account the goals, capabilities and structure of the political system in which public administrators have to function. In Africa where public administration is viewed as an instrument of modernization, politics acquires greater importance. It may be stated that the effectiveness of public administration as an instrument of development is a function of the quality of political leadership in the country.

Thirdly, public administration as a means for accomplishing the ends of the state or as a technique or skills for doing a job required by the state is part of modern technology and is therefore culturally neutral. If you do not like the British parliamentary systems of government you can still proceed to England and learn how the British manage their subsidized medical services without being influenced by their ideas of democracy. Equally, if you want to be a pilot you can learn to do so in the Soviet Union, Japan or the United States without fear of ideological contamination. The whole concept of international civil service and technical assistance programmes are based on this theory that one can borrow or hire special skills for a specific job to be done irrespective of the political systems and ideologies which prevail in the world today.<sup>2</sup> This is the thinking which in some countries lead to viewing civil servants as apolitical, professional men and women, ready to serve whatever government comes into power. As in all efforts to simplify diverse and complex phenomena, there is always a gap between theory and practice.

What is the appropriate theoretical framework for the study and analysis of public administration in Africa? The answer seems to be, it depends on whom you are asking. Western scholars take their governmental organization and political process as a framework within which to analyse the

organization and operation of public administration in Africa. The parliamentary system of government is the key concept in this model. The electorate is sovereign and its sovereignty is exercised at the ballot box or by parliament or Congress. In the British Westminster model the Prime Minister and his cabinet constitute the executive branch of government answerable to the people through parliament. A loss of majority on a policy issue, means the house has to be dissolved and elections called to seek the verdict of the electorate.

The civil service provides continuity in the face of changing political leadership, competitive party politics, and the verdict of the electorate.

The western concept of viable political institutions within which the bureaucracy operates is based on a multiplicity of institutional equilibrium or institutional checks and balances. No one single political leader can buy off all the independent interest groups and the mass media. Former President Richard Nixon and his Watergate experience provide a good example. The fears of "peasants" or "workers" being exploited by government or employers does not arise because government is not the main employer in industrial democracies. Secondly, each interest group is organized separately and autonomously to protect and promote its own interest. It is this multiplicity of social and professional organizations which Fred Riggs calls extra-bureaucratic political institutions which preserve individual liberty and prevent the emergency of dictators.<sup>3</sup>

The civil servants in this context are neither the most highly paid group in society nor the most highly admired social class. They are precisely what the term implies "servants". The richest and/or most influential people in industrial societies are found among private business firms, commercial farmers, trade union leaders, directors of multinational corporations, publishers, authors and owners of newspapers and other mass media.

The political context of public administration in socialist countries is of course quite different from the capitalist

model. The supreme body in Marxist countries is the communist party. In the Soviet Union for example civil servants must be both experts and also dedicated communists. For a civil servant to rise to the top cadre of the bureaucracy he must be a tested member of the communist party. Consequently, in the Soviet Union it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between a "Politician" and a civil servant. The two roles tend to be interchangeable. A person may be elected to the membership of the central committee while at the same time retaining his job as a manager of a state farm or factory.

In Marxist-Leninist thought politics as such does not exist. The dictatorship of the proletariat does not allow competitive party politics or private ownership of the means of production and distribution. Marxism-Leninism emphasizes "democratic centralism" meaning that a decision made by the top organ of the party must be carried out without question by those below. This is the principle of "subordination of the lower party organs to the higher".<sup>4</sup> The leading role of the party in society is unquestionable. "It is the vanguard and organized detachment of the working-class, the highest form of the class association of the proletariat, the instrument of dictatorship of the proletariat and the embodiment of its unity and will".<sup>5</sup> The state is the executive and coercive arm of the party.<sup>6</sup>

Marxist scholars look at the African political process in terms of the inevitability of class conflict and class struggle, with a conviction that despite setbacks from time to time, ultimately victory is on the side of "revolutionary democratic forces" representing the exploited workers and peasants. The state is viewed as an instrument of political domination and a source of economic power by the petty bourgeoisie who control it. The petty bourgeoisie include political leaders, bureaucrats, managers of state economic enterprises, senior members of the armed forces and the police alliance with private business interests and commercial farmers.<sup>7</sup>

The transformation and development of the society is not possible according to the Marxists until the fundamental

social contradictions have been resolved. This happens when a group of dedicated Marxists, supported by the progressive elements among the workers and peasants, capture political power, by whatever means, and are able to dismantle the bourgeois state and proclaim in its place a dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is clear from the preceding digression that public administration whether viewed analytically as a field of study or functionally as a process, cannot be understood outside its political context. The theoretical frameworks developed in industrial societies and Marxist countries are relevant and useful only when their political contexts are taken into account. However, the question still remains as to how we proceed to study and analyse public administration in Africa. In other words what is the political context of public administration in Africa? The question is not as simple as it sounds. The answer depends on who is answering, namely, whether he shares Marxist or western political values. Secondly, as we stated already, Africa itself is not one state with a single political culture and historical experience. It is with these considerations that we proceed to make some observations on the subject of this paper.

### THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Public administration functions within a political environment. It influences and is influenced by the political process of which it is a part. Political environment means the behavioral consequences of social, economic, political and cultural forces in a society. These forces interact with the external forces to produce conditions that determine the patterns of behaviour of the polity, including the bureaucracy. The structures and process for the organization and deployment of political power and the nature of property ownership have a decisive influence on the pattern of behaviour and activities of the public service. As John

Okumu has observed with reference to Kenya, "civil servants are by no means neutral instruments for progress but are bestowed with a political role in the widest sense".<sup>8</sup>

African civil servants may be called petty bourgeoisie by Marxist academics but we should not forget that most of these people still have their roots in the traditional setting. An African permanent secretary may own a modern house in the city and some shares in private company but he may be the only child in a family of say six who went beyond high school. He cannot sever relations with his brothers and sisters and the rest of his extended family who still live in the traditional environment. The demands from his village as well as his sense of moral obligation to his extended family constitute the type of linkage that is anything but antagonistic. This relationship also affects his monthly pay cheque to a considerable degree. All these pressures and forces from the traditional social structure and the political forces in the modern sector of the society, constitute the political environment of public administration in Africa. In order to establish a better picture of the environment of public administration in Africa we must go back to the colonial era at least to see what administrative values were imparted to the successors of the colonial regimes. The colonial state was an authoritarian and administrative structure of authority, and it comprised what James Coleman terms two sets of actors, the administrators and the administratees.<sup>9</sup> The British imparted on the colonies its idea of generalist administrative class, a class that constituted the top cadre of the administration. Secretaries of departments and services as well as provincial and district commissioners and other senior administrators were selected from this class to perform semi-political functions in an otherwise administrative state. The entire system was geared to maintain law and order and to collect personal taxes using the colonial police force and native chiefs to facilitate this process. The consequence was an elitist, generalist class of snobbish and racist administrators with first degrees in economics, politics and philosophy from Oxford,

Cambridge and the like. Many of them came from the English aristocratic families with a mission to rule the rest of the world. Of course Africans were deliberately excluded from joining this administrative ruling class otherwise the whole purpose of colonial control would be defeated. As independence approached, however, the British rushed to promote and socialize a few African elite so that they could provide continuity in sustaining the British concept of administration.

The complex tasks of social transformation, nation-building and development in Africa call for precisely the opposite of what the British administrative class had to offer. Needed are specialized knowledge and skills in technical subjects especially in agriculture, veterinary science, forestry, engineering, medicine, economics, education, management, business administration, accounting, law, etc. This is not to down-grade the functionality or the supporting role of other subjects especially those in the humanities and the social sciences. The question has to do with emphasis and priorities in the light of limited and scarce resources. There is not very much to administer in Africa other than development projects. The post-colonial African states need nation builders especially in the form of intermediate technologists like carpenters, brick-makers, electricians, plumbers, mechanics, nurses, pharmacists, and rural sociologists. Indeed, instead of national institutes of public administration which were founded on the eve of independence to train administrators in how to draft cabinet papers, development effort needs the support of institutes of technology and management, what the British call polytechnical institutes. The task at hand in Africa is not only to provide piped water, dispensaries, feeder roads, and schools to villages and urban centres, but also to maintain and equip these services and technologies. The post-colonial African administrator, if one is required that is, should be one characterized by a capacity for flexibility, innovation, creativity and development orientation.<sup>10</sup> This administrator should not stay in the capital city attending endless meetings and drafting memoranda; he

should be in the field providing technical advice and rendering assistance to the rural people as they struggle to get out of their miserable living conditions.

The colonial administrative state was apolitical in that it did not permit the development of orderly political processes including representative assemblies. It was also highly centralized. The governor and his secretariat were the apex of administrative power centred in the capital of the colonial territory. The secretaries of various services and departments as well as heads of field administration were all answerable to the governor and his secretariat. The entire administrative structure did not provide for devolution or decentralization of power and authority.

As African countries approached independence, the British colonial officials were anxious to leave behind their Westminster model of government. Thus the independence constitution in English-speaking African countries had to have entrenched clauses relating to the establishment of the Civil Service Commission, the Police Service Commission, the Judicial Service Commission, defining the procedure for appointments, promotions and dismissals. It also provided for autonomy of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Attorney General and the Comptroller and Auditor General. On top of these structures of power there was to be a parliament freely elected and a Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister and answerable to Parliament. The assumption was that election to parliament and regional representative bodies would be based on competitive party politics.

After attaining political power, African leaders quickly revised the independence constitutions. Under the new constitutions, all powers were centralized around the chief executive and the structures which were intended to generate and preserve parliamentary democracy were rendered empty shells.<sup>11</sup> The majority parties went further and resorted to the principle of winner-takes-all by declaring themselves the only legal parties in the countries they ruled. All pretences regarding separation of powers and supremacy of parliament

were put aside in favour of a centralized presidential system supported by an equally centralized one-party state symbolized by the same chief executive. The drive toward centralized political power led to the dismantling of all autonomous local authorities and their elected assemblies including the co-operation movement and trade unions. Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah and Tanzania under Julius Nyerere were the best examples in this direction. In 1962, Mr Nyerere defended his drive to concentrate all powers in the executive. His argument went as follows:

We recognize that the system of checks and balances is an admirable way of (sic) applying the breaks to social change. Our need is not for breaks — our lack of trained manpower and capital resources, and even our climate, act too effectively already. We need accelerators powerful enough to overcome the inertia bred of poverty, and the resistance which are inherent in all societies.<sup>12</sup>

Tanzania under President Julius Nyerere followed Ghana under Nkrumah almost step by step in the drive to centralize political power in the new one-party state and to dismantle all autonomous social institutions in the country. The posts of chiefs were abolished in 1963 apparently because of their unrepresentative character and their alleged connivance with colonial officials to suppress nationalist aspirations.<sup>13</sup> Their functions at the local level were transferred to the local party functionaries. With the proclamation of one-party state in 1965, parliament lost its supremacy to the ruling TANU party. In reality, however, political power did not reside in the party organs as such but the party president who symbolized both the supremacy of the party as well as the will of the new nation.

In Ghana, an amendment to the 1961 republican constitution in 1964 gave Kwame Nkrumah the power to dismiss judges of the high court at any time for reasons which to him appeared sufficient.<sup>14</sup> In Uganda in the late 1960s Prime

Minister Milton Obote declared himself President by first repudiating the constitution and resorting to the army to dismantle the Kabaka's palace and chasing him into exile where he died.<sup>15</sup>

The implications of these political events during the period following independence were to do away with representative government as was previously conceived by independence constitutions and in effect to disfranchise the citizens. What emerged was not the administrative state which was imposed on the Africans by the colonial regimes, it was the single-party state, equally imposed on the same Africans by the first generation of post-colonial nationalist leaders.

The single-party leaders could of course talk and pass resolutions but they had neither the skills nor the experience to manage a modern state let alone provide the technical services that the masses wanted. This is what enlarged the role of public administration. With power concentrated in the president's office and given the absence of local elected assemblies, the administration was in fact politicized by being given two hats. A regional Commissioner was both the representative of the chief executive as well as executive secretary of the party machine at the regional level. We know both from theory and experience that the politicization of the public service does not lead to an increase in the quality of administrative performance. The opposite is true. Politicians by their profession tend to succumb to pressures in order to gain popular support. Civil servants are normally screened from public exposure because they are expected to be men of professional integrity trained to tender unbiased professional advice to political authorities. When the latter are politicized the result is corruption, patronage, bribery and maladministration.

### LEGITIMACY AND GOVERNANCE

A realistic analysis of the political environment of public administration would be incomplete without raising some

questions about the legitimacy of government. The structures of governmental authority within which power is exercised and how that power is actually deployed provide a clue as to the patterns of linkages between government, bureaucracy and the society at large. The starting point is to ask a few fundamental questions, namely, what is government in Africa? Whose government is it? Another way to rephrase these questions is simply to study the location of sovereignty in the African political systems. Does sovereignty in the African concept of government lie with the people as a whole, the ruling party, the chief executive, the bureaucracy, the national parliament or the commander of the armed forces?

These questions relating to the legitimacy of government are relevant in part because there are very few African countries today in which groups of citizens have not tried or are not trying to overthrow their government by force, presumably because that is the only way left to change the government. It is very difficult to develop a competent and efficient public service in a country in which the government lacks popular support. The effectiveness in the performance of administrative functions is a function of constitutionalism, that is the legitimacy of the government in power.<sup>16</sup> The concept of public service or civil servants is based on the assumption that these men and women are accountable to the political authorities. The latter are in turn popularly elected and responsive to the wishes of the electorate. A self-imposed and unpopular military regime of the type we saw in Uganda a few years ago, or a one-man one-party dictatorship like that in Zaire today, do not provide a conducive environment for a vigorous system of public service.

A word of caution is necessary. Government during the last quarter of the 20th century is not a pre-colonial tribal chiefdom. It is a modern and complex form of human organization to preserve order and stability while also providing social services and the social infrastructure necessary to stimulate the economic and social development of the society.

To be able to work in an orderly manner, the government has to respond to the aspirations of the people it represents while taking into account the limitations and opportunities provided by the world in which we find ourselves. A combination of the people, their government and natural resources constitute a nation which in turn produces political leadership to guide the nation towards development and prosperity while preserving individual liberties and national security.

The development process requires a balanced combination of political leadership, trained and knowledgeable cadre of professionals and administrators capable of mobilizing internal and external resources required to translate aspirations into accomplishments. As Professor Merle Fainsod once put it:

Improvements in the effectiveness of development administration ultimately depend on the quality of training of the public servants who man it and on a social and political environment which liberates their energies. Structural adjustments can work no development miracles where administrative manpower is inadequate or the will to develop is lacking. The secret of development is not concealed in the interstices of governmental or administrative structure. Development takes place where skill supported by commitment and the human and material resources exist to translate dreams into actualities.<sup>17</sup>

Where do we get the skills and commitment which Professor Fainsod is talking about? Contrary to the view commonly held by foreign governments and donor agencies, Africa has a large reservoir of skilled manpower. The problem is that few African governments, and, particularly senior administrators, bother to make the best use of the available human resources. The colonial indoctrination and missionary paternalism were so deep on us that for most of our leaders in politics, government and the public sector, the words "expert", "consultant" and "adviser" are subconsciously associated with the white man. Of course when it suits us we talk of the problems

of "brain drain", but how many African governments have plans and strategies to attract and make optimal use of scarce skills?

The reasons for this attitude include a feeling of professional inadequacies which lead to a sense of insecurity in the incumbent administrator. Under a highly centralized regime, decisions on senior appointments and promotions are influenced by political considerations to maximize loyalty to the political leader rather than promote professional competence. This is one of the reasons why some skilled people leave their countries for jobs elsewhere. Political turmoil, tribal and ethnic considerations in some of our countries are also responsible for the constant brain drain. The commitment which Professor Fainsod demands as a condition for sustained development process is not something one can import. It refers to a political leadership that is committed to development rather than one that is keen on accumulation of personal wealth. This is the most sensitive problem and the key to African search for political order and economic development.

A military regime may be applauded for ousting an incompetent and corrupt regime but it is not a substitute for political leadership. Africa is full of examples to substantiate this observation. Political leadership come from within a community by whatever method members choose to identify and designate a member to be their spokesman. The mandate for spokespersonship of the community is subject to recall should the people concerned so wish. Commitment to development which come from responsible leadership is lacking in many African countries precisely because once a leader is elected to the presidency of the Republic or Kingdom, he proceeds to manipulate the very constitution and procedure under which he was put into power. The result is that it becomes impossible to replace him by constitutional means, and for all practical purposes he becomes president for life, the wishes of the electorate notwithstanding.

Politics is a necessary evil. Without it you have a police state. With it you may unjustly end up in detention. It is for

this reason that men of wisdom insist on effective means for political accountability as well as checks and balances in the organization and distribution of power. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. A professor of philosophy who has spent most of his adult life in Africa and has taught at an African University for over twenty-five years had this observation to make:

If the people had a greater say and the leaders a more stringent obligation to account for what they do and what they spend, the former would produce more and the latter spend less for the greater benefit and development of poor countries.<sup>18</sup>

Unless and until visible progress is made in the political environment all efforts at administrative training and reforms is like pouring water on a rock. It will not sink.

### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

It is impossible to make progress in economic and social development without a skilled, efficient and highly motivated cadre of administrators and managers of public affairs and institutions. The prospects for developing and retaining a professional and competent body of these men and women will largely depend on the progress made in resolving the crises of legitimacy and orderly political change in the African states. There cannot be political order in a country without widely accepted methods and procedure for holding political leaders accountable for their decisions and when necessary changing them.

Responsible and dynamic political leadership supported by a team of competent, well-trained and skilled administrators, managers, professionals and technicians constitute the prerequisite for the transformation and economic development of our stagnant societies. The task of persuading peasant farmers to grow more and better food and cash crops and the

urban factory worker to work harder and avoid wild-cat strikes, is the responsibility of elected political leaders at the grassroots as well as managers of public and private sector enterprises. Sooner or later, however, the peasant farmers and the urban workers are going to get tired of political rhetorics by politicians every year calling for sacrifices and hard work without tangible results for their efforts. In a majority of the African countries, the economic situation of peasants and urban workers is much worse than at the time of independence. A national revolution which takes too long to show results ends in disaster.

The political environment of public administration in Africa remains fluid and unpredictable. Until Africans face the reality of political power and reorganize their governmental structures of authority to make them accountable to the people, the struggle for power, for personal aggrandizement and corruption by politicians and administrators alike will continue to overshadow the imperatives for political order, rural transformation and national economic development. We all share in the responsibility for reconstructing our societies to make them better places for our children and their children.

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## COMMENTS ON PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE SECOND PLENARY SESSION

Although the subject addressed at the second plenary session was the Political Environment of Public Administration, participants' attention focused on the need for a genuinely African philosophy of development. It was widely felt that the time was ripe for the continent to cap its political independence with intellectual independence, and stop looking up to the technologically advanced societies in the East and West for solution to basic socio-economic and political problems.

The role and purpose of government was, for instance, an issue on which a purely African initiative was urgently required. It was the consensus that Africans ought to find answers to the following questions among others: What is government for? What is the purpose of power and for what ends should it be exercised? When politicians and career administrators haggle over power, what should be paramount in their minds?

Participants noted with dismay that in the previous two decades, power had been exercised in many African countries to settle old scores, to amass wealth, and to perpetuate the ruling cliques in power. The desire to serve the people and raise their standards of living had largely taken secondary positions.

Related to the question of power is the legitimacy of regimes. This was, in view of participants, a fundamental issue. Even though many governments in Africa started off on democratic lines, as soon as independence was achieved, many of the leaders dispensed even with the pretence to democratic rule. The new rulers simply destroyed the demo-

cratic ladder which they ascended to get to power.

But government which lacked legitimacy and failed to respond to the needs and yearnings of its people was doing a great disservice to itself. No matter how many times and how loudly such a government exhorted its people to "make sacrifices", the standard response of the people would be apathy, cynicism and nose-thumbing. Before a government could expect to mobilize the citizenry for development, it must first be armed with genuine mandate.

Apart from the discussions on the ideal political framework for African countries, participants examined the relationship between politics and administration. Conceptually, politics deals with the ends of government and is supposed to facilitate the realization of the democratic ideals of popular sovereignty and representative government. In contrast, administration is concerned with the means for the attainment of the ends. Whereas politics is in the realm of values, administration is sometimes seen as a value-neutral, professional process. It is this way of looking at the relationship between politics and administration which led some participants to conclude that, in the interest of efficiency, administration should be politically neutral. Many other participants, however, felt that in the context of the problems of nation-building in Africa, absolute political neutrality was not feasible. In the end, the consensus which emerged postulates a situation whereby African countries would strive toward professionally competent and performance-oriented public services while at the same time ensuring that the public services remain sensitive and responsible to environmental demands.

The status and position of career officials also engaged the attention of participants. Without prejudice to the demands of politicians for the "politicization" of certain high-level positions — especially, positions of confidence — participants were of the view that the development of professional career services ought to be the dominant concern of African countries.

The following is a summary of conclusions and recommendations which emerged at the end of the Second Plenary Session:

- (a) As advocated in the Lagos Plan of Action, Africa must now work out its own philosophy of development in place of alien, and some times, irrelevant theories of government and administration;
- (b) The legitimacy of government and its institutions must now be the primary concern of all Africans;
- (c) African countries must strive to develop and maintain professionally competent and performance-oriented public services;
- (d) It is not enough for the public services to be professionally competent, they should also be responsive to the yearnings and aspirations of the people as expressed through their popularly elected representatives;
- (e) Both the political and the administrative elites must, in whatever they do, put the interest and welfare of the people in the forefront;
- (f) Seminars, conferences and workshops should be constantly organized to identify strategies which the policy-makers and the administrators might adopt in coping with the problems of nation-building.

## *Chapter Six*

# ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS AND RESPONSES TO CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

ADEBAYO ADEDEJI

## INTRODUCTION

For almost a decade now, I have been raising the alarm about Africa's deteriorating economic condition. In February 1977, at the thirteenth session of the Economic Commission for Africa, I stated that:

Africa, more than the other third world regions, is faced with a development crisis of great portent. In spite of the region's ample natural resources and a favourable population-to-natural resources ratio, in spite of the generous and even indiscriminating incentives for foreign private enterprise, in spite of our participation in numerous conferences, both regional and interregional, and in spite of our adherence to orthodox theories and prescriptions — in spite of all these — neither high rates of growth nor diversification nor an increasing measure of self-reliance and dynamism seems to be within our reach.<sup>1</sup>

Since then, I have, on several occasions, tried to identify the nature of Africa's economic crisis, its origin, and how best it can be tackled. Indeed, I have been crying aloud about what I have termed as Africa's devastating economic crisis and about the need — indeed, the necessity — to do something about them in order to avert possible economic collapse

and the inevitable consequent social and political disaster in Africa.

Today, Africa faces a plethora of crises — the food crisis, the energy crisis, the balance of trade crisis, the debt crisis and the crisis of economic management. We may also add to the list the climatic and ecological crisis resulting in the growing desertification of the continent, persistent droughts and consequent crops failures, hunger and famine.

In light of these serious economic problems, is it surprising that many futurists see no bright economic prospects for Africa? V.S. Naipul even went so far as to assert that "Africa has no future" and both the World Bank and DAC in their recent projections about Africa's economic future were no less pessimistic. Even the ECA in its Silver Jubilee publication entitled *ECA and Africa's Development 1983-2008: a preliminary perspective study*, showed clearly that not only is Africa's current "economic environment unfavourable" but also that if historical trends were to continue, the future that will emerge will be "horrendous". According to the ECA historical trend scenario, Africa will require more food imports by 2008 than it does now; over 90 per cent of all the capital goods required for development would have to be imported, and critical intermediate goods, like fertilizers and cement, would still have to be brought from outside Africa.

On the social side, the ECA preliminary perspective study went on to show that under the historical trends scenario, all services would continue to deteriorate both in terms of quantity and quality. Only a diminishing proportion of a rapidly increasing population would have access to education, health and water services. Cities would become over-populated shanty town, as housing would become less available. Consequently, riots, crimes and misery would become the order of the day by the year 2008 if present trends do not change. In such a rapidly deteriorating economic environment what are the implications for public administration? What impact will such deterioration have on the Public Service? What administrative adjustments would be impelled

in response to such changes in the economic environment?

The ECA perspective study also examined Africa's future economic prospects based on another scenario. This is a scenario based not only on the will to survive but also on the possibility of reaching greater heights. However, the efforts called forth in the attainment of the goals of the normative development scenario are tremendous, to say the least.

Let me illustrate this point graphically. A most conscientious pursuit of the normative development scenario would entail our governments taking, individually and collectively, all appropriate measures to achieve (a) a more-than-triple increase in our production of cereals; (b) an increase by 250 per cent of our production of roots, tubers and pulses; (c) an increase of 300 per cent of Africa's meat production; (d) an annual average growth rate of 9.3 per cent in our energy production; (e) production of 1,821 million tractors (as against the present 253 million in 1980) to meet our agricultural equipment requirements and 21.49 million tons of fertilizers per annum (as against 2.27 million in 1980); (f) our requirements of iron and steel products which will rise to 195 million per annum as against our installed capacity of 6.5 million in 1980; and (g) our seaborne trade that will be in the order of 1,463 million tons compared with 571.0 million tons in 1981.

These are some of the examples of what needs to be accomplished under the normative development scenario during the next twenty-five years. And as I said recently:

twenty-five years is not a long way off. It is only five-year development plan periods. The conception of a major industrial or agricultural enterprise followed by the undertaking of prefeasibility, feasibility and engineering studies of the project, the construction of the factory or dam as the case may be and the taking of all other processes until the enterprise actually comes on-stream usually straddles at least two (five-year) development plan periods. Therefore, we are terribly hard-pressed for time. What is certainly not

on our side, in view of the enormity of the urgent actions taken to bring about the willed future finds us further down the economic abyss.<sup>2</sup>

Surely, the administrative adjustments required to meet the challenges of such a willed future must be fundamentally different from those called for by the historical trends scenario. The administrative responses to an economic environment engineered by the normative development scenario must perforce be fundamentally different from the others. What will these be? And how can they be engineered?

Unfortunately, the ECA perspective study being basically economic one did not explore the administrative implications of both scenarios. And neither has the Commission's Division of Public Administration and Management yet endeavoured to spell out what the two scenarios mean or imply for African public administration and management. I have no doubt that it will do this before long. In this chapter, I intend to spell out these implications, albeit in a preliminary and tentative manner, perhaps raising more questions than answering them. But before doing this, let us examine briefly the current state of economic management in our continent.

### **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND CRISIS OF ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA**

For years, scholars have paid inadequate attention to the impact of poor economic management on Africa's worsening economic environment. Until recently, whatever has been said and written about it has been from foreign scholars and commentators and extra-African international institutions. And such comments have not only been most unwelcome to African governments but have also tended to be dubbed neo-colonial propaganda designed to undermine our nascent confidence in ourselves.

In a way, this is partly true. The motives of these foreign experts and institutions have not always been altruistic and

one thing we cannot afford to lose or allow to be undermined is the little self-confidence which we have managed to build up since independence. As I said in my address to the ECA Silver Jubilee Session last April:

The very foundation of development and the oil that lubricates its engine are the possession of self-confidence by a people in themselves and in their capacities to initiate and organize their own concepts, policies and instruments for development and to mobilize their human resources for the exploration of their needs. For after all is said and done, development fundamentally refers to human beings, to every man and woman. It is a human experience synonymous with the fulfilment of individual mental, emotional and physical well-being. The development of self-confidence by a people in themselves is one of the basic prerequisites for the initiation of the process of self-reliant and self-sustaining socio-economic development. Therefore, the erosion of self-confidence keeps a people in abject poverty and in a perpetual state of dependence. It makes them dependent on outsiders for all else. Therefore, while we should be critical of our past performance. We must not fall victim of outside propaganda which are designed to erode our confidence in ourselves and make us permanently eternally dependent.

But this having been said, the time has come for us to recognize our weaknesses and to publicly acknowledge such weaknesses and find ways and means of ameliorating them, if not entirely eliminate them. While there is no justification for self-destructive criticisms, there is ample room from a critical self-analysis of the mistakes which we have made and/or are still making, of our deficiencies and, above all, of our inefficiencies.

There is no sector in which these deficiencies, inefficiencies and ineffectiveness manifest themselves more glaringly than in the field of economic management. We have all accepted

that unless the public sector assumed the pervasive role in the promotion of socio-economic transformation, our economies will remain poor and backward indefinitely. We do not have as yet the pool of knowledge, skills, entrepreneurship and capital that will internalize development without the push from governments. The role of governments as planners, entrepreneurs, innovators, mobilizers and social engineers is therefore of paramount importance. Yet, to quote rather extensively from my NISER distinguished lecture of 24 March 1983:

...evidence abounds of poor economic management or, to put it differently, of a high degree of economic mismanagement in many an African country. Colossal wastages of public funds in the midst of severe shortages constitute one of the many paradoxes that are currently the plight of Africa. More often than not, such wastages are due not only to ignorance and inefficiency but also to greed and avarice by those who have been put in positions of authority and responsibility and who have sworn to protect the interests of the people.

But the wastage of public funds is only one of the problems connected with the efficient mobilization and utilization of resources in general. We are all aware of the problem of leakages of foreign exchange resources through over — and under — invoicing by indigenous and foreign enterprises, through the collusion between our public officers and our foreign suppliers and through smuggling. There is also the problem of the non-maintenance of our existing capital assets which constitute a more regrettable yet avoidable source of resource wastage. One only has to go round Africa, as I do frequently by the nature of my current responsibility, to see how fast public assets are deteriorating due to benign neglect. Furthermore, the way we exploit our natural resources, including land utilization to which I referred earlier, also constitutes a serious wastage of resources and the consequent environmental

degradation should surprise no one. Finally there is the enormous wastage of human resources, both through the non-use or non-efficient use of available man-power and through brain drain. Our failure to create the environment which is conducive to R and D activities is resulting in growing emigration of scientists, medical doctors, and scholars out of Africa to developed countries.

Indeed, the poor management of our economies, has put a question mark on the ability of the public sector to play the kind of dynamic role in the development process called for by the (Monrovia) *Strategy* and the (Lagos) Plan. This has led some well-meaning people as well as some highly reputed institutions to put too strongly the case for the privatization of the African economy. However, the question is not one of private enterprise versus public sector. It is a question of efficient mobilization and utilization of scarce resources.<sup>3</sup>

It is this consideration that has made me include economic management as one of what I have termed, Africa's five devastating economic crisis. And here our public services bear very serious responsibilities for most of these failings. Inefficiency has become the norm in our public services — whether it be the civil service, the parastatal or the local government. The striving for excellence, and the continuous search for improvement which marked the immediate post-independence years seem to have been replaced by nonchalance, indifference, opportunism and cynicism. It seems that within the first quarter of a century after independence, African public services have lost their mission, have ceased to be serving public interest and have become a self-perpetuating, self-centred and self-aggrandizing cabal.

Is it any wonder that as soon as there is a change of government in an African country — usually by coup d'etats — not only is the political class discredited but the public servants are also disgraced? Have we paused to ask why the mass retirements of higher civil servants is becoming a regular

phenomenon in Africa? Can we blame the public for distrusting their public servants and for resenting and even despising them for their arrogance and insensitiveness? Even I, a former higher civil servant and professor of public administration was so angered by what I have seen that in my address as the President of the Nigerian Economic Society some eleven years ago I said that "a new bourgeoisie is forming, a bourgeoisie that Karl Marx could hardly have foreseen — the bourgeoisie of the civil service. And it is flatly, stupidly and cynically bourgeois, pretentious, arrogant and insensitive".<sup>4</sup>

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS AND RESPONSES UNDER THE HISTORICAL TRENDS SCENARIO

In the light of the preceding discussion, let us now examine the kind of administrative responses and adjustments that we can expect under the ECA two development scenarios referred to earlier, beginning with the historical trends scenario. But before doing so, we must first examine the ECA projections of the main parameters that will together shape Africa's economic environment during the next twenty-five years. The most important of these are: (a) the demographic phenomenon; (b) the unemployment and underemployment situation; (c) the massive educational requirements; and (d) the social conditions.

Twenty-five years ago, Africa had a population of about 242 million. By 1980, this population had increased to 440 million and by the year 2008 it is expected to be 1,077 million. In other words, the African population would have increased more than fourfold between 1958 and 2008, and would have more than doubled between 1983 and 2008. In specific terms what this means is that in twenty-five years time, the population in every African country would be more than double what it is. Out of this large population, 474 million will be living in cities and towns, i.e. Africa's total population in 1980 plus another 32 million would be living in urban centres in twenty-five years time. In 1980, Africa's

urban population was estimated at 120 million. So during the next 25 years we will be expected to provide pipe-borne water, housing and electricity and medical facilities to name only four, for more than fourfold of the present urban population.

This population projection also implies that there will be a rapid increase in the school-age population with considerable pressure on the education services. The projected first level enrolments are 175.9 million, 70.0 million and 8.7 million respectively. The burden which such a demand for education would impose on the public service would almost certainly be impossible to sustain under the historical trends scenario. And, as far as the labour force is concerned, Africa would have in 2008 a labour force of 510.3 million — 286.8 million in the rural areas and 223.5 million in the urban areas. Under the historical trends scenario 283.5 million would either be openly unemployed or underemployed.

These then are the variables that will together determine the economic environment during the next twenty-five years — a population explosion, an accelerated rate of urbanization, severe pressures on social services, an unprecedented demand for education at all levels and labour force that in number is almost twice the total population of Africa at independence in the 1960s and that is more than the current population of the continent.

Given such an economic environment, what kind of administrative adjustments and responses can we postulate under the two ECA scenarios? We shall deal first with the historical trends scenario and in the next section with the normative development scenario.

The first scenario, it should be recalled, deals with the perspective of the African region by the year 2008 based on the continuation of the past and current development trends without major conscious changes in patterns of production, distribution and lifestyles. Applied to public administration and management, it implies the perpetuation of administrative systems and practices of the past twenty years. The

historical trends scenario as applied to government and administration therefore means (a) a rapidly expanding bureaucracy due partly to governments trying to have its fingers in every pie and due also to the bureaucratic tendencies of self-regeneration and proliferation of departments and ministries; (b) diminishing productivity and growing inefficiency; (c) the intensification and greater internalization of bureaucratic tendencies, particularly the worshipping of methods and procedures and rules and regulations at the expenses of initiative, innovation and enterprise; (d) the bourgeois tendencies on the part of civil servants will become even more pronounced as they increase the distance between themselves and the public they have been appointed to serve; (e) nepotism and corruption will become more widespread as self-aggrandizement will hold sway; and (f) wastage of public funds and poor maintenance of public assets will reach unparalleled proportions.

In a way, this painting of the administrative canvas under the historical trends scenario is both in reaction to the economic environment as well as a contributor to the making of the environment. In a situation where everything is going down hill, where things are falling apart and disintegrating, the administrative system cannot be immune from the generalized malaise. It must perforce adjust. This is a requirement of the law of cumulative causation. It is, however, possible that such a process of decay might, in the first instance, have been set in motion by the inefficiency, ineffectiveness and corruption of the administrative and political systems. Indeed, the present poor performance of the African economy is due largely to the failure of the public sector to deliver and to the inefficient management of the economy by the governments and their public services. As indicated earlier, it is this poor record of performance that has led many well-meaning people and some highly reputed international organizations to advance very strongly the case for the privatization of the African economy.

Such a public sector as we have postulated here will

definitely collapse under the weight of the economic problems and challenges of the next twenty-five years. It will be totally incompetent to manage the population explosion and the rapid rate of urbanization. It will no doubt fail woefully to provide adequately, in qualitative and quantitative terms, public services to meet rapidly growing demand. Because it will be unable to meet the demand for education, our society is likely to have a higher percentage of illiterate population in 2008 than it had in 1960.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS AND RESPONSES UNDER THE NORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO**

It will no doubt have become abundantly clear from what has been postulated for administrative adjustments and responses under the historical trends scenario that Africa must perforce reject this path and invent for itself a dignified future. Otherwise, riots, crimes and misery would be the order of the day by the year 2008. The normative development scenario is, therefore, the only viable option available to Africa if it is to save itself from economic disasters with consequent social upheavals and revolutions, the undermining of its weak and fragile political system and the eventual loss of its political sovereignty. I have said it many a time before and let me repeat it: Africa marching toward the future hand in hand with the past and the present has no dignified future at all. But to invent or will such a dignified future for itself — a future that will give rising prospects of abundance, of economic self-determination and of national and collective self-reliance and self-sustainment — calls for extraordinary effort, for dogged determination and for manifest political will and political leadership of the highest calibre that will bring forth the highest motivation from the broad masses of the people and harness their energies for productive purposes.

It will be superfluous to say that the administrative adjustments required to facilitate the pursuance of the normative development path are fundamentally different from those described under the historical trends scenario. Indeed, they

performers have to be the very antithesis of those. For us to launch ourselves on the course for normative development, we would therefore need public services that possess the following minimum characteristics:

- (a) Total and unquestioned commitment to engineering socio-economic transformation of their countries, of their sub-regions and Africa in general;
- (b) A structure that deliberately reduces bureaucracy and red tapism to the minimum and the size of the public services to reasonable proportions;
- (c) High degree of efficiency and motivation. Indeed, only an achievement-oriented public service can succeed in bringing about the willed future;
- (d) The attraction to public service of the most talented and public spirited men and women who are more interested in serving the public than in self-aggrandizement, with the consequent reduction in the incidence of nepotism and corruption.

To meet the challenge of the normative development scenario we need a new breed of public servants in Africa — men and women who have brains in their heads as well as fire in their bellies, who are concerned enough about the cross of humiliation which every African carries on his/her forehead because of the economic and technological backwardness of the continent and are therefore determined to dedicate their lives to change the situation and to remove the banner of humiliation.

If our thrust is to concentrate on the individuals who compose the public service rather than on structures and organizations, it is because of our firm conviction that revolutions are usually brought about not by organizations and structures nor by rhetorics but by individuals who are concerned enough and are determined and dedicated enough to pursue single-mindedly their chosen goals; that the great movements in history have been the handiwork of such

individuals; and that the revolutionary situations, which in the normal course of historical change often occur when progress is being made but not fast enough to overtake expectations nor radical enough to close the gap of relative deprivation, are engineered by a group of such highly concerned and motivated individuals. Call them development fanatics or ideologues if you like but such fanaticism is certainly required to launch and sustain Africa on the narrow and difficult path of self-sustained and self-reliant development.

Before such a public service, composed of men and women of the calibre which I have been describing, can emerge in any of the African countries, at least three minimum pre-requisites must be satisfied. These are: (a) the pre-requisite of a favourable social and political environment; (b) the pre-requisite of the recognition of ability and performance; and (c) the pre-requisite of mutual accommodation and tolerance between the public service and the political-cum-military rulership.

In the Political Class, the Higher Civil Services and the Challenge of Nation-building<sup>5</sup> which is the text of a talk which I gave at a workshop on the relationship between policy-makers and the Higher Civil Service under the Executive Presidential System in Nigeria, I elaborated at length on these minimum pre-requisites. I shall therefore be very brief here.

The pre-requisite of favourable social and political environment requires that the governments must take urgent steps to weed out deadwoods from the public service; boost the morale of those remaining; rebuild the public image of the public services; protect public servants from unwarranted and cowardly attacks; and, restore the social prestige of the public servants vis-a-vis the other actors in the country particularly vis-a-vis the political and military classes.

The pre-requisite of the recognition of ability and performance involves the need to ensure that the public servant will be allowed always to perform his duties and responsibility objectively and to the best of his ability without undue

pressure; that governments are prepared to listen to constructive criticisms of their policies and programmes and not regard such criticisms as tantamount to disloyalty or treasonable acts; that governments will do everything in their power to advance the professionalization of the public service; and, that skills, ability, competence and integrity will be the only criteria for appointments and advancements.

The third and final pre-requisite — the pre-requisite of mutual accommodation and tolerance — is perhaps the most basic. It deals with the need to work out conditions for productive co-operation between the political-cum-military ruling class and the higher public service based on mutual respect, trust and confidence and with the welfare of the people as the over-riding concern. In view of the importance of this matter, let me quote *in extenso* from what I said at the workshop and indeed what I have been saying for the past twenty-year about the relationships between the political ruling class and the higher public service:

In facing the challenge of nation-building and the task of national development, the politicians and the administrators meet in a common set of tasks in which there should be a distinction of gifts, division of powers and variety of skills. Each should accord due respect for the role of the other and should endeavour to strengthen the elements that unite them in the task of nation-building and national development rather than exacerbate division and distrust to the detriment of the nation. In other words, and as James O'Connell rightly concluded in his contribution to the Nigerian *Administration and its Political Setting*, the politicians should lead as they are ultimately responsible to the people but "they need to be able to stimulate their administrators, evaluate their advice, and act co-operatively with them... Political leadership without administrative and technical support is power in a vacuum; administration without political leadership is only tidiness in stagnation. Politics and administration belong together in the dynamics of a dialectical relationship. But there is no

perfectly ordered model for this relationship, and no perfect delineation of responsibilities or functions will fit all the needs and possibilities of development".<sup>6</sup> All that we can proffer by way of advice in this dialectical encounter is that the politicians should strive assiduously to politicize the civil servants while they on their part should use every available opportunity to civilize the politicians.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this discussion of administrative adjustments and responses to changes in the economic environment, it would have become quite clear that administration is far from being a passive factor merely responding to changes in the economic environment. Nor is it affected by changes in the economic situation alone. Administration is both the creator and moulder as well as the product and responder to the interactions of a complex of factors – political, social and economic – which operate in the society. It is also a most powerful independent factor in its own right. Indeed, administration, politics, economics and sociology belong together in the dynamics of a dialectical relationship.

In the African context, a great deal depends on the government as promoter of national unity and cohesion, as social pace setters and in the economic development field, as planners, entrepreneurs, developers, and allocators of scarce national resources. Thus, the task of nation-building and of engineering the socio-political and economic transformation of Africa calls for a pervasive role for government in Africa and the major instrumentality in the armoury of governments for playing this role is the public service. But a decadent, unstable and corrupt political system is hardly likely to have a virile, strong, incorruptible and development-oriented administrative system. Therefore although we have referred only in passing to the political factor, we must not make the mistake of under-estimating its fundamental importance in the newly independent and heterogeneous societies that we

have in Africa.

In the political process, the quality of leadership and the vision and perspective of that leadership is also of fundamental importance. In any society where the political leadership sees governance not as a means to engineer fundamental socio-economic, political and cultural changes but as a means of keeping in power, in perpetuity, a particular regime or individuals or groups of individuals, then we cannot expect much, if anything at all, from its public service. Where the political leadership is without any vision and where it has become a self-serving cabal, its public service cannot but be its true image. Therefore, what I have often called the L-factor (the leadership factor) is of paramount importance.

There is also another dimension which we have hardly mentioned but which is no less important in determining the economic environment and the consequent administrative adjustments and responses — the international economic dimension. The introduction of Africa into the international economy and its integration therein has been through colonialism. The unfortunate consequence of this is the overspecialization of the production of raw materials for which there is little domestic demand and its dependence on outsiders for the production of goods and services which the African peoples need — the so-called African syndrome of producing what it does not need and of importing what it needs. Today, Africa's dependence on external stimuli is virtually total.

While the historical trends scenario explicitly assumed that this external dependency will not only continue but will become even greater during the next twenty-five years, the normative development scenario, by assuming self-reliance and self-sustaining development process, minimizes if not completely neutralizes the external factors. In other words, a closed economy is implicitly, though not explicitly, assumed. While this may be the ideal thing to do, given the geo-political realities of Africa today, this is a most heroic assumption. Therefore, even under the normative development scenario,

we must allow for some openness of the economy although definitely not as exposed and dependent as under the historical trends scenario.

In such situation the external factors will constitute major but not dominant determinants of the economic environment and the administrative adjustments and responses thereto. For example, a favourable external economic environment would mean easy access to concessionary aid and foreign capital, relatively easy access to technology and favourable terms of trade for Africa's export produce. On the other hand, a hostile external economic environment, such as we currently have, will mean the exact opposite — diminishing external finance with harsh conditionalities, restriction of the transfer of technology, unfavourable terms of trade, heavy debt burdens, etc. What the prevailing external economic environment is will rebound for better or worse on the African internal environment. Let me, however, add very quickly that peripheral as Africa is in the international economic system, a determined and sustained effort on its part to follow the normative development scenario is most likely to have a great impact on these exogenous factors. This having been said, the point we are making here is that it will be unrealistic not to take the external factors into account even in the normative development scenario.

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*Chapter Seven*

**DISCOVERING THE RESOURCE POTENTIAL OF  
THE ECOLOGY OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT\***

GORAN HYDEN

**REVIEW OF PAST EXPERIENCE**

Because African states were created out of a colonial experience it was understandable that at the time of independence the predominant political orientation was towards the external environment. Principal obstacles to progress were conceived to be the legacies of colonialism or the attempts by international capital to retain economic control of the African countries — the “neo-colonial” factor. Similarly, in searching for the means to attain progress the perspective was on raising capital overseas — through loans or aid — and obtaining the necessary technical assistance to accelerate development. In the fields of public administration and management, for instance, the wish was to acquire command of the most up-to-date methods and practices developed in Europe and North America.

The corollary of this orientation was to ignore the peculiarities of the African conditions. Rather than analysing the domestic situation and identifying the constraints and opportunities for progress, the principal question was what Africa lacked and what therefore remained to make the newly independent states equal (or similar) to more deve-

\* The views expressed in this chapter are those of the author and are not necessarily shared by the Ford Foundation.

loped societies. Many political leaders treated their own societies as "clean slates" that could be manipulated by a political machinery more or less at will.

This "social engineering" mentality which was strongly endorsed by the international donor community reflected the optimistic mood that characterized the world up until recently.<sup>1</sup> The first three decades after the Second World War was a period when mankind developed an almost blind faith in science and progress. Values and attitudes that stood in the way of material advancement were either to be conquered by the waves of social change set in motion by the application of capital and science or to be swept away by the forces of social revolution. Whether liberal, social democratic or Marxist, the prevailing perceptions were all derived essentially from a European philosophical tradition. The 1960s was the climax of western influence on world development. It was a period when man imprudently set himself above history; forgot his own limitations and ignored the observation, originally made by Marx, that man's capacity to make history is determined by the material conditions prevailing in society at any given time. There was little or no recognition of this fundamental aspect of ecology. The notion that "we must run while others walk" summarized quite well the prevailing mood of the day.

One immediate consequence of this approach to development was a rapid expansion of the functions and responsibilities of the state apparatus. The post-independence situation was contrasted with that of the colonial days when, it was argued, the public service was primarily an instrument for maintaining law and order and thus was lean in shape. With independence, matters changed and the burden of bringing about development was seen to fall squarely on the shoulders of the public servants. This resulted in a rapid growth of the civil service in all African countries. In the first ten years of independence it doubled in size in several countries. The management problems that followed from such quantitative expansion were exacerbated by the shortage of experienced

managers. In spite of commendable efforts to accelerate the training of African public managers at the time of independence and after, it was impossible to keep pace with the demands created by the political leaders' ambition to develop their newly independent states. First there was the desire to make education available to all and to extend public health facilities to people living in the rural areas. Provision of clean water became the missing component in the "trinity" that was placed at the top of the development agenda in most African countries. Everywhere the government was taking a direct responsibility for this strategy and thus normally carrying the principal financial burden for it. This attempt to bring about a "welfare state" over night was understandable in the climate prevailing at independence. Most actors agreed with the view that Africans had been denied the opportunity to advance themselves in the past. The state, therefore, became by necessity a prominent redistributive mechanism. Because Africans had also been denied opportunities to acquire control of major means of production and financial control, this ambition was extended to the economic sector either by setting up parastatal agencies with responsibility for helping local people into business or, more commonly, by government acquiring control over foreign-owned enterprises. Everywhere governments seemed ready to follow Nkrumah's well-known paraphrase of St. Matthews: "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto ye". The inevitable outcome of this approach was a rapid institutional growth and proliferation causing an accelerated demand for management capacity.

Reading through the reports of the first Inter-African Public Administration Seminars, held in the years immediately after independence, it appears the attention also of the new African administrators was directed towards the larger issues of how the public service could be changed to serve as the engine of growth and development. Addressing themselves to the post-independence role of the civil servant, participants in the 1967 Seminar stressed that:

...his new role is to be a vehicle of change — to plan, advise, implement and act as a catalyst and a salesman of change. This means that he must himself be committed to change. But change from the administrator's point of view has to be considered as a means of achieving certain ultimate objectives, such as improving standards of living. Change, therefore, has to be planned if wastage of resources and undesirable changes are to be avoided and the achievement of certain goals expedited.<sup>2</sup>

This statement does not only reflect the general political enthusiasm generated in support of a purposeful and well laid out change after independence but also a widely held belief that the civil service could be transformed to serve such purposes. The ambition was to create a "development administration" which could perform the entrepreneurial and innovative tasks needed to foster development.<sup>3</sup> Underlying this approach was the premise that because African countries lacked well-established private entrepreneurs, the functions of capital accumulation and industrial development had to be carried out under the auspices of the public sector imbued with a sense of initiative and boldness.<sup>4</sup>

Against this background it is understandable that the demands of development planning came to exercise great influence on the minds of policy-makers. The various administrative reform efforts that took place in Africa in the late 1960s and early 1970s were premised on the notion that government structures had to be reorganized to suit the institutional demands of a comprehensive development planning system.<sup>5</sup> Although much attention in those days was paid to the ideological differences between African states, the notion that the planning function is a key activity around which the operational undertakings should be organized was embraced by all regimes regardless of political persuasion.

Development planning, however, tended to imply a concentration of authority to central government and thus a "top-down" approach. Field staff had few incentives to

engage themselves in entrepreneurial work and the common pattern around Africa in the late 1960s was to see staff in the provincial and district offices sitting idle awaiting instructions from their ministry headquarters. Similarly, financial management got out of hand because of excessive delays in processing matters from the field. It was these managerial shortcomings that led many African governments to decentralize authority to their field administrators in the 1970s. The degree to which such decentralization was carried out varied from country to country. In some places, like Tanzania where there was an attempt to respond also to growing pressures for more popular participation in public policy-making, the 1972 reform was portrayed as being taken not only on managerial but also on political grounds. Even in those countries, however, where the terms of reference for the delegation of authority to the field were narrower, policy makers argued that such a reform was necessary to keep government operations going.

In summarizing this review of the role of the public service since independence it is striking how similar its syndrome of change has been in African countries. Everywhere it began with a commitment to development planning and quite extensive state interventions in all sectors. This initial orientation created its own demand for structural reform of the public service aimed at enhancing the country's development management capacity. Realizing the dangers of overconcentrating authority inherent in this approach, the structural reforms were followed by various decentralization measures. The principal elements of this syndrome can be found in most African countries and do reflect a similar philosophical outlook. At the core of this approach has been the notion that the state has a responsibility to direct and control society. During the first two decades after independence few questions were raised concerning the feasibility of this approach. The growing scope and complexity of public sector functions were seen as natural and desirable and the extent to which management issues were raised, they were directed

to the internal operations of the public service and the public enterprise sector. There were three critical questions that were never adequately raised.

The first concerns the broader implications of a strategy that was based on the assumption that the state had a right to conquer a growing share of the social and economic environment for its own purposes. The justification to use the state for redressing imbalances and discriminatory practices created in colonial days is clear, but it seems the strategy was sometimes taken too far too quickly. Few actors or analysts asked themselves the question what the impact would be of growing state regulation and involvement on people's motivation and willingness to contribute to national development.

The second question concerns the financial implications of the strategy. It was assumed that as the state extended its control over society it would also be able to raise more revenue to finance its expanding activities. During the 1960s and 1970s hardly anybody argued that there was a ceiling to how much public revenue could be collected without having backfiring consequences. That the revenue base would actually shrink was even further beyond conception. The provision of foreign aid to fund many of the ambitious development programmes must have concealed the real issue and left policy-makers less sensitive to the financial and economic limits of their strategy.

The third question concerns the implications inherent in the mode by which the administrative reforms were conducted. The principal objective seems to have been to eliminate outdated colonial legacies and streamline the public service along modern management principles. Thus, key advisers to these reform commissions tended to be foreign management experts with little experience of how the African public services operated on a day-to-day basis. There was in these reform commissions insufficient recognition of the fact that given the scope and complexity of functions handled by each ministry, the senior administrator had difficulty in barely keeping his nose above the load of papers on his desk. The

broader reform measures remained largely cosmetic and failed to relieve the managers of their involvement in petty details. The impact of the reforms was very limited.

While for a long time it may have been possible to ignore these questions experience of the state-centred strategy of development pursued to date, forces them on the public agenda all over Africa today. When governments are in danger of losing control over macro-economic processes, when salaries to public servants cannot be paid on time, when there is no fuel to keep public vehicles going, and when state-owned enterprises have to close down or operate at only a fractional capacity, the limits to state action must be seriously considered. To the extent that the public manager is still in the driver's seat, he is in a vehicle that has got stuck. The road has proved much rougher than anticipated. It is time he gets out of his vehicle and examines the environment. By better appreciating both its constraints and opportunities he will hopefully be able to get his vehicle going again.

### THE CRISIS OF THE STATE

It is important to point out that the state is in trouble not only in Africa. The international economic recession in recent years has brought home the message that rapid expansion of public spending on social insurance and development programme cannot be pursued as an end in itself – in isolation from other kinds of governmental policies and private as well as public interventions in social life. It would be a mistake to assume, however, that the growing critique of the welfare state is only the result of the recent global recession. What we are witnessing is a much more fundamental reorientation of thoughts – a questioning of the basic principles that have guided political action in the last three to four decades – and in that sense a major paradigm shift.

In Europe, for instance, the demand management policies that were originally derived from Keynes are increasingly under fire because they tended to neglect such factors as

keeping the economic structures up-to-date, introducing new technologies on time, making sure that the work force had an appropriate skill structure, i.e. all things that go under the label of "supplieside" economics. An equally serious challenge to the Keynesian policies is the growing tendency of people in the industrialized world to view taxes no longer as a solidarity payment for strengthening and maintaining the welfare state, but as an unjust burden which has turned into an economic and social disincentive.<sup>6</sup>

The welfare state which only a few years ago was held up as a model for other countries in the world to emulate is not only under criticism from a neo-conservative source. As significant in Europe is the reaction from people with a growing feeling that they can exercise little influence over their own lives, careers and destinies. They want more control, more decision-making delegated to individuals and groups and less state regulation. The bulk of these people have found their home in organizations advocating "alternative" development strategies imbued with often very radical messages. Progressive people, therefore, are increasingly engaged in a critical scrutiny of the welfare state and its limitations. They realize that an important objective in the present situation is to create the incentives for ordinary people to reconfirm their commitment to society by taking greater responsibility for actions affecting their own existence. To that extent, what is happening in Europe is a growing recognition of private and voluntary efforts to solve the society's problems. In many respects, it is a rediscovery of the "ecology" of state action.

When African policy-makers and officials, therefore, today examine the various aspects of the public management environment they are not alone in reassessing past strategies. All the same, there are a few particular "ecological" factors that make such an examination especially important in Africa.

### *No Tradition of Statehood*

The first is the absence of a tradition of statehood in

Africa. The state as we now know it on the continent was a colonial creation, a derivation from the European experience. According to the latter, the moral foundation underpinning state action is the same as that guiding private action. This coincidence is the product of a long and often painful historical experience. Because it is deeply engrained in society when an individual public servant makes a promise to serve his country without fear and favour there are several factors in society that facilitate and reinforce the realization of this ideal. Serving the public, therefore, becomes a special honour, a mark of distinction. There is no doubt that this is the way that the colonial civil servants also saw themselves in Africa. Whether conceived in class or national terms, they saw their job as a mission serving a higher interest. This devotion to an abstract ideal, however, met with a very different reaction by people in Africa as against Europe. It was generally regarded as serving foreign interests and Africans serving in the colonial administration had difficulty in escaping the image of being collaborators with the enemy. It is not surprising, therefore, that the legitimacy of state action in Africa meets with much suspicion. To be sure, there was a brief period after independence when state policies acquired general legitimacy by simply being anti-colonial. As African policy-makers have established themselves in public positions, however, it is clear that a different pattern has emerged. This reflects the fact that in African countries there is a public realm other than the state to which the individual feels obliged. Whether expressed in terms like "home village", "local community" or "ethnic group", it does, as Ekeh<sup>7</sup> among others have noted, exercise influence over public policy. Most officials find it difficult to dissociate themselves from the moral pressures of this realm and, when faced with a conflict between the interests of their respective home community and the state, tend to favour the former. It is easy for an outsider to moralize about such behaviour and condemn it without understanding the economic and social circumstances giving rise to it. The solution does not lie in

moral condemnation and it is doubtful whether it is effectively solved by attempts to politically regulate public behaviour. First of all, there are many subtle ways of circumventing such regulations particularly since they rest on a weak moral foundation in society. Secondly, even when adhered to, their effectiveness is likely to be limited as they tend to cut the official off from the popular legitimacy that service for one's home community or any other such locally defined constituency carries. This raises the question of what can be done to enhance the legitimacy of state action.

### *The Weak Bourgeoisie*

The other factor is the relative weakness of the African bourgeoisie. No other group of people in Africa has been the subject of such extensive criticism as its bourgeoisie. Beginning with writers like Fanon<sup>8</sup> and Dumont<sup>9</sup> it has been the most popular target of blame for Africa's shortcomings. This criticism has generally been of the moralizing rather than the scientific type. Occupying the position as the most likely link to the rest of the world (and thus naturally to the former colonial powers) the African bourgeoisie has been a natural target of criticism. At the same time it must be recognized that Africa badly needs its own bourgeoisie. It needs people who by blending private ambitions with public responsibility can economically advance and socially transform society. Although history provides examples of how the forms for realizing its interests have varied from place to place, no society has been able to develop without such a class of people. Africa's bourgeoisie remains comparatively weak because it was never able to develop its full versatility in pre-colonial or colonial days. To be sure, there were trading communities along the coast of West Africa well before this century but as colonization took place, these and other groups were contained in their ambitions. Thus, merchant and manufacturing activities were developed primarily with the assistance of immigrant minorities. When African countries reached independence the "elite" — the emerging indige-

nous bourgeoisie — consisted of little more than a few administrators and professionals. Some countries, e.g. Kenya, have deliberately tried to develop an African bourgeoisie by encouraging local people to enter trade and manufacturing. As a result, Kenya now has a considerable number of people who by virtue of their private wealth are beginning to look at the state not only in terms of how public funds can be used to augment their own capital but how public institutions can be made to better serve their interests as private businessmen or manufacturers.<sup>10</sup> The same is true in Nigeria and other countries where similar policies have been pursued. In these places there is gradually developing a stronger public demand for efficient performance and better services by government and state enterprises. It seems that wherever the private and voluntary sectors have been left without official support and encouragement and the bourgeoisie (to the extent it exists), therefore, still consists primarily of politicians, administrators and professionals, the task of enhancing the public accountability of government officials and managers has proved particularly difficult to carry out. Since both politicians and bureaucrats have shared a responsibility for formulating a given policy there has been a tendency for a collusion of interest to develop. Although public criticism may have been expressed, e.g. in the mass media, corrective action has usually been difficult to implement. In the light of this experience it is necessary to ask what can be done to strengthen institutions outside the public sector to make the latter function more efficiently and serve society more effectively.

### *The Frail Economic Base*

The third “ecological” factor of special significance in the African context is the nature of its peasant agriculture. The majority of producers in African countries are still small holder peasants, most of who till their land using a simple technology. The latter does hardly at all entail a dependence on other people. The peasant household can generally meet

its needs without entering into any credit arrangement to secure necessary inputs. By overlooking this structural autonomy of the peasant household many governments, in their ambition to develop the country's agriculture, have run into difficulties. If credit and other inputs provided through public programmes have not suited the needs of the peasant household, the tendency has been to divert these inputs for other uses. Even in those cases when they have been applied for their original purposes, the policy has overestimated the absorptive capacity of the rural production units. Thus scarce public resources have been wasted. The entry points for initiating change at the peasant household level is much more limited than has been assumed in public policy. The creation of organizations serving the interests of the state — be they parastatal entities, or co-operatives — has generally been done without much recognition of the interests of the peasant population. Thus, these organizations have been forced to operate in a vacuum. This is particularly true where they have been operated under the protection of a price monopoly. In view of their relative autonomy from the state, the peasants have, whenever the incentive to sell through the official channel has been low, withdrawn their support of the national economy by either smuggling their produce to another country, sell it on a local market (black or white), or totally refrain from surplus production. This behaviour of the peasant producer, which is apparent throughout Africa, threatens the very economic base on which any self-reliant development in Africa can be built. It does raise, therefore, the question of what can be done to facilitate the emergence of more productive linkages between the rural producers and the officials controlling policy in African countries.

### CURRENT PUBLIC MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

This chapter has so far tried to demonstrate that since independence the "ecology" of public management has undergone a significant change because of the ambition by the

state to subordinate other institutions in society. At the same time there is evidence that large numbers of people have slipped out of the control by the public sector leaving the state suspended in "mid-air" above society without much effective interaction between the two. Although the extent to which this statement is true varies from one country to another it is sufficiently serious in many countries to serve as a general warning signal. With the revenue base declining public policy-makers and managers have little choice but to identify solutions to policy problems that involve, to an increasing extent, agencies outside the state sector. The "ecological" challenges facing public management in Africa today can be summarized in three major points.

#### *Scope of Public Sector*

The first of these concerns the scope of public sector responsibility. How much can the state in Africa legitimately take on without losing its credibility and support? In the same way as analysts of the welfare state in Western Europe or the bureaucratic state in Eastern Europe realize that there are disincentives inherent in attempts to extend state intervention to all sectors of life, African policy-makers and public managers must be advised that the feasible scope of state action is likely to be much more limited than has been assumed so far. Many African countries are today plagued by, for instance, frequent power cuts, deteriorating roads, water shortages, unreliable telephone services, poor schools and degenerating health facilities. In this situation one must ask whether it is right of governments to spread their meagre resources thin through involvement in less essential activities rather than concentrating on those activities where state involvement is likely to have greatest payoffs. Far too little of this kind of "prioritizing" has been done by African policy-makers, yet tailoring government responsibilities to better match its financial and managerial capacity might, as the 1983 World Development Report argues,<sup>11</sup> be one of

the most urgent points for African policy-makers to consider. Experience in African countries does not support the proposition that self-reliant development is necessarily best enhanced by extensive public ownership of the means of production. If state ownership reduces the scope for capital accumulation because of declining productivity as the case has been in many countries,<sup>12</sup> governments end up weaker in terms of controlling the destiny of their country. As Rothchild notes in a recent article on the problems of governance in Africa, when the economy progressively declines the maneuverability of government contracts so that each misallocation of resources (or act of public corruption) has a magnified impact on the credibility of public policy.<sup>13</sup>

The financial stringencies that now characterize virtually all African governments force ministries to retreat into a situation where almost all the money goes directly to staff salaries. As funds, e.g. for fuel to run the vehicles of extension staff and for preparing mimeographed "handouts" are being cut, the rationale for government involvement must be questioned. As Moris notes,<sup>14</sup> the task of sustaining staff morale in such circumstances becomes impossible and new methods like the "T and V" system which requires a high level of staff commitment, discipline and cost consciousness stand very little chance of proving successful. Governments have to develop systems aimed at ensuring much greater cost-effectiveness in their operations. As Jones argues, ministries often have good reason to ask themselves whether extension staff is needed in each corner of the country.<sup>15</sup> There are probably many places in Africa where it could be argued on the basis of a systematic monitoring and evaluation that extension staff make no difference to the activity in which they are supposedly involved. Given the problem of gaining access to the average peasant household, it seems like a waste of scarce public resources to keep large numbers of agricultural instructors on the government payroll. Numbers of staff is not likely to determine success. Impact is more likely to be determined by the quality of the extension work and the

extent to which it is in demand.

If there is merit in suggesting that governments should be careful not to bite off more than they can chew, there is also a greater need to consider alternatives outside the official budget. Many activities that are now run by public institutions could be handled by private companies, co-operatives or voluntary agencies. Delegation of responsibilities to such organizations ought to be considered in order to share the public management burden more evenly. Identification of the potential for such alternatives may be another of the top priorities of African policy-makers. The "ecology" of public management must not be regarded as a social wasteland. It does possess many institutional plants that could be nurtured for greater involvement in public management tasks.

#### *Involving Non-Governmental Organizations*

The second point follows from the statement just made. Governments must refrain from the position that they have all the answers to the questions raised by change and development. By being involved in virtually all sectors of activity, public policy-makers have tried to extend the boundaries of state action beyond the possible and have usually built this ambition on the assumption that there is one model, or one approach, that can be applied without qualification to all parts of the country. The environment, however, differs in significant respects, a point that is particularly true of rural development programmes. The notion that a project or a programme can be designed on the basis of a feasibility study or a pilot effort and subsequently applied on a large-scale, perhaps across a whole country, is untenable in the kind of policy-making environment that exists in Africa. Such an approach does not only lead to substantive mistakes but also to institutional inflexibility, something that tends to discourage local initiatives and ambitions. Calling it the "blue-print" approach because of its assumption that policy implementators are supposed to execute a given project plan faithfully much as a contractor would follow a construction blue-

print, specifications and schedules, Korten notes that it has an appealing sense of order, specialization and recognition of professional talent to the policy-maker.<sup>16</sup> This emphasis on well-planned and clearly defined projects with discrete and visible outcomes may be well suited to infrastructural projects, in which the outcomes are terminal, the environment stable and the costs predictable. In rural development programmes, by contrast, the objectives are usually multiple, ill-defined and subject to change, task requirements unclear, outcomes unbounded by time, and costs unpredictable. In much of public policy-making and management in Africa, therefore, the blueprint approach is distinctly unsuitable. It is based on premises that are not applicable to the unstable and unpredictable environment of rural Africa. The inevitable result of its wholesale application is the creation of a heavy machinery that is bound to find itself incapable of achieving public policy goals. It is only now, in the light of economic pressures brought about by the global recession, that this is beginning to become generally recognized.

What, then, can governments do to ensure more effective public management? By recognizing that the "ecology" of public management contains an institutional potential of its own, tasks which are currently in the hands of government ministries or parastatal institutions can be performed by other types of organization. The real challenge ahead may be to transform government mechaneries that have got used to applying the blueprint approach — and in the process have developed a strong desire to control even petty activities in society — to a role of serving as facilitator or catalyst of change. Public sector institutions might have a particularly important role to stimulate the growth of other institutions rather than pre-empt their role in development. With such an emphasis, public sector institutions would be able to take an important step from a largely unproductive blueprint approach to a supportive "greenhouse" approach through which advice, training, credit and other inputs would be extended to strengthen the capacity of other sectors in

society. It might be tempting for some to see this as a surrender but such support for the growth of private voluntary, co-operative and community-based activities is in the long-run a way of strengthening the public sector. The latter cannot carry the development burden alone and will benefit from vigorous and dynamic non-governmental institutions. Thus, a shift to the greenhouse approach with the objective of nurturing institutional growth outside the state sector may have pay-offs in terms of enhancing the effectiveness of public management.

#### *Greater Emphasis on Learning from Experience*

The third point involves a greater recognition of the need for learning from past experience. It is understandable that African countries in the first years after independence were inclined to have their eyes set on the future. The past was essentially a colonial experience that everybody deemed oppressive and in other respects irrelevant for the future. With more than two decades of independence, however, the African states can no longer deny their own past. It is from their own mistakes that they will grow stronger as, for instance, the experience of Nigeria suggests. The new constitution and the administrative set-up that has been devised in recent years is very much the outcome of the tragic civil war in the 1960s. This point applies not only to the political arena. It is equally valid to public management. It is worth noting that two of the most important contributions to the management literature in the last few years stress the value of being able to embrace one's own errors. David Korten's review of successful rural development programmes in Asia show that the ability to internalize lessons from past experience, including errors, was at the root of the success of such diverse ventures as the National Dairy Development Board in India, the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement in Sri Lanka, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, Thailand's Community-Based Family Planning Services, and the National Irrigation Administration in the Philippines.<sup>17</sup> All these

ventures were based on a process of bottom-up programme and organizational development rather than the top-down initiatives that are associated with conventional public policy-making. A similar message is contained in the current best-seller in management on the U.S. Market: "In Search of Excellence".<sup>18</sup> Its review of what makes American companies successful includes a special reference to the capacity of top management to allow for a reasonable number of mistakes. All excellent companies, the authors conclude, are learning organizations. This implies the capacity to review not only individual policies but also the processes by which policies are made. As Moris notes in his assessment of government-run agricultural extension programme in Africa, it is important to investigate not only the causes of particular policy mistakes but why the same mistakes tend to be repeated for such a long time.<sup>19</sup> A refined learning approach to policy-making and public management calls for people who can act as catalysts, mobilizing those whose support or commitment is needed to make projects or programmes more relevant and successful. Also Rondinelli concludes in his review of the problems of development administration in Third World countries, that more effective public management demands technicians and administrators who can respond creatively, appropriately, and quickly to changes, who are willing and able to seek out and correct mistakes as they are discovered, and who can plan and manage simultaneously.<sup>20</sup> Planning and action must no longer be regarded as two separate activities. What is needed is a planning "mentality" or outlook that is embraced by all public managers and serves them in their task of building the knowledge of past experience into future action.

### CONCLUSION

This chapter has been written with a view to developing a greater sense of respect for the African "ecology" of public management. Policy-makers and public managers are not

really in charge of this environment to the extent that has generally been implied in the literature to date. They are immersed in a cobweb of social, economic and political relations that limits their freedom of action. Rather than self-confidently assume that the stage is theirs and that policies will automatically be implemented as conceived, policy-makers and public managers alike need to adopt a more humble attitude towards their environment and recognize both its constraints and opportunities. The latter are there but can often be best used if institutions other than the government bureaucracy are allowed to seize them. Thus, improved public management at this juncture in Africa implies a greater participation by organizations outside the state sector. The public manager must not only look at the "ecology" as a source of trouble. It does contain the answers to many of the questions that now bother him.

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11. World Bank, *World Development Report 1983* (London, Oxford University Press, 1983), p 50.
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## *Chapter Eight*

# **ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS AND RESPONSES TO CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT & MANPOWER  
DIVISION OF UNECA**

## **INTRODUCTION**

That Africa has now reached a critical stage in its existence is beyond doubt. While discounting the tendentious propaganda of the continent's detractors, there is no doubt that a serious rethinking of the basic economic and social policies is called for. Almost everywhere one looks in Africa, one is repulsed by the ugly features of underdevelopment, notably, poverty, disease, illiteracy, natural and man-made disasters, and fragile socio-economic infrastructures. As the continent approaches the end of the 20th century, the agonizing question is: Will Africa be able to recover the lost ground in time to face the incredibly difficult challenges of the 21st century?

All the available facts point to the need for the continent to put its entire productive capacity on a war-footing. The thesis of this chapter is that each country's administrative system offers the key to current and future questions of survival and development.

The chapter starts to define the nature of the problem by reviewing the economic and social conditions in Africa. It then goes on to assess the "combat-readiness" of African administrative systems bearing in mind the dominant features and constraints. In the third section, the chapter examines major requirements for survival in what would appear as an increasingly hostile environment.

## THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Africa entered the First United Nations Development Decade amidst high hopes. Not only were increasing numbers of countries in the continent being released from the bonds of colonial rule, it was also the general belief that the newly-won independence would usher in economic prosperity and the good life. The political kingdom was attained in the 1960s and it was a matter of time before every other desirable goal was achieved. That was part of the euphoric mood of the early period of independence. What is the situation like today? The picture that has emerged on the African horizon to-date is not particularly as bright as earlier imagined. Instead of rapid economic growth, Africa has witnessed economic decline. Poverty, destitution and hunger have conjointly dimmed the view of a "life more abundant". The gradual but systematic decay of economic institutions has threatened the survival of some political systems, triggered off the modern day version of inter-tribal wars in others, and led to a rapid increase in the number of political refugees and migrant workers across the continent.

Africa is part of the developing world, but, South of the Sahara, and excluding South Africa, it seems to be developing far less rapidly than any other region in the same category. Table 8.1 compares the rate of growth in Africa, South of the Sahara, with those in East Asia and Pacific, and North Africa and the Middle East. The table reveals that between 1966 and 1980, Africa (South of the Sahara) lagged behind in the terms of GNP and GNP per capita.

The World Bank could not resist the temptation to comment on the slow pace of development in Africa. In its report for 1981, it noted:

The low-income countries of Africa South of the Sahara were the principal exception to the overall trend; their growth was so low that per capita incomes actually declined.<sup>1</sup>

Table 8.1: Comparison of the rate of growth in Africa, South of the Sahara with those in East Asia and Pacific and North Africa and the Middle East

	GNP							GNP per Capita		
	1966-76	1977	1978	1979	1980	1966-76	1977	1978	1979	1980
All Developing Regions	6.1	5.8	5.2	5.2	4.6	3.6	3.5	2.8	2.7	2.3
East Asia and Pacific	8.1	8.4	9.4	6.6	3.9	5.5	5.9	6.9	4.3	1.6
Africa South of the Sahara	5.0	2.9	3.4	3.3	2.3	2.3	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.4
North Africa and the Middle East	8.1	10.0	6.0	14.6	7.5	5.1	6.6	2.7	11.1	4.2

Source: World Bank Report, Washington, 1981.

The figures supplied in table 8.1 reveal very little about actual conditions in many African countries. For instance, they do not show the extent to which particular countries differ from others in terms of growth. While it will be wrong to conclude that any African country has overcome the problems of underdevelopment, it could, at least, be argued that as a result of resource endowments and other natural advantages, some countries have succeeded in recording higher rates of growth than others. Table 8.2 indicates the differences in rates of growth achieved by particular groups of countries in 1976.

**Table 8.2: Growth Rates by Economic Sector in 1976 for Developing African Countries, Classified by GDP per Capita**

	<i>Growth Rates in Percentages</i>					
	<i>Total GDP</i>	<i>Agric.</i>	<i>Mining</i>	<i>Manu- facturing</i>	<i>Industry</i>	<i>Services</i>
Major oil exporters	8.6	4.6	7.5	10.5	10.3	9.3
Non-oil exporters	3.1	2.2	-1.3	3.3	3.7	3.8
Countries whose per Capita GDP was:						
Below US\$ 100	1.9	3.1	-2.5	0.2	1.0	1.2
US\$ 100 to 200	0.0	1.0	-0.9	-0.6	-0.1	0.8
US\$ 200 to 300	4.1	2.0	0.4	2.9	4.2	5.6
US\$ 300 or over	6.7	2.0	11.0	15.4	10.3	9.2
Total Developing Africa	4.9	2.8	4.2	5.1	6.6	5.6
Least Developed Countries (1)	2.4	3.4	4.9	-1.0	0.8	1.8

Source: Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa 1976-77, (Part I) E C A, Addis Ababa.

N.B.(1) The 18 countries in Africa classified as least developed in 1976 are Benin, Burundi, Botswana, the Central African Republic, Chad,

Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, the Niger, Rwanda, Somalia, the Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, and Upper Volta.

Although rates of growth of GNP are generally higher in oil-exporting than in non-oil exporting economies, none of the African countries has yet succeeded in overcoming the basic obstacles to development. Before the glut in the oil market, the oil exporters were able to accumulate sizeable foreign reserves but the reserves were soon committed to infrastructural projects and, in some cases, to consumption items. The world-wide economic recession of the late 1970s and the glut in the oil market as from the 1980s adversely affected the oil-exporting African countries which then had to resort to frantic austerity measures to cope with serious balance-of-payments problems.

The countries without oil had the worst of both worlds. They had to pay high prices for oil imports, and, because of the unfavourable terms of trade, they received relatively little on their exports.

The answer to current economic problems lies in productivity. Yet key sectors, like agriculture, have gone into decline. In the early part of the First Development Decade, Nigeria, which then had little oil to market, was able to meet most of its food requirements. The situation changed drastically in the Second and Third Development Decades as food became a critical item on the import bill as well as an explosive political issue. In the Eastern and Southern Africa, a few countries, such as Kenya, Malawi, Swaziland and Zambia, have recorded aggregate increases in agricultural production between 1971 and 1979. However, as table 8.3 shows, per capita production has fallen in most countries.

Figures released by the FAO convey a more alarming message on African agriculture. Between 1970 and 1981, African countries imported a greater volume of agricultural products than they exported. Coupled with this unhealthy development is the tendency for the countries to pay more for the imports than they received from their export commo-

Table 8.3: Per Capita Food Production in Eastern and Southern Africa  
1971-1979 (Base Year 1969-1971 = 100)

Country	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Angola	98	93	89	89	90	92	92	74	75
Botswana	111	100	94	100	93	105	95	80	91
Comoros	99	95	100	98	96	101	95	94	95
Ethiopia	97	95	94	91	89	98	86	83	84
Kenya	98	99	98	94	96	98	97	92	86
Lesotho	99	83	94	117	87	80	99	107	95
Madagascar	99	98	96	105	99	99	96	90	96
Malawi	108	110	105	103	94	99	100	105	96
Mauritius	97	110	108	104	78	107	99	101	101
Mozambique	99	100	101	96	84	83	79	74	72
Swaziland	103	110	99	108	105	110	104	110	114
Tanzania	98	95	92	91	91	96	96	94	91
Uganda	97	98	95	94	90	92	88	92	89
Zambia	105	103	98	108	113	113	105	104	92
Zimbabwe	105	124	98	119	106	104	106	105	90

Source: *African Statistical Yearbook 1980* (Eastern and Southern Africa) Part III, UNECA, N.Y., 1980.

**Table 8.4: Volume of Agricultural Imports and Exports: Africa, 1970-1981 (Trade Index 1969-1971 = 100)**

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Volume of Imports	101	110	111	115	128	136	145	182	195	202	228	247
Volume of Exports	103	98	109	110	102	93	98	85	85	85	83	82

Source: *FAO Trade Yearbook*, 1981, Vol. 35, FAO, Rome, 1982, pp 33 and 35.

**Table 8.5: Value of Agricultural Imports and Exports: Africa, 1970-1981 (Trade Index 1967-1977 = 100)**

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
Value of Imports	100	115	128	180	290	353	313	388	456	518	668	720
Value of Exports	106	98	112	145	185	172	207	269	259	282	281	226

Source: *FAO Trade Yearbook*, 1981, op.cit., pp 33 and 35.

dities. Table 8.4 shows clearly that Africa is increasingly becoming a net importer of food, while table 8.5 depicts the unfavourable terms of trade faced by many African countries.

Africa's external debt has grown correspondingly with its economic problems. Whereas the long-term external debt of all African countries was US\$ 13.1 billion in 1973, by 1981, the figure had gone up to US\$ 56 billion.<sup>2</sup> This complicates economic management problems as sizeable proportions of national budgets have to go into loan and interest repayments.

### *Factors in Africa's Development*

Several factors have contributed to Africa's economic plight. Worth mentioning are the world-wide inflation, the economic recession in the developed countries, fluctuation in export earnings, and/natural disasters (the most devastating to-date being the Sahelian droughts). However, while tracing the influence of external factors, one must not lose sight of the fact that the poor growth record and the external deficits among African countries have much to do with the process of policy formulation and implementation. As the World Bank rightly pointed out, "insufficient or misdirected policy responses" was one of the factors which left many African countries (particularly West African countries) in a condition of economic weakness. It is clear therefore that public administration have a crucial role to play in turning the battered economies of Africa around. We shall return to this later.

### *Social Conditions*

There is a direct relationship between the level of economic development and the prevailing social conditions. Mass poverty, over-crowded living conditions, hunger and destitution are some of the natural outgrowths of economic backwardness. In a report released by the ECA in 1977, it was estimated that while 31 per cent were above the poverty line in Africa in 1972, 69 per cent were below that dreaded line. Table 8.6 provides the details.

Table 8.6: Estimated Number of Persons in Poverty in Africa, 1972

		Million	Percentage
Population above the poverty line		106	31
Population below the poverty line		239	69
– of whom seriously poor =	105	30	
– destitute =	134	39	
Total		345	100

Source: Survey of Economic and Social Conditions in Africa, 1976-77  
Part I, ECA, Addis Ababa.

The projection up to the year 2000 is no less disconcerting. Even on the optimistic assumption that high growth rates would be achieved, the World Bank estimated that around 630 million people in Africa would live in poverty in the year 2000, and that "under the low case (scenario), the poor could number 850 million by then..."<sup>3</sup>

An alarming development is in the demographic area. Africa has the dubious reputation of recording one of the highest rates of population growth (above 3 per cent) and undoubtedly the lowest rate of economic growth. The ECA perspective study covering the period 1983 – 2008 has estimated that Africa's total population will grow to 1.1 billion by the year 2008. With the meagre resources available, each of the country in Africa has to feed and clothe its increasing number of people (the majority of whom are poor), take care of the sick, provide water for cattle and human beings, supply fuel and energy for domestic and industrial consumption, cope with commodity shortages and inflation, maintain the socio-economic infrastructure, and find jobs for the growing number of unemployed school leavers.

The danger facing many African countries lies not simply in the aggregate number of people whose varying needs have to be met, but in the rising tempo of social mobilization. Thanks to the increasing rates of literacy and urbanization

Table 8.7: Commercial Motor Vehicles in Use in Eastern and Southern Africa 1960-1978

(in Thousands)

Country	1960	1965	1970	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Botswana	0.5	1.5	3.1	4.8	7.9	9.1	12.5	13.3
Ethiopia	8.8	8.9	-	13.2	12.9	13.1	13.4	14.0
Kenya	13.1	12.1	18.0	63.8	69.2	70.0	71.0	72.0
Lesotho	-	2.0	1.6	2.0	3.2	-	-	-
Madagascar	20.0	27.1	37.2	46.2	48.2	50.1	52.3	-
Malawi	5.3	4.5	7.7	9.5	10.5	11.2	13.0	-
Mauritius	3.8	5.3	7.6	8.2	9.5	11.2	13.0	-
Mozambique	5.8	12.5	18.3	24.9	26.8	-	-	-
Seychelles	-	-	-	-	1.0	1.6	1.7	1.7
Somalia	3.9	6.3	4.5	6.1	6.7	-	-	-
Swaziland	-	2.6	3.1	4.8	5.6	-	-	-
Tanzania	8.7	24.6	37.7	42.3	42.3	-	-	-
Uganda	5.2	11.8	14.0	8.9	-	-	-	-
Zambia	10.8	12.7	34.7	62.0	73.4	78.4	-	-
Zimbabwe	-	-	48.0	70.0	-	-	-	-

N.B. - = figures not available

Source: *African Statistical Yearbook (Eastern and Southern Africa) Part III, UNECA, N.Y., 1980.*

Table 8.8: Radio Receivers in Eastern and Southern Africa: 1960-1978

(In Thousands)

Country	1960	1965	1970	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Botswana	2.1	4.0	8.5	55.0	-	-	-	-
Ethiopia	85.0	-	160.0	200.0	200.0	210.0	220.0	230.0
Kenya	57.0	35.0	891.0	1578.0	1660.0	-	-	-
Lesotho	-	4.0	5.0	11.0	22.0	23.0	-	-
Madagascar	82.0	-	540.0	700.0	855.0	-	-	-
Malawi	-	80.0	90.0	125.0	127.0	130.0	135.0	136.0
Mauritius	40.0	60.0	84.0	85.0	85.0	-	-	-
Mozambique	37.0	60.0	90.0	176.0	200.0	225.0	-	-
Somalia	-	35.0	50.0	67.0	68.0	69.0	70.0	-
Swaziland	1.8	8.0	30.0	53.0	-	-	-	-
Tanzania	20.0	115.0	150.0	231.0	232.0	300.0	-	-
Uganda	90.0	-	-	250.0	250.0	250.0	-	-
Zambia	-	31.0	46.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	-	-
Zimbabwe	-	-	145.0	225.0	250.0	255.0	260.0	-

Source: African Statistical Yearbook, 1980, op.cit.

and to modern technological inventions such as the motor car, railways, radio and television sets, video recorders and satellite communications, the people of Africa are now brought in contact with developments outside their own immediate environments. Figures on rates of literacy and urbanization are only available for a few countries and these figures are not even up to date. Still they reveal a lot about the social conditions in Africa today. In 1970, the literacy rate in Ghana was 30.2 per cent and the rate of urbanization, 28.9 per cent. In 1973, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya recorded a rate of urbanization of 59.8 per cent and a literacy rate of 50.1 per cent. In 1976, Egypt's rate of urbanization was 43.9 per cent, and its literacy rate 43.5 per cent. Again the ECA perspective study forecasts that the African region will be 44 per cent urbanized by the year 2008.

#### *Political Development Implications*

The unhealthy economic situation in Africa coupled with the increasing tempo of social change pose grave dangers for political development and stability in the region. The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed an epidemic of military takeovers in many of the then newly-independent countries. Civil wars, separatist agitations and political disturbances have in some countries led to mass starvation, and migrations to different parts of the continent, quite apart from diverting attention from urgent tasks of nation-building and economic development.

### THE STATE OF AFRICAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The picture brought out in the preceding paragraphs looks rather grim. Before asking ourselves what type of administrative system is required for the urgent tasks of reequipment and regeneration of national economies, we must first look at the contemporary system of public administration in Africa.

Generalizations tend to be misleading and anyone who intends to use a single explanatory model to describe African

public administration would be committing fatal errors of analysis. Structures and practices vary from one country to the next — depending mainly on colonial heritage, post-independence reorganization and restructuring exercises, and local environmental influences.

However, most of the public services of Africa have certain features in common. Typical among these are the central, if not dominant, role of public administration in the development process, the relative inefficiency of public enterprise undertakings, the transplant, or attempted transplant, of highly sophisticated bureaucratic structures and management techniques, and the lack of a situationally relevant theoretical framework to guide administrative reform measures.

### *Big Government*

The dominant role of the public sector is a recurring theme in almost all the countries of Africa. Each government in Africa has its fingers in every pie. Its interests range from banking and insurance, through oil refinery, air and road transportation, to agriculture, and social welfare. Central government bureaucracies are no longer content with merely shuffling papers from desk to desk; they now brew beer, distribute cement, manage holding companies, retain matches, and assign individuals to keep a bureaucratic eye on developments at the stock exchange and the international money market.

The expansion in the scope of government in Africa has been reflected not only in the number of public payroll, but also in the level of public expenditure. Table 8.9 illustrates, with the experience of Nigeria, the pattern of development in public service manpower position.

Another evidence of bureaucratic growth is the increase in government expenditure. Table 8.10 traces the pattern in Eastern and Southern Africa between 1960 and 1979.

Table 8.9: Growth of the Federal Public Service of Nigeria, 1962-1980

Year	No. of Payroll	Rate of Growth (%)
1962	50,817	—
1965	50,736	- 6.3
1968	61,705	+ 8.9
1971	72,552	+17.6
1974	122,914	+69.4
1977	121,883	- 0.83
1980	231,802	+91.0

Source: *Manpower Statistics 1962-1980*, Manpower Board, Lagos, 1977

### *Efficiency in Government*

Another major theme in African public administration is that of efficiency and productivity in the public sector. In nearly all the countries, the sector is made up of the civil service, parastatal organizations and local government agencies.

In terms of the resource they utilize, the employment they generate, and their potential impact on the health of the national economy, the public enterprises collectively occupy a strategic position in the public sector. The term 'public enterprise' encompasses organizations set up by government either as autonomous or quasi-autonomous bodies and charged with responsibilities in some specific areas. Their functions range from management of public utility undertakings, and the provision of social welfare services, to participation in industrial, manufacturing and commercial ventures. Some of them operate as research, development and educational agencies while a few others perform regulatory functions.

The level of efficiency of the various public enterprises in Africa has lately become a matter of serious concern. Not only are many unable to achieve the basic objectives for which they were set up (e.g., electricity generation and distribution, water supply, and air passenger services) they

Table 8.10: Government Expenditure in Eastern and Southern Africa, 1960-1979 (in Million U.S. Dollars)

Country	1960	1965	1970	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Angola	90.4	172.8	68.2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Botswana	6.0	16.9	26.5	88.8	88.3	92.6	117.9	114.8	217.5
Comoros	1.8	3.6	5.3	14.4	20.5	—	—	—	—
Djibouti	4.0	9.8	11.7	22.0	24.8	42.2	40.0	57.6	75.4
Ethiopia	76.1	160.4	231.9	373.0	495.2	638.2	702.9	769.7	1018.6
Kenya	129.9	197.4	339.9	644.2	814.3	891.3	1072.4	1527.6	1864.6
Lesotho	6.7	12.6	25.5	32.5	39.6	51.7	67.7	92.5	148.0
Madagascar	72.3	110.6	150.4	275.4	305.2	363.8	423.7	552.2	—
Malawi	22.4	58.4	88.5	109.5	131.1	169.0	181.4	190.6	319.4
Mauritius	35.1	50.8	51.2	136.5	163.2	212.6	255.8	340.3	361.7
Mozambique	161.0	189.4	309.0	645.6	563.8	—	—	—	—
Seychelles	—	—	—	17.3	19.3	—	—	46.5	59.1
Somalia	—	28.4	43.3	84.4	94.8	110.1	276.4	254.3	279.3
Swaziland	7.3	13.5	23.2	51.1	68.8	54.2	99.2	104.4	211.2
Tanzania	70.2	139.4	299.2	619.8	837.8	711.9	928.7	1213.0	1486.3
Uganda	67.8	132.7	226.2	264.3	303.8	309.0	490.7	—	—
Zambia	82.3	278.9	581.9	986.4	1284.6	1312.6	1004.4	1000.3	1042.4
Zimbabwe	90.4	247.1	398.2	693.7	744.7	—	—	978.4	1131.0

Source: African Statistical Yearbook, 1980, op.cit.

are running at a loss.

A number of factors have been held responsible for the relative inefficiency of public institutions in Africa – political interference with managerial decisions, excessive civil service control, and the bureaucratic orientation of the managers themselves. In view of the fact that a lot has been written on the first two, this chapter will focus on the third factor – bureaucratic tendencies. However, in discussing the subject, we shall go beyond the public enterprises to see what relevance the bureaucratic model has for the study and practice of public administration in Africa.

### *Bureaucratic Tendencies*

The third major issue in African public administration is the predominant role of 'bureaucracy'. As transplanted from metropolitan countries to what were then colonial territories, the bureaucratic form of organization possesses the following distinguishing features:

- (a) specialization along functional lines;
- (b) legality and impersonality;
- (c) hierarchical conformation;
- (d) dominance of rules and regulations;
- (e) standardization of methods and procedures;
- (f) appointment on the basis of expertise; and
- (g) the separation of politics from administration.

The bureaucratic ideal-type which Max Weber, the German Sociologist, was so much keen on has also been applied extensively in the various sectors of the African public services – ranging from civil services and regulatory agencies, to public enterprises and universities. The tendency toward increasing bureaucratization should not come as a surprise. As government expands in scope and complexity, the choice will tend to lie in the application of bureaucratic methods and techniques.

Yet the dysfunctional effects of Max Weber's ideal-con-

struct are likely to outweigh whatever advantages are expected to accrue from bureaucratization. In no area of public administration are the dangers of bureaucracy and "red tape" more visible than that of public enterprise management. By derivation, "public enterprise" connotes "entrepreneurship" or "risk-taking" in the public sector. However, the prevailing orientation of a bureaucracy is stability or risk-avoidance. If African public administration is to tackle the immense socio-economic problems referred to in the preceding section, and pioneer technological development, a close re-examination of the bureaucratic model of organization is called for.

#### *In Search of Alternative Organization Form*

Apart from the negative effect of the bureaucratic form of organization, African public services have to reckon with external, environmental (or ecological) interferences in the process of administration. The ideal-construct or theory of bureaucracy oriented from Prussia – with its peculiar history, military and other traditions, its acceptance of the protestant ethic, and its belief in the efficiency or rationality of the individual. The argument in favour of a counter-vailing theory of administration is predicated not just on the fact that the Weberian bureaucracy originated under different conditions, but more especially on the existing confusion and misunderstanding which characterize the study and practice of public administration in Africa. Every one rails against the bureaucratic model, but there is as yet not a single coherent and viable alternative to that form of organization. As a matter of fact, the disillusion with imported models of organization (the bureaucratic model included) has produced four different types of reactions among practitioners and scholars:

- (a) the do-it yourself or practical man's reaction;
- (b) the 'technology transfer' response;
- (c) the revolution by rhetoric; and
- (d) the escapist response.

### *Practice as a Substitute for Theory*

A natural corollary of the application of alien models of organization and management is the gap between "theory" and "practice". It is not unusual for administrators in Africa to condemn existing "theories" of administration. The administrators tend to be particularly disappointed that answers to basic administrative problems are neither to be found in the textbooks nor conjured up by university professors in the course of classroom lectures. How, for instance, to "handle" or "relate to" a recalcitrant political head of department is a subject which is of utmost importance to many an African administrator, but when he consults a basic text for clues, all he gets are highly abstract concepts of "politics-administration dichotomy".<sup>4</sup> For their own part, new entrants into the civil service are reluctant to worry their brains over theories of administration which the prevailing organization environment would not permit them to operationalize! And since the textbooks and the professors have failed him, the African administrator most frequently resorts to improvisation. More often than not, his substitute theories are apt to be hastily constructed, illogically presented, and extremely limited in applicability as well as in time horizon. It goes without saying that such do-it-yourself, situationally limited "theories" tend to be displaced with alacrity by rival theories within the organization.

### *Technology Transfer Option*

The response to alien theories of administration may be one of "co-option". This, in fact, is the essence of the overblown idea of "technology transfer". By technology transfer is meant not just the transfer of the hardware (like the modern, sophisticated computers, equipment, and machines) but also the transplant of "techniques" of managing modern, complex organizations. The *raison d'être* of technology transfer is straight forward — technical and managerial "know-how" is a scarce commodity in the technologically less-developed countries. For those of them that are anxious to "catch

up" with the developed societies, there is no alternative but to transfer modern, and efficient organization and management proto-types from the advanced to the less-developed societies.

If the do-it-yourself approach (mentioned earlier) widens the gulf between "theory" and "practice", technology transfer as a matter of policy brings into bold relief the contradiction between idealism and realism — between rhetoric and manifestation. Many of the African public services will be hard put to explain the paradox of technology transfer and the crippling inefficiency of many of their agencies.

#### *Revolution by Rhetoric*

Partly in response to the urgent need for a countervailing and socially relevant theory of public administration, a number of so-called radical views have surfaced. The views are rarely presented as a coherent body of knowledge. The "radicals" include those proposing reforms in specific aspects of the inherited bureaucratic structure, those who believe that the bureaucracy is part of the apparatus of tyranny which should be replaced, and those who simply do not know what to do with the octopus. Instead of producing a viable alternative to the bureaucratic theory, the radicals have started their own kind of revolution — "revolution by rhetoric". Radical words and phrases ("results-oriented management", matrix management, PPBS) have been bandied about but no fundamental change seems to have taken place in the study and practice of public administration in Africa. If anything everyone seems overly anxious to carry on business as usual.

#### *Traditional Culture Response*

The last major attempt at providing a theoretical basis for the practice of public administration in Africa hides behind African culture and tradition. The "traditional culture" response to the predominance of alien management concepts cites the Japanese approach to management as an example

worthy of emulation in Africa. The adherents of this approach extol the virtues of African traditional society — its simplicity and lack of artifice, its assurance of order and stability, its moral outlook, its abhorrence of avarice, greed and corruption.

However, the traditional-culture orientation over-simplifies the problems encountered in the traditional society. Contrary to the belief that the society was corrupt-free, a recent study carried out in Nigeria concludes that each traditional society contains the seeds of its own corruption.<sup>5</sup> The conclusion emanates from the traditional society's circumscribed view of the universe, its narrow conception of truth, justice and fairness, and its purely materialist definitions of 'duty' and rewards from efforts. Add all these to the socio-economic changes of the post-colonial period. What emerges is not a society living by the laws of nature, but one that has been pulled far away from its original, "other-worldly" roots to the material, "this-worldly" branches. Japan which is a favourite example among African countries did not start with the transistor radio and Sony Beta-Max. It began with a sound work ethic, an entrepreneurial (Samurai) class, a national discipline capable of meeting modern technological challenges, and a clear commitment to research and development. Where are the equivalents of this achievement-oriented tradition in Africa? Instead of clinging to traditional myths and operating under the influence of what may be termed the cultural-fundamentalist propaganda, African administrators and scholars should begin to take a realistic stock of their societies and work out an appropriate balance between tradition and modernity.

### ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS AND RESPONSES

The first section reveals the magnitude of the economic and social problems confronting African countries. The second section reveals that the administrative system in each country also faces serious problems. The situation is without any

doubt very bad, but it is not irreversible. Let us look at the steps so far taken before suggesting what else can be done to resuscitate the dying economies.

### *Austerity Measures*

In response to the hard economic conditions, equally harsh remedies have either been proposed or administered. The IMF's standard prescription, which not many developing countries are willing to swallow, consists of the "freezing" of vacancies in the public service, cutting of "excess fat" in government expenditure, devaluation of currency, and elimination of import restrictions. But whether they like it or not, the various ailing economies have had to embark on similar, unpalatable "austerity" measures. The public sector has had to feel the pinch of "austerity" with restrictions being imposed on appointments and promotions, and on the purchase of essential items (such as fuel, drugs and laboratory equipment). The immediate result of the latter measure is that those on the payroll of government continue to draw salaries but are unable to discharge their obligations for want of resources and equipage.

The private sector is not spared the agonies of austerity either. With the restriction of foreign exchange transactions and the stringent control of import licences, the machinery, equipment and raw materials required to keep production processes going are increasingly difficult to procure. This frequently leads to production interruptions or outright stoppages, mass retrenchment of workers, not to mention commodity shortages and rising cost of living.

### *Self-Reliance — The Key*

Perhaps what is required is for all the countries of Africa to cease putting themselves in the position of "beggar nations" and take measures calculated to ensure rational and judicious allocation of their own resources. In specific terms, the requirements for survival in what promises to be an increasingly hostile environment include:

- (a) immediate operationalization of the concept of collective self-reliance;
- (b) the articulation of a development-oriented set of values for the public sectors;
- (c) the definition of the 'proper' role of government;
- (d) the establishment of *productivity centres* and key Results Areas in each arm of the public and private sectors;
- (e) the revitalization of various production agencies of governments;
- (f) the installation of control/monitoring mechanisms; and
- (g) encouragement of policy and strategic studies.

#### *International Economic Adjustment*

Several conferences, symposia and economic summits have drummed it into the ears of all Africans that their salvation lies in their fostering practical and meaningful economic co-operation amongst themselves. It has been argued that the unequal and inequitable pattern of economic relations which subsists between the North and the South — or, specifically, between the technologically advanced countries and the less-developed — will persist so long as the less developed nations continued to entertain the illusion that the developed would bail them out of their economic plight. Yet, after each assertion of collective destiny and pious declaration of interdependence, the countries in the African region have always pulled in different directions. The tragedy of the situation lies in the fact that what each African country looks for in Europe can be exchanged for its own products within Africa. In the area of agriculture, Kenya, Malawi and Swaziland have a lot to offer other African countries. The Africans who troop to Paris, London, and New York in the summer to purchase textile materials may be well advised to stop over in Dakar and see what the local dye industry could produce. What stops Ghana from exchanging its cocoa for other items *within* Africa? These are off-hand suggestions, and it is possible that after careful consideration they will turn out to

be less practical than others.

If the principle of collective self-reliance is accepted, what *"remains to be done is for the various public services in Africa to serve as protagonists and activators of this ideal."* First, we must take an inventory of what each country possesses in abundance and what it lacks. The next stage is that of finding out which African country promises relatively favourable terms of trade in specific areas. As soon as information becomes available, it is incumbent on African administrators to ensure that their countries' foreign and domestic policies reflect the new mood.

### *Ethical Response*

The success of the international economic initiative discussed above depends largely on the prevailing ethical standards, notably, those of discipline, self-reliance and patriotism.

Public administration in Africa is in a rather peculiar situation in that the values underlying it originated not from within the continent (in the same way as the Samurai ethic originated from within Japan) but mostly from north America and western Europe. The African administrator comes under cross-pressures as soon as he begins to take decisions. It is then that he has to reconcile the traditional society's narrow orientation with the demands of a modern, multi-ethnic nation-state, or indeed, with the requirements of collective self-reliance. If this Roundtable is to make any contribution, delegates will need to focus on aspects of the traditional African society which serve either as "animators" or "inhibitors" of development. We should start by examining the prevailing view of the universe and the various nationalities' definitions of truth, justice, fairplay, patriotism, etc. We should then go on to look at the traditional society's conception of the relationship between man and his environment with the specific objective of deciding whether the environment should mould the man, or the man should change the environment. The other ethical questions which we must answer are on what constitutes the appropriate relationship

between the government and the governed, between authority and responsibility, and between contributions/service and rewards.

In order to be provocative, we may start with the hypothesis that where primordial loyalties stunt the development of universal ideas, the values of truth, justice, fairness and collective self-reliance will be correspondingly undermined. If, in contrast, political and administrative elites succeed in fostering a national orientation, it would be possible for universal standards of behaviour to emerge.

It is of course not enough to foster a national universal outlook. A consensus must be reached on the role of the individual in society, the duties and obligations of the government vis-a-vis the governed, the limits of authority bearing in mind each functionary's scope of responsibilities, and the nature of work in relation to the rewards from individual effort.

### *Role of Government*

The scope of responsibilities of government in Africa has been determined by a number of factors — historical, socio-anthropological, economic, bureaucratic and ideological. Bearing in mind the phenomenal growth in the size of the various governments, and the relative inefficiency of many public enterprises, the time is ripe to redefine the role of government.

### *Organization Reform and Revitalization*

Without prejudice to what is decided as the proper role of government, steps must now be taken to review the working of the machinery of government in each country. In particular, we must critically examine the relationship between central and local government, between the civil service and parastatal organizations, between politics and administration, and between management and the work force.

We should also ask specifically whether the bureaucratic

form of organization will serve equally well in the civil service, public utilities, industrial, manufacturing, and commercial enterprises, research and development organizations and educational institutions. If, as it is often suggested, alternative models of organization are required, what should be the main elements of the models? As far as this chapter is concerned, the elements that will need to be taken into consideration include ethics of development administration, objectives of enterprise, measurable outputs, methods of operation, clientele, intellectual requirements, managerial skills required, professional standards, and prevailing economic conditions.

### *Productivity Centres*

Target-setting may be unpopular with rank- and status-dominated bureaucratic organizations. What matters most in such organizations is that papers get shuffled through the "proper channels". In order to meet the immense challenges of today and the future, the various organizations in the public sector should be classified according to *results expected*. Even in the civil service, there should be evidence that the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry Natural Resources, Mines, and Energy — to mention a few — achieve specific results within a particular time frame.

There is a tendency to administer and evaluate public enterprises using civil service, bureaucratic criteria. This is a fatal error which must now be corrected. Each parastatal organization should be required to meet specific production quotas and financial targets. The fortune of its board and management should be closely tied to the achievement of the specified results.

Local government agencies should be included in the network of national productivity centres. They should be so mobilized that they will be in no doubt as to what they are expected to do in the areas of refuse collection, sewage disposal, environmental sanitation, rural water supply, road construction and/or rehabilitation in local communities,

administration of parks, gardens and markets, revenue collection, etc.

### *Control and Monitoring Mechanisms*

The success of the proposed productivity drives hinges on a firm statistical base. In other words, the effectiveness of the productivity centres depends largely on the efficiency of information and records management systems that are installed. For a start, a simple model may be considered at the national level. This is expected to furnish instant information on:

- (a) inputs consumed by a productivity centre within a period, say, 3 months or 1 year;
- (b) outputs produced over a period;
- (c) internal and external constraints on performance.

### *Policy and Strategic Studies*

Even after all the measures proposed above have been adopted, it is possible that the administrator in each public service of Africa will face increasingly difficult challenges. If the past trend is anything to go by, the African society of tomorrow will be confronted with problems of unfathomable proportions: population will increase, health and social welfare needs will multiply, energy, housing and food situations will become more critical, school leavers will find it very difficult to be gainfully employed, and bearing in mind the unbridled exploitation of forested areas, ecological balance will emerge as a dominant issue. If the entire continent is not to be submerged in the flood of tomorrow, the public services should start as from today to reappraise government policies and encourage rational solutions.

## CONCLUSION

Africa is passing through a critical period. If it is to survive the turbulent changes taking place now, urgent steps must be

taken to shape-up the various countries' fragile economies. The administrative system in each country has a vital role to play. Not only will it be required to serve as a vanguard of the doctrine of collective self-reliance, it will have to examine itself critically with a view to returning itself for the tasks of development. Aspects of the administrative system in need of remoulding include the prevailing ethos/ethics of public administration, the scope and size of government, the organization structure, the measurement of productivity, and the monitoring of performance. For the productivity drive to succeed, the information management system in each country must itself be productivity- and results-oriented. Finally, policy and strategic studies should be part of the activities of the various public services.

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## *Chapter Nine*

# ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUSTMENTS AND RESPONSES TO CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT: THE ZAMBIAN CASE

Z.J. NGWENYA

## INTRODUCTION

Zambia's economic performance in recent years has been unsatisfactory and the resultant effects on the public administration and management systems in the country have been severe. An annual report of a Provincial Officer sums up the situation succinctly: "It is not practical to run a department without money".<sup>1</sup>

This chapter attempts to assess the impact of the present economic crisis on public administration and management systems in Zambia. It also examines the administrative responses to the challenges occasioned by the economic crisis. For purposes of analysis three institutional aspects of public administration and management systems in the country are here examined. These are: (a) the government civil service; (b) the Local Government Administration; and (c) the Parastatal Sector.

The first part of the chapter highlights briefly the significance of copper in the Zambian economy and shows that during the first decade of Zambia's independence the country did not face serious fiscal problems. We shall show that this is so because the country's economic performance during the first decade of independence was relatively good. The second part of the chapter reviews the country's economy since the mid-1970s when the economy began to collapse, while the third part highlights the impact of the economic crisis on public administration and management systems. The final part of the chapter reviews critically some administra-

tive responses to the challenges posed by the economic environment.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COPPER IN THE ZAMBIAN ECONOMY

The mainstay of the Zambian economy is copper. As tables 9.1 and 9.2 demonstrate, it contributes about 90 per cent of the country's total export earnings and close to 30 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic product (GDP).

**Table 9.1: Contribution of Copper to Value of Exports (K. Million)**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Copper</i>	<i>Total Exports</i>	<i>% Contribution</i>
1970	681.4	715.0	95.3
1971	450.2	485.2	92.79
1972	490.9	541.6	90.64
1973	698.3	742.0	94.11
1974	838.5	905.1	92.64
1975	472.0	521.0	60.60
1976	688.1	749.2	91.84
1977	645.9	705.2	91.59
1978	592.5	661.6	89.56
1979	987.3	1063.0	84.41

*Source: Bank of Zambia Report, Volume 12 No. 11, June, 1982, p 54.*

**Table 9.2: Contribution of Copper of the GDP [At constant 1970 Prices (K. Million)]**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Copper</i>	<i>Total GDP</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1979	390.2	1314.6	29.68
1980	398.6	1367.9	29.14
1981	350.7	1358.2	25.82
1982	420.7	1406.4	29.91

*Source: National Commission for Development Planning, Economic Report, 1982. Lusaka.*

**Table 9.3: Average annual copper prices for the period 1970-1982**  
(*Electrolytic Wire bars cash prices on the London Metal Exchange*)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Market price Kwacha per ton</i>	<i>Index of copper price (1970 = 100)</i>	<i>International pur- chasing power of copper index (1970 = 100)</i>
1970	1010	100	100
1971	767	75.9	72.0
1972	764	75.6	67.9
1973	1156	114.5	90.7
1974	1326	131.3	83.8
1975	794	78.6	40.5
1976	1007	99.7	46.0
1977	1016	100.6	40.5
1978	1890	187.1	35.9
1979	1522	150.7	41.6
1980	1719	170.2	35.0
1981	1514	149.1	31.0
1982*	1435	144.1	25.5

\*Based on 1st 8 months of the year.

Source: National Commission for Development Planning, *Economic Report, 1982*, p 45, Lusaka.

**Table 9.4: Contribution of copper to government revenues**  
(1966/1967-1970 K.Million)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Copper</i>	<i>Total Recurrent Account</i>	<i>% Contribution</i>
1966/67	245.8	384.3	63.96
1968	178.2	292.3	60.96
1969	235.1	389.5	60.36
1970	231.1	425.1	54.36

Source: Third National Development Plan, 1979-1983, p 5.

It can be deduced from the above that there exists a strong correlation between the performance of copper on the international market and the amount of revenue that accrues to the government and its constituent agencies (such as ministries and departments, local authorities and parastatal bodies) to enable them to carry out their functions. We attempt to establish this correlation in the remaining part of this section and the subsequent one.

### *The First Decade of Independence*

As pointed out earlier, during the first decade of Zambia's independence, Zambia enjoyed a buoyant economy and the problem of lack of foreign exchange that has become a familiar 'cry' today in public administration and management circles was not very pronounced. This was largely because, as President Kaunda frequently put it, "we were born with a rich copper spoon in our mouth". Indeed from figures available, and as table 9.3 shows, the international purchasing power of copper was reasonably high until 1974. The index was well above 60. As it is to be expected, its contribution to government revenue was also quite high (over 50 per cent) as table 9.4 demonstrates.

Given this fairly buoyant economy, the government was able to undertake a number of development programmes. For example, educational facilities expanded at all levels. Health facilities also expanded tremendously as table 9.5 shows:

**Table 9.5: Full-time health institutions 1964-1977**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Total full-time health institutions</i>			<i>Health centres and clinics</i>			
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Beds/ costs</i>	<i>Hospitals</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban/ industry/ deprt. special</i>	<i>Mobile units</i>	<i>Flying doctor service</i>
1964	354	10,850	48	250	56	—	—
Jan. 72	629	16,300	73	418	116	7	15
Dec. 77	747	19,800	82	464	169	15	17

*Source: Third National Development Plan, 1979-1983, p 365.*

At the same time, a huge parastatal sector emerged "as the main agent of the state in fostering economic development of the country".<sup>2</sup> In 1978 there were 112 parastatal organizations in the country, and this sector currently occupies about 80 per cent of the economy. The strength of the government civil service also multiplied many times. Table 9.6 shows that the civil service established posts increased from 25,075 in 1964/1965 to 62,524 in 1974 representing an increase of over 150 per cent.

**Table 9.6: Established posts in Civil Services: 1964/1965-1983**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Established posts</i>
1964/65	25,075
1965/66	28,991
1966/67	30,699
1968	61,997
1969	52,315
1970	52,277
1971	59,471
1972	59,189
1973	59,717
1974	62,524
1975	62,674
1976	64,970
1977	70,884
1978	73,225
1979	76,756
1980	80,916
1981	72,853
1982	70,801
1983	78,918

Source: Personnel Division, Office of the Prime Minister, Lusaka.

### THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

The picture that emerges from the above is that during the first decade of independence, Zambia enjoyed a buoyant economy, and consequently there were few or no serious constraints on the activities of government institutions in the country. If anything, the period was marked by a steady growth of the economy which tended to influence the growth of the public service as a whole. However, as we show in the third part of the chapter, the 'honeymoon' was to be disturbed beginning from 1975 when the economy began to show severe signs of strain. What were the forces at play?

We have already shown that the Zambian economy is heavily dependent on copper. However, its international marketability began to dwindle markedly around 1975 consequent upon the international economic recession. For example table 9.3 shows that its international purchasing power index decreased from 83.8 in 1974 to 40.5 in 1975

**Table 9.7: Copper's contribution to Government recurrent revenues 1974-1982 (K Million)**

Year	Rev. from copper	Total Rev.	Copper's percentage contribution
1974	252.2	647.5	38.95
1975	59.4	448.2	13.25
1976	11.6	443.0	2.62
1977	-1.2	449.0	-0.27
1978	0.1	549.9	0.02
1979	-9.8	592.7	-1.65
1980	41.7	767.7	5.43
1981	1.0	811.0	0.12
1982 (Budget)	0.1	975.5	0.01
1983 (Provision)	0.1	867.3	0.01

Source: National Commission for Development Planning, *Economic Report, 1982*, p 18.

representing a decline of about 50 per cent. The dwindling of the marketability of copper has had a number of serious implications for the economy as a whole. A few examples will suffice. The first is the impact on government revenue. As table 9.7 below shows, copper's contribution to government revenue has taken a steep dive since 1975.

The country's terms of trade have also been affected. Table 9.8 shows that the terms of trade index has been deteriorating since 1975 and in 1982 was only a quarter of its 1970 value.

Table 9.8: Zambia's terms of Trade Index (1970 = 100)

Year	Export price index	Import price index	Terms of Trade index
1970	100	100	100
1971	78	105	74
1972	80	111	72
1973	117	126	93
1974	134	157	85
1975	84	194	43
1976	100	217	46
1977	97	248	34
1978	103	299	35
1979	185	374	50
1980	201	486	41
1981	198	584	34
1982	180	695	24

Source: National Commission for Development Planning, *Economic Report, 1982*, p 23.

The massive deterioration in the country's terms of trade has only exacerbated the balance-of-payments problem. Table 9.9 is illustrative. As is to be expected the deterioration in the balance-of-payments has led to a significant expansion in external indebtedness and a further accumulation of external payment arrears.

Table 9.9: Balance-of-Payments position (K. Million)

Year	Overall balance
1974	+18.6
1975	-250.0
1976	-136.2
1977	-223.5
1978	-258.8
1979	*158.4
1980	-219.7
1981	-341.4

\*Bank of Zambia Annual Reports (various issues).

Source: Third National Development Plan, *Economic Reports* (various issues).

The dwindling profitability of copper in recent years seems also to have adversely affected general economic activity in the country. For example, available data (Table 9.10 below) suggests that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fared somewhat better before 1974 than during the subsequent years. Additionally, the GDP per capita has "declined by 52 per cent from 1974-1980"<sup>3</sup> in real terms.

Table 9.10: Percentage variations in GDP at constant (1965) prices

	1970 Over		1976 Over				
	1965 Annual Average	1971 Annual Average	Annual Percentage Variation over preceding year				
			1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Unadjusted for terms of trade	+2.0	+3.4	+7.4	+ 2.0	+5.6	- 0.4	+2.4
Adjusted for terms of trade	+6.0	-2.3	+7.1	+12.6	-0.7	-24.6	-6.5

Source: National Commission for Development Planning, *Third National Development Plan*, p 1.

The slowing down of the domestic economic activity has, of course, heightened the cost of living in the country. For example, table 9.11 shows that before 1975 the consumer price index rose by less than 10 per cent annually. The index assumed double digits thereafter.

**Table 9.11: Cost of living indices 1972-1982 (1975 = 100)**

Year	Low income group %		High income group %		Combined low and high income groups	
	Index	Change	Index	Change	Index %	Change
1972	78.9	—	78.9	—	78.8	—
1973	840.0	6.5	84.6	7.6	84.3	7.0
1974	90.8	8.1	92.2	9.0	91.5	8.5
1975	100.0	10.1	100.0	8.5	100.0	9.3
1976	118.8	18.8	116.1	16.1	117.5	17.5
1977	142.3	19.8	136.8	17.8	139.1	18.4
1978	165.6	16.4	152.6	11.5	159.1	14.4
1979	181.6	9.7	169.4	11.5	175.7	10.4
1980	202.9	11.7	189.4	11.5	196.2	11.7
1981	231.3	14.0	209.1	10.4	220.2	12.2
1982*	255.6	10.5	232.9	11.4	224.3	10.9

\*Up to August only.

Source: National Commission for Development Planning, *Economic Report*, 1982, p 40.

The poor performance of the economy has also aggravated the unemployment situation in the country. For example, wage-earning employment in the formal sector in the urban areas declined from 393,000 in 1975 to 368,000 in 1978.<sup>4</sup> The decline represents a loss of 25,000 jobs in only three years. It is also instructive to note here that the unemployment phenomenon is taking place at a time when there is a marked increase in the number of school leavers joining the labour market. Having nothing else to do the youth have tended to resort to criminality thus threatening the inherited

cultural values of the society.

Finally, the increasing trend in the government budget deficits also suggests that all is not well in the economy. Table 9.12 illustrates. It must be admitted here that while moderate levels of budget deficits are generally acceptable, very high and continuous deficits as highlighted in the table can be hazardous to the economy because they tend to promote inflation.

**Table 9.12: Government budget deficits: 1978-1982 (K. Million)**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Revenue</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Deficit</i>	<i>% Deficit</i>
1978	576.30	746.8	167.50	29.06
1979	620.60	867.8	247.20	39.83
1980	791.40	1288.90	497.50	62.86
1981	834.10	1277.20	443.10	53.12
1982	869.00	1561.90	692.90	79.74

*Source: Zambia Daily Mail, 24th August, 1983.*

## THE IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

### *Government Civil Service*

The impact of the economic crisis on the civil service has manifested itself in several ways. One has been the decline in the government recurrent expenditure. For example in a circular No. 10 of 1978, the permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Finance warns ministries and departments that:

There is absolutely no prospect that Government revenue will increase in 1979 over 1978 levels because of the continuing low level of economic activity in the country. Consequently, it is necessary for recurrent expenditure to be held at its 1978 levels and controlling officers should be prepared for an actual reduction in expenditure ...<sup>5</sup>

The ILO's Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa (JASPA) estimates, for example, that Government total recurrent expenditures "declined by 25% from 1975-1979".<sup>6</sup> The decline of government recurrent expenditure that has become characteristic in recent years has sharply reduced the effectiveness of government staff in virtually all operating ministries and departments, particularly in the rural areas. Complaints such as lack of transport, fuel, medical supplies (e.g. dressings, anti-malaria drugs, vaccines), school books, improved seedlings, and fertilizer, have been heard from time to time. A NIPA report on two rural districts (Samfya and Serenje) make the point more poignantly:

...in Serenje agricultural field staff and teachers have to come to district Headquarters to collect their salaries. In Samfya, education staff take to teachers their salaries but this operation takes a month. In Serenje there are schools which have not been inspected for two or three years, there are delays of up to three months in delivery of medical supplies to some rural health centres and the Agricultural Finance Company has been unable to visit some farmers with loans for up to two years instead of the aim which is to visit them every two weeks. In Samfya, roads staff were using wheelbarrows to maintain roads because all graders were out of use at the time of our visit and vegetables were rotting in the ZAMHORT office because the vehicle from Mansa had not come for over a week. The examples are endless.

Lack of recurrent resources has in turn lowered the morale of staff, who in many cases are dedicated workers themselves. Thus it has become common for heads of departments to lament "you cannot help people when you have nothing"<sup>8</sup> and ...it is not practical to run a department without funds.<sup>9</sup>

Inadequate funds has also affected the growth and size of the government civil service. This is because of the government's recent policy of suspending the creation of new posts

and freezing vacant non-professional and non-technical posts. This is clear, for example from a circular from the Permanent Secretary, Personnel Division which directs *inter alia*, that:

...As explicitly stated in the Ministry of Finance circular No. 11 dated 15th June, 1982 on recurrent expenditure estimates the need to restrain in expenditure on personal emoluments will continue in the ensuing financial year. In this regard, the following policy decisions which applied during 1982 concerning the staffing of Ministries and departments will also be in full force in 1982: (a) that no new posts will be created; (b) that vacant non-professional and non-technical posts will remain frozen...<sup>10</sup>

The effect of the government's policy as delineated above has been that the size of the civil service has grown only marginally in recent years. For example, as table 9.6 shows, between 1974 to 1983, the civil service has grown from 62,524 to 78,918 representing an increase of 26.22 per cent. This contrasts sharply with the increase of over 150 per cent during the first decade of independence.

The governments' decision to embargo the creation of new posts and freeze some existing posts has affected the performance of the civil service in two main ways. First "Ministries and departments that are understaffed have got bogged down because they are unable to recruit additional staff".<sup>11</sup> Secondly, the freezing of posts has reduced staff promotion opportunities and consequently undermined the morale of some officers in the civil service. The following remarks attributed to Livingstone District Acting Governor lend credence to this interpretation:

Lack of promotion prospects in the civil service has adversely affected efficiency... A worker who did not see a bright future (because the next post has been frozen) could never be expected to put in a good performance... if an officer did not see prospects of advancement, the per-

formance of that officer could not be expected to be efficient because he would spend most of his time grumbling and brooding about his future...the commission (Public Service Commission) should seriously address its attention to these cases which frustrated civil servants and affected their performance to the detriment of nation...<sup>12</sup>

### *Local Government Administration*

The economic crisis has equally affected the performance of the local government administration in Zambia. Since the onset of the economic crisis, the Provincial and Local Government Administration Division<sup>13</sup> has, dutifully, reminded local authorities of the precarious nature of the national economy and its implications for local authority financing. For example, in a circular No. 17/82 of 1982 the Divisions's Acting Permanent Secretary warned the Chief Executive of Local Authorities that:

The National Commission for Development Planning has intimated that the low price of Copper in the International market during 1982 has adversely affected the Government's revenues and the country's balance-of-payments position has further deteriorated in 1982. In view of this level of funds for District Councils Capital projects from Government resources is not likely to increase in 1983. You are therefore advised to prepare your Council's 1983 estimates and restrict proposals for Capital projects to be funded by Government to the same level as in 1982.<sup>14</sup>

One aspect of local government finance that has been affected adversely by the economic crisis is loan capital finance. The government is the major source of local authority capital finance and provides about 45-60 per cent of the total loan capital to local authorities.<sup>15</sup> However, its ability to finance local authority capital projects has been weakened due to the economic malaise outlined above. For example, in 1982, the estimated total loan requirements of local authori-

ties amounted to K38,880,000 but only K13,065,000 was actually handed out.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, evidence available suggests that government loan assistance to local authorities has been declining progressively in recent years. For example, in 1982, K13,065,000 was given out to local authorities but the figure in 1983 dropped to K12,853,000.<sup>17</sup> The allocation for 1984 is K11,387,000.<sup>18</sup> The meagre financial resources of the government have adversely affected local development programmes. For example, the 1981 Ndola Urban District Council report laments:

The serious economic difficulties experienced by the country continued to have strains on the council's finances. During the year under review the financial picture could not be described as encouraging as there was no external assistance. The contribution from government was nil. There was practically no significant capital finance made available by government... Capital projects such as the construction of a new civic centre had to be put off because of lack of capital finance... we hope the government will assist the council in securing financial assistance to put up a more befitting Civic Centre...<sup>19</sup>

Local authorities who depend heavily on the central government subventions to finance their recurrent budgets are in an even more precarious position. This is due to the fact that subventions are rarely paid in good time let alone paid at appropriate levels. The result has been a near breakdown of services in the majority of local authorities particularly those in the rural areas. For example, workers are rarely paid their wages on time and few local councils have a reliable transport system.

#### *The Parastatal Sector*

Perhaps the most critical problem that has affected the performance of the parastatal sector consequent upon the economic crisis has been the scarcity of foreign exchange to

import capital goods from abroad. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the manufacturing sector in Zambia relies heavily on external sources of capital as table 9.13 demonstrates.

**Table 9.13: Share (%) of External capital in Total Capital Receipts**

1976	36%
1977	42%
1978	43%
1979	68%
1980	74%
1981	43%

*Sources:* National Commission for Development Planning, *Economic Reports* (several issues).

The difficulties in acquiring foreign exchange can be noted in table 9.14 which shows the foreign exchange allocations to the Zambia Industrial and Mining Corporation Limited (ZIMCO) group of companies between March and September, 1982. The table shows that, overall, the group received only 49 per cent of their total requirements.

**Table 9.14: Summary of ZIMCO's Foreign Exchange requirements and Allocations (K'000) March-September, 1982**

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Requirements</i>	<i>Actual allocations</i>	<i>Per cent allocations Against requirements</i>
Mining	249,700	115,300	46
Industry	112,852	18,598	16
Energy	116,437	89,782	77
Transport	69,929	45,614	65
Finance	5,000	757	15
Hotels	1,155	258	22
Agriculture	2,766	1,528	55
Trading	23,700	15,375	65
Communication	8,695	2,744	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>590,234</b>	<b>289,956</b>	<b>49</b>

*Source:* NCDP, *Economic Report*, 1982, p 374.

The scarcity of foreign exchange has tended to inhibit the importation of inputs and consequently most industries have been operating below capacity. The erratic supply of essential commodities such as detergents and cooking oil is evidence of the dilemma. Additionally, some industries in the country have had to face voluntary liquidation or partial closures because of the scarcity of foreign exchange but only to accentuate the unemployment problem in the economy.

### ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSES TO THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

We have shown that the Zambian economy has been bedeviled by severe constraints in recent years. We have also shown that the economic crisis has had some debilitating effects on the performance of the public administration and management institutions in the country. But how far have the public administration institutions responded to the administrative challenges posed by the economic crisis to mitigate its severe consequences?

It has already been shown above that one reaction is the recent government policy to suspend the creation of new posts and freeze some existing ones in the civil service. For example "between 1980 and 1981 10,000 jobs were frozen".<sup>20</sup> The policy is designed to de-emphasize unproductive recurrent expenditure and re-direct resources to productive investments to resuscitate the economy. However, while the policy is basically sound, it ought to be applied selectively because a wholesale run-down of the civil service might 'punish' those government departments in dire need of additional staff and hinder effective performance of their functions.

A presidential appeal to the civil service institutions to cut down administrative costs due to wastage and misuse of government property (e.g. transport, fuel, stationery and use of telephone) has been another response to the challenges

occasioned by the economic environment. In a circular No. PPS/6/55/17 of 24th October, 1980 sent to all ministries and departments, the President wrote:

For a long time, I have noted with great dismay and concern that the party and its government's expenditure on stationery, office furniture, fuel and oils by ministries, departments and government institutions is alarmingly too high....It is clear, however, that the high demand is not due to the expansion in the Public Service operations, but rather to the great wastage that goes on unabated in all public offices. This wasteful expenditure is largely due to indifference, negligence and negative attitude towards public property. I want it checked and brought to an end forthwith...<sup>21</sup>

Evidence available suggests that the presidential appeal has fallen on deaf ears. Thus, addressing Permanent Secretaries in May, this year, (three years later) President Kaunda was obviously disappointed. He... noted that "the country has been losing K'million every year through misuse of telephones by Civil Servants who talk about 'love' and plan thefts on government telephones..."<sup>22</sup>

It stands to reason that there is an urgent need here to plug loopholes because wastage can hardly improve administrative performance in an economic crisis. In local government administration "the emphasis now is that local authorities should try to finance most of their administrative operations largely from their own local resources."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, 'self-reliance' is most desirable because dependence on erratic central government handouts has not helped to improve administrative performance in local authorities. But then, local authorities would require both administrative and political support from the national government to enable them to adequately tap the local financial resources. Evidence exists which shows that lack of administrative

capacity and political will both at national and local levels can make self-financing a proposition difficult to operationalise.

In the parastatal sector, a number of measures have been taken to improve administrative performance in spite of the economic crisis. Perhaps the most significant has been the 1981 merger of the giant Copper Mining Companies – The Roan Consolidated Mines (Ltd) and Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines (Ltd) into one conglomerate, the Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (Ltd). In an environment of declining copper profitability the merger was all the more necessary to reduce the mining industry's costs and thereby increase production. Indeed, the data available shows that the merger is paying dividends. For example, the company saved "K120 million during the six-month period ended 30th September, 1982".<sup>24</sup>

Another notable response in the parastatal sector has been the decontrol of commodity prices in December, 1982. Hitherto, commodity prices were fixed by the government but frequently well below the costs of production. As is to be expected, the result was heavy operational losses. The decontrol of prices should improve the economic performance of parastatal bodies.

It is also pertinent to mention here that in an economic crisis like the one currently prevailing in Zambia, the need for appointing qualified and trained personnel to man administrative institutions cannot be over-emphasized. The data available points to the fact that some of the key personnel in the public service have doubtful credentials. For example, referring to the parastatal sector, the President once contended that "some parastatals are full of people who failed in government and yet are still employed by parastatals at higher salaries for doing less work."<sup>25</sup> And only recently, at an annual conference of Zambian local government association, the association's chairman:

...complained to the President in his welcome address that smooth implementation of decentralization was being

hampered by incompetent officers recently appointed to key posts...The situation in 47 district councils was pathetic because the officers appointed were not technically or professionally qualified, resulting in shoddy services.<sup>26</sup>

It must be remembered here that in an organization, it is people who make it work, and organizations can ill-afford to carry passengers — especially in a turbulent economic environment.

However, although the administrative adjustments referred to above are important, it appears that the long-term remedy to the administrative constraints that result from the turbulent economic environment lies in the economic base itself. For the evidence above, it appears that there is need to restructure the economy. First, the vulnerability of copper suggests that there is need to diversify exports to broaden the foreign-exchange earning capacity. Second, dependence on foreign inputs in the manufacturing industry tends to aggravate the balance-of-payments problems, and this points to the need to de-emphasize foreign inputs and promote the use of domestic resources and raw materials. The recent government directive to Zambian firms to "find alternative local raw materials or diversify their operations because it cannot continue to provide foreign exchange for imported inputs"<sup>27</sup> is a step in the right direction.

Single-handed, however, Zambia like many African countries may find it difficult to improve her economic performance. The tragedy of African economies is that so far they have shown little inclination to work collectively to strengthen their position in the world economy. It is in this context that one looks with hope at the efforts symbolized by the Southern African Development co-ordination Conference (SADCC) and Preferential Trade Area (PTA) in East and Southern Africa. The spirit of collective self-reliance underpinning the Lagos Plan of Action is also worthy of commendation.

## CONCLUSION

Zambia is at present in a deep economic crisis which has adversely affected administrative performance in the public service. We have shown that the public administration institutions have made several important administrative adjustments to deal with the constraints occasioned by the turbulent economic environment. However, these adjustments need to be reinforced by the restructuring of the economic base itself.

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## COMMENTS ON PAPERS PRESENTED AT THIRD PLENARY SESSION

The third plenary session focused on the sub-theme 'Administrative Adjustments and Responses to Changes in the Economic Environment.' Participants were of the view that while external factors should not be ignored, the bulk of Africa's problems were internal to the continent. Therefore, in looking for solutions, attention should thenceforth shift to the conditions within each country militating against rapid socio-economic development.

Many of the participants agreed with Professor Adebayo Adedeji that the normative development strategy offered the key to Africa's mounting problems. However, they doubted whether the policy-makers and the administrators would have the courage to make the hard choices prescribed in the strategy. The consensus then emerged that ways must be found to make African leaders aware of, and sensitive to, the magnitude of the problems. It was also agreed that in selecting individuals for key positions in government, particular attention should be paid to the attributes specified in Professor Adedeji's chapter. In other words, top level political and administrative positions should be occupied by Africans who "have brains in their heads as well as fire in their bellies".

Participants noted that the state shouldered a relatively heavy burden in Africa. However, to suggest that it (the state) should be divested of many of its responsibilities is to ignore the factors compelling it to acquire the responsibilities in the first place. Such a suggestion also did not take into account the capacity and overall efficiency of the non-governmental institutions that were to be entrusted with the responsibilities. The relatively poor performance of Africa's agrarian co-operatives was cited as an illustration. The participants argued that before such bodies were saddled with

additional and complex responsibilities, a process of fundamental restructuring and reorientation must be carried out.

The issue of privatization was debated at length. The majority of the participants expressed serious reservation as to the wisdom in turning over to private investors enterprises which should normally be owned and managed by government. They argued that any attempt to remove the state completely from the sphere of economic management would lead to a situation whereby the national economy was controlled by multinational corporations and their subsidiaries. The participants nonetheless agreed that African public enterprises were bedevilled by serious management problems. To this extent, the various countries in Africa should sponsor research projects aimed at finding lasting solutions to these problems, and at strengthening the national economy generally. Urgent steps should also be taken to eliminate waste, extravagance, misuse of public property and general mismanagement of resources.

Finally, the participants acknowledged the important role of public administration in tackling the critical economic problems confronting Africa. Public service with a law-and-order orientation would not serve the needs of the present period. What Africa badly requires now and in the future are public services that:

- (a) are totally committed to engineering socio-economic transformation;
- (b) are able to down-grade bureaucratic red-tape and emphasize achievement and results;
- (c) can motivate employees to give of their best; and are able to attract, retain, and utilize the skills of the brightest, the best, and the most public-spirited individuals in society.

The following is a summary of conclusions and recommendations of the third plenary session:

- (a) In tackling the problems of socio-economic develop-

- ment, Africa must first look at itself, identify internal constraints on progress, and encourage its people to come up with ideas and solutions;
- (b) Every means available must be utilized to make African policy-makers and administrators aware of the gravity of the socio-economic situation;
  - (c) Africa had for too long stuck to the 'soft' options in preference to the 'hard' choices; contemporary problems dictate courage, determination and a sense of mission;
  - (d) Research studies should be initiated into the performance and overall productivity of public enterprises;
  - (e) In selecting men and women for leadership positions in government, due consideration must be given to their intelligence, motivation, probity and patriotism;
  - (f) Measures aimed at eliminating waste, extravagance, misuse of public assets and general mismanagement of resources should be instituted;
  - (g) A genuinely results- and achievement-oriented public service must be created in each African country in place of the existing rule-bound, status-centred, civil service-oriented, bureaucratic organizations.

## *Chapter Ten*

# THE AFRICAN CULTURE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES: LESSONS FOR CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

M.J. BALOGUN

## INTRODUCTION

While many commentators have discussed in general terms the impact of the traditional setting on contemporary public administration, little has been done to carry out systematic analyses of the relevance of traditional values and institutions to the changing requirements of African administrative systems. Yet, administrators in African public services today face a major dilemma. As they seek to accomplish their varied tasks, they are torn between going back to the good old days of pure traditional depotism, and coming to terms with, and mastering, the alien systems of government and administration which they inherited from the colonial authorities.

In attempting to resolve the dilemma, it might be necessary to conduct indepth inquiries into the "properties" of each indigenous administrative/political system with a view to testing its goal-achievement capability, its resilience, its integrity and ethical basis. However, since such an ambitious programme cannot be implemented in a chapter such as this, we shall confine our attention to a general survey of traditional African societies. In terms of ethics and values, at least, some of these societies must have lessons for the practice of public administration in present-day Africa. The question is whether the prevailing "world view" in such societies was finite or non-finite. It is possible to point to a few societies whose cosmological theories and religious beliefs suggest non-finite world view – the type which is capable of instil-

ling universal values of truth, honesty, justice, and fairness in public administrators of today. In many others, however, this is not the case. Again, whereas some traditional societies possessed a well-structured system of government and political organization, others existed merely as segmented, acephalous social systems.

The primary aim of this chapter is to draw lessons of experience from the traditional, pre-colonial African societies. The chapter is interested not only in what will "work" in contemporary administrative systems, but also in what are likely to serve as impediments to development administration. The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section looks at the peoples and cultures of Africa. The second examines how religious beliefs and ethical orientations of particular traditional societies shape their "world view". The third section focuses attention on the systems of government and administration in traditional society. The fourth traces the influence of the traditional society on current systems of public administration in Africa and goes on to suggest a framework for an ethical revolution.

### **THE LAND, PEOPLES AND CULTURES OF AFRICA**

Africa is a continent with diverse geographical features, racial groups, nationalities, ethnic communities, and cultures. From Cape to Cairo, a tourist can experience divergent climatic conditions, fly from the arid zone to swampy creeks, touch down on widely different altitudes, listen to conversations rendered in almost all imaginable languages, watch performances in an endless pageants of cultures and art forms, and make fruitless attempts to interpret or reconcile conflicting images.

In terms of physical features there is a wide variation between the flat plains of the North, and the mountainous ranges of the East. The vast sweep of sandy dunes of the Sahara is in sharp contrast to the undulations and depression one is accustomed to seeing in East Africa. The lush, green

forests of the Equator and the mangrove creeks of West Africa stand out alongside the dry stubs of the Sahelian region and the forbidding terrain of the Kalahari Desert. The differences in vegetation and topography are complemented by the wide divergence in natural and mineral resources with which the various subregions of Africa are endowed.

Africa is also peopled by different racial groups — ranging from the arabs of North Africa to the Nilotic and Bantu categories of the African race. The point about diversity can best be made if account is taken of the variations in language, custom and ways of life in each African country. Nigeria, with a population of 80 million has approximately 250 ethnic groups and a greater number of dialects. Zambia, with a population of under 7 million, has 73 (officially recognized) ethnic groups and 84 dialects.

Cleavages along religious lines represent another important features of Africa. A sizeable number of the people are either Muslims or Christians, while the others are animists or adherents of one of the indigenous religious sects. A significant proportion of those who profess Christianity and a fair number of Muslims also participate in traditional religious rites.

Another major difference among the societies of Africa is in respect of the system of government operated before the advent of colonial rule. While some societies possessed well-organized systems of government and administration which ante-dated colonial rule, others could be described as societies inhabited by "tribes without rules". Examples of the former type of societies are the Hausa-Fulani of northern Nigeria, the Oyo Yoruba of south-western Nigeria, the Banyoro and the Baganda of present-day Uganda, the Zande of the former Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and the Amhara of Ethiopia. The latter type of societies include the Tiv of the middle-belt area of Nigeria, the Igbo of south-eastern Nigeria, the Pakot and the Masai of Kenya, the Bakiga of western Uganda, and the Tallensi of northern Ghana.

It is clear from the preceding paragraphs that one should

be very cautious in making generalizations about Africa. As revealed in the next section, the divergence among African societies is further reflected in the diverse world view.

### RELIGION, ETHICS AND MORALITY: AN INSIGHT INTO AFRICA'S WORLD VIEW

It is customary to hear it argued that were it not for the "corrupting" influence of European incursions, the traditional society would have been a perfect model of simplicity, probity, love, justice, equity and fairness. If this is correct, everything happening to Africa today should rightly be laid at the doorstep of the white-man with his "materialist" instincts. But does this model fit the facts?

It is all too easy to get carried away by the traditional society's legendary attachment to the spiritual values of love, good neighbourliness, and honesty. However, before making a sweeping generalization, it is advisable to take the societies of Africa in turn and examine critically their conception of nature — including human nature. We may start by focusing attention on selected cosmological theories before proceeding to examine how each society explains or "rationalizes" day-to-day occurrences.

#### *The Origin of the Earth*

A people's idea of how the earth came to be is a function of its religious belief. Adherents of Christianity subscribe to what has been termed the "creationist" theory which is amply stated in the Old Testament. Even Charles Darwin's "evolutionary" theory has not shaken the faith of true Christians in the Biblical version of how God created the earth and all the things in it. The Muslims have their own variant of the creationist theory complete with the explanation for Adam and Eve's eviction from the Garden of Eden. The Taoists and the Hindus, the Confucian, the Ying-Yang and other schools of philosophy have also different ways, ascribed the creation of the earth to a Supreme Being. How

about the peoples of Africa? Let us put the question simply: do African believe in God? If the answer is negative, what do they believe in? If the answer is in the affirmative do they live by the laws of God?

### *Man's Relation to God*

There is probably not a single community in Africa which does not believe in a Supreme Being. Among the Hausa, this Supreme Being is *Allah*. The Yoruba refer to Him as *Oloun*, *Eledumare*. The Bakiga offer prayers to *Sebahanga*. The Mende (of Sierra Leone) invoke the name of *Ngewe* all the time and turn to Him in time of need. The Abaluyia (of Western Province of Kenya) believe that the earth was created by none other than *Wele*, *Nyasaye*. But this identification with a Supreme Being is where the unanimity ends. Apart from the Supreme Being, many traditional societies worship other lesser gods or deities. In other words, many of the people of Africa refer their problems to other lesser gods being the commonly accepted Supreme Being. It is important for our analysis to know whether the African's primary loyalty is to the Supreme Being whose dominion extends to the heavens and all corners of the earth, or to smaller gods with limited jurisdiction"

We may take for example the Yoruba traditional religion. Its polytheistic character is reflected in the belief that Heaven serves as the abode not only of *Oloun*, *Eledumare*, but also of many other gods or spirits. For this reason, the Yoruba worship many inanimate objects, e.g. hills, stone, fire, thunderstorm and iron. These objects are referred to individually and collectively as *orisas*. There are local as well as national *orisas*. The local ones include the *Oke'badan*, the hill which is worshipped in Ibadan annually; the *Osun*, a river that is worshipped in Oshogobo; and the *Obalogun*, an *ljesa* folk-hero who was said to have led the *ljesas* in their war with the *Nupes*. The Yoruba national *orisas* include the *Ifa*, the oracle of palm-nuts; the *Esu*, the stone-god whose evil spirit need to be constantly propitiated; the *Ogun*, the god of iron;

Sango, the god of lightening or fire; and Oya, the goddess associated with thunderstorm.<sup>1</sup> Hero and ancestorship is an important aspect of Yoruba religion. As Fadipe points out, a man who dies becomes an *orisa* and that means, an object of worship by his children.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the founder of each family is an *orisa* to all members of the extended family.

The Mende of Sierra Leone share the Yoruba's belief in spirits – both ancestral and non-ancestral. The Mende's belief in ancestral spirits is based on the assumption that a dead person's spirit goes near *Ngewe* and thus deserves some of the reverence accorded to the Supreme Being. It is further assumed that the dead could not cross over to the land of the dead until certain rites (*tindyamei*) have been performed.<sup>3</sup>

As for the Bakiga of western Uganda, the Sebahanga (God) does not rule all by Himself. He co-exists with "a great many different types of spirits who interfere with (the Bakiga world's) normal functioning and always for the worse".<sup>4</sup>

And among the Ibos of south eastern Nigeria, Chineke (God) overlords all inferior spirits, and His arch-enemy, *Ekwensu* (the Devil) is at the head of another class of spirits – the evil spirits.

The Abaluyia strongly believe that Wele or Nyasaye created the earth. However, there are diverse views as to how the Supreme Being proceeded with his task of creation. Some held the view that He created the world in several stages but could not say in what order, others maintained that the world was created in a single day or "like lightening" but none could say precisely how.<sup>5</sup> The Abaluyia are probably a step ahead of many other traditional African societies in that they, the Abaluyia, had the local equivalents of Adam and Eve. As far as they are concerned, the first man God created was Mwambu, and the first woman, Sela. As we shall soon discover, it is not only the cosmological area that the Abaluyia differed from the rest of the traditional African societies; they also distinguished themselves with their cause-effect approach to the definition of ethics and morality.

### *Ethics and Morality*

While it is true that the traditional African societies do have clear notions of “good” and “bad” behaviour, what was considered ethical in each society was subject to local interpretations.

The traditional society’s idea of “ethical” and “unethical” conduct corresponds to the prevailing notions of “godly” and “sinful” deeds respectively. The Ibos, for instance, believe — like many other African — that for every “pious” and “good” human being, there is a “sinner”. Whereas the pious believes in God and other minor deities in His service, the sinner takes instructions from the devil and communes with evil spirits. The “good” moves on the side of God while the “bad” is in league with God’s principal antagonist, *Ekwensu*, the devil, “whose one purpose is to frustrate the goodness of God and to disseminate evil”.<sup>6</sup>

The range of “ungodly” and “unethical” deeds varies from one society to the other, but conducts which tend to be frowned upon include adultery, murder, pilfering, wilful desecration of ancestral names and shrines, flagrant contravention of tribal customs, and utter disregard of local superstitions. An infraction of a code of good conduct may earn the miscreant a fine (say, of a goat or a head of cattle), capital punishment ostracization, or outright banishment from the tribal land. Even the rulers, with all the despotic powers conferred on some of them, could not behave as they wished all the time. A chief who was thought to be high-handed, unjust, incompetent, or “tight-fisted”, risked being shunted aside in palace intrigues, or deposed and banished into exile.

### *Anti-Ethical Tendencies*

With all the safety-valves against “irresponsible” behaviour, can one still dispute the fact that such a society was a shining example of probity, justice, love, equity, fairness and “good conscience”? If the traditional society is capable of distinguishing between “good” and “evil”, between “just” and “un-

just" deeds, will it then not be correct to attribute any corrupting tendencies in the society to exogamous influences? This argument can be faulted on four major grounds, viz. the traditional society's generally negative view of man, its limited time-and-space horizon, the strong influence exerted by the material world, and the persistence of institutions which block the acquisition of knowledge about natural phenomena.

### *Negative World View*

The first principal adversary of ethical conduct in traditional African societies is the generally negative view of the world and, for that reason, of man. The interpretation which is given to daily occurrences provides a clue to the African people's definition of the nature of man. It is assumed either rightly or wrongly that one person's misfortune is brought on by the evil machinations of another. In most cases, the notorious villains are the evil spirits working hands-in-gloves with the Devil. The fear of evil spirits is pathological and is not confined to any African society, but this experience from the Bakiga society of western Uganda is particularly worth citing. As M.M. Edel reports, the Bakiga world is supposed to be infested with:

ghosts of recently departed ancestors (abazimu) who trouble their own desendants and make them ill, and there are various other malevolent spirits which work through human familiars, smiting them, their kinsmen and even strangers with all sorts of horrid afflictions.<sup>7</sup>

What makes the Bakiga and many other African situations very disturbing is that the spirits do not have to be provoked: they operate arbitrarily and capriciously. Therefore, when calamity strikes, the victims or their relatives have to placate the evil spirits with offerings. It is further believed that in addition to these spirits, human beings could exercise evil powers through magic and witchcraft. A few humans are even

credited with the power to suspend the rains from falling and with the ability to command a deluge at the wink of an eye. Some of the evil powers might be controlled by "counter-magic" or by protective spells and charms manufactured by experts in native medicine. It is, however, worth noting that the rain-makers have not proved able or willing to minimize human suffering by controlling floods, droughts and earthquakes!

In contrast to the generally negative view of man is what may be termed the logical positivist one. In no society of Africa does any belief system approximate this latter view except, possibly, among the Abaluyia of Kenya. The Abaluyia believe that God and the Devil are on opposite camps. He who chooses to stay in the camp of God must observe certain natural law. After all, the order of the world as established by God was perfect. In fact, God saw to it that "man had everything he needed to survive and develop" on earth — the sun, rains, plants and vegetation, etc. Even the first man, *Mwambu*, was not left to lead a solitary and purposeless life — God provided him with a female companion, *Sela*.<sup>8</sup> In this respect, at least, the Abaluyia philosophy is in complete agreement with one major conclusion in Islamic theology, viz that all the natural phenomena not only confirm God's power to create and terminate, but also God's perfection in anticipating all human needs.

How do the Abaluyia explain the "disturbances" which frequently occur in the order established by God? Why do people fall ill? Why are there floods, fire disasters and — if one may also ask — political disturbances? The Abaluyia's world view suggests a logical and credible explanation — the natural order is "disturbed" by the "unnatural" and "abnormal" behaviour of human beings. In other words, nature does not operate capriciously but in reaction to influences operating on it. Just as an individual person's good health could be endangered if he engages in abnormal and unnatural activities, so might a political order be upset if the actors deviate from Nature's laws. Instead of pursuing this

deductive reasoning further, the great majority of African peoples are content with fairly simple explanations, notably, that "misfortunes" are the handwork of "evil forces". Suffice it to say that a person who believes that he is being pursued by some unknown or vaguely defined enemies will always be looking for escape routes and short-cuts to safety. To such a person, ethics and morality are irrelevant diversions which cannot but take a second place to the need for survival in a hostile territory.

#### *Limited Time and Space Horizon*

The traditional society gives territorial or kinship expression to the siege-mentality described in the preceding paragraphs. In their judgement of "good" or "bad", "pious" or "sinful" behaviour, they take close relations into account but shut out the "foreigners" and "strangers" as if the latter do not exist. This limitation in the traditional society's time-and-space horizon deals ethics and morality the second fatal blow. Among the various societies of Africa, a behaviour is deemed to be "bad" and "sinful" if it adversely affects relatives or members of the same ethnic group, but no harm is done if the wronged party is an "outsider" or a "non-indigene". It is "bad" to commit murder or adultery; it is "ungodly" to tell lies or steal; but all these moral codes apply only within a narrowly defined territory and/or at a particular period in time. As Basden notes in his study of the Ibo society, for example, if a crime is perpetrated:

outside the town area, when the criminal returns safely, especially if he brings back booty, he will be congratulated on his success.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Existential-Materialist Pull*

The materialist tendencies in the traditional societies constitute the third major factor working against the emergence of universally accepted codes of conduct. The various religious practices and beliefs described earlier undoubtedly

have deep, metaphysical, 'other-worldly' roots. At the same time, however, they have a materialist, 'this-worldly' bias, and the 'other-worldly' aspect is relevant only in so far as it fits into a constantly changing existential picture. The Yoruba, for instance, do not worship any object or hero that had not, at one time or the other, been perceived as being responsible for some specific and concrete changes in the life of the people. Certainly, highlands and hills were never worshipped for their own sake — they were worshipped because:

In the first place they had an inestimable protective value: during war and inter-tribal hostility they afforded the safest hide-outs and places of refuge. Secondly, they struck fear into the hearts of the inhabitants because of their dominating size and their dense basal vegetation, which were taken to be the hiding-place of many wild animals and spirits.<sup>10</sup>

A critical examination of the traditional theory of exchange will also reveal that reciprocity, rather than the noble values of "duty" and "selfless service", was the predominant consideration in forwarding gifts or rendering an obligation. Among the Tiv (of Nigeria's Benue State) the gifts that are not supposed to be reciprocated are those from relatives and close neighbours. Gifts from "strangers" are favours which must be returned in cash or in kind.<sup>11</sup> Among the people of the Oil Rivers area of Nigeria, the "trade dash" ostensibly started when the Portuguese sought to establish trade relations with the indigenes. In actual fact the practice of offering gifts as a means of preparing the way for favours was not introduced by the Portuguese; it was a practice which accorded:

very well with the traditional usage of the Eastern Region in which it is correct for a small gift or concession to be made to anyone from whom some special social service is required.<sup>12</sup>

It has also been reported that:

The Zande patron-client relationship was based upon unspecified mutual reciprocity. Formerly political and military support was given by the client in exchange for protection; he rendered services and goods in expectation of full return at a latter time.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Anti-Philosophical Stance*

The fourth onslaught on ethics and morality in traditional societies is sheer ignorance about how the forces of nature operate. How can one justifiably condemn traditional depotisms for being corrupt and unscrupulous when their knowledge of "wrong" and "right" is both situationally conditioned and at a rudimentary state? Of course the traditional societies could be held liable for the presistence of ignorance. They fostered, indeed, encouraged, those values and institutions which precluded objectives and unfettered inquiries into natural phenomena. Among the Yoruba and in Hausa-Fulani communities, the principle of seniority governs child-rearing practices and reinforces the hierarchical authority of elders and rulers. Among the Ibo, religious beliefs and superstitions

are deeply ingrained in the minds and lives of the people; they are blindly accepted by the adherents. No questions are raised as to the whys and wherefores.<sup>14</sup>

And even though the Mende invoke the name of God all the time, they do so as a matter of routine:

...most Mende people will admit that they know very little about the actual nature of *Ngewe* because, as one informant put it, 'no one has ever seen him'.<sup>15</sup>

If we go by the popular African saying, "seeing is believing", then probably only a handful of Africans would be genuine believers. The total world outlook seems to be biased against theoretical speculation and in favour of "practical"

solutions to problems. The dilemma lies in the fact that some issues — especially, ethical and moral issues — cannot be disposed of in a “practical” way. Science and technology are at the top of Africa’s agenda, but the benefits accruing from them will continue to elude Africa until investigative, analytical and “theoretical” habits are cultivated from the formative years and nurtured through subsequent stages of life.

### *Influence of Alien Religious Doctrines*

To be sure, Africans have been exposed to alien religious doctrines. The two notable religious faiths which have been widely propagated in Africa are Christianity and Islam. However, as pointed out earlier, true Christians and Muslims are hard to come by in Africa.

The arrival of Christian missionaries in Africa witnessed large-scale conversions from indigenous religious beliefs. Nonetheless, the appeal of the alien religion depended to a large extent on how its gospel fitted into the people’s overall existence. Among the Yoruba, for instance, the concept of life after death increased the popular appeal of the new religion. As Fadipe noted:

The idea of a heaven with golden streets, peopled by angels with wings and shining faces; of a heavenly choir with golden harps; and of a life of sensuous if innocent pleasure offers a very powerful inducement.<sup>16</sup>

Islam is another religious belief which has been embraced by a significant number of Africans. In contrast to most indigenous religions, Islam enjoins upon adherents to reject the fake gods and have implicit faith in the one and only God — the Lord of the Heaven and Earth. Other obligations imposed on a good Muslim are:

- (a) belief in the prophethood of Muhammed and the other apostles of God who preceded him;
- (b) regular observance of certain religious rites such as the

- thirty-day Ramadhan fast every lunar year, and the five daily prayers;
- (c) granting of charity (zakat) to the poor and the needy;
  - (d) doing deeds of righteousness by being honest, just, kind, humble and by being pure in thought and deeds;
  - (e) acceptance of the doctrine of *i'imani* (Predestination).

Islam thus offers fundamental philosophical, spiritual and ethical lessons. But apart from observing the formal aspects of the religion (by praying in the mosque, fasting during the Ramadhan, and going to Mecca on holy pilgrimage) a good number of Muslims seldom put the *substantive* aspects of the religion into practice. They may pray five times a day, but that fact does not stop them from retaining the services of a medicine-man, offering sacrifices at a shrine somewhere, lying and cheating, and in the process of trying to "change" their destiny, disturbing the natural order of the world. The basic presupposition in Islam is that although the material world changes all the time, the basic laws of the universe — i.e. the laws governing the material changes — are themselves unchangeable. With the possible exception of the Abaluyia society referred to earlier, nothing in the African world suggests methods of uncovering or discovering these natural laws. Again the Qur'an enjoins upon true believers to seek knowledge. As the Holy Qur'an keeps stressing, in the natural phenomena (like the sun, hills, the sky, rains, rivers and plants) are signs for people "endowed with patience and understanding." How many societies of Africa are patient in the search for knowledge?

#### GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION IN TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES

We have thus far concentrated on Africa's world view. This was done in order to provide an insight into the moral and philosophical basis of government in traditional societies.

The question whether the traditional society possessed attributes of a political system has been answered in various ways by different scholars. In this chapter, we shall focus on the classification schemes that have been proposed. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard have indentified at least two types of political system in traditional African societies, Group A and Group B.<sup>17</sup> Group A includes societies with centralized political authority, fairly well-defined administrative structures and judicial institutions. In such societies, differences in wealth, privilege and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority. Examples of Group A society are the Hausa-Fulani (Nigeria), Ashanti (Ghana), Banyoro (western Uganda), Baganda (Uganda), and the Amhara (Ethiopia). Group B comprises societies without centralized authority, administrative machinery and judicial institutions. In this type of society, there are no sharp divisions of rank, status and wealth. Examples of such "stateless" or "segmented" societies are Bakiga (western Uganda), Tallensi (northern Ghana) and Tiv (Nigeria).

Jones has criticized the analytical scheme which produced Group A and B societies. According to him, only a few societies in Africa actually belong to either of the two polar extremes of A and B. The vast majority fall between the two and possess the attributes of both.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Political Organization in Centralized Systems*

The main characteristics of centralized and quasi-centralized political systems are hierarchical gradation of authority, division of labour, territorial identity, and the bonds fostered by language, religion and/or other shared values.

One example of centralized government and administration is the Hausa-Fulani society in Nigeria. Under the influence of Islam, and especially after the religious holy wars (the Jihad) which spread from the North to the South in the early part of the nineteenth century, the Fulani conquerors established a firm system of government and administration within their areas of jurisdiction. From Sokoto in the North-

West to Yola in the extreme North-East, and in areas including Kano, Zaria, Bauchi, Niger and Ilorin among others, Islam served not merely as a common religion, but it also provided a philosophical basis for the resolution of practical social and political problems. The Sultan of Sokoto as the *Sarkin Musulumi*, was at the apex. Under him were *emirs* who presided over the affairs of different localities. The emirate (i.e. the area under the jurisdiction of an *emir*) was itself broken down into districts under district heads. Each unit of government had its various "specialized" arms. Thus the treasury was under the control of a treasurer (*ma'aji*). Law and order was maintained by a police force made up of *dogaris*. The laws were interpreted and strictly enforced by *alkalis* and other experts in Islamic jurisprudence. A system of taxation existed under the name of *haraji*. The resilience and overall effectiveness of this indigenous system could be attributed largely to the strong bond of Islam and the practical suggestions on the conduct of public administration as contained in the Holy Qur'an, the *Hadith*, and other Islamic literature. It was, in short, a public administration based on knowledge, and it was not surprising that when the colonial authorities saw it in action, they decided to adapt it and work through it, rather than instal a completely new system in its place.

Political organization in Yoruba traditional society is neither wholly centralized nor completely segmented. Undoubtedly, elements of government existed in varying degrees among the Yoruba. The Old Oyo Kingdom, for example, based its system of government on the former Songhay-Mali pattern, and, as such, possessed a relatively advanced civil and military organization. Within the Oyo Kingdom, there were political units whose chiefs (*bale*) acknowledged the suzerainty of the Alafin. Tributes were exacted by the Alafin from these minor chiefdoms, which were also required to supply the Oyo Kingdom with military personnel in times of war. The Alafin's policies were interpreted and executed by a cadre of officials. At the head of the civil government was the Bashorun and the head of the

armed forces was the *Are-Ona Kakanfo*. There were also a few specialists like native doctors (onisegun), sorcerers (*babalawo*), and *orisa* priests.

However, the Oyo Kingdom was not a monolithic political system since most of the territories controlled by the *bales* were largely autonomous. Moreover, many other Yoruba-speaking communities did not come under the influence of the Oyo Kingdom. Among the independent units are the Ife, Ijesa, Ekiti and Ondo, the Ijebu, the Egba, and the Lagos Yoruba.

The pattern of government among the Bushamen, Bergdama, Hottentos and Southern Bantu (all in South Africa) was rather similar to that operated in the various Yoruba communities. With particular reference to the Bushmen, Schapera has disclosed that

...Although usually referred to in the literature as a 'tribe', (the Bushmen) are not united under a single government. Instead they are divided into separate local 'bands'.<sup>20</sup>

Each, "band" occupied a territory and constituted a political community under the leadership of a "chief". The chief was represented at lower levels by deputies and assistants. At the headquarters, he (the chief) was supported by a number of "advisers" and "executive officers". The key officers were the *Great Induna* (who served as "chief of staff" or prime minister), the native doctors (who protected the person of the chief and manufactured charms that were expected to "fortify" the chief's army against their enemies) and age-regiments (who went on military expeditions and, in peace time, constituted the tribal work-gangs). The others were the court messengers and law enforcement personnel.

Among the Zande of the former Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, all chiefs belonged to the ruling clan, the *Avungara*, which was a class of notables.<sup>21</sup> The chief ruled by sending out governors (who were also *Avungara*) to administer portions of the territory. Sub-units of the governors' provinces were in turn

administered by deputies who were mostly powerful commoners.

#### *Scope and Powers of Rulers*

In nearly all the traditional societies, whoever was the chief occupied a position of power and enjoyed vast amount of privileges. Among the Yoruba, the *bale*'s functions include:

Authority over every member of the group, responsibility for settling disputes among members and for their general welfare, and the management and allocation of land for farming.<sup>22</sup>

The Bale also enjoyed extensive privileges. He was certainly entitled to gifts of farm produce from members and to a "leg of every animal or fowl offered at any sacrifice in the compound".<sup>23</sup>

In the Zande community, the chiefs; combined in their offices all political and administrative functions as well as many economic ones. They were the military and political leaders and the wealthiest men.<sup>24</sup>

Among the Bantu, the scope of the chief's responsibility and authority was almost without limit:

He (the Bantu chief) represents his people in their dealings with outsiders and organizes such communal activities as war, collective labour, and certain types of ritual...he is both legislator and judge, with power to inflict capital punishment; he claims many forms of tribute, in both labour and kind; he controls the distribution and use of land, co-ordinates agricultural activities, provides for the poor and needy, and rewards those who serve him well; and he performs religious and magical ceremonies on behalf of the tribe.<sup>25</sup>

Among the Yoruba, it was not impossible for a traditional potentate who had many wives already to "commandeer" other females that caught his fancy. All the chief needed to do was to declare: "I rest my foot on this lovely damsel". Sometimes the man to whom the "lovely damsel" was betrothed would challenge such unilateral declarations of interest, and the aftermath might be rebellion or intra-tribal war.

### *Checks and Balances*

The chief in an African society does not wield powers without corresponding obligations. Each society has the mechanism for checking abuse of office and incompetence. The first control comes in form of competition. The chief rules under the shadow of warring factions, defeated contenders and new rivals for office. Intrigue, rebellion and power tussles were as much a feature of tribal government as they are of contemporary politics.

Popular expectations constitute the second control on the conduct of rulers. Especially among the Bushmen, Bergdama, Hottentots and Southern Bantu, the Chief is expected to be "reputable", "worthy" of the office, and "just" in his dealings with his advisers and subjects. He is also expected to be the "father" and "herdman" of the tribe; he must rule with "wisdom"; he must be "generous", and must not abuse his office. On becoming a chief, he is expected to abandon his boyhood associates and act properly like a chief. His oath of office includes the pledge to attend faithfully and promptly to his official duties, and to enforce tribal laws and custom.

The third check is imposed by "advisers" and intermediaries. The chief rarely acted alone when formulating policy or making declaration on tribal laws and custom. Members of the chief's council or the council of elders frequently made contributions.

Wilful disobedience of "unjust" or "unpopular" measures is an extreme, but not an impossible, method of influencing the conduct of rulers in traditional societies. As a matter of

fact, a ruler might be expelled or even killed should he arouse sufficient hostility.<sup>26</sup> It goes without saying that a chief whose incompetence led to the conquering of his tribe by another always lost his throne together with all the attendant privileges.

### THE TRADITIONAL SETTING: LESSONS FOR CONTEMPORARY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Even though the focus of this chapter is not on modern systems of public administration and management, no harm will be done by tracing briefly the impact of the traditional setting on contemporary public administration. The influences exerted by the traditional values and institutions on modern administrative systems can be classified under four broad headings, viz. diverse world outlook, feeling of insecurity, clash of values and the potentially salutary effects.

#### *Positive Lessons*

In relative terms, the traditional society offers some potentially beneficial lessons for contemporary public administration. As pointed out earlier, each traditional society was governed by a code of ethics and contraventions tended to be swiftly and effectively penalized. In sharp contrast to "modern" practice whereby an individual may be adjudged to be corrupt one day and elevated to a high office the next, it was not so easy to escape the consequences of one's actions in a traditional society. A traditional ruler that is deposed remains deposed; and one that is banished remains banished.

Another positive lesson from the traditional society is the pervading spirit of communalism — or what might be described as fellow feeling. The development of many a traditional community was facilitated by a number of a practices and institutions, among them, the age-regiments and tribal work-gangs. In Yoruba societies, the *esusu* clubs and the *Anko* club provided the means whereby savings could be pooled and modest projects (such as weddings, and housing/construc-

tion) undertaken. Even the colonial authorities exploited some of these traditional institutions by encouraging the formation of "co-operative societies" among cocoa farmers and other primary producers. It is a paradox that "modernization" witnessed the decline of the co-operative spirit and the establishment of large-scale "public enterprises". Now that the public enterprises are not faring well may be the various governments in Africa will consider bringing back the co-operative societies as *alternative* or supplementary production systems. Also, some governments in Africa set aside millions of dollars every year to finance staff housing, motor vehicle loans, etc. What happened to the good old *esusu* clubs? Can't these be adapted to suit modern requirements?

#### *Diverse World Outlook*

Perhaps if each traditional society had emerged as a nation-state, some of the negative influences that are currently discernible would have been non-existent. However, for historical, political, economic, and possibly, strategic reasons, it was considered necessary to bring together many traditional societies to form modern sovereign states. One major effect of converting these erstwhile autonomous traditional units into components of modern nation-states is the diversity in world outlook. There are simply too many local deities with sharply divergent cues and mutually exclusive laws of behaviour. The modern systems of administration are the major victims of this diverse world outlook. People with different orientations, backgrounds and beliefs are recruited to work as a team. It is conceded that administration by its very nature consists of co-ordinating and integrating the activities of odd assortments of individuals each with his own hopes, aspirations and fears. At the same time, however, these individuals must have a common denominator — a meeting ground — which would make them want to work co-operatively.

#### *Feeling of Insecurity*

It is not just the diversity in outlook which makes the

process of contemporary administration especially difficult. The atmosphere prevailing in the external environment of public administration does not promote or encourage the co-operative spirit. If it is not the evil spirits today, it is likely to be the "evil machinations" of this or that ethnic group that are responsible for some mishap. The distrust and lack of mutual confidence which are a regular feature in society tend to be reproduced in formal organizations with damaging effect on co-operative endeavours. The smooth running of modern administrative organizations depends largely on every member accepting responsibility of his actions. By encouraging individuals to pass on such responsibility to outside forces, the traditional society impairs the work of administration. In any case, if evil spirits and their human cohorts have actually wrought so much damage in people's lives, is it not about time society enlisted the forces of God-given knowledge in the service of humanity? This raises fundamental questions of ethics.

#### *Vacuum in Ethics*

While the traditional society was not lacking in codes of good conduct, the definition of ethics in each society was, like its world view, mutually exclusive. This of course is not good enough from the point of view of modern administration. Under a system of government that is supposed to serve the interests of diverse communities, steps have to be taken to ensure not only that administrative authority is counter-balanced by social responsibility but also that the codes of good conduct are not divisible. Double standards are the direct enemy of any code of conduct.

#### *A Paradigm for an Ethical Revolution*

If ethics is accepted as a major imperative in African public administration, it is advisable to set out the main ingredients of an ethical revolution. These are:

- (a) a crusade against ignorance, superstitions and negative

world outlook;

- (b) a universalistic approach to the definition of ethics;
- (c) a programme of basic and adult education in ethics;
- (d) an implementation and monitoring programme.

The first major step in reorienting African public administration towards positive change and development has to take the form of a crusade — a crusade against ignorance, superstitions and negative world outlook. AAPAM has a role to play in promoting and developing effective methods of acquiring knowledge in the field of administration. The practitioners in the areas of health, and social welfare would also do well to encourage medical doctors and scientists to liaise with native doctors, the Yoruba *oniseguns*, the Zimbabwean *ngangas*, the Bakiga's *omufumu weresibas*, etc. with a view to comparing notes on methodology and finding common solutions to the mounting human problems. Africa may today not be in the mood for knowledge for its own sake, but we should recall Aristotle's words: "the wise never ceases to be".

With humanity as a frame of reference, administrators and scholars in Africa should attempt to identify those values which make a people truly great. Already we have *Ujamaa*, *Harambee*, and Humanism each of which in different ways reflects our traditional heritage. Other abiding values which would need to be considered are those of democracy, knowledge, justice, accountability, honesty, patriotism, discipline and self-reliance. Both in our search for new values and in operationalizing existing one, we need to use as a guide-post the Abaluyia ideas of "natural" and "normal". Even investment policies — including policies on industrial and infrastructural development — will benefit from an idea which injects a sense of moral, political, administrative and economic proportions, into the decision process.

The third aspect of the ethical revolution is the drawing up of a programme of education in ethics. The schools, the print and the electronic media, traditional rulers, parents, workers' committees, students associations, interest groups and

political parties must be mobilized for the purpose of inculcating the values of freedom, love, justice, accountability, industry, probity, patriotism, self-reliance, public spiritedness, economy, and productivity, etc. In order to counter sectional or ethnic tendencies, the various groups should be encouraged to take a cue from Hui Shih's (a Chinese Philosopher's) famous dictum:

Love all things equally;  
Heaven and Earth are One Body.

The other (and perhaps, most vital) part of the revolution is the implementation programme. If the police allows the big shots in society to get away with their crimes, and the immigration and customs and excise personnel connive with smugglers, there is definitely no point in discussing the issue of ethics. To ensure that the revolution does not turn sour, the equivalent of revolutionary committees and monitoring brigades should be set up in key sectors of government and industry.

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## *Chapter Eleven*

### **THE AFRICAN CULTURE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

K.E. DE GRAFT-JOHNSON

The bureaucratic systems, its ethic and its concomitant structures evolved in the industrialized societies of Western Europe and North America in response to changes brought about largely as a result of the industrial revolution and the need for large-scale administration and management.

In the developing and non-industrialized societies of the world, the bureaucratic system was largely imposed and was part of the colonial or imperial apparatus of control and exploitation. In Africa in particular, this system was seen as the "white man's" way of doing things, and therefore as alien and unsympathetic to African ways and sentiments. The Bureaucratic system never fully penetrated the social structures of African societies, and was in many ways a thin veneer. Where it operated efficiently, it was often in specific areas directly dominated and run by colonial bureaucrats whether as public officers or business managers.

The system of indirect rule introduced by the British in their colonies and which also operated in subtle forms even in the non-British areas, enabled a dual system to operate where structures, procedures and values which were incompatible co-existed. The coming of independence to African countries did not effectively change this. In actual fact, there was an erosion of western bureaucratic values and practices as the new elite cadres in post-independence Africa sought to break free from what they considered to be colonial systems without always being clear about the "African" systems they wanted to substitute. Much ambivalence has prevailed in this area of what systems of values to operate because systems

and values can serve the interests of particular groups or categories of people locked in the post-colonial struggles for power, influence and status.

It is the view of the writer that there is nothing specially "African" about these compromises. These may be necessary stages in a process of change where the social structure — meaning in this context the behaviour patterns of people, their beliefs, attitudes and expectations — has yet to be adjusted or come to terms with the needs of a modernizing society. One problem faced by late-comers to development is that certain patterns of change and development and related systems and structures have already been established for the world community and their chances of developing indigenous modern systems to suit their special circumstances and therefore not great.

For example, the modern industrial system of production based on capitalism has become so powerful and pervasive that even those ideologically opposed to it cannot escape its influence and have to come to terms with it.

In Africa, the traditional structures and values that are antithetical to the modern bureaucratic ethic and which seem to hinder effective administration and management are well known. Max Weber who pioneered studies into the nature of the bureaucratic process, noted long ago some of the essential elements. His analysis, though superseded by more sophisticated studies, is still valid in drawing attention to the ascriptive orientation of traditional societies.

In this short chapter, an attempt will be made to underline some of the main characteristics of African traditional social structures, the relevant values and attitudes which support these cultural elements, and their effects on the operation of modern bureaucratic, administrative, and management systems. Finally, we shall discuss some of the problems posed by the persistence of these cultural elements and suggest some possible solutions.

## AFRICAN POLITICAL SYSTEMS

African societies evolved different socio-political systems before the 19th century scramble for Africa undermined their autonomy. There were, on the one hand, the small acephalous societies with largely decentralized structures and where religious leaders or clan elders exercised authority in a more or less diffuse fashion. Within these relatively simple social structures, the burden of public administration was minimal. Social control was exercised through a system of reciprocal obligations and expectations between clans or lineages and by a system of collective responsibility in intra-clan or intra-tribal relations. Everybody was literally everybody's keeper within the clan or family unit.

At the other extreme, centralized political systems also evolved with powerful chiefs who developed their own formal systems of control and administration with legislative bodies, judicial systems and standing armies. The centralized kingdoms of Ashanti in Ghana, the Baganda in Uganda and the emirates of Northern Nigeria are a few examples. Here public and private law was clearly articulated. Political structures organized in a hierarchical order were well established. Administrative systems for tax collection were developed. But there was no bureaucracy in the Weberian sense as such.

Between the small acephalous societies like those of the Konkombas, the Ibo and even the Masai of East Africa, and the big centralized kingdoms were intermediate political units with chiefs and elders, judicial and military bodies, but lacking a developed and centrally controlled administrative systems.

## TRADITION AND CHANGE IN AFRICAN SOCIETIES

The advent of colonialism meant an immediate diminution in the power, status, and influence of the political leadership in the countries affected. New administrative systems were imposed on top of the traditional ones. In some instances,

the traditional political leaderships were eliminated and their traditional political structures were abolished or destroyed.

In spite of the changes which were systematically implemented, many traditional institutions proved resilient and survived, although sometimes under other disguises. More importantly, the family and clan systems remained largely intact. Primordial loyalties channelled through lineage, clan, and tribe remained strong. When we discuss the influence of African culture and social structures on modern administrative systems, it is largely these resilient structures and the values they generate as well as those which support them that we must address ourselves to.

Before examining some of these values, it may be worth noting other salient characteristics of African social structures. The fact that the majority of people live in widely dispersed rural communities with poor transportation and communication meant that close control and administration of large numbers of people was not easy. Non-industrialized societies do not usually have large concentrations of people in cities or towns. The urban phenomenon is a late one for most of tropical Africa, and the culture of cities which spawns the seeds of modern complex administrative structures has been in many cases too recent to become indigenized. So for many Africans, even today, "home" is the village, cottage or "shamba".

Large-scale administration and meticulous regulations and procedures are difficult in a non-literate milieu. Passing instructions, regulations and edicts by word of mouth is slow and inefficient. Messages get garbled. Precedents are difficult to establish and follow. The man on the spot is then able to interpret the messages and rules in a way that suits him, and it is difficult to contradict him. In such circumstances, abuse of power and authority is easy.

Another characteristic of traditional African societies is that communities tended to be small with most people knowing each other and doing many things in the same way. Emile Durkheim described such primary groups as characte-

alized by "mechanical" solidarity. Conformity and to some extent uniformity in behaviour, dress, activity and attitudes are very strong. In such communities therefore individualism as a social value enjoys a low premium. Such small social groupings therefore tend to support values like nepotism and ethnicity which are seen as positive.

These traditional structures and social characteristics have undergone some changes but they still retain remarkable resilience and are still fairly dominant. The many social and political changes which have occurred over the past century and a half and especially since independence have left these basic social structures and characteristics largely untouched. The major changes have been in the field of literacy, but its impact on values and attitudes has not been as far-reaching as is sometimes assumed.

A characteristic of underdevelopment is of course poverty. It means a low standard of living. This is usually correlated with a low level of education, short life-expectancy and high morbidity. The persisting uncertainties of life and their attendant frustrations condition poor people to be largely concerned with immediate and pragmatic issues. The future for them is an orphan. It belongs to nobody and nobody plans for it. This attitude is very strong in Africa, even among the privileged and educated. Long-term plans are seldom prepared because few feel any concern about it. Administrators and planners who try to incorporate a future of say ten years or more in their programmes get little concrete support. And any one who suggests a fresh and strategic approach in the policy-making process is likely to be dismissed as a "mere theoretician".

When one is confronted with certain basic attitudes of mind and behaviour that are inconsistent with what is expected in a modern bureaucratic system, the tendency is to assume that these can be corrected with more education, and that all that is needed is to explain the rules. The fact is that culture can impose limitations on perception and therefore direct the mind to other priorities. Auguste Comte, the

father of modern sociology, drew controversial attention to himself when he propounded his Law of three Stages. His thesis in brief is that the human mind develops in response to the social milieu in which it grows, that the dominant modes of perception, thinking and explanation differ from society to society. In societies marked by illiteracy, low technological development and theocratic political structures, what he calls *Fictive Thinking* is the dominant mode. In modern industrial societies with high technology and complex social institutions the dominant mode is *Positive or Scientific Thinking*. Between these two stages of thought is an intermediary phase characterized by *Metaphysical or Abstract Thinking*. Comte tried to demonstrate a correlation between the dominant mode of thinking, the belief systems, the modes of explanation and the social institutions.

Writing at the beginning of this century, the ethnologist Lucien Levy Bruhl developed his Theory of Primitive Mentality. He too had noticed the way in which people from so-called simple societies seemed to reason differently from people in industrial societies and implied that this was a function of race. Needless to say he came under strong criticism for these views. What is important in these theories is the recognition of a different way of looking at things, in proposing explanations and drawing conclusions. It is not a problem of intelligence but of cultural direction. Evans-Pritchard, the Oxford anthropologist, in his studies of witchcraft in African societies addressed himself to some similar phenomena: he noted from example that when a man walking through the bush is bitten by a snake, the local people are disinclined to treat it like an accident. For them, there appears to be neither accident nor coincidence. Everything that happens seems to have a purpose and a cause, human or superhuman.

Investing phenomena with a mystic purpose, using teleological arguments to explain natural cause and effect, equating motive with intention, are all characteristics of "fictive thinking". Another characteristic of fictive thinking is the

provision of ready-made answers especially to puzzling or unpleasant happenings. Another loses her child through sudden illness, and this is immediately attributed to a witch, usually an innocent old woman who happens to be unpleasant. The boss falls seriously ill, and his deputy is immediately under suspicion. It is assumed that if he can have a motive to succeed the boss, then he must have the intention also.

Explanations of this sort tend to be prevalent in circumstances where scientific explanations of cause and effect are not easily available. Stories are then invented to give some sort of satisfaction to those affected. Thus astrology preceded astronomy in giving explanations of what the stars are and their movements. The moon was first an object of veneration, a goddess, a mystic object in the heaven a focus of romantic imaginings. Now we know it is a cold brown grey orb of rock and dust. But it has hardly diminished the romantic and religious significance of the moon. There are similar lingering of the fictive state of mind, in spite of modern science and education in our African societies.

The combination of a lingering state of fictive thinking with certain primordial values and loyalties produces interesting responses, many of which are by no means peculiar to Africa. Even in Europe and America, after centuries of "scientific" education, there are residues of fictive thinking in their traditions and culture.

Behind some of the problems we face is a concept of man that is not too clearly articulated, but we can still get glimpses of it. There is, for example, the concept of man as an innocent being. He does no wrong. All wrong-doing by him is the result of other "powers" influencing him. And so when a person has been convicted of a crime, his people may wish to "cleans" him of the evil spirit that made him commit the crime. Some explanations given for unhappy events have this characteristic. Blaming an old woman for causing the death of a child is a way of declaring the mother innocent of improper care and lack of love for her child. It also, of

course, prevents an investigation into the cause of death. Our societies are replete with many such explanations deflecting blame from ourselves and preventing investigations. Take the case of the child who blames his failure in an examination on the fact that the teacher does not like him. Strangely enough, many parents accept this as valid. These examples can be multiplied in everyday life. What they reflect is an ascriptive perception of the individual's status. In Weberian terms, it is quality rather than performance which counts. In other words, *who* you are counts more than *what* you are.

One detects in this attitude also a tendency to discount and sometimes discourage personal achievement. Not many years ago, when some of us were school children, it was common to assume that people who were very bright at school had "something" extra to study with; rich market women were not seen as shrewd business women, but as witches or people who had special snakes or charms to assist them. A football team needed "juju" to win a big match, etc. It is tempting to suggest that all these beliefs and attitudes are things of the past. But culture is resilient, and in the dark corners of the human mind some of these old beliefs lie hidden.

The absence of literacy strongly militated against the development of a scientific culture in Africa. Much knowledge had to be carried in the head, and this always had serious limitations even though some people were able to develop phenomenal memories. This meant that the body of accumulated knowledge was always limited and too many people had to rediscover things for themselves. Again the absence of a literary and reading tradition meant and still means that a great deal of available knowledge does not get to those who could benefit from them. In many parts of Africa today, even among the majority of literate people, a reading habit as such does not exist. As a result, many people do not derive the full benefits of their formal education.

One detects also in our culture a certain reluctance to pursue excellence or perfection. Could this be a religious

inhibition? The Austrian anthropologist Ulli Beier who lived near Ibadan for many years in the 1950s and 60s once remarked that for a long time he was puzzled by the sculptures made by the wood carvers, especially for the Shango religion or cult. The heads and bodies were meticulously carved, but the hands and lower extremities were invariably crudely done. If they could do the more complicated face so well, why not the relatively simple hands and feet? Upon investigation, he learnt that the wood carvers were reluctant to complete the sculptures because it was wrong to attempt to compete with the Creator!

There is also a strong strain of anti-intellectualism in our culture. It is by no means unique. Intellectualism, when directed towards technology and physical science generally is more acceptable. But even in the industrialized countries, the powers that be are always suspicious of purveyors of ideas. In Africa and many third world countries, their influence is far more feared because in our circumstances of rapid social change, political instability, and frustrated expectations, ideas which other stable societies can contain can easily trigger off revolution. It is possible, however, that the answer is more simple. The basis of elitism in many of our countries is education, but the level of education is not necessarily correlated with political power. The fears entertained by the ruling groups may well be that with a rapid pace of development, this could happen; in other words, political power may gravitate towards the intelligent and well-read members of the society as the tempo of social change becomes accelerated.

I have attempted to underline a few of the traditional social values and attitudes in our societies today which could have bearing on our performance in the field of administration and management. As indicated earlier, our strong attachments to family, clan, and tribe tend to militate against the more open bureaucratic values based on merit. There is yet no strong loyalty to the nation as a whole compared to these basic social units. But there may be other factors militating

against the operations of a bureaucratic ideal. Robert Merton in his famous essay on "Social Structure and Anomie" made the point that social deviance in society may well be a function of the social structure itself. Society sets values and goals for people to pursue and it lays down acceptable norms or means for pursuing those goals. The socialization process in society seeks to condition people to accept both goals and norms. But where people accept the goals or values but find that the norms or means provided by society are inadequate for achieving those goals, then a significant proportion of those affected may become disaffected and therefore reject the norms or means.

The problem in most developing countries is that poverty is still very pervasive. In traditional societies, the poor could keep each other in countenance, because they were little exposed to the temptations of conspicuous consumption. Today, too many people are only too aware of the goals of success, of affluence, of power and so on. They also have to suffer the frustrations of knowing that they can not achieve those goals on the merit system prevailing. Hence the rejection of the system and the tendency to deviate. What is happening is that people may know what the system is and how it is supposed to operate, but they pay only lip service to it because they do not see it as serving their individual or group ends. An explanation is of course not necessarily a justification, and I am offering none of the latter. The fact still remains that the wider the gap between goal and achievement for the majority of people, the more desperate they will become and the more they are likely to deviate from the norms.

Essentially, social systems operate with a reasonable level of conformity and acceptance if the system works, that is if people see it as satisfying their needs reasonably, and if they see its operations as "just". This raises ethical, social and political issues as to what, taking a society as a whole, would be "just" I have no answers to propose. What is just in this context is a matter of concensus on the one hand, and, on

the other, a matter of feasibility, that is what is reasonably possible. The most efficient administrative and managerial system devised will not be effective if the people who operate it and those who are the presumed beneficiaries do not see it as responsive to their needs and aspirations and above all as a just system.

## *Chapter Twelve*

# THE AFRICAN CULTURE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN SENEGAL

ABDOUL AZIZ DIA

## INTRODUCTION

Numerous seminars, colloquia and conferences have been organized throughout Africa on public administration. The topics discussed often focused on:

- (a) The role and purpose of administration;
- (b) The nature of various systems of administration (whether centralized or decentralized);
- (c) Human, material and financial resources;
- (d) Administrative performance (efficiency in accomplishing mission).

The purpose of this chapter is to see how existing public administration systems could be improved in the context of the African socio-economic and cultural environment.

This chapter will be divided into three parts:

- (a) The African environment;
- (b) Public Administration: the current system;
- (c) General recommendations for an improved system.

The study will be based on the experience of Senegal. However, general conclusions may be drawn because of the similarity of problems and the approaches adopted in other African countries to find solutions to them.

## THE AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT

The African socio-political environment is characterized by:

- (a) the presence of two different cultures: the African culture and the alien (non-African) culture;
- (b) the emergence of social classes or strata;
- (c) an obvious dualism between the urban and rural worlds;
- (d) the establishment of recent administrative institutions dating back to the early 1960s which took over from the colonial administration and set themselves the task of development.

### *The Cultural Environment*

Traditional African culture is based on community life. In villages which may be considered as the basic units, social rules forged by tradition were well-established. Life appeared to be static. In this specific context it is not surprising to note the importance of age because the elderly always had a deeper knowledge of traditions. By virtue of their experience and wisdom they became the custodians of the spiritual and moral values within the group. This body of values served as the unwritten constitution of the community.

From respect for age came the right of seniority. Younger people deferred to older people. This was to raise a number of problems in administration.

In the individual's relationship to society the problem did not arise. The individual deferred to the group and the general interest overrode private interest.

Villages were most often ruled by a council of elders who took all decisions concerning the life of the group. The rules which governed village life have withstood the vagaries of history. They have served the great African empires and the colonial era. This demonstrated their soundness even though they remained unwritten.

### *Current Social Structure*

In the course of history many changes emerged on the

African social and cultural scene particularly because of colonialism. A system of values different from tradition appeared in the cities. The two cultural systems then coexisted until they ended up interfacing to varying degrees. The major consequence of this was the emergence of two distinct worlds, viz. rural and urban. In the country-side, tradition was maintained despite the impact of colonization. At the same time, however, the westernization of the towns proceeded at a fast pace. The rural world which accounted for 80 per cent of the population of Senegal is particularly marked by a very low living standard (subsistence income), by chronic illiteracy and marginalization from politics despite its demographic and economic importance.

In the cities, social strata rather than social classes appeared, the distinctive criteria being the major factors of production.

From these social strata emerged the elite who served as a transmission link during the colonial era and ruled post-independent Africa. The rural world and the urban world constitute two sides of the same coin — the nation. According to Senghor, the nation was based on the fundamental belief in a common will for a common life. The social and political scene therefore shifted from the restricted space of the village to the enlarged space of the country. The transition of traditional Africa to colonial Africa and then to modern Africa therefore called for the establishment of more suitable institutions and for changes in outlook.

However, the very idea of nationhood implied a solidarity between villages, regions and different social groups, whence a better distribution and utilization of national wealth to raise the general standard of living and to eliminate inequities. The task was the responsibility of public administration, the state being but one manifestation of it.

Before going on to analyse the administrative system, it would be necessary to stress the importance of cultural factors. Japan is often cited as an example of a country which managed to modernize while preserving its traditional

values. Many authors often confuse modernization with westernization. Africa, like all other continents, needs to modernize but not at the expense of its values which today are the pride of the people. This is the challenge to be taken up by present and coming generations.

### THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

The administrative system as now exists in African countries is the result of colonization. The indirect rule policy pursued by the British had its counterpart in the assimilation policy practised by the French. However, it is often forgotten that before the colonial era, Africa had seen the rise and decline of great empires such as Ghana, Mali and Songhai. Those empires could not have existed without an efficient administrative system which allowed the sovereign to exercise his authority up to the remotest corner of the empire.

With colonization, Africa experienced a new type of administration based on written principles and rules. The new system of administration was the result of a long historical process that had taken place in Europe.

#### *Role and Mission*

The colonial administration was a dominating administration. The system was designed to establish and to consolidate colonial power both politically and economically. For that reason, the colonial administration was in essence repressive because it could not tolerate any challenge to its authority from the dominated peoples. It managed to exploit internal dissensions, if not actually provoke them, and it benefited from the co-operation of the "civilized" Africans in accomplishing its mission. In order to get closer to the subject the colonial territories were divided into wards, cantons and the like.

#### *The Post-Colonial Era*

With the advent of independent Africa, the need to estab-

lish a new type of administration became obvious. Dominating administration had to give way to development administration.

The state had to establish modern structures in order to solve the cultural, economic, political and social problems that threatened to erode the foundations of the new nation. The administrative divisions inherited from the colonial period was in most cases maintained with little variation. In Senegal, the nomenclature was changed (regions and districts instead of wards and cantons for example) and an eighth region called Louga, was created.

With regard to central authority, organization was largely based on what obtained in the old metropole, particularly at the substantive level.

In fact, there is not much difference between the constitutions of African countries such as Senegal and the constitutions of former colonizing nations.

#### *Administrative Performance*

The state remained the major employer, and countries such as Senegal benefited from a sound and highly operational administrative machinery. The administrative structures and institutions had been established and were functioning well before independence.

The state has been able to achieve success in the social sector in such areas as health and education, and in the economic sector by establishing parastatal agencies, developing the infrastructure, and acquiring agricultural machinery among other things. Through planning and investment policies, the state contributed to attenuating regional disparities. However, much remained to be done.

From the numerous colloquia and seminars, the performance of the civil service seems on the whole to be very poor considering the resources it has at its disposal.

#### *Administrative Relations — The Administered*

The citizens often deplore the complexity and slowness of administrative processes. In order to secure proper

documents they often have to cope with many difficulties owing to the complexity of procedures, absenteeism and unavailability of state officials, not to mention misinformation. Citizens denounce the coldness of the administration as well as the rampant corruption which in the course of time undermines most of its services.

In rural areas, administration is often seen as the manifestation of a new authority which seeks only its own interests and which is in fact often worse than the colonial system. That perception is at the root of much of the resistance on the part of farmers who in fact do not trust administration. Rural dwellers also deplore the omnipresence of the state; its interference in all areas is considered arbitrary.

The private sector often considers the state as a bad debtor and as a difficult client at best. Fund releasing procedures and delays in the payment of state debts are often cited as the source of the liquidity problems facing private and public enterprises.

#### *Administrative Relations and Civil Servants*

Civil servants especially deplore the precariousness of their material situation because their salaries are generally very low when compared to salaries in the private sector. They also question career development and rating systems which are not based on objective criteria.

The modalities of punishment and reward also leave much to be desired. These problems actually result in poor productivity and deplorable behaviour on the part of most state officials.

#### *Administration and Development*

The state has not always managed to attain the objectives it sets in four-year development plans because on the one hand, it lacks the material, financial and human resources, and, on the other hand, suffers from mismanagement of its modest available resources. Regional services are paralysed because of the paucity of operating funds.

*Reforms: Attempts at Decentralization*

The administration has not remained insensitive to its internal organizational or structural problems, nor has it been unmindful of its relations with the administered and third parties. Many reforms have been carried out to make good the deficiencies and inadequacies of the civil service in order to make it more effective and operational.

It was in this light that administrative and local reforms were initiated in Senegal from the early 1970s. In order to cope with the human needs of the reform an appropriate training policy was pursued. Towards the late 1970s new methods of management were introduced into the administrative services and into the parastatal sector in order to make them productive.

The administrative reform is based on two fundamental principles:

- (a) devolution; and
- (b) decentralization.

In this specific regard, devolution of power implies wider powers at the regional and local levels as well as greater responsibility for regional and district administration. Devolution is justified by the fact that local authorities are conversant with the realities in those areas under their jurisdiction and can therefore take the most appropriate decision within the limits of their competence.

Devolution is not incompatible with the principle of hierarchical authority that superiors exercise over subordinates. On the contrary, it makes administration more functional and avoids delays in decision-making.

Even though the reform ran into difficulties in implementation the Senegalese experience is often cited as an approach which facilitates the relationship between the administration and the rural world. The state exercises its administrative power over local communities but can in no case decide for those communities.

In view of the very high illiteracy rate among rural people and the fact that they have no mastery of the most rudimentary management methods, the state provides them with technical staff and continues to exercise a very strong influence in the management of community affairs. Rural people are not always happy with this and want to exercise their rights in full. However, unpleasant as it may be this initial phase is necessary.

### *Training*

In terms of training, many institutions have been created or strengthened to cope with the manpower needs resulting from the reform. Such schools as the *Ecole nationale d'administration et de magistrature*, train the senior level staff. Other institutions such as the *Centre de perfectionnement administratif* and *Ecole nationale d'economie appliquee* among other trains middle-level staff.

### *Introduction of New Management Techniques in Administration*

Many seminars are being organized jointly with international institutions with a view to improving administrative performance. In this connection, more adequate organization charts have been prepared and put in place. Management techniques such as planning, management by objectives, and management control to establish more specific and efficient budgetary practices have been introduced and experimented with in recent years, both in the public services and in the parastatal sector. The ultimate objective is to manage available resources rationally and with a view to attaining main objectives.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION

The administrative reforms undertaken in Senegal are beginning to bear fruit. It is early yet to conduct a precise

appraisal of their impact.

However, suggestions for the consolidation of what has been achieved and the improvement of the present system will be made. The recommendations focus on:

- (a) Administration and its environment;
- (b) Administration and its internal organization;
- (c) Administration and administrative personnel.

#### *Administration and the Environment*

Administration is often perceived as an autonomous, anonymous, and self-seeking entity. It is also perceived as a brutal force ready to suppress any resistance. In the rural world, people tend to consider it a substitute for colonial power which means there is a distance between the administration and the administered. Efforts are therefore needed to demonstrate to citizens that the administration is there to serve them.

The problems of under-development cannot be resolved without effective co-operation between the state and local communities. Nor can it be done without popular participation. This is why the decentralization policy pursued from the early 1970s should be continued and strengthened. The problems raised by its implementation should be resolved so that the objective of grassroots management could be achieved.

The creation of rural communities is based on the idea of solidarity between villages so as to pool limited resources to invest in community projects. Solidarity is not an empty word in Africa. Farmers have always managed to share the little that they had in spite of precarious subsistence conditions. Local people should likewise be able to take their destiny in their own hands. Collective self-reliance must start from below — at village and community levels. The state should provide every possible assistance to local communities whose prerogative it is to take the necessary initiative to find specific solutions to their problems. The state should lay

down general guidelines, set objectives and encourage grass-roots initiative with a view to attaining those objectives.

#### *Administration and its Internal Organization*

Devolution was put into practice at the same time as decentralization. The policy enables the quality of decisions to be improved at the same time as it speeds up decision-making. It implies greater responsibility which should encourage initiative at all levels.

With regard to management methods introduced in recent years, account should be taken of local realities at the time of implementation. Most of these techniques and methods have proven their value elsewhere. However, the expected results cannot be taken for granted because of Africa's cultural values.

Devolution should not be confined to the level of power. More than ever, it also needs to apply to resources. Most regional technical services are paralysed for lack of funds and logistical facilities. Such services therefore fail to provide the required expertise for the people. This is the basis of the frustration experienced both by recipients and state officials. It is, therefore, necessary to review the system of appropriation so as to allow regional services to carry out their respective missions.

Public enterprises should be managed in much the same way as private enterprises except for the cases where the companies are purely social images. The use of country-specific modern management methods should be the rule rather than the exception. Officials should be evaluated on the basis of their performance and state subsidies limited to the minimum. On the other hand, the state should pay its debts in order not to create financial problems for its creditors.

#### *Administration and Administrative Personnel*

There are cases of over-staffing. Most officials are far from being productive. In order to reduce staffing costs, the state should recruit according to its needs and get rid of passengers.

The state should also review the material condition of its officials if it wants to retain the best. Promotion, punishment and reward should be based on objective criteria such as performance and initiative. Officials should be able to secure real job satisfaction. In return, they owe allegiance to the state. They should demonstrate a spirit of service towards the citizen. They should know that they are there to serve citizens and should place themselves at their disposal. The citizen evaluates the administration from the behaviour of officials. It is, therefore, up to administrative staff to uphold the good name of the administration.

The state stands to gain from trusting its nationals more than foreign experts. Lack of confidence in the ability of indigenous personnel/experts provokes a loss of enthusiasm among national officials who have decided (in spite of numerous outside temptations) to place themselves in the service of their country. In making appointments to key posts in the civil service, nepotism and favouritism should be eschewed. The principle that the right man should be in the right place should be applied systematically. However, structured, institutions are worth no more than the people who run them. The selection of people is therefore of primary importance.

### CONCLUSION

From the Senegalese experience, the author of this chapter has tried to advance concrete proposals for making public administration and management systems more effective in the specific social and cultural environment of Africa.

The development of an efficient administrative system involves:

- (a) Modern management methods;
- (b) Simplification of administrative procedures;
- (c) A policy of devolution;
- (d) A policy of decentralization that promotes the effec-

- tive participation of people in development and grassroots management;
- (e) A new type of civil servant having a spirit of service and who can be ethically and materially motivated;
  - (f) A policy of modernization and non-westernization with a view to preserving the specific values and cultural identity of Africa.

Even though the reforms have yet to yield the expected results, it is obvious that they are on the right path. It should finally be pointed out that the present study is intended to improve what currently exists in African countries. This approach seems more realistic than that of wanting to change everything radically.

## COMMENTS ON PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE FOURTH PLENARY SESSION

Discussions at the fourth plenary session focused on the role of African cultures and social structures with specific reference to how these cultures and structures were inhibitive or supportive of efficient administrative and management systems.

Among the issues which presented lively debate was the prevailing cosmological theory in Africa and the extent to which this could be taken as a starting point for a meaningful examination of African culture in general and administrative behaviour in particular. Participants agreed that Africans believe in a Supreme Being, but that, in addition to this Supreme Being, some societies worshipped several other deities. It was felt that this belief in several gods was capable of bringing about a confusion in men's view of the universe and of blocking the emergence of logical, nay, scientific, explanations of day-to-day occurrences.

As regards the traditional social structures and institutions, divergent views were expressed as to the impact they have on modern administrative and management systems. Whereas some of the participants were of the opinion that traditional institutions possessed the main elements making for sound administration, others called attention to their archaic features and corrupting influences.

The family, the tribe and the clan were perceived as agents of socialization, i.e. as institutions responsible for inculcating the norms of right and wrong. Yet, the narrow outlook of these institutions, their limited time and space horizon and their frequently negative view of the "outside" world did not escape the attention of critics.

Even the traditional leadership and authority structures were not spared. While many participants agreed that aspects of the structures were capable of being adapted — particularly aspects relating to hierarchy and seniority, definition of

duties, obligations and responsibilities, and the imposition of checks and balances, the principle of "recall" or "dethronement" — the performance of the traditional structures on balance left much to be desired.

Participants were unanimous in the view that an understanding of both the traditional setting and the intervening colonial experience was necessary for a complete analysis of contemporary administrative and management systems. It was important that the major elements in traditional African culture be identified and the effect they have on modern administration established — preferably through empirical research. Examples of elements crying out for further study are the African's concept of time, the prevailing religious beliefs and their effects on the administrator's notion of justice, fairness, honesty, and service.

A question which was raised but not answered pertained to the role of women in public administration. It was argued that the traditional role played by women in society required a thorough examination with the aim of finding out how best some of the additional roles (such as nursing children) could be redefined to fit the demands made by modern organizations on women administrators.

The roundtable advocated the launching of a research programme aimed at identifying cultures and traditions which are common to African societies, and at identifying from among these cultures the "facilitators" and "inhibitors" of administrative efficiency.

### *Chapter Thirteen*

## THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

MICHAEL A. BENTIL

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

According to the aide memoire on the theme of this year's Roundtable, the subject of this chapter is expected to focus attention on the implications of participation by governments in international activities (bilateral and multilateral) on public administration and management systems in developing countries in Africa. This should be viewed from the perspective of (a) the increasing and complex administrative and managerial responsibilities that have been and continue to be generated especially at, and subsequent to, the attainment of political independence by different countries as from the latter part of the 1950s; and (b) the influence of administrative systems in one country on the processing and management of public sector affairs in another.

Generally, both practitioners and academicians tend to think of and measure the volume and content of administrative responsibilities in government primarily in the context of domestic needs. They seem not to consider the management of foreign affairs as part of public administration in national development. It is also not sufficiently appreciated that the incidence of political independence comprehends responsibilities for managing international affairs, which sometimes become more complex and complicated than

those associated with the administration of domestic affairs, Administrative and managerial responsibilities stemming from international and inter-governmental relations are numerous.

In this chapter attention will focus on only three aspects, viz, (a) management of foreign affairs and international relations both at diplomatic missions abroad and at international meetings at global, regional and sub-regional levels such as those within the United Nations, and Organization of African Unity, the African Caribbean and Pacific Group of Countries based in Brussels, Belgium, and the Group of Non-aligned countries; (b) administration and management of international economic transactions, including foreign trade and external trade relations, financing of national development programmes from external sources; and (c) administration and management of international technical co-operation programmes.

Because of limited space and time, the main thrust of this chapter will only be to review and highlight some of the major problems and issues of external affairs which have significant impact on national public administration systems. The aim will be to create a greater awareness and interest in the subject and suggest future measures for strengthening the capacities of governments to cope more effectively with the administrative consequences of their involvement in international activities. In line with this, each of the three broad categories of responsibilities stated above will be analysed so as to underline the difficulties associated with them and the effects. In each case, an effort will be made to bring to attention the experiences of actions that have been or could be taken to alleviate or solve the difficulties that exist. The chapter will conclude with suggestions on the role AAPAM could play in the future to mobilize African interest in finding a meaningful solution to administrative and managerial problems generated by the involvement of states in international or inter-governmental affairs.

## MANAGEMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Administrative problems associated with the maintenance of external relations and conduct of foreign affairs in developing countries in Africa as elsewhere are very complex, sometimes even more complicated than the administration of the public service at home. Nonetheless, these receive hardly any meaningful attention in public administration-oriented study and training programmes. The dimensions and characteristics of foreign affairs-related problems are better perceived from the content and spread of the work involved. To name a few as an illustration, the content of the work revolves around: (a) organizing, servicing, and attendance at, numerous meetings and conferences; (b) documentation and records management; (c) mailing and communication services; (d) information and publicity; (e) consular requirements including processing of visas, registration and welfare of citizens of the country resident abroad; (f) protocol and other diplomatic etiquette requirements; (g) personnel administration, including movements, welfare and security of foreign service staff and their dependents; (h) logistics and supplies, property and materials maintenance.

In addition to the administrative responsibilities indicated above, Foreign Service personnel are required primarily to be proficient and knowledgeable in their substantive duties embracing different aspects of diplomacy. When compared with their counterparts in advanced countries, Foreign Service personnel in most developing countries in Africa seldom receive any meaningful training, if at all, that would enhance their administrative skills. Schools and Institutes of Public Administration as well as regional institutions for training in public administration and management in developing countries in Africa in general seldom cater to such training. There have been very few exceptions, including the experiment in Ghana during the 1960s when Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA) (then

the Institute of Public Administration) included in its curriculum the training of cadet Diplomats in administrative and diplomatic skills. The programme was discontinued during the 1970s. Another experience (which was short-lived) was the attempt to train diplomats to acquire administrative skills – an attempt which followed OAU's request to the United Nations during the early part of the 1970s for assistance under the technical assistance programme for improvements in registry and documentation systems. The United Nations is also currently providing technical assistance to the Government of Zimbabwe with respect to the training of diplomats.

Lack of administrative and managerial expertise to support diplomatic work at both national and international levels has weakened the capacity of governments in several developing countries in Africa to maintain an acceptable standard of performance in conducting foreign affairs. Delays in documentation processing and information and communications flow and their negative effects on policies and major executive actions are a common example of this weakness. Other manifestations of administrative and managerial deficiencies in the performance of the Foreign Service is waste of resources (human, fiscal and material) due to poor administrative planning, co-ordination of responsibilities between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Home Ministries; weak personnel administration; poor logistics planning, and absence of effective machinery for management auditing.

The problem has been compounded by the phenomenal and rapid expansion of diplomatic and consular work which has also become increasingly complex. The volume of diplomatic responsibilities has been influenced by several factors and is reflected by the reciprocal relationships between one government and another in terms of representational missions and protocol requirements. This could involve one government in as many as 155 reciprocal diplomatic relationships with other countries with the additional problems of establishing and maintaining diplomatic missions in several countries. On average, it is estimated that one African govern-

ment maintains diplomatic missions in about twenty other countries. Annex I furnishes a list of known African Governments and the number of countries with which they have diplomatic relations globally. By the same token, one government may provide host facilities to the governments of other countries. A conservative estimate is that an African government may play host to at least forty diplomatic missions.

In addition to maintaining diplomatic missions abroad and providing host facilities to other diplomatic missions at home almost every country in Africa is also a member of different international and intergovernmental organizations. These organizations are too many to enumerate. For example, it is known that within the United Nations system alone, there are at least over two dozen organizations of which African governments are or could be, members. The principal ones include: The General Assembly of the U.N.; International Monetary Fund and World Bank; Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); International Labour Organisation (ILO); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Health Organization (WHO); International Trade Centre (ITC); United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); United Nations Centre for Transnational Corporations (UNCTC); United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT); Universal Postal Union (UPU); World Meteorological Organizations (WMO); and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Within Africa itself, there are several inter-governmental organizations with which many governments are associated. There are more than 100 such organizations, of which the well-known ones are: Organization of African Unity (OAU); Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); African Development Bank (ADB); African Centre for Administrative Training and Research for Development (CAFRAD); African Institute for Economic Development (PAID); East-Southern African

Management Institute (ESAMI); and African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM).

Common administrative problems associated with the conduct of foreign affairs as well as participation in international and inter-governmental activities have been identified to include: (a) heavy strain on limited administrative as well as financial resources in the sense that there are not enough qualified personnel nor adequate budget available to enable the governments concerned to participate meaningfully in the numerous international and inter-governmental meetings and conference to which they have committed themselves. Assigning staff to represent the government in different international activities has in a number of cases also been a source of administrative ineffectiveness "at home"; this is characterized by mounting backlogs of work and slowness in the public service delivery system; (b) the frustrations of keeping up with the growing number of international organizations. It has been difficult in a number of cases for governments to maintain up-to-date directories of international organizations and programmes as well as purposes for which they were established, that could be used as a guide in determining more meaningfully the degree of their involvement in their activities; (c) limited capacity to absorb and make full use of overwhelming documentation that is generated by international transactions; (d) problems of co-ordination and jurisdictional disputes among different ministries and other public agencies with respect to the power of decision and executive responsibility pertaining to foreign affairs. For example, there have been instances where serious conflicts have arisen between the ministries of Foreign and External Affairs and other ministries and government agencies regarding channels of communication between the government and foreign governments and institutions with respect to substantive matters. Ministries of Foreign Affairs generally prefer that all foreign contacts within the government are channelled through them. But, the substantive ministries have detested and resisted this on the grounds that it delays government

action on important international matters. It also leads to unnecessary duplication of work and costs, especially where the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established special subject units, in some cases on an elaborate scale to deal with substantive subjects for which other ministries and government agencies are more technically equipped; (e) personnel problems stemming largely from shortcomings in the systems and procedures relating to staff movements including installation (housing, security and general welfare) of officials on postings abroad, and conversely rehabilitation (housing, job allocation and general welfare) of officials returning home from long assignments abroad; (f) lack of adequate capacity to effectively cope with the pressures of diplomatic communications including the dispatch, receipt and administration of mail. "pouches" and cables; and (g) exacting and time-consuming requirements of diplomatic etiquette of host government including, in particular, time to be made available by public servants in different ministries and government agencies to receive and talk with representatives of foreign missions and international organizations based in, or visiting, the country.

#### ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC TRANSACTIONS

Discussions under this heading as previously indicated will focus on the administrative implications of international trade and externally financed programmes with which governments are involved. The scope of activities include: (a) membership of, and commitment to, different international and inter-governmental organizations and/or programmes the purpose of which is to promote international trade, harmonize commercial and trade policies and procedures, promote customs union and harmonization of tariffs, protect and stabilize prices. Examples of international and inter-governmental organizations pursuing the above-stated objectives include UNCTAD, ITC, General Agreement on Tariffs

and Trade (GATT) and AGP all at the international level; and Association of African Trade Promotion Organization (AATPO) Morocco, Cocoa Producers' Alliance Nigeria, Inter-African Coffee Organization (IACO)/Ivory Coast, African Timber Organization/Gabon, ECOWAS Nigeria, Southern African Customs Union (no fixed headquarters), and Mano River Union (MRU) Sierra Leone, all at the Africa regional and sub-regional levels; (b) membership of, and commitment to, international and inter-governmental financial institutions and programmes the purpose of which is to promote international flow of capital and assist in providing financing to support national productive and development programmes through lending and encouragement of foreign investments. The institutions and programmes in question include: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and International Development Association (IDA) all within the World Bank group, and the African Development Bank headquartered in Abidjan, Ivory Coast; (c) bilateral relationships between one country and another with respect to trade and financial matters.

The substantive aspects of transactions or activities associated with external trade and financing are usually very complex and overwhelming, and often overshadow the significance of their administrative requirements. Governments seem to be concerned with the benefits and problems associated with their external trade relations in terms of the size of the market and price for their exports, the cost of imports, the level of external capital to be mobilized, the length of period during which external loans have to be paid and the rates at which interests must be paid on external loans, rather than with diverse related administrative needs to be met such as (a) organizational and staffing effectiveness of the institutions and agencies concerned; (b) proper planning and coordination of the work required both within the same institution and between one institution and another; (c) efficient operational procedures and systems based upon proper

record-keeping and documentation. Lapses in this system and procedure have been numerous and have led to serious delays in policy decisions and executive actions; (d) proper and regular system of reporting and accountability; and (e) administration.

Other related administrative requirements include: (a) servicing of external loans embracing maintenance of up-to-date loans registers; (b) administration and enforcement of rules and regulations relating to external trade such as registration and licensing importers and exporters; (c) organization of inspection of exportable produce and products against prescribed standards; (d) administration of ports and international borders including cargo handling, servicing of vessels, planes, trucks, trains and other vehicles, and security; and (e) customs administration including clearance of outgoing and incoming goods, revenue collection and accounting, warehousing and record-keeping.

The impact of external trade and financing activities on the administrative capacity of the government in a number of developing countries in Africa can be measured in several ways. Typical ones include: (a) rapid growth and expansion in financial institutions as well as increase in the volume of their transactions; (b) increasing expansion of machinery and institutions to cope with endlessly growing and challenging demands. A number of new institutions have been established and also existing ones strengthened to meet the new demands, as in the case of Ministries of Trade, Finance, Agriculture and Foreign/External Affairs, Customs Department, the Central Bank, the Marketing Boards. In some cases, branches or units of the institutions concerned have been established in foreign countries as an additional measure to cope with the growing demands.

Examples are: (a) commercial or trade attaches established by some states at some of their missions abroad; (b) branches of commercial banks and marketing boards opened up in a selected number of countries where the volume of commercial and financial transactions is significantly high;

and (c) increasing participation and involvement of most African governments in different organizations and conventions dedicated to the promotion of international trade and financing.

Coping with the requirements stated has presented a number of administrative difficulties in many countries in Africa. Most of the difficulties have been persisting and new ones emerging from time to time; part of the reason is due to lack of attention being paid to them. Typical examples of these difficulties are: (a) frustrating delays associated with handling and clearing cargo and goods at ports; the causes include poor documentation and record-keeping as well as disorganized storage and warehousing of goods in bond, characterized by uncontrollable congestions; (b) Another major reason is cumbersome administrative and clerical procedures at the various offices, especially the Ministries of Trade, the Central Banks and Commercial Banks; (c) duplication of work among different ministries and public institutions due to poor co-ordination and lack of appropriate administrative directives; and (d) corruption encouraged by weak systems of reporting and accountability, defective control mechanisms and poor incentives as well as other deficiencies in public personnel systems.

#### **ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL CORPORATION PROGRAMMES**

The impact of international technical co-operation programmes on the administrative capacity of governments in developing countries can be measured in several ways. The first consideration is the number and levels of institutions participating in the programmes. There are international programmes such as those initiated and supported by the United Nations and its associated agencies. According to a recent report by the joint Inspection Unit of the UN on the capacity within the UN system for evaluating technical assistance programmes, there were during 1981/1982 more than

25 UN agencies executing technical co-operation projects in some 152 different countries including all countries in Africa. There are also inter-governmental programmes at the regional level such as those undertaken by the OAU and Commonwealth Secretariat, and also bilateral programmes in which at least thirty donor governments participate. Other sources of technical co-operation include assistance provided by several hundred non-governmental organizations with active interest in international development programmes, and also an increasing number of private institutions and international consulting firms active in the development management field.

The impact can also be measured from the standpoint of the type, number and value of projects around which the technical assistance revolves. For example, according to the UN source mentioned above, UNDP as largest channel for multilateral technical co-operation approved funding for some 15,000 projects at a cost of about \$4.7 billion during the 1972-1982 period. Also, according to OECD 1979 Review on Development co-operation, expenditure on bilateral technical co-operation is a substantial component of official development assistance. In the United Kingdom, for example, technical co-operation expenditure in 1977 constituted 24.2 per cent on net official development assistance to developing countries and multilateral agencies. In France, the contribution was 48.8 per cent of official development assistance, 27.8 per cent in New Zealand, 9.7 per cent in the United States and 5.7 per cent in Canada.

Another way of measuring the impact of technical co-operation on the administrative capacity of governments in developing countries revolves around the concepts, policies and objectives of the projects to be executed as seen from the perspectives of both the donor governments and organizations, on the one hand, and the recipient countries, on the other. There are cases where the objectives of technical co-operation are aimed primarily at promoting the political and economic interests of the donor governments and organizations as in the case of "tied-aid" programmes. There are other

cases such as programmes within the United Nations system where the basic purpose of technical co-operation is the promotion of self-reliance in developing countries by building up, *inter alia*, their productive capacity and their indigenous resources and by increasing the availability of the managerial, technical, administrative and research capabilities required in the development process. In the latter case, the selection of priority areas in which to seek UN assistance is seen as the exclusive responsibility of the requesting governments. In that case, the governments concerned are obliged to apply appropriate administrative machinery and systems to ensure an efficient and effective implementation of the technical assistance projects. The major administrative responsibility for ensuring an effective implementation of technical assistance project designed primarily to promote the interests of the donor governments or organizations on the other hand largely depends on the donor institutions.

#### *Technical Co-operation Cycle: Administrative Implications*

The discussion in this section will focus on the major elements and processes of technical cooperation programmes and the administrative responsibilities they generate. The analysis will be based on, and guided by, the UN experience, which is widely shared by developing countries in general: (a) country programming to identify project for which external assistance will be needed; (b) ordering of projects priorities; (c) project formulation and documentation; (d) approval of the project document; (e) implementation of the project; and (f) evaluation of the projects are the essential phases for technical co-operation, each of which requires specific administrative action.

The country programming and priority determination phases demand careful and time-consuming nation-wide planning and assessment of needs as well as periodic review and updating of needs, taking into account changing circumstances. It is a critical stage in the sense that the programme to be developed should provide a sound guidance on needs to

be met as well as the means available by which each of them would be satisfied. Doing so involves considerable administrative action, including the issuance of the necessary directives, collection and analysis of different types of statistics, inter-departmental and agency consultations, co-ordination of programmes to balance one need against another in the context of national priorities and the search for information on suitable resources (public and private, domestic and foreign) which can be applied to the needs.

The general experience is that there has been lack of thoroughness in the programming for technical co-operation in developing countries due principally to a shortage of the requisite skills as well as constraints of time. Projects have been developed which later proved to be either out of date or totally unnecessary. In other cases, projects have been duplicated; also requests for external assistance in the form of expertise have been made when the country is replete with similar skills and expertise. Bringing in foreign experts where they are not needed does not only cause resentment among both individuals and institutions with the requisite skills and expertise, but is pathetically wasteful because it denies critical areas the opportunity of attention.

The stages of project formulation, preparation of project document and project approval also generate considerable administrative responsibilities and the need for appropriate skills at the national level. The tendency has been for governments to underrate the significance of these responsibilities by leaving them to the whims of the donor governments and organizations. In other cases the responsibility is assigned almost exclusively to one national department or agency, in general, the Ministry of Economic Planning, most of which have been found to be ill-equipped for the work involved.

Project formulation is the key to the success or failure of any technical assistance project as it provides the key to the main project elements: objectives, background information and justification, outputs and inputs. It requires collective action under central direction necessitating the active involve-

ment, basically of all substantive ministries and other public agencies. Other participants are the Ministry of Economic Planning as the co-ordinating agency; Ministry of Finance with interest in the financing of the project in general, and specifically in the cost of government inputs; and Establishment Office or the Central Personnel Agency with concern for assignment of national counterparts and support staff to the project.

A number of technical assistance projects have foundered as a result of poor project formulation and design as well as mediocre preparation of project documents. Typical reasons include lack of clarity in the definition of project objectives and goals. Weak or indifferent leadership, poor planning and lack of proper consultation at the national level among participating individuals and institutions have often compounded such failures. Poor definition of objectives as well as unclear project goals and outputs have also been the cause of the poor administration. Deficiencies that have been experienced include: (a) recruitment of the wrong type of experts due to lack of proper guidelines from the project document to design appropriate job descriptions; (b) assignment of wrong national counterparts; (c) failure to make better use of the training provisions on the project; (d) delays in acquiring the equipment planned for the project; and (e) difficulty in enforcing accountability and monitoring provisions of project documents.

Successful project implementation as already indicated, depends initially on the clear definition of the project and its goals. In addition, it demands sound administration which is sometimes sacrificed for the substantive/technical aspects of the project. Administrative requirements in project implementation are diverse. The crucial ones include: overall leadership, direction and supervision; recruitment and maintenance of international experts; recruitment and optimum deployment of national staff; planning, phasing and co-ordinating of different project activities; organization and administration of training both locally and abroad; clerical,

logistical and equipment support; records-keeping; monitoring and accountability, including periodic reporting on the progress of the project to both government authorities and donor organizations.

In many countries, difficulties are experienced in one way or another in coping with the diverse administrative responsibilities associated with the implementation of international technical co-operation. There is initially the common and perennial problem of shortage of staff with the requisite skills. This has often led in a number of cases to leaving entirely to the expatriate consultants crucial responsibilities such as the determination of policies and other major decisions, overall leadership, general direction and control and executive action. In other cases, the national counterpart staff to be assigned to the project would be inexperienced and therefore depend considerably on the expatriate consultants. This dependence on foreign experts has in many cases not helped the projects to achieve the overall objective of technical co-operation, which is self-reliance. In a number of cases, foreign experts pursued activities and programmes which were not consistent with local needs because they lacked guided directions, which their working environments, including the local staff with whom they were associated, could not provide.

The other significant administrative problem is the lack of capacity to manage the foreign expertise and other resources required by the project. A typical example is the failure to optimize the use of the time of the expatriate consultants due to poor planning of their activities and the inability to stick to approved work schedules. Access to appropriate policy and executive levels and also to needed information has not been easy to achieve by the expatriate personnel because of the lack of necessary administrative machinery to organize and pursue it. Inadequate support services and facilities have also been a common source of failure to enhance the work of the expatriate staff; delays or sometimes total failure to assign national counter-part staff to work with, and

understudy, the expatriate personnel are other causes and they are widespread. Lack of central direction and control of projects, coupled with cumbersome procedures as well as overlap of responsibilities has been another significant administrative deficiency undermining the opportunity to make better use of foreign experts.

The last phase of the technical co-operation cycle in these discussions is the evaluation process to ensure that the objectives of the project are being achieved as intended. This has been the weakest link in the cycle because neither the donor agencies nor the recipient governments have paid sufficient attention to it. Within the UN system, project evaluation is a process which attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible, the relevance, effectiveness and impact of planned activities in the light of their objectives.

In the development field, project evaluation is most critical, considering that resources available to meet urgent needs have become increasingly limited and tight. It is particularly useful and necessary, as a learning and action-oriented management tool, as well as an integral part of the basic management cycle, to provide a guide for improving current and future activities in the interest of rational use of resources available to a particular aid-receiving country. In this chapter and contrary to the general trend, evaluation of projects is seen from the perspective of aid-receiving governments rather than that of donor governments and organizations. The issue in question is the capacity of a recipient government to develop and effectively operate an administrative machinery to enable it to meaningfully analyse and assess the impact (usefulness and relevance) of numerous technical assistance projects sponsored and operated simultaneously by different donor governments and organizations. As previously indicated, a government in a developing country could have access to as many as some 25 UN agencies, between 30 and 40 other multilateral organizations and banks, and several hundred non-governmental organizations for technical assistance. In this regard, a government may

have to deal with as many as 70 or 80 foreign-aid organizations sharing among them several hundred projects. By the same token, there could be also several hundred experts. For example, according to the U.N. study previously quoted, as many as 340 external assistance missions visited one country in 1981.

Most governments in developing countries in Africa have been, and are still, ill-equipped to cope with the volume and complexity of work involved in evaluating international technical co-operation projects *from the standpoint of national needs*. Some governments have established central agencies to deal with the problem, but the results achieved have been marginal due to the lack of requisite skills and guidelines and, above all, the overwhelming nature of the work to be undertaken. Not much help has been available to the developing countries from the U.N. agencies in the area of project evaluation because of limited experience in that field. The difficulties of comprehending and activating evaluation by governments are reflected in the fact that there seems never to have been a comprehensive effort to analyse or even take an inventory of international activities. In general, evaluation appears to have emerged rather slowly and unevenly in the development field, and to have suffered from a substantial number of difficulties and constraints. One major source of difficulty is that all along evaluation activities have been designed to meet the requirements of donor governments and organizations which are strongly influenced by dominant economic factors notably, market analysis, balance-of-payments impact, macro-economic variables, sales and production figures, cost benefit analysis, shadow prices and rate of return on investments.

#### **ACTION NEEDED AND ROLE OF AAPAM**

In the foregoing review, three of several factors which have significant impact on the administrative capacity of government in developing countries as a result of the international

environments in which they operate, have been broadly analysed to reflect some of the problems they generate. In this section, attention will focus on the improvement actions that can be taken. The three factors considered are: (a) the requirements of foreign affairs and international relations; (b) the consequences of foreign trade and external trade relations; and (c) participation in international and technical co-operation programmes. In each case, the major problem identified was the lack of trained and skilled manpower to deal adequately with the complex and enormous administrative responsibilities and functions that are generated by those activities.

The second major problem was the lack of awareness, at the policy as well as top and executive levels, of the significance of the administrative requirements within the international environments. Consequently, very little attention has been focused on training and staff development to build up the cadre of personnel required to undertake the necessary administrative and managerial actions. Also characterizing this problem is the absence of an established administrative machinery to provide effective leadership, co-ordination and supervision of the activities that are undertaken in different ministries and other public agencies to support the government's involvement in international and foreign affairs.

Poor administrative directives as well as outdated systems and procedures have also been identified as undermining the administrative capacity needed to provide support to government's participation in different international activities. Deficiencies in the administration of ports, including customs procedures, have been noted to be a serious drag on a government's efforts to gain by its participation in international trade activities.

Lastly, the lack of capacity and know-how for an effective management and continuing evaluation of technical co-operation programmes and projects has been mentioned as another major hindrance.

The impact of the weaknesses summarized above is hard to

assess since the subject has not been empirically studied and analysed. It is, however, generally known that governments at one time or another have incurred substantial losses, or been seriously embarrassed, or failed to attract foreign capital and other investments, because of their lack of administrative capacity to support their activities within the international environment. There is an urgent need for governments to become more aware of these problems and thereby take appropriate measures to correct them. AAPAM could assist considerably by including in its future programmes a special programme to highlight the significance of, and the need for, increasing administrative capacities in governments in Africa. This could be achieved through its Roundtables and specially designed research and advisory projects to be undertaken with interested governments and donor agencies. National as well as regional institutions devoted to public service management training should be encouraged and supported financially as well as politically to undertake a thorough study of the subject and to develop appropriate training and consulting programmes that would assist government to increase their capacity to effectively manage and administer the diverse international and inter-governmental programmes and transactions to which they are committed. It is hoped that in the action proposed, the institutions concerned would work in full collaboration with the appropriate government ministries and agencies as well as interested international and inter-governmental organizations.

## Annex

<i>Host Country</i>	<i>No. of Govts. physically represented in the Host Country</i>	<i>No. of other Govts. with which some relationship is maintained</i>	<i>Total No. of Govts. with which Diplomatic relations are maintained</i>
Angola	42	19	61
Benin	50	14	64
Botswana	37	15	52

Burundi	34	9	43
Cameroon	49	32	81
Cape Verde	40	12	52
Central African Republic	34	12	46
Chad	40	16	56
Comoros	22	3	25
Congo	46	20	66
Djibouti	34	12	46
Equatorial Guinea	14	17	31
Ethiopia	76	26	102
Gabon	41	31	72
Gambia	39	30	69
Ghana	74	20	94
Guinea	63	32	95
Ivory Coast	56	15	71
Kenya	71	15	86
Lesotho	34	21	55
Liberia	40	36	76
Madagascar	43	11	54
Malawi	28	9	37
Mali	46	26	72
Mauritius	41	15	56
Mozambique	52	15	67
Niger	48	21	69
Nigeria	88	25	113
Rwanda	41	15	56
Sao Tome & Principe	16	16	32
Senegal	57	36	93
Seychelles	31	16	47
sierra Leone	58	17	75
Somalia	51	14	65
Sudan	61	29	90
Swaziland	30	10	40
Tanzania	67	25	92
Togo	36	26	62
Uganda	58	26	84
Upper Volta	46	19	65
Zaire	59	25	84
Zambia	73	24	97
Zimbabwe	43	14	57
Egypt	112	23	135
Libya	72	27	99
Morocco	83	19	102
Tunisia	80	21	101
Algeria	97	28	125

Source: 12th Edition of *EUROPA* Publications Ltd (1982-83) London.

## *Chapter Fourteen*

# THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN AFRICA

WALTER O OYUGI

## INTRODUCTION

The nation states in the 20th century have become increasingly interdependent. There is not a single state — developed or undeveloped — that does not depend on other states for some of its requirements. The only difference is that some states are more dependent than others when the totality of international transaction is considered. These transactions are mainly influenced by political and economic considerations. Political considerations are of ideological and strategic nature. Economic considerations are by and large oriented to material benefits although other considerations (such as strategic considerations) are not to be excluded. The developed and the developing countries benefit differently depending on the nature of the transaction. This point is to be explored later in this chapter.

Africa is an underdeveloped continent. Therefore its interaction with the international system tends to be influenced by its quest for development. The international system is made up of the nation-states, but when it comes to economic transactions, the configuration is rather different. In international relations, the technologically advanced nations play a dominant role — especially, through the various transnational corporations, international organizations and inter-

national foundations. The effect which the interaction of the African governments with foreign governments and transnational corporations have on the character and behaviour of public administration and management in Africa is the focus of analysis in this chapter.

That public administration is a creation of its environment, is today a truism. In the context of the so-called developing countries, the significance of environmental (ecological) influences was first popularized by the Comparative Administration Group of the American Society of Public Administration. The lead was taken by Riggs, whose main initial concern was the socio-cultural environment.<sup>1</sup> Later, both the political and the economic factors were taken up by Riggs himself as well as by other members of the Group.<sup>2</sup> The development administration movement started by the Group, tended to focus on the domestic environment to the exclusion of the international one.<sup>3</sup>

### THE COLONIAL HERITAGE

The point of departure here must be the colonial heritage. Colonialism was a foreign import. It established a system which in many respects have survived independence. Indeed, colonialism established a tradition throughout the continent which has been difficult to eradicate. What are these lingering traditions, and in what ways do they affect the behaviour of public administration in Africa?<sup>4</sup>

Briefly, the current bureaucratic tendencies and orientations of many African public services can be traced to colonial foundations. During the colonial period a major preoccupation of administration was system maintenance. To that end, many regulations were made centrally and administered throughout the colonial state. There were variations in application but the results sought were essentially the same. Localities had to relate to the broad guidelines centrally set.

The class structure of the services is also a colonial import. Whereas Africanization of the services changed the racial

configuration, the structure of privilege and deprivation was retained. A notable example of a lingering structure is the civil service class structure, viz., the Administrative-professional, Executive and Clerical and Subordinate cadres which have survived in many anglophone states.

The current narrow perspective of many government agencies can also be attributed to colonial heritage. During the colonial period, again in anglophone Africa, departments, and later ministries, operated autonomously without paying due regard to the need for co-ordination. Today, lack of co-operation among various government agencies remains a problem.

In some countries, some structures and practices were kept intact. The structure and practice of Provincial Administration in Kenya is a case in point. *Bwana* District Commissioner is still as powerful as his colonial counterpart. In hardship areas (notably North-Eastern Province) he still combines political and administrative authority with magisterial jurisdiction — even though lacking the professional qualification to discharge the later function. In Provincial Administration, regardless of the training one acquires, the nature of the work still conditions one to behave as if the major preoccupation in office is one of system maintenance.

Throughout the continent, the socialization carried out by the colonial powers left a remarkable imprint. In many francophone countries, France is the "other home". In the former British territories, the story is rather similar: the elites and indeed every literate member of the society believes that anything British is superior. Hence preference for British education, goods and services. This orientation yields behavioural traits that lead to functional insecurity and lack of confidence in one's own ability to solve problems. Perhaps it may explain also the problem of technological dependency common in black Africa.

Colonial heritage is still a major factor to consider in understanding the nature of the international environment in Africa; for by and large, the interactions between Africa and

the international system have characteristics which are deeply rooted in the colonial system.

### INFLUENCE OF DONOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

African states maintain very strong links with their respective former colonial masters. It has been suggested above that the objectives of these transactions are primarily political, strategic, as well as economic. The medium of interaction is usually aid — both financial and technical. The underlying assumption is always the economic and technological superiority of the donor country. The psychology of the transaction is usually one in which the recipient is conditioned to accept a position of inferiority. That places her in a situation in which she can neither manipulate the relationship to her own advantage nor control it. The affair is a lopsided one.

Africa relies very heavily on foreign resources for her development needs. Aid is received for a variety of purposes — budget subsidies, technical assistance, price support, etc. About a decade and a half ago the Pearson Commission found that about 90 per cent of official development assistance to Africa was in the form of bilateral aid.<sup>5</sup> In many countries such aid flows constitute a significant percentage of the development budget. It is this kind of situation that makes the relationship lopsided. It has been possible in such situations for the donors to literally determine the order of priorities. The Pearson Commission made a similar observation when they wrote:

Heavy reliance on foreign aid means that for many countries, capital flows are foreign-controlled and not necessarily oriented toward the sectors they would consider most important in a balanced development programme benefitting the majority of the people.<sup>6</sup>

What we are witnessing in Africa today is precisely this

state of affair. The leverage which the donor countries have over recipient governments has increased with the volume of aid.

The nature of the relationship that a donor country establishes with the recipient is critical to the maintenance of the structure of unequal transactions. Often, the resident ambassador establishes a very cordial relationship with the Head of State or with certain key ministers in the government. The relationship soon begins to acquire an informal character. Informal out-of-office meetings become more frequent; the frequency of social gatherings increases and known passions (such as golf-playing) are taken advantage of. Sooner or later, a symbiotic relationship emerges that is exploited by both sides but especially by the stronger side.

The spill-over of such interactions into the administration and management of governmental affairs can be immediate and penetrating. The story told by one former American ambassador accredited to an African country is not an isolated case.<sup>7</sup> It is the pattern in most African countries.

The first battle is usually fought on the ideological front. The objective is to ensure that an ideological framework is established that is favourable to the donor country. Since decisions are usually made at the highest levels of party and government, high-level government and party functionaries are subjected to all sorts of lures and manipulations. In this game, the West has done far better than the communist countries.

The explanation is a simple one. In most countries old colonial connections were easily exploited, and in any case, both the political and the bureaucratic elites were committed at independence to maintaining the *status quo*. The socialization on the eve of independence and immediately after, had predisposed them to believe that they were the sure beneficiaries of the privileges bequeathed by colonialism.

For instance, the sentimental attachment of the franco-phone states to the French culture is largely the outcome of a successful assimilation process that occurred during the

colonial period. It therefore accounts for why the degree of neo-colonial relations between France and her former territories is by far greater than that maintained by other colonial powers and their former colonies. As would be expected, the influence of France in national policy-making of such client-states is quite pronounced. There are also many anglophone countries that have similar relationships with Britain.

To translate political and ideological gains into material benefits for the client-states, most donor countries decided to establish aid agencies through which to channel development assistance. The British established the Ministry of Overseas Development (now Overseas Development Administration). The USA established the International Co-operation Administration (now Agency for International Development). All members of the OECD have their own agencies through which bilateral aid is channelled.

These agencies maintain field offices in the recipient countries. The field offices usually act as clearing houses — receiving and transmitting aid requests and project proposals and approval from the recipients to the donors and vice versa. Through these agencies, donor countries have been able to penetrate and influence the administration of development programmes — especially the formulation of development policies. This they have been able to do by developing field offices into huge bureaucracies with all kinds of expertise. Consequently many donor countries have been able to have in the recipient countries teams of specialists that can carry out detailed studies whenever there is need to do so. The British ODA and the USAID operates along these lines. The British in particular have regional offices which have the authority to even commit a certain level of funding without reference to London. The knowledge that a local aid official can make a final decision to commit funds have given such bureaus a lot of leverage over recipient bureaucracies.

The presence of a field office is important to the donor in another context. In the case of a large project which has to go to the donor agency's headquarters for approval, the

opinion of the field (or country) representative is a critical variable. The recipient is aware of this. Since the donor is better equipped than the recipient to carry out the necessary surveys that are critical to project decisions, the recipient tends to be influenced by the project values and priorities set by the donor. The psychology of technical superiority that we alluded to above thus comes into play.

There is ample evidence to support the contention that donor governments and agencies have a lot of leverage in policy and decision-making in Africa — more so in the field of development.<sup>8</sup> Various aid agencies may employ different penetration strategies but the results are by and large the same.

International organizations are similarly influential. The role of the International Monetary Fund (the IMF) is detailed and widespread. Many African Central Banks are virtually run by the fund. Uganda and Zaire are the most recent cases. There is no major monetary or financial policy such countries can make without the knowledge and approval of the fund. Indeed, the IMF is notorious for its procapitalist, anti-egalitarian fiscal policies. It has always opposed food subsidies and what it regards as “excessive” government participation in economic management. To the extent that it has always insisted on, and got recipient government to accept its line of thinking underscores its overwhelming influence in the economic management of the poor countries. Even Tanzania one of the most “stubborn” countries, had to succumb to IMF pressures recently.

The World Bank too has had a lot of influence in the general area of development policies. Its leading role in agricultural and livestock development financing has given it a lot of influence in the field of agricultural administration. Many rural extension programmes being currently administered in many African countries can be traced to the World Bank (International Development Association). In Kenya for example, the so-called Integrated Agricultural Development Programme had its origin in World Bank recommendation.

And more recently, the Bank managed to get the Ministry of Agriculture to accept the adoption of what it termed *Visit and Training Method* in extension work. Before the strategy was accepted, the Bank had to finance a trip by several Agricultural Officers to parts of East Asia in 1983 to see for themselves the "success" of the method in a number of selected countries.

What is unfortunate about some of these externally induced "innovations" is that they usually have no bearing on local conditions. The *Visit and Training method* is a modified form of the old saturation method in extension.<sup>9</sup> Its success depends on staff availability and ability to disseminate extension advice, availability of resources, and farmer's ability to follow and adopt the acquired technology. The method was introduced with nothing having been done to improve the existing pathetic situation in the field.

The Banks' excessive influence on recipient governments is also partly due to the strategy it uses in selling its ideas. In the case of large-scale projects, the Bank usually send study missions which are always referred to as "high-powered." As Gordenker has observed, these missions tend to have almost unlimited access to senior bureaucrats and ministers. Reports written thus influence high-level decision-making, and close relationship leads to instant acceptance of recommendations.<sup>10</sup> There is no country in Africa, South of Sahara, for which the World Bank has not prepared such reports. For most of them, the exercise is an annual event.

Other international organizations (especially in the UN family) function along similar lines. The strategy which many such organizations have adopted is to incorporate representatives directly into government structures in such a way as to guarantee effortless access to the ministry concerned.<sup>11</sup> This strategy was used by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in the early years. UNESCO's National Commission found in member countries, is as Gordenker correctly observes, intended to assemble knowledgeable and influential people from within government and outside it to

consider the national involvement with UNESCO.<sup>12</sup> The symbiotic relationship thus established works to ensure that the values of the organization are acquired and internalized by the member country. This then assures automatic acceptance of policy advice tendered by the organization.

From the preceding discussion one can state that the behaviour of international organizations is not in any way different from that of the agencies of the donor countries. Both act to promote the values and interest of their creators. In their interaction with the agencies of the recipient countries, they act as if what matters is their perception of the issues at stake. In such a situation, the relationship is lopsided, and any benefits derived from it by the recipient is, to say the least, incidental.

#### *Technical Assistance: Myths and Realities*

The instrument that donors use in influencing and controlling the policy and development situation in the recipient countries is technical assistance. The term has been defined to include the supply by public assistance sources, governments, international organizations and other public aid organizations of advisory personnel, 'topping up' of operational personnel, volunteers, fellowships, equipment and buildings provided under grant for technical assistance 'type' projects, i.e. in support of, or in association with, technical assistance personnel.<sup>13</sup>

The flow of technical assistance to developing countries is on the rise. According to a recent World Bank report, the flow is much greater in Africa than elsewhere in the developing world.<sup>14</sup> To be specific, about 25 per cent of overseas development assistance (from OECD member countries) to Africa in the late 1970s was in the form of technical assistance grants.<sup>15</sup> Classified by subregion, the percentage is even higher. Singer and Doss found that the share of technical assistance accounted for 44.6 per cent of OECD grants to East Africa in the late sixties.<sup>16</sup> The figure remains high even on bilateral basis. The Pearson Commission found that

technical assistance made up 33 per cent of all aid received from France by French-speaking Africa South of Sahara.<sup>17</sup> And current figures presented in the *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* show some very high percentages indeed for individual countries.<sup>18</sup>

The questions to ask at this juncture are: What is the problem with technical assistance? Why should there be more of it, or put differently, why should it not be on the decline? What have been the assumptions and myths associated with technical assistance?

The problem with technical assistance is that it has failed to deliver the goods. The fact that the flow is on the rise is an indication of the failure of the programme (of technical assistance). Thus, the original assumption, namely that through technical assistance the recipients are enabled to acquire the best technology for their own development can now be dismissed as just a myth. In support of the thesis a simple question is posed: Is Africa more developed today than it was on the eve of independence? Or to put it simply, has Africa better access to basic needs today than it did on the eve of independence? The answer appears to be negative. According to a recent UNECA paper:

...over the last two decades the food and agricultural situation in Africa has undergone a drastic deterioration. Today each person in the region has, on average, a considerably less access to food than was the case ten years ago, the average dietary standards have fallen below nutritional requirements. In the face of a rapid growth in population and urbanization, food production in Africa has tended to stagnate. Indeed, average food production per person has greatly declined since 1960.<sup>19</sup>

This is a disturbing observation considering the amount of both financial aid and technical assistance that has gone into agricultural "development" in Africa in the last twenty years.

Again, the *World Bank's 1980 Development Report* esti-

states that in the 1970s the growth of per capita income in the "low income countries" of Sub-Saharan Africa averaged only 0.2 per cent annually compared with 1.1 per cent in similar Asian countries and 2.9 per cent in developing countries generally.<sup>20</sup> The point has been underscored further in another World Bank report:

During the past two decades economic development has been slow in most of the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa... the recorded record is grim and it is no exaggeration to talk of crisis... Between 1970 and 1979 per capita income in 19 countries grew by less than 1 per cent per year, while during the last decade, 15 countries recorded a negative rate of growth of income per capita.<sup>21</sup>

The report adds that the situation is steadily deteriorating. These observations lead us to the obvious conclusion that in spite of foreign financial aid and technical assistance, Africa is steadily underdeveloping. The obvious conclusion then is that technical assistance has been responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa. The World Bank implicitly appears to accept this position when they observe:

Thus, to the extent that Africa's problems are the result of unsuitable project concepts or perpetuation of inappropriate policies, the donor community shares in the responsibility.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore the question is: how has this problem (i.e. the failure of technical assistance) come about?

In order to answer this question, we must go back to the discussion of the myths associated with technical assistance. To be of any use, technical assistance must serve the needs of the recipient country. Amuzegar Jehangir suggested in his study of USAID's aid to Iran that four processes are involved in the give-and-take of foreign technical assistance:

- (a) An examination of the symptoms for the diagnosis of the problem;
- (b) Devising and prescribing new solutions and demonstrating their applicability;
- (c) Training and supervising in the local use of prescribed remedies or techniques;
- (d) Provision for an assimilated continuation of adopted techniques and practices in a routine fashion without further need for foreign training and or supervision.<sup>23</sup>

A variation of the same theme has it that the purpose of technical assistance is not to transfer specific theories, techniques, practices or procedures, but to explore with the host country's personnel their own situations and problems, and to develop their own distinctive solutions and courses of action.<sup>24</sup>

Technical assistance has failed to live up to these expectations. If technical assistance had been able to discover the problems that are unknown or unfamiliar to African governments and bureaucracies and then prescribed solutions that are appropriate technically and economically, the underdevelopment of Africa that we have described above would not have been the outcome. In many instances, technical assistance has been associated with the introduction and application of inappropriate technology. In some cases Africa has been used as a testing ground for administrative and management techniques that are either irrelevant to the needs of public organizations or have never been tested before.

The attempt to popularize Management by Objectives (MBO) and Organization Development (OD) in the African public services by technical assistance consultants is a case in point. Both the *Udoji Commission* in Nigeria (1974) and the *Ndegwa Commission* in Kenya (1971) came out very strongly in favour of introducing management by objectives in the Civil Services of the said countries. These recommendations were emphasized notwithstanding the fact that at the time the two management techniques were failing to take roots in

the Western public services — and for good reasons too. Anyone experienced with MBO is aware that traditional “profit-oriented” MBO is more difficult to operationalize in the “service-oriented” organizations.<sup>25</sup> The success of MBO depends among other things on the stability of the organization in terms of rules, procedures, technology, resources and environment. These are conspicuously wanting in public organizations, which are characterized by turbulent political environments, resource instability, goals which are vague and subject to multiple interpretations, limitations in skills, as well as the difficulty involved in measuring the output of an employee.

The experience of Kenya has amply demonstrated the irrelevance of MBO in the Civil Service. According to evidence so far available the enthusiasm with which the technique was received in the Directorate of Personnel Management as well as in the Ministries of Health, Agriculture and the Office of the President (i.e. Government Printer) have since waned. Many key officers interviewed in a recent study did not even know that these ministries had once accepted MBO for implementation. Those who did know, dismissed MBO as having had no impact at all.<sup>26</sup>

In one parastatal — the Cereals and Produce Board (formerly Maize and Produce Board) — where MBO was introduced in 1966, the researcher found that its use was confined to two key officials — the General Manager and the Personnel Manager. The system collapsed as soon as the two men holding these key positions left.<sup>27</sup> Thus, today very little is heard about MBO yet a lot of resources was wasted in introducing it.

Another case in point was the introduction of decentralization in Tanzania following the recommendation of a private consulting company — McKinsey Co. (a consulting firm with the experience in the design of private corporate management structures). In a forthcoming major study of integrated rural development in Tanzania, Elizabeth Klemmer observes that the McKinsey consultants based their recommendation on a

managerial model common in private corporations where the top directors of a company delegate certain responsibilities to lower level managers.<sup>28</sup> The result was bureaucratic decentralization. Again according to Klemeir, McKinsey consultants believed that field management decisions could be programmed, i.e. that officers could follow established procedures for project planning and implementation set out in operational manuals prepared by the consultants.<sup>29</sup> The practice was different in many respects; the principles on which the decentralization project was based were similar to those associated with the so-called modern management techniques (MBO, OD, etc.).

No wonder therefore that the project has turned out to be a failure precisely for the same reasons that have made MBO unworkable in public service organizations: viz; "turbulent" political environment, lack of resources, etc. Kenya had similar experience a few years ago when a group of expatriate academics designed a field management system to be used in a special programme — the Special Rural Development Programmes (SRDP) that was being implemented at the time (1968-1976). Known as Programme Implementation System (PIS), it had some of the characteristics of MBO. The system consisted in breaking up the sub-projects into operational objectives and then programming them accordingly. Central to the system's effectiveness was the monthly (and later quarterly) reporting device. Through this device, progress reports were filed indicating what had or had not been achieved and who was responsible for what. The system never worked. Field officers found it too cumbersome. The staff at the headquarters ignored the information contained in it as it demanded too much of their attention. In the end the "innovation" failed to win converts, and it collapsed soon after the expatriates left. This represents a good case of premature introduction of sophisticated management techniques into a system used to bureaucratic routines. What ought to have come first was a programme aimed at changing the nature and orientation of the bureaucracy! Thus, both in the

Kenyan and in the Tanzanian cases discussed above, the expatriates failed to devise any solutions to the problems of rural administration that were capable of being adopted and institutionalized in the administrative system. There have been many similar cases elsewhere in Africa.

Another area where the dominance of technical assistance has been felt is development planning. In the first decade of Independence, Africa was inundated with all sorts of planning models and techniques. The importers were professional economists — usually contracted by donors. The non-economists were busy at the time developing organizational “models”. The creation of central and local planning organizations were suggested and adopted.

At the end of the decade almost all independent African countries had established planning ministries of central planning units. The establishment of the ministries or planning was followed with a massive influx of planning ‘specialists’. And within a short time, similar units were opened in other ministries — especially those directly involved in development. They were similarly staffed. At once the expatriates (both advisers and administrators) in the ministries of planning and development established a network of relationships that ensured the domination of the planning process by the expatriates.

Two decades later, technical assistance still remains dominant in planning. Indeed, dependence on foreign financial aid for national development has deprived the African states of a say in the major decisions regarding development. Thus, as Holtham and Hazelwood have observed with respect to Kenya, major projects are being planned, prepared and largely carried out by expatriates, such that the Kenya Treasury surrenders the selection of all but a few projects to donors.<sup>31</sup> Holtham and Hazelwood add:

Capital aid has had deleterious effects on Kenyan administration by undermining central control of development budgets of operating ministries.<sup>32</sup>

Hyden also laments the fact that technical and economic considerations of professionals from donor countries have exerted considerable influence on the design and conduct of foreign aid. Thus, those who are often most removed from the realities of African situations are having the strongest influence on the key decisions determining given foreign aid projects or programmes.<sup>33</sup> Both Holtham and Hazelwood as well as Hyden decry the fact that the African bureaucrats do not seem to be bothered about the situation.

From the foregoing discussion, it is obvious that technical assistance has been a very costly affair to Africa — costly in political, administrative and economic terms. Part of the problem is that donors have tended to make technical assistance part of any aid transaction in which they are involved. This has resulted in the appointment (by the donors) of people whose services are not needed by the recipients in the first place. These *floating specialists* are welcomed by the recipients simply because they are part of a wider package deal that must be accepted as such. As would be expected, the recipients have not been bothered about the proper recruitment of personnel. We are here confronted again by the negation of one of technical assistance's myths, namely that it is always supplied in response to the needs of the recipients.

The costs are inherent in the orientations and behaviour of technical assistance personnel. The values that the personnel promote, especially at the plan formulation stage, can have untold political consequences. Development plans in Africa are full of populist pronouncements (e.g. basic needs strategy) that hide the real (pro-elite) intentions of the planners. As representatives of western capitalism, the planners cannot be expected to behave otherwise. Development policies pursued on the advice of donor representative have been largely responsible for the accentuation of inequality that has become a dominant characteristic of many African societies today.<sup>34</sup> Administratively, reliance on technical assistance stifles the creativity and initiative of bureaucrats. Where

undesirable, unqualified and inexperienced assistants have been "donated", the costs to the bureaucracy in terms of wrong advice, and mediocre performance in operational roles can be costly. The evidence available tends to suggest that technical assistance has not performed well. Africa has not been able to get the right type of personnel. This was the conclusion arrived at by the Pearson Commission when they wrote:

The supply of competent people from the donor countries for overseas work is limited and there is heavy competition for their services in their own countries. It is not surprising therefore that the average quality of personnel who offer their services has tended to deteriorate as demands have arisen. In very general terms and allowing for some notable exceptions — most developing countries seem increasingly dissatisfied with the quality of technical assistance personnel.<sup>35</sup>

The failure of many development projects in Africa should be seen in this light. That technical assistance costs recipients nothing or very little is yet another myth. The so-called grant has a catch in form of direct costs to the recipient (a house in a "good area", sometimes a free government vehicle and petrol, and office space, secretarial services, duty free imports, etc.). In other countries, notably francophone Africa, the cost of French technical assistance borne by the recipient is said to be around 50 per cent of the overall cost.<sup>36</sup>

### ROLE OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

This chapter cannot end without discussing the impact of multinational corporations on African administration however brief the discussion may be. Perhaps the best approach might be the application of the *transnationalization thesis* as advanced by two Latin American scholars. Osvaldo Sunkel and Edmundo Fuezalida refer to the existence of a

*Transnational community* that shares a common culture which they refer to as *transnational culture*. The community is made up of transnational corporations (i.e. multinationals, international organizations and individuals transcending national boundaries). They observe that the hegemony is based on the specialized knowledge the community possesses and their indispensability in the process of creating and applying knowledge. The key receiver of this knowledge in developing countries is the government bureaucracy (both military and civilian). The bureaucratic elite to a large extent shares the *transnational culture* (i.e. the values, principles and methods of the *transnational community*) and have therefore direct interest in the *transnationalization process* (i.e. their incorporation in the international capitalist production system).<sup>37</sup> In their application of the transnational thesis to the Kenyan situation, Godfrey and Langdom submitted that in the case of Kenya, the community includes higher-level civil servants, the more prominent politicians, some professionals and more prosperous and well-educated African businessmen.<sup>38</sup> One should add that a similar situation obtains throughout Africa.

The influence of multinational corporations has increased particularly in the last decade or so. This period has witnessed a steady increase in the number of public servants entering private business — usually in activities controlled by the subsidiaries of the multinational corporations. The African bureaucratic elite's need to penetrate the business circle and the MNCs' search for privileges from the government have led to a symbiotic relationship between the two to their mutual advantage. Thus, today multinationals literally influence the pattern of foreign investment in Africa because of the political clout they have been able to muster through the use of financial leverage. According to Godfrey and Langdom, the MNC's have sought and received: import protection, regulatory advantages for its subsidiaries, informal channels of communicating with the state officials, profit protection, access to local and public finance, etc. The state functionaries

have in return received: partnership in the subsidiaries, board membership, illicit payments, etc. And the state itself has been able to negotiate accelerated managerial Africanization and African participation in product distribution. There is also the increasingly widespread state share-holding in MNC subsidiaries, often being negotiated on the initiative of MNC's.<sup>39</sup> The situation thus makes MNC's strong partners in the governing process in Africa.

The other area in which the presence of MNCs or (the transnationals) has been directly felt is in the design of salary structure. *Transnational culture* means high consumption value and a different lifestyle. Evidence is available to show that the private sector, and the MNC's in particular, pay higher salaries for equivalent qualifications and experience than the public sector.<sup>40</sup> This usually leads to demand by the public servants for salary increase. The irony is that the MNCs are able to pay better salaries because of the protection and privileges accorded to them by the state.

The effect of the uncontrolled salary increases is increased income inequalities in a continent where the majority of the people are still either unemployed or under-employed in on-and-off farm activities.

There is no doubt that MNCs have excessive influence in Africa in the field of policy-making. This situation has been brought about by the success with which the African political and bureaucratic leadership has been incorporated into what we referred to above as the *transnational community*.

## CONCLUSION

The message which is clear in this chapter is that the international environment is a critical environment as far as administration and management in Africa are concerned. The structure and orientation that African bureaucracies inherited at independence are, for instance, still major determinants of relationships in the administrative process. These have been reinforced by continued reliance on the former colonial

masters as the major sources of bilateral assistance. Continued reliance on foreign aid has deprived Africa of the control of her domestic political and economic situations. The donors have tended to dictate the terms, and the African countries have tended to go along for fear of being abandoned! As a result, the international environment has emerged as a system influencing not only the details of national policies but also in many cases the details of their implementation. These activities have not unfortunately led to positive changes in the continent. We hear of poverty and inequalities throughout the continent, and more recently about food shortages. Evidence has been provided in the chapter to show that Africa is underdeveloping and that the international environment shares a large portion of the blame.

Part of the explanation of underdevelopment in Africa is that aid — both financial and technical — has not had the impact that was expected of it. The reality of the situation is that the benefits associated with aid have so far turned out to be mere myths.

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39. See Martin Godfrey, “The International Market in Skills and Transmission of Inequality” in Jose Villamil, *Transnational Capitalism and National Development*, *op.cit.* and Steve Langdon, *Multi-national Corporations and the State in Africa*” also in Villamil, *ibid.*
40. Godfrey has useful data on the subject in his paper “The International Market in Skills...” cited above.

## COMMENTS ON PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE FIFTH PLENARY SESSION

The Roundtable discussed aspects of the international environment which have had significant impact, directly or indirectly, on public administration and management systems in Africa. Given Africa's situation of integration into the world economic, socio-cultural and political systems, and of dependency on technologically advanced societies, international influences have shaped and moulded the character of national administrative systems.

While admitting the existence of other factors, the Roundtable focused its discussions on the flow of ideas, noting that the spread of ideas across national frontiers had been facilitated by developments in communications technology. It was observed that aspects of the international environment presented a basis for understanding the character and operation of public administration in Africa.

On technical co-operation, the Roundtable noted the views of critics who argued that the relationship between Africa and the technologically developed countries had not worked out in favour of African nations. The Roundtable examined the influence of the external environment by focusing on the colonial heritage. It was the view of participants that many of the contemporary bureaucratic tendencies and orientations were traceable to the colonial system of administration. Current values, consumption patterns, the hierarchical class structures, the preoccupation with "law and order" and system maintenance functions — all these had their roots in colonialism. The Roundtable also cautioned against the predominant influence which donor agencies, and the various international organizations exert on the policies formulated in different African countries. In fact, the influence most frequently begins from the stage of planning and runs through that of implementation to that of programme evaluation and review. The absence of sound administrative infra-

structure in many an African country has further created an opportunity for the external organizations to exploit Africa's position. Members were urged to impress it on the appropriate officials, the need to establish adequate institutional mechanisms for the conduct and monitoring of reciprocal transactions. Moreover, in order to guard against the temptation to adopt irrelevant and inappropriate technologies, participants urged all African governments to undertake a critical review of previous programmes and identify projects that were likely to have maximum benefits for the people of the continent. The need for collective self-reliance in the areas of science, technology, industry, trade and commerce was also re-emphasized.

Participants appealed to all African countries to start taking their destiny in their own hands and stop passing the responsibility for underdevelopment entirely on the developed countries. One way of facing up to Africa's problem was in the establishment of policy planning and strategic studies units. Instead of living from hand to mouth, African countries should set aside resources for research and development programmes. It was further noted that mental freedom was an indispensable condition for development administration.

Another area which generated considerable discussions was that relating to the establishment and management of Africa's overseas missions. The degree of waste — in manpower and resources — was highlighted. In fact, the administrative prodigality of overseas missions contrasts sharply with the precarious economic situation within the continent and the deplorable standard of living in each African country. The Roundtable accordingly advocated the initiation of comprehensive management audits aimed at minimizing waste and maximizing the impact of the various missions.

The Roundtable strongly recommended that, where available, local experts should be used in tackling basic problems. Local training institutions should also develop

capabilities not just in the area of training, but in those of research and consultancy. In conclusion, the Roundtable appealed to all African countries to establish units whose primary role would be the constant monitoring of the impact of the external environment on the conduct of national affairs.

## APPENDIX

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