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AJPAM is a bi-annual publication of the African Association for Administration and Management. It appears in January and July each year.

Manuscripts focusing on problems of public/development administration in Africa are invited from all parts of the world. Contributions which are based on experiences outside Africa but providing useful comparative lessons are also welcome.

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The African Association for
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AFRICAN JOURNAL OF
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
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Contents

Bureaucracy and Neo-patrimonialism in Ethiopia: Implications for the Rise and Fall of the Mengistu Regime (1974-1991) <i>H.K. Asmerom</i>	1
Complexity of Joint Action: Implementation of Restructuring of Ministerial Organization in Ghana <i>J.R.A. Ayee</i>	25
Strengthening the Linkages between Public Policy and its Implementation: A Review of Zimbabwe's Experience <i>S. Agere</i>	44
External Support for Institutional and Management Capacity-Building in Africa: the Commonwealth Secretariat Experience <i>Olu Fadahunsi</i>	55

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BUREAUCRACY AND NEO-PATRIMONIALISM IN ETHIOPIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RISE AND FALL OF THE MENGISTU SOCIALIST REGIME (1974-1991)

H.K. Asmerom

Introduction

Bureaucracies in third world countries play a leading role in a wide range of national development programmes. Moreover, they are structures without which regimes cannot adequately claim a mandate to govern and to implement essential services that are necessary to keep them in power and produce marginal benefits which spill over to the rest of society. All over the world government bureaucracies have certain characteristics in common but they also display considerable differences in the ways they operate, in the types of function they carry out, and in the ways in which they compromise their own orientation in favour of those of other sub-systems, including the political system that justifies their existence. Indeed, some bureaucracies seem to operate in subservience to the ruler rather than respond to the needs and demands of society, as articulated in the form of "real" public policies.

Ethiopia's experience indicates that long-established patterns of institutional and interpersonal behaviour tend to establish themselves afresh even after drastic changes have been brought about in the overall political and ideological spheres. This trend can be illustrated by a comparative analysis of the links between on the one hand, the imperial style of rule and the bureaucracy before the 1974 revolution, and on the other, those between the emergent leadership and the bureaucracy since that date.

This article will try to provide answers to the following questions: why did the Ethiopia of the post-revolutionary period continue to display unmistakable characteristics of the past even though the patrimonial system as personified by the Emperor was effectively replaced by a military regime which converted itself into a Marxist-Leninist socialist state? And what are the implications of this continuity of personal rule for the position and role of the bureaucracy as an agent of socio-economic development in general and the stability of the new system in particular?

Against the background of the relevant theoretical setting and the historical roots of patrimonialism in Ethiopia, we shall analyse the emergent climate of

neo-patrimonialism and the position of the bureaucracy under it, first under the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) and then under the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia led by Mengistu Haile Mariam. The implications of the continuity of patrimonial practices for the status of the bureaucracy as an agent of socio-economic development and the instability of the emergent political system will be examined in the conclusion.

I. Patrimonialism and Neo-Patrimonialism: a Conceptual Framework

The concepts which have been chosen to help in explaining the character and behaviour of the Ethiopian bureaucracy are patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism. Jointly they serve as a dynamic conceptual framework for describing and analysing the features of continuity and change in Ethiopian political and administrative realities. For the pre-1974 period the relevant concept is patrimonialism, while for the post-1974 situation, it is neo-patrimonialism.

Patrimonialism as systematically defined and elaborated by Weber as part of his political sociology in general, and as a type of traditional authority structure in particular¹, initially referred to the relationship between the all-powerful and dominant traditional ruler and his totally submissive household staff. The staff carried out a variety of tasks under the immediate control and supervision of their ruler. As the ruler incorporated new territories in his domain, whether through conquest or peaceful annexation, he was obliged to increase his civil and military personnel. Eventually, hierarchical structures were created, flowing from the ruler's palace down to the tax collectors and law enforcing administrators in the countryside.

In theory as well as in practice, higher officials and their subordinates could acquire a certain degree of power and influence, but were not allowed to establish an independent power base of their own. In fact, they held their positions as long as they enjoyed the confidence of the ruler and the patrimonial ruler himself was expected to exercise his power and authority within the limits of traditional values and norms.

A central concern of such a regime is system maintenance. The instruments of system maintenance are primarily military forces and centralized administration. The patrimonial ruler can also employ the following *ad hoc* means of control and domination: first, he can personally visit the various regions of his realm, depending on the urgency to do so; second, he can regularly despatch inspectors and controllers to outlying areas to ensure that regional administrators and governors carry out their tasks according to central directives; third, the ruler can oblige regional administrators and governors to report at his palace on a regular basis.

These instruments of system maintenance and control have all been used extensively in Ethiopia, both past and present.

In contrast, neo-patrimonialism which, according to the contention of this chapter is a major characteristic of the Mengistu regime, refers to the patrimonial mode of rule in contemporary third world countries, and is often associated with the dominant and all-powerful institution of the presidency in many African, Asian and Latin American countries. According to Eisenstadt, the traits of neo-patrimonialism became clear and visible "in post-colonial societies with the dissolution or 'breakdown' of the initial model of modernization"².

Among other things, a neo-patrimonial system of rule is characterized by the dominant role played by the central elite and by the growing importance of paternalistic, distributive, accumulative, extractive and symbolic policies. These systems are also characterized by the shift from a representative or constitutional type of political institutions towards dominance by the executive branch supported by the bureaucracy, the army and political cliques, with the army occupying "a strategic position as reservoir of actual power and as the keeper of the appropriate symbols against the corruption of other groups"³. Neo-patrimonial regimes are notorious for the minimum attention they give to the development of civil society, while domination is imposed from above on a society in which the pre-capitalist mode of economic life persists.

Neo-patrimonial system of rule displays a high degree of dualism. This is partly rooted in traditional practices and partly derived from the current images of the all-powerful presidency operating within the framework of the one-party state. In a way, therefore, neo-patrimonialism is the contemporary version of patrimonialism, or the continuation of past practices of an all-powerful ruler who could treat government officials as though they were his household staff or domestic servants.

In the case of Ethiopia, neo-patrimonialism refers to the inheritance and continuation of key patrimonial features in a politico-administrative system which was guided by Marxist-Leninist ideology. They include: personalised style of government; arbitrary intervention in all aspects of government business, and the stress on hierarchical control, obedience or subservience to superior authority, and loyalty to personalities rather than to state institutions.

II. The Historical Roots of Patrimonialism in Ethiopia

Fragmentary historical evidence indicates that the Ethiopian administration was always closely associated⁴ with the imperial court and the monarchy⁴. Like

many traditional rulers, Ethiopian monarchs seemed to have ruled their domain with a handful of court officials, assisted by a semi-autonomous regional nobility who had reciprocal yet dependent relationships with the monarch. In a way, the system could be characterized as embracing both centralized and decentralized patrimonialism. But it was under Menelik that a more centralized and expanded patrimonial administration was established⁵. He appointed his relatives, trusted courtiers and famous generals to key positions. Members of the traditional regional nobility, i.e. those of the northern and central provinces, were appointed to rule their respective areas but were required to travel to the Emperor's palace at regular intervals with huge amounts of tribute and taxation. Complete loyalty to the Emperor and leadership ability are two major considerations which could raise persons of humble origin to high positions in the system. Other ascriptive criteria such as marriage alliances, political expediency and factors which could not undermine the Emperor's supreme power position, were variously employed to recruit the necessary personnel.

At the early stage of the patrimonial system, the Emperor's policies were mostly concerned with the preservation of the expanded empire, with the maintenance of peace and order, and with the collection of taxes and tributes⁶. Gradually, Menelik II created a highly centralized patrimonial bureaucracy, which eventually served as the cornerstone of the bureaucracy of the Ethiopian Empire under Haile Selassie I and later of the People's Republic.

From the time of the enthronement of Haile Selassie I in 1930 to the eve of the Italian invasion, the set-up of the bureaucracy differed little from what it had been during the terminal years of Menelik's rule, although it was expanded with the addition of new ministries. The Emperor's absolute powers were given formal legitimacy under the 1931 Constitution⁷. From 1936 to 1941 the country was under Italian occupation and the Emperor went into exile in Britain. After his return in 1942 and with the help of the British forces in Africa, Haile Selassie started to rebuild his bureaucracy, creating many more ministries and government agencies.

The provincial administration was brought under the effective control of the Emperor who directly appointed provincial and district governors as his personal representatives and, through the Ministry of the Interior and other ministries, controlled and supervised the field agents in the provinces. In short, after 1942, the provincial administration became a formalized extension of the central bureaucracy, although provincial and district officials could still cleverly ignore and misinterpret the directives given to them by the Emperor and operate according to their own locally-based interests and demands.

To be sure, a great deal was done to make the structure and functioning of the bureaucracy conform to the requirements of the rational bureaucratic model. The bureaucracy operated as an instrument subservient to the patrimonial system of rule, and carrying out tasks that were largely system-maintenance in character. Lower level institutions were linked to the imperial palace by a network of formal and informal communication, and by a well-defined hierarchical order.

III. The Emergence of Neo-patrimonialism and Status of the Bureaucracy after the Revolution

When the young officers took over power from the Emperor in 1974, they established themselves as the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), without any clearly defined plan of action or blueprint on how to run the country. But the PMAC very soon realized that if it was to sustain the revolution and to stay in power as its true guardian, very radical policies and programmes would have to be adopted. The reasons for the radicalization process were complex and cumulative in nature. The PMAC retained the Cabinet that had been appointed during the last days of the Emperor's reign. At that very early stage of military rule, the principal change was to replace the Prime Minister Lij Endalkatchew Makonnen, with General Aman Andom who also got the post of Minister of Defence, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Chairman of the PMAC itself⁸. Soon after establishing itself in power, the PMAC inaugurated the bloody side of its rule by executing Aman Andom together with many former ministers and top military officers. This was done without trial and for alleged crimes which in many respects were not more serious than those committed by Menelik's ministers who were simply dismissed and sent home or kept in the capital under the surveillance of Tefferi Makonnen (later Emperor Haile Selassie).

The PMAC was divided into specialized sub-committees for the purpose of supervising and controlling the ministries and other government agencies. As the highest collective state organ, it also started to run its meetings and deliberations on a democratic basis, with decisions being reached by majority vote after a lengthy debate: The PMAC was too large, however, to work effectively in this way. Mengistu Haile Mariam took over the chairmanship of its meetings and began to lead its activities along less democratic and more dictatorial approaches to decision making⁹. By 1975 the semblance of democratic decision-making had vanished as Mengistu gradually but surely became the acknowledged leader of the so-called hard-core leftists within the PMAC. It is now the prevailing view that from the outset Mengistu favoured the imposition of dictatorship and Marxism from above and the use of violence when necessary, until a socialist state could be established¹⁰.

Under the supervision of PMAC committees, the bureaucracy functioned more or less as it had under Haile Selassie's rule, but the changes in the early period of military rule tended to slow down the pace of activities. Moreover, the Council of Ministers and individual ministers who had functioned under its (the Council's) supervision were later to be omitted from the decision-making process¹¹. The Council of Ministers received directives from above and was expected to implement them (the directives). At the same time, it was invariably accused of negligence and sabotage if things went wrong, regardless of who was to blame¹². It is worth noting that PMAC decision-making, particularly in the early years, seems to have involved a number of formal and informal structures made up of civilian groups and individuals. Gradually, however, the bureaucracy was brought into the picture as a subservient tool of the PMAC, similar to its position under Haile Selassie. As Brietzkek has pointed out, many practices of the previous administration, including favouritism and patron-client relations, appear to have re-emerged on a greater scale¹³. The same author argues further that, "the PMAC had done little more than pick up where Haile Selassie had left off, as the paternalistic tutelage by the elite, the conduct of politics through patron-client relations of the country's traditional social structure came to life again after a short lull"¹⁴.

Indeed, it is difficult if not risky to alter an established pattern of behaviour and long-established value-orientation, especially if the target group is large. On this issue the PMAC made repeated verbal attacks on what it referred to as "bureaucratic capitalism" and the "petty bourgeoisie"¹⁵, but it could not effectively subject more than 100,000 civil servants to fundamental reform or systematic purges. The shortage of personnel with the necessary qualifications seems to have been one of the reasons why the PMAC did not dismiss or penalize in some other way members of the inherited public bureaucracy. The dilemma of reforming a huge army of public officials was and still is enormous. At any rate, the PMAC seemed to have taken some measures to ensure that top officials in particular carried out their assigned tasks according to socialist policies and directives. In doing so, the PMAC first assigned military officers (called "disciples of change") to ministries and other government agencies to monitor the work of ministers and their subordinates in the hierarchy. This experiment was a failure in that the army officers did not have the requisite training and experience. They were often hindrances rather than "disciples of change" or of efficiency in government business, and were unable to cope with the complexities of modern administration. With the military officers next door, inefficiency, work to rule, and apathy once again began to characterize the operations of the public bureaucracy.

The first measure being a failure, the PMAC then tried to re-educate senior civil servants and political appointees, using indoctrination sessions at the

ideological school in Addis Ababa and training programmes in Eastern European and other socialist countries. The success of this programme was also doubtful, although the rank-and-file of the civil service did not seem to have refused openly to take part in the various indoctrination sessions and seminars. Regardless of these various attempts, the position of officials and civil servants at the central level seemed to have remained relatively unchanged in comparison to the noticeable changes at the provincial and sub-provincial levels. It was fairly easy to replace the less qualified provincial civil servants, many of whom were also landowners and members of the local traditional elite. In fact, the nationalization of all rural land could not have been implemented without a change of personnel and of the overall structure of provincial administration and the introduction of government-sponsored peasant associations. As a result of the package of nationalization measures which led to the expansion of the public bureaucracy, central government control over the provincial administration grew stronger than during Haile Selassie's reign. Peasant associations and urban *kebeles*, although they contained centrifugal elements, seemed to be controlled effectively by centralized structures such as COPWE (Commission to Organize the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia, later to become the Workers' Party of Ethiopia) in addition to the usual bureaucratic agencies, including the Ministry of Interior¹⁶. As an extension of the central bureaucracy, the provincial administration was kept as weak as under Haile Selassie: it was now an arbitrator of conflicting political forces rather than the ruler's sole representative in the periphery. All in all, the PMAC was primarily concerned with winning the allegiance of the bureaucracy and preserving the latter's time-honoured subservient status.

The political turmoil and widespread assassinations resulted in frequent and sudden changes in the structures and allocation of powers within the PMAC. Under Proclamation 108 of 1976, PMAC was restructured. The Congress, which consisted of all Council Members, appointed the Chairman of the PMAC, the two Vice-Chairmen and the Secretary-General. Teferi Benti was chairman of PMAC at that time, while Mengistu Haile Mariam was the first Vice-Chairman. Mengistu's powers appeared to have been restricted to the supervision of the Council of Ministers and, by extension, of the entire bureaucracy, with little scope for further action. The task of the second Vice-Chairman was to supervise the political consciousness of the masses and to organize and arm the people's militia.¹⁷ The PMAC's other main organs were the Central Committee and the Standing Committee, whose functions vis-à-vis other PMAC organs and the public bureaucracy were described in the Proclamation.

As a result of a sustained and bitter power struggle within the PMAC, the chairman, other leading members who were opposed to Mengistu's machinations, and the second Vice-Chairman were executed in 1977. Mengistu, who now emerged

as winner from the bloody confrontation, once again re-organized the PMAC structure entirely in accord with his own wishes. Thus, following Proclamation 110 of 1977, the organs of the PMAC were to be (a) a Congress consisting of all Council Members; (b) a Central Committee consisting of 32 council members; (c) a Standing Committee consisting of 16 council members. Mengistu became PMAC Chairman with far greater powers and prerogatives than either of his two predecessors. He also became chairman of both the Central and Standing Committees. At this stage PMAC had only one Vice-Chairman and a Secretary-General, both posts being rather weak and nominal. As Ottaway and Ottaway accurately remarked, for the first time since the overthrow of the Emperor, Ethiopia was once again under the domination of a strong personality.¹⁸ The emerging political framework has been subjected to opposing interpretation, ranging from ruthless authoritarianism and naked dictatorship,¹⁹ to a 'true revolutionary' directing a true revolution. To some observers, the new leadership projected the image of the all-powerful emperor. Mengistu was compared to Emperor Twedros who established a centralized empire after the country had become disunited as a result of conflict among local war lords. The people around Mengistu also contributed to the myth-forming process, primarily for their own ends. Thus as Schwab has correctly observed, "in their ardour to prove their loyalty to Mengistu some members of the Dergue (Committee) and of COPWE have gone to the extent of mystifying the person of Mengistu in much the same manner as with the late Emperor".²⁰ On balance, Mengistu's accession to the commanding heights of power and authority seems to be in line with the succession crises faced by past patrimonial rulers.

The subservient status of the bureaucracy was not changed by the successive reorganizations of the PMAC or by the creation of COPWE in 1979. The bureaucracy continued to carry out its routine tasks under the supervision and control of the PMAC and its chairman, who also became chairman of COPWE and of its Executive and Central Committees. The apparent similarity between the past and the present has been succinctly described by Schwab:

*The government ministries in Ethiopia have traditionally been relatively powerless and there is no evidence to show that the situation is otherwise at the present time. Their primary function is to carry out Dergue or COPWE edicts, and to deal with relatively, innocuous day-to-day matters. They may, as in any bureaucracy, pace the carrying out of decisions or influence their tone and style, but they play almost no role in establishing policy or influencing ideology.*²¹

The traditional hierarchical and centralized linkage between the central and provincial components of the bureaucracy was revised in 1980. Accordingly, the Minister of Interior was given a renewed mandate to supervise the administration of the regions, *awrajas* and *woredas*, and to protect the revolution against its enemies in the countryside. In doing so, he had to cooperate with other law-enforcing agencies, other ministries and government organizations.²²

Neo-Patrimonialism and the Bureaucracy under the 1987 Constitution

The most far-reaching changes with regard to the structure of the state in general and of the bureaucracy in particular, were introduced in 1987 with the publication of the Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The PMAC transformed itself into the National Shengo (National Assembly) as the highest state organ.²³ There seems to have been no change of personnel, especially at the top. Mengistu and his fellow army officers continued to rule the country with the help of a Marxist-Leninist-oriented constitutional framework endorsed by the Ethiopian people in a referendum held on 1 February 1987. Members of the National Shengo were thenceforth to be nominated by the organs of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, mass organizations, military units and other bodies so entitled by law (Article 64 of the 1987 Constitution). Since the National Shengo held only one regular session per year, its activities were carried out by the Council of State headed by the President. In effect, the National Shengo had a mere rubber-stamp status more or less comparable to that of Parliament in Haile Selassie's time.

Proclamation No. 8 of 1987 details the powers and duties of the bureaucracy, comparable to Order No. 1 of 1942 (as amended) which constantly reorganized the various ministries during Haile Selassie's rule. According to Proc. No. 8 of 1987, the Council of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister, was to be the highest executive and administrative organ of the People's Democratic Republic. It was to have a Standing Committee composed of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers and other persons designated by the Council. The Standing Committee, which could be seen as an Inner Cabinet was to carry out a wide range of functions including monitoring the activities of the Shengos of Autonomous and Administrative Regions and of large urban centres. Below the Council of Ministers there were twenty ministries, each headed by a minister who was accountable to the Council of Ministers for the activities of his ministry. There were also sixteen government agencies, including seven Commissions, the National Bank of Ethiopia, six authorities and two institutes. *No reason was given as to why these different names were used.* These organizations can be compared to the semi-autonomous and autonomous agencies and public enterprises of the previous regime.²⁴ In the present system the sixteen public organizations are directly accountable to the Council of Ministers and, beyond that, to the Council of State, the President and

the National Shengo. As such they have become **part** of the expanded public bureaucracy.

The Auditor-General's Office was re-established to carry out the normal auditing and scrutinizing of annual budget and other financial statements of all government organizations and, to a certain degree and under certain conditions, the accounts of private organizations. In addition, an entirely new and highly elaborate control mechanism was established, i.e. the Workers' Control Committee which operated at national, regional and primary levels. It had four broad categories of tasks: (a) combatting abuse of power by government officials, wastage and plunder of resources, bribery, administrative injustice, unlawful enrichment and illegal trade practices; (b) ensuring that dignity of labour is appreciated and respected; (c) encouraging the workers to safeguard, protect and administer the resources brought under their control and to ensure their class dominance; and (d) ensuring that the properties of mass and state organizations are protected.²⁵ In carrying out all these tasks, this new committee system was obliged to cooperate with the Workers' Party of Ethiopia. As Clapham argues, these new institutions of control were vastly greater than anything that could have been provided by the personal networks of the old regime.²⁶

The Administrative and Autonomous Regions vaguely mentioned in the new Constitution acquired a legal status of their own in 1987 through a string of proclamations, though they were not immediately operational. Thus, Proc. No. 14 established five Autonomous Regions and twenty-four Administrative Regions. Both types were to be subdivided into provinces. Further, Proc. No. 15 detailed the organs (and functions) of the then Autonomous Region of Eritrea and those of the three special Administrative Regions to be established within it. Proc. No. 16 defined the structures (and functions) of the Autonomous Regions of Tigray, Assab, Dire Dawa and Ogaden and Proc. No. 17 those of all twenty-four Administrative Regions in a uniform style. Since these proclamations could not immediately be implemented, the existing structures of regional, *awraja* and *woreda* administrations continued to operate until such time as the autonomous and administrative regions could be established. However, even when the new units were established, they were controlled by central government organs such as the Council of Ministers, the Council of State and, finally, by the President of the Republic himself. Furthermore, the President exerted his authority on the countryside through the party machinery of which he was Secretary-General and chairman of its key organs. As the party had the power to nominate all members of the National and Regional Shengos who in turn, elected the officials to the various executive and administrative posts, nothing of importance could be decided without the President's knowledge. In line with the regime's ideology of Marxism-Leninism and its commitment to a unitary state, the autonomous and

administrative regions appeared to be a sophisticated means of enforcing a tighter central control over all parts of the country than was possible under Emperor Haile Selassie's patrimonial rule.

Nevertheless, it should be made clear that due to war situations, the administrative and autonomous regions announced in 1987 could not be implemented. This means in fact the old patterns of sub-national administration were still operative although most of their traditional tasks had been taken over by party organizations, peasant associations, and other state agencies. Further as part of short-term emergency measures, the country was divided into different military zones. The consequence of all these is that the neo-patrimonial bureaucracy at the centre and its extensions in the periphery were under military control and supervision as in the early years of the military take-over.

The preamble to the 1987 Constitution stated that the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia was to be the leading and guiding force of state and society and, as such responsible for overall policy. This means that the task of the bureaucracy was to be confined to implementing policies, while the Party was responsible for the formulation and adoption of policy. Nonetheless, the party and the bureaucratic hierarchies were not completely separated from each other at the personal level. The President of the Republic, who had responsibility for the activities of the Council of Ministers (directly and via the Council of State) was Secretary-General of the Party and chairman of its Central Committee. Below that level, a good many members of the Central Committee were also members of the Council of Ministers or had leading positions in other government agencies. As a result, the multiple positions held by the President and many senior party officials had come to blur the line between the policy formulation and policy execution organs of the state. Ultimately, the President was in charge of the two parallel hierarchies. As such, he had the power to decide what kind of policy was to be adopted and how it was to be implemented.

The 1987 Constitutional framework was as generous as the 1955 Revised (Imperial) Constitution in reserving extensive powers and prerogatives to the Ethiopian ruler. There is, however, a crucial difference between the two. The powers and prerogatives of Haile Selassie were based on religious ideology - on the notion of the divine right of kings. The Emperor believed that he was chosen by God to rule his subjects as a sovereign monarch. The powers of Mengistu, on the other hand, initially based on military force, were subsequently legitimized by his appeal to the working people whom he mobilized under a new secular ideology of Marxism-Leninism. The Emperor exercised his power and authority from the top of the pyramid, while Mengistu seemed to control all major state institutions from the centre.

From these tentative analyses, it can be seen that the President of the People's Republic of Ethiopia was vested with more visible powers than Haile Selassie. Nevertheless, both were variations of patrimonial and personal rulership - that of Haile Selassie was a prototype of traditional patrimonialism while that of Mengistu's socialist regime embodied traits of neo-patrimonialism as described by Eisenstadt, Le Vine, Young and Turner and other scholars who follow similar lines of approach to the study of policies and administration in third world countries.²⁷

During Mengistu's high-handed and authoritarian rule, Ethiopia was torn by multiple civil wars and devastating famines. In the mist of the combined tragedy, the regime faced a very serious crisis of legitimacy and was mainly concerned about its survival. In the process, the government set aside huge amount of resources to fight its enemies. It is self-evident, that under these circumstances, the much expanded bureaucracy did very little, even in its own frame of reference, to promote national and rural development. This assertion can be proved in many ways. In the context of this paper, however, we shall try to substantiate it with a brief review of the status and performance of: (a) the planning machinery in general; (b) the state farms; (c) the peasant associations; (d) the service cooperatives; (e) the producers' cooperatives; and (f) the resettlement and villagization programmes. All these may be considered essential components and extensions of the emergent neo-patrimonial bureaucracy.

The Planning machinery

Despite shortcomings and weaknesses the idea of development planning was part and parcel of the traditional patrimonial system as existed during the ancient regime. Therefore, planning was not new to the Mengistu's Socialist Ethiopia. Nevertheless, since the military came to power in 1974, public policies were implemented on *ad hoc* basis, via campaigns and special directives and orders from the centre. Indeed, the blue-prints setting out a structured planning design came only in 1976 with the publication of the so-called Programme of the National Democratic Revolution (PNDR) followed by the creation of the Central Planning Commission in 1977. As it were, these measures marked the institutionalization of a highly centralized planning process. A year later (in September 1978) the Central Planning Commission was replaced by the National Development Campaign and Central Planning Supreme Council. The new planning machinery embarked on ambitious targets but no attempts were made to allocate resources for the purpose of achieving specific developmental goals. Eventually, in June 1984, the regime announced the creation of the National Committee for Central Planning which again replaced the one that was established in 1978. This latest (1984) planning structure was an elaborate one. It had a national committee, chaired by the head of state; an executive committee or planning agency; regional planning

agencies and planning councils reaching as far as *wereda* (district) level. Further, the Central Statistical Office, the Development Project Study Agency, and the Mapping Agency, were involved in the planning process with their specialized services. Also in 1984 the regime published its first comprehensive Ten-Year Perspective Development Plan. However, the plan targets were criticized as very ambitious and unachievable. What is more, the plan was announced at the height of the 1984 famine. Eventually it became clear that it was unworkable. What is more the highly centralized nature of the decision-making process served as a major obstacle in the implementation process.

The state farms

The origin of these production-oriented organizations also dated to the pre-1974 period. During the Mengistu Socialist Regime, However, they were greatly increased in number and their main function was to produce grain to feed the urban population and the armed forces. Secondly they were to produce raw materials such as cotton and sugar cane for domestic consumption and for export. The entire produce from the state farms was to be sold to the Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) and to other agencies at government-controlled prices. The state farms received favourable treatment from the regime with a very high proportion of the capital earmarked for agricultural development in the country being allocated to the farms. However, despite the extensive favourable treatment they received from the government, the state farms did not function and produce as originally expected. They were constrained by over-mechanization, uneconomic use of inputs, lack of skilled management and absence of disciplined and motivated labour force.²⁸ Further one of the main contradictions of the state farm system was the fact that peasants had to be displaced, apparently as in the pre-revolutionary times, to facilitate the establishment of some of the new state farms. Forced recruitment of labour was evident in some cases. In a way, as Clapham has succinctly put it, the capitalist style of large-scale farming system that existed during the days of Haile Selassie's rule has been maintained and expanded by a socialist state that proved to be more exploitative of labour and less efficient as a means of producing food than its predecessor.²⁹

The peasant associations

These were originally created as instruments for mobilizing the people in the rural areas to help the regime in its efforts to implement the 1975 far-reaching rural land reforms. Later, they acquired a legal personality and as such they were expected to pave the way for the eventual establishment of a full-fledged socialist agricultural system in the country. Organizationally, peasant associations were to have revolutionary administrative committees at district, provincial, regional, and

national levels. This array of committees was given the task of coordinating and controlling the activities of peasant associations and to channel assistance from the central government to peasant associations at the grass-roots level. Members of these committees included bureaucrats, political cadres from the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, extension experts from the ministry of agriculture as well as representatives of the peasant associations. The committee system was manipulated by the regime to impose its programme on the peasantry and to interfere in the activities of the peasant associations at the grassroots level. Apart from these external structures peasant associations had their own internal organizations. These included: (a) the general assembly; (b) the executive committee; (c) the judicial committee; (d) the inspection committee; and (e) the defense and security committee. The function of each unit seemed to be clear, at least on paper, but in practice, the general assembly was manipulated by the executive committee and other government and party officials operating at that level. Indeed, some concrete case studies have come to the conclusion that the general assembly was a mere "rubber stamp body" that endorses decisions already taken by district level officials of the central government.³⁰ The executive committee became more powerful and influential than the general assembly for a number of reasons. First, it was a cohesive body and met more regularly than the general assembly. Secondly, the key office holders, especially the chairman of the executive committee, worked very closely with government officials and extension agents and were members of the revolutionary administrative and development committees at the *woreda* level.

Like all other institutions established by the regime, peasant associations were structured hierarchically, starting at the village level and going up to the *woreda*, provincial, regional and ending with the All-Ethiopian Peasant Associations (later called Ethiopian Peasant Association) at the national level. Apparently the regime used this hierarchical structure mainly to control the activities of peasants at the village level. This control mechanism appeared to be more effective with the creation of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (later called the Ethiopian Democratic Unity Party). Indeed, the party, which reserved constitutional supremacy for itself, following the standard socialist framework, had the power to control other state institutions and mass organizations in the country.

Regardless of the tight political control from above, it was not possible to force the peasant associations to maximize their contribution. It appears that in most cases land was fairly distributed among peasants within the associations. This increased pressure on the land which in turn led to reduced yields and increased the risks of starvation and famine. In any case, production by individual peasants, though high, compared to collective farms, was totally inadequate. Several reasons may be cited in support of this conclusion. First, the peasants were demoralized.

They had minimal rights and were subject to eviction, imprisonment or even execution. Secondly, they did not receive the farm supplies they were promised because most of the fertilizers and improved seeds were handed over to collective and state farms. Thirdly, the prices paid to farmers were fixed by the government and were often low and these did not motivate the farmers to produce more. Fourthly, farmers were not able to obtain the basic consumer goods they needed, such as cloth, sugar, salt and soap. Fifthly, there emerged instability of private holdings of the land. This means as newly eligible young peasants needed land, the only way to make it available to them was to decrease the size to those that already existed. This created a new type of fragmentation of the land with adverse effect on agricultural production. Finally, the peasant had to bear extra obligations which included forced attendance at political meetings, additional taxes and services to the state. Some of these were comparable to the former feudal duties and obligations.

The service cooperatives

These were another form of peasant-based organization created by the regime. They were formed by grouping together a number of peasant associations for the purpose of purchasing and distributing agricultural items such as fertilizers, consumer goods and services to peasants via cooperative shops. They were also to serve as intermediaries in selling the product of the farmers to the Agricultural Marketing Corporation. Like the peasant associations, the service cooperatives were designed by the regime as transitional structures which would be helpful for the eventual establishment of producers' cooperatives. In the short-term, service cooperatives could help to increase the bargaining power of peasant farmers and as such they could play a decisive role in the agrarian transformation of the country. Under the then prevalent political instability, the service cooperatives were not in a position to supply the peasants with the consumer goods and agricultural equipment they needed. For one thing the regime was not in a position to meet the demands; for another, the centralized decision-making process and all the corrupt practices around it delayed the delivery of the available goods and services. Despite such structural problems, however, service cooperatives appeared to be popular among farmers and producers' cooperatives.

Producers' cooperatives

Another form of rural institutions created by the regime were the producers' cooperatives. They were considered to be crucial to peasant agriculture upon which socialism was to be built in Ethiopia. To this extent they received all forms of preferential treatment - the best available land, a variety of extension services from the ministry of agriculture and credit facilities. The strategy of achieving

full-fledged producers' cooperatives was outlined in the Policy Guidelines published in 1979. Thus, according to these Guidelines, the first stage was the establishment of an elementary form of cooperatives known as *malba*. The basic requirement at this stage was the transfer of private land holdings to communal ownership, though individual farmers would be allowed to cultivate one-fifth of an hectare for themselves. Oxen and other draught animals, and implements were to remain in private hands. The second stage in the transition to socialism was the so-called advanced producers' cooperatives or *welba*. At this stage, all land and all draught animals and implements were to be transferred to the cooperatives. Individual farming of up to one-tenth of an hectare would still be permitted. At this stage, service cooperatives were to be converted into producers' cooperatives. The third and final stage was the commune or *weland*. This stage would be characterized by a high level of institutional and technological development. Derived as they were from the already discredited East European models of socialism, these ideas could not be readily embraced by the peasantry in Ethiopia.

As can be expected, the regime announced that peasants should only join producers' cooperatives on voluntary basis, though extensive human, financial and technical assistance were made available to induce peasants to form producers' cooperatives. Despite all the favourable treatment they received from the state, available studies and assessments so far agree that the producers' cooperatives had been a failure and often counterproductive.³¹

The resettlement and villagization Programmes

These were basically sound ideas which are by no means new to countries in the third world. If well-prepared and properly implemented they could offer people in the rural areas, especially those who have been living in over-cropped areas, or scattered in between mountains and valleys, better prospects in life if they could be persuaded to settle in new villages. However, in the present context, they were not properly planned and the regime simply applied brute force and intimidation to move the people to the new settlements and villages. At any rate, the manner in which both programmes were implemented by the Mengistu regime were heavily criticized as unworkable. By and large, the programmes were evaluated as a failure. Apparently, the regime, faced as it was with a number of grave political and economic crises, later abandoned its rigid Marxist dogma in favour of more liberal and pragmatic approaches to economic and social planning in the country. These measures appeared to have been too half-hearted and to have come too late to salvage the regime's rapid decline.

Conclusions

The military officers who took power from the Emperor, began to rule the country in the form of collective leadership under the name of the PMAC. The bureaucracy that had been inherited from the Emperor began to function under PMAC control and supervision. By its very nature, the PMAC was too cumbersome and unruly to be able to make prompt decisions and to guide a nation through a turbulent transition to socialism. After three years of a bloody struggle for power, primarily within the rank-and-file of the PMAC itself, Mengistu emerged as the most powerful figure in the country. Sweeping structural changes made him head of State and of Government and Chairman of the Central and Standing Committees within the PMAC. Later, he became Secretary-General of the Workers' Party as well as Chairman of both the Politburo and the Central Committee. His position was given legitimacy by the 1987 Constitution. Under the new constitutional framework Mengistu apparently refrained from identifying the sovereignty of the nation with his own person as was the case with the Emperor. In fact the new Constitution made it clear, and for the first time in the country's history, that the sovereignty of the nation lies with the Ethiopian people who were portrayed in it as the source of all state power. Unlike the Emperor who justified his right to rule on the Divine Right of Kings (as supported by the teachings of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church) Mengistu endeavored to identify himself with the working people of Ethiopia whom he wanted to mobilize behind a socialist pattern of development. He created the conditions necessary for him to be "elected" to the post of civilian president, thereby converting the military dictatorship or what Markakis calls "garrison socialism"³² into the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the nature of the military rule did not seem to have been changed by the introduction of the new Constitution and all the related proclamations. These were all impositions from above, notwithstanding the nationwide referendum of 1 February 1987 to "approve" the new Constitution. Moreover, most of the key positions within the Party hierarchy and other state organizations were held by the military.

Torn from their original ideological and political setting, the regime fell back on the past practices of centralization, and the patron-client relationships continued with the help of Marxist-Leninist ideology, supported by even more complex institutional arrangements than before. This means that despite radical ideological changes Mengistu did not seem to resist the attributes of the personality cult that were part and parcel of Haile Selassie's rule. He also seemed to have kept intact the pomp and the ceremony that were part of the old imperial palace. Even more interesting, at least from the point of view of politics and administration, was that the style of personal rule characteristic of Emperor Haile Selassie came full circle in the sense that Mengistu himself appeared to make all major decisions. As in the

past, he had constitutional prerogatives to appoint and dismiss all government and party officials. With all these practices and manifestations, the old climate of unequal relations between the all-powerful ruler and the dependent officialdom that was typical of the imperial past, became visible during the Mengistu regime. In part, this continuity conforms with the claim that traditional values and norms do not disintegrate easily into nothingness as a result of political and ideological change. The continuity can also be explained by the personal characteristics of the new ruler himself - particularly his burning ambition to have all state power in his own hands.

As regards the status of the bureaucracy as an agent of socio-economic development, the short-term implications of this continuity of patrimonial practices in the form of neo-patrimonial traits appear to be twofold. First, in as much as the bureaucracy had been kept as an instrument of the emergent political system, it did not play any significant role in the formulation of public policy. Implicitly or otherwise, its various components both at the centre and in the countryside were obliged to implement the policies that were decided by the Party Central Committee as finally approved by Mengistu himself. It had no discretion of its own to introduce changes and adjustments.

Secondly, as in the imperial days, the bureaucracy which served Mengistu was expected to attribute its success to the wisdom and far-sightedness of the revolutionary leadership. On the other hand, it was forced to accept all the blame when things went wrong during policy implementation, or to apologize whenever the failure was due to unforeseen natural or man-made factors beyond the control of the state. In view of its weak position and the conflicting demands that were imposed upon it, the bureaucracy did not have any effective and positive role in the implementation of policy.

The implications of the continuity of patrimonial practices for the long-term viability of an emergent political system can be partly derived from the preceding analysis. Bureaucratic weakness and inertia are bound to have an unfavorable impact on the durability of the political system. Moreover, as can be seen from historical evidence, political systems that are dominated by a single ruler, whether patrimonial or neo-patrimonial, ultimately face very serious constitutional and political crises leading to their disgraceful downfall.

Thus, a wider significance of this study is that a patrimonial or neo-patrimonial ruler of whatever ideological persuasion and personal character, appears to have very close reciprocal links with the bureaucracy. Firstly the bureaucracy is an outgrowth of the ruler's household staff in the historical sense of the term. This affinity seems to have continued until the present day, although

it varies in intensity from one situation to another. Second, as a crucial link between state and society, the bureaucracy can often be misused by patrimonial or neo-patrimonial rulers in order to perpetuate their personal goals and those of their supporters, courtiers and clients, which could be in conflict with, or at the expense of, the needs and demands of society at large. Third, the close links between such rulers and the bureaucracy could be an obstacle to the development of political parties and other alternative structures of administration. In the final analysis, if patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism are similar types of personal rule, their ideological premises appear to be quite different. And yet both seem to depend on similar if not identical practices of superior-subordinate (or patron-client) relationships which can effectively be manipulated by ambitious individuals.

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2. See, Eisenstadt: *Traditional Patrimonialism and Modern Neo-Patrimonialism*, op.cit., 1973, p.13
3. See *ibid.*, p.15. For further application of the concepts, see for instance the other references in note 1.
4. See for instance, Tekle Tsadik Makuria: *The History of Ethiopia* (2 volumes in Amharic), Addis Ababa 1946 Eth. Calendar (1954 GC); Mahteme Selassie Wolde Maskal Zikre Neger (Chronicles), Artistic Printers, Addis Ababa, 1962; Zewde Gebre Selassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975; Christopher Clapham, *Haile Selassie's Government*, Frederick A. Praeger, New York 1968; Levine, Donald N.; *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1965.
5. In the context of Ethiopia, the concept of patrimonialism has not been explicitly operationalized so far.

6. Menelik II was also keen to expand public works and communications and to build a network of roads and railways. In fact, the only railway line in the country to date which stretches from Addis Ababa to Djibouti was constructed during his reign.
7. The institutions that were created by the 1931 constitution were the Monarchy, the Parliament, the Courts and the Ministries. The last three operated under the direction and control of the Emperor. This basic design was not altered much by the 1955 revised constitution, though the prerogatives and the powers of the Emperor were given in detail than they were in the previous one.
8. Later, a clarification was issued to the effect that General Aman Andom was not the Chairman of the PMAC but its spokesman. See Blair Thomason, *The Country that Cut off its Head*, Robson Books, London, 1975, p.105. Not long after the announcement the disagreement between Aman Andom and the PMAC reached a point of no return. After a fierce battle at his residence, General Aman was killed. During the same night some 60 former top officials and generals who were taken as prisoners by the new military rulers were executed. These executions triggered a bloody revolution and disorder in the country, prompting the Somali invasion of Ethiopia from across the Ogaden and the liberation movements in Eritrea and Tigray intensified their armed struggle against the military regime.
9. For details, see for instance, Blair Thomason *op. cit.*, 1975, pp.116-117.
10. See Peter Schwab, *Ethiopia, Politics, Economics and Society*, Frances Printer (Publishers) London, 1985, p.36.
11. See Colin Legum, *Ethiopia, The Fall of Haile Selassie*, Rex Collings, London, 1975, p.52 and p.57.
12. See M. Ottaway and D. Ottaway; *Ethiopia, Empire in Revolution*, Africana Publishers, New York, 1978, pp.142-143.
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14. *Ibid.*, p.215.

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19. See John Markakis and Nega Ayele; *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia*, Spokesman, Nottingham Press, 1978, especially chapter 10, pp.146-177.
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22. For Details, see Proclamation 179, Definition of Powers, Amendment Law of 1980.
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26. See Christopher Clapham, *Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia*, Cambridge University Press, New York etc., 1988, pp.113-114.
27. There is still a certain degree of imprecision in the use of the concepts patrimonialism, neo-patrimonialism and personal rulership in the context of the developing countries. For instance some like Robert Jackson, and Carl G. Rosberg "Personal Rule: Theory and Practice in

Complexity of Joint Action: Implementation of Restructuring of Ministerial Organization in Ghana

J.R.A. Ayee

Introduction

The implementation of restructuring of ministerial organization in Ghana between 1982 and 1992 has shown that there is little relationship between the stated goals of the ministerial restructuring programme and its result or performance. The under-achievement of the stated goals of the restructuring programme could be attributed to what is called "the complexity of joint action". This paper therefore discusses the problems that led to the non-realization of the objectives of ministerial restructuring in Ghana. In this connection, the paper first discusses the model of the "complexity of joint action" which forms its theoretical basis. Second, it explores the formulation and implementation of the programme. Third, the paper identifies the problems that plagued the ministerial restructuring programme. Finally, it analyses the implications and lessons for the implementation of public policies.

I. The Complexity of Joint Action

This model refers to the number of actors, in addition to the principals, whose agreement - either implicit or explicit - must be secured before a policy can be successfully implemented. In their seminal study of the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Oakland programme, Pressman and Wildavsky noted that the implementation of the programme was complex and convoluted because of the "changing actors, diverse perspectives and multiple clearances".¹

The aim of the EDA's programme in the city of Oakland in California was to provide jobs for minorities, a goal it attempted to achieve through financial aid schemes for public works and local enterprises. Over a period of six years (1965-1971), EDA's achievement was disappointing. Although huge sums were spent, few jobs were created. This raises the question of what happened along the way. The aim of Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) is to explain this failure, especially since the activities of EDA in Oakland were neither mired in controversy nor hampered by the presence of a "political machine". Rather, a seemingly "innocent" programme, which experienced no serious conflict, no large-scale political pressures, and no lack of funds, ran into substantial difficulties.² It is therefore, the

crux of the model that even perfectly ordinary circumstances may pose serious obstacles to policy implementation.

The model of *the complexity of joint action* highlights the importance of a number of variables in the implementation process. These are:

- (a) multiplicity of participants and perspectives, which shows that in order to carry out a policy or programme, like the ministerial restructuring in Ghana, a large number of governmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals eventually become involved in the process of implementation;
- (b) each of the participants has a distinctive perspective and "when perspectives differ, so also is the measure of success"³;
- (c) "decision points" and "clearances" isolate every decision in which a major participant has a discernible opportunity to make choices; there are a number of "decision points" along the way at which "clearance" has to be received if the policy being implemented is to continue.

The model, on the basis of the following propositions, provides an insight to the implementation process:

- (a) the manoeuvre of the several parties both express conflict and create it;
- (b) with every manoeuvre aimed at reducing the conflict there is an associated risk of actually making matters worse;
- (c) much of the implementation process moves along out of control driven by complex forces not of any party's making;
- (d) the policy implementation process is a dynamic one during which the passage of time should be taken into account;
- (e) under certain conditions, the longer participants continue their manoeuvrings the worse the prospects for programme success.⁴

The significant aspect of Pressman and Wildavsky's seminal work is that they use the multiplicative model from probability theory to underscore their point that the "complexity of joint action" increases the chances of policy being poorly implemented. For probability theory rather than game theory to be relevant to implementation processes, it must be the case that implementation resembles a "game against nature" more than it resembles a bargaining session among two (or more) players.⁵ The policy imperative emerging from the model is that

"implementation must not be conceived of as a process that takes place after, and independent of, the design of policy."⁶ At an analytical level the message of the model is that the "study of implementation requires the understanding that apparently simple sequences of events depend on complex chain of reciprocal interaction".⁷ Hence the analysis is of value in directing one towards the organized complexity of the policy sphere, in which each actor or participant struggles to impose his definition of the situation on others. As a result, "appeals for coordination may be next to useless, since each wants co-ordination in his own terms".

The model of the complexity of joint action does not, however, explicitly identify and analyse implementation processes that result in the perversion or subversion of policy goals or the processes that lead to excessive financial costs. Secondly, the model fails to characterise in a moderately abstract and systematic way the interactions that routinely link the different kinds of institutions or roles normally involved in a process of "programme assembly".⁸ Taken literally the model would lead us to anticipate "implementation failure" in each and every instance of large-scale policy execution (probabilities). Yet, the complexity of joint action does provide interesting perspective and brings up the relevance of certain variables associated with the execution of public policy, namely the number of actors involved, decision points, clearance, the passage of time and anatomy of delay. The use of the multiplicative model from probability theory leads us to a prediction of failure in all multi-stage implementation *scenarios*, even when the odds associated with success at each stage are high.

II. The Restructuring of Ministerial Organization

On assumption of office on 31st December 1981 through a military *coup d'etat* the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government inherited a civil service that had several weaknesses:

- (a) it was unwidely, bureaucratic and bound by red tape;
- (b) its promotion procedures were lengthy and cumbersome;
- (c) the decision process tended to be slowed down by over-centralization and over-concentration of powers;
- (d) the data base for decision-making was weak;
- (e) the staff were underpaid - resulting in low morale and low productivity;

- (f) lack of cost-consciousness was reflected in wasteful allocation of resources and the absence of a maintenance culture;
- (g) lack of political direction and commitment led to apathy and inertia;
- (h) resource constraints impaired the ability of organizations to implement public policies.

These deficiencies made the civil service not only incapable of implementing the PNDC government's Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) and Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the 1980s but also influenced the PNDC to regard its top echelons as agents of imperialism and neocolonialism which should be overthrown rather than being simply reformed.

Consequently, the PNDC government decided to rejuvenate the civil service to make it effective and efficient. To ensure that its (the civil service's) "orientation tallies with the objectives of the revolution", the PNDC further attempted to politicize its top cadres.¹⁰ In this connection the PNDC government established the Kaku Kyiamah Committee in May 1982 to advise it on what should be done to restructure the ministerial organization in Ghana. Specifically, the terms of reference of the Committee were to:

- (a) examine the justification or otherwise of the Principal Secretary continuing to play his traditional role as first-line adviser to the political head of the Ministry and thereby exercising a supervisory role over everyone else;
- (b) review the position in (a) above in such manner as to remove all possibilities of conflict, non-cooperation and dissatisfaction, as has been the experience with the *status quo* in many instances;
- (c) modify the accountability structure among the top echelons of the civil service by restructuring job descriptions and the chain of command. In particular, consideration is to be given to the desirability or otherwise of redesignating the Principal Secretary "Director of Administration";
- (d) consider the need to let Principal Secretaries and other top brass of the civil and public services come and go with governments so as to ensure absolute political commitment at the top official level;
- (e) evolve measures for opening up appointments to headship of Ministries to suitable persons outside the Administrative Class in particular, and the Civil Service in general;

- (f) relate the entire exercise to previous structural Review Reports on the Civil Service which have not yet been implemented, e.g. the Okoh Commission Report; and
- (g) submit recommendations within a month, to the PNDC Secretaries for consideration.¹¹

On the basis of its understanding of its terms of reference the Kaku Kyiamah Committee decided that its report should help achieve the objectives of:

- (i) democratizing the advisory mechanism within the ministerial set up;
- (ii) politicizing and reorienting top management personnel;
- (iii) improving performance and enhancing productivity.

The democratization of the advisory mechanism within the ministerial set-up was considered necessary because according to the Kyiamah Committee, the existing "structure tends to project the Principal Secretary as the final adviser to the political head of the Ministry for purposes of decision making". This position was "considered unsatisfactory in terms of the likely danger of the limitations of perception, circumspection and thrust that might attend to such a situation"¹².

The politicization of top management personnel was considered necessary to bridge the "present political gap that is allowed to exist between the political head of the Ministry and top management personnel". The Kyiamah Committee hoped that the achievement of politicization and "conscientization" would help "to promote unity of purpose between the political head of the Ministry and top management personnel and ensure a commitment to the realization of the aims and objectives of Government policies". Also the Committee believed that with the democratization of the advisory machinery and the politicization of top management, the conditions would have been created for "a greater degree of job satisfaction" resulting ultimately "in greater efficiency and increased productivity"¹³.

Recommendations of the Kyiamah Committee

Three major recommendations were submitted by the Kyiamah Committee regarding the role of the Ministry, the politicization of the position of the Principal Secretary and the democratization of the advisory mechanism.

On the role of the Ministry and its relationship with other agencies, the Committee noted that "Ministries appear nowadays to be performing beyond the bounds within which they were originally conceived". In other words, instead of

limiting themselves to the tasks of advising on policy, coordinating and monitoring government business and conducting inter-ministerial relations, ministries had become entangled with programme execution. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that Ministries restrict themselves to (i) formulation of policies; (ii) serving as the administrative support units for political headship; (iii) coordinating and monitoring programme and activities within the ministerial sector; and (iv) conducting interministerial relationships.

These conclusions of the Kyiamah Committee, it must be pointed out, do not differ from those made earlier by reform commissions set up in Ghana. The Mills-Odoi Commission Report of 1967 had lamented that:

*"Ministries appear to have become more and more directly involved in the management of programmes to the neglect of their correct role as instruments for determining objectives, priorities and strategies for the nation as a whole and for assessing, marshalling and of allocating resources"*¹⁴.

Accordingly, the Mills-Odoi Commission recommended decentralization "by the creation of institutions outside the ministries which are legally vested with responsibilities for defined functions ...". These institutions were to be "District and Regional Authorities and certain functional authorities fully responsible and accountable for specific operations throughout the country". When this measure of decentralization was achieved, the Commission expected that:

*"There will be fewer ministries ... and they will be smaller, more professional bodies concerned with determining objectives, priorities and strategies for the nation as a whole and for assessing, marshalling and allocating resources"*¹⁵.

This recommendation was not implemented. According to the Okoh Commission Report of 1976,

*"there is an increasing pre-occupation of Ministry staff with executive control of programmes at the expense of sufficient attention at long term planning. Ministry concern with detailed programme implementation leaves less time than ever for forward planning"*¹⁶.

The Okoh Commission accordingly recommended that ministries should establish Planning Units or Planning Staff "to carry out short-, medium-, long-term planning".

The 1982 (Kyiamah Committee) efforts at restructuring the ministerial system were influenced by the previous reform devices. To strengthen the capacity, and capability of the Ministry, the Committee recommended that the principal units and functions of the reorganized Ministry should be: Planning and Monitoring; Information and Public Relations; General Administration; and Training and Research. Each unit is to be headed by a director. The new head of the Ministry is designated Chief Director. The actual implementation of policies and programmes would be carried out by departments, public boards, corporations, and other agencies which come under the control and direction of ministries.

On the position of the Principal Secretary in the Ministry, the Kyiama Committee was of the view that "the system has made the Principal Secretary unnecessarily over-powerful and overburdened with a myriad of extraneous responsibilities". It was again its view that because of the office of the Principal Secretary the advisory mechanism was "somewhat rigid, overcentralized and undemocratic". It also was "devoid of any political commitment or involvement"¹⁷. The Committee therefore, recommended that:

- (i) the political responsibilities of the Principal Secretary should be transferred to a political appointee to be designated under-Secretary;
- (ii) the post of Principal Secretary should be abolished;
- (iii) the present incumbents of the posts of Principal Secretary who have the requisite expertise to fit into any of the first-line Director posts could complete for appointment to these posts

The Kyiama Committee's recommendations were based on the following considerations:

- (i) the debate over whether the Principal Secretary was truly the first-line adviser in the ministerial set-up;
- (ii) the practice of posting Principal Secretaries to ministries where they clearly lacked the depth and the technical competence required for effective performance;
- (iii) the habit of some Principal Secretaries of resisting or blocking the flow of professional advice coming to the political head.

However, the recommendations concerning the position of the Principal Secretary have been criticised. According to Woode, the Kyiamah Committee did not exhibit:

*any rigorous intellectual appreciation of the subject in all its ramifications. It failed to provide concrete evidence that Principal Secretaries "resist and block the flow" of advice to the political head. The question whether the Principal Secretary was truly the first-line adviser or that in reality ministers are advised by a host of anonymous and faceless characters outside the Civil Service was not adequately answered. The alleged incompetence of Principal Secretaries resulting from their mobility was not proved.*¹⁸

Despite these "methodological flaws" the Kyiamah Committee called for the abolition of the post of Principal Secretary, and proposed a new ministerial organisation structure. Under the new arrangement, the PNDC Secretary (Minister) will be the political head of the ministry. He is to be assisted by Under-Secretaries. These Under-Secretaries, will not only relieve Secretaries of routine political pressures but will also ensure that "the point at which final decision-making begins within the Ministry is absolutely politically committed"¹⁹. The Under-Secretary will be the single first-line adviser to the political head of the Ministry. In this way the Kyiamah Committee hoped to close the gap between "the official adviser" and the political head. The effect of this suggestion is to replace the Principal Secretary with the Under-Secretary - a political appointee - as the Secretary's channel of communication with his ministry"²⁰.

As far as the Kyiamah Committee was concerned the problem of democratization stemmed from the existing structure which tended to project the Principal Secretary as the final adviser to the political head of the Ministry for purposes of decision-making. A contrary view is that while the Principal Secretary is the chief official adviser to the political head, the political head is not precluded from seeking advice from other sources. It is also pointed out that if a political head is competent there is no way that a Principal Secretary can force him to take a decision that will embarrass his government.²¹ Even the Okoh Commission itself acknowledged that:

*standing instructions on the preparation of policy memoranda include the requirement that such memoranda should indicate where appropriate that the views and concurrence of all Ministries that may be affected by the proposals have been sought and included in the memoranda.*²²

The need for consultation in decision-making has always been recognized in the Ghanaian public service. The defect of the system as the Okoh Commission pointed out was that it did not provide an effective mechanism for a thorough discussion and assessment of issues which cut across departmental lines nor did it

provide a regular platform for ironing out interministerial conflicts. As the Okoh Commission rightly emphasized, "experience has shown that this method of consultation by circulating papers is not enough"²³. The Commission, then recommended that "greater use be made of inter-ministerial committees for thorough discussion of policy memos". These committees should not be standing committees but *ad hoc* ones.

The Kyiamah Committee, however, favoured an arrangement which allowed all heads of directorates in a ministry equal and easy access to the political head. As a way of institutionalizing democratization, the Committee recommended the establishment of a Standing Committee of all directors, meeting under the chairmanship of the PNDC Secretary, (Minister) or, in his absence, the Under-Secretary. This Committee was to be known as the Ministerial Co-ordinating Committee (MCC). The MCC was to be the "principal co-ordinating organ for policy formulation and implementation". Through the mechanism of the MCC the Committee hoped to achieve the objective of democratization of the decision-making process. The snag was that the degree of democratization was limited only to the heads of directorate operating in the ministry²⁴.

III. Institutions Involved in the Implementation of the Ministerial Restructuring

The Public Administration Restructuring and Decentralization Implementation Committee (PARDIC) was established by a letter of the Committee of PNDC Secretaries (Cabinet) on 14 September 1983 and not by an executive or legislative instrument or a PNDC law. It was to assist the government in the actual implementation of the ministerial restructuring programme. Specifically, the PARDIC was to implement the following measures:

- (i) converting ministries into planning, monitoring and evaluating organizations, thus divesting them of day-to-day implementation functions;
- (ii) abolition of the post of Principal Secretary. This position as the highest professional post in the Ministry was to be replaced by that of Chief Director, who was required to develop political sensitivity to the concerns of the political leadership;
- (iii) democratization of access to the political leaders in the ministries;
- (iv) politicization of the top echelons of the civil service;

- (v) decentralization of all ministries with the exception of the Ministries of Defence, Internal Affairs, Justice and Foreign Affairs.²⁵

The lack of agreement among the members of the PARDIC led to its division into sub-committees on 16 January 1985. This means that sixteen months after it was established, the PARDIC did not have an agreement among its members as to what was to be done. This situation arose because of the differences in the members' understanding of the problems facing Ghana's public administration system, and hence the steps needed in tackling and solving them.²⁶

Certain members of the PARDIC advocated the reform of Ghana's public administration system through decentralization because experience had demonstrated that the system was too centralized and consequently needed to be decentralized.²⁷ This group within the PARDIC, which later constituted the sub-committee on decentralization, saw the reform as entailing the following measures:

- (a) the mobilization of human resources and investment;
- (b) the establishment of local leadership and management cadres;
- (c) the diffusion of knowledge and technical expertise; and
- (d) the enhancement of the political, economic, social and moral well-being of all the people of Ghana.

This group thus advocated the decentralization of the public administration system as the approach to administrative restructuring.

Other members of the PARDIC insisted on re-organization from the central ministries. These members later constituted the sub-committee on ministerial reorganization. This second group was convinced that the focus on ministerial reorganization would enable the civil service to have ample scope to analyse, coordinate, monitor and evaluate all policy plans in the various spheres of the national economy without getting involved in the actual implementation work. It was also the view of this group that the restructuring of the ministerial organization had to precede the decentralization exercise in order not to decentralize ineffective and inefficient administrative systems to the regions and districts thereby worsening the plight of the already disadvantaged rural people.

The then PNDC Coordinating Secretary on 16th January 1985, split the PARDIC into two, each to tackle one of the two distinct aspects of its work. One was the PARDIC Sub-Committee on the Restructuring of Ministerial Organizations

(PSCRMO) and the other was the PARDIC Sub Committee on the Decentralization of the Public Administration System (PSCDPAS).

This division into sub-committees marked the end of the merger of the three previously existing committees on administrative reform in Ghana: namely the Sackey, Ansah Asamoah and Sowu Committees, to form PARDIC on 14 September 1983. Indeed, the PSCRMO was actually the same as the Sackey Committee without its Secretary. The PSCRMO operated from the Office of the Head of the Civil Service.

Apart from the PARDIC, there were other bodies and organizations working on ministerial reorganization, especially those aspects dealing with institution building in pursuit of the government's restructuring and decentralization programme. These include the work done by the Ministry of Local Government (MLG), geared to creating organizational capacities for the decentralized organizations to function effectively.

There was a Transitional Implementation Team (TIT) established in 1987 by the PNDC for purposes of implementing government decisions on the reorganization of the central planning system of Ghana. The T.I.T. was to establish the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC). The NDPC was to develop the new content of work for national development planning. The interim report of the T.I.T. was submitted in September 1988, and it contained the draft National Development Planning Law.²⁸

There was also the Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP) under the overall coordination and direction of the Oversight Committee for Civil Service Reforms (OCCSR) headed by the Member/Secretary of the Committee of Secretaries and Head of the Civil Service (MSCS/HICS). The OCCSR, which operated from the OHCS, not only had full-time expert consultancy support (provided by Messrs Coopers and Lybrand Delloitte and the Royal Institute of Public Administration of the United Kingdom) but was funded by the World Bank. The OCCSR had four sub-committees with the overall objective of improving the performance and productivity of the civil service in order to strengthen its capacity for the implementation of government policies and programmes, particularly the public sector elements of the PNDC's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP II) of 1987.

Although the activities of these organizations and bodies touched on the organization and management of the Ghana civil service, they were not specifically concerned with the position of the Chief Director. The PARDIC was the committee that proposed the position of Chief Director, and, with the backing of the Committee of PNDC Secretaries, actively promoted its implementation. The position of Chief

Director, it must be noted, was a major component of the PARDIC restructuring strategy. The successful implementation of the position of the Chief Director to replace the Principal Secretary was, therefore, linked to the success of PARDIC's programme. This explains the emphasis on the work of the PARDIC and its sub-committee, the PSCRMO, in examining the implementation of the restructuring exercise with regard to the position of the Chief Director.

IV. Problems of Implementation

The implementation of the proposals on the position of the Chief Director, on whom the restructuring rests, met with obstacles which led to the failure of the reformers to realize the intended objective of politicization of the civil service. The implementation left the civil service essentially unchanged and, hence, bureaucratic.

Most of the problems of the implementation of the ministerial restructuring demonstrate that there were a number of actors in addition to the principals, whose agreement - either explicit or implicit - had to be secured before the restructuring exercise could be successfully implemented. Indeed, there was very little agreement among the actors on what was intended to be achieved.

A major problem related to the status and recognition of the PARDIC as a body legally clothed with the authority to reorganise the civil service. The PARDIC was, as we have already noted, established by the Committee of PNDC Secretaries (Cabinet) with a letter from the office of the then PNDC Coordinating Secretary (Prime Minister) on 14 September, 1983. The establishment of the Kaku Kyiamah and Sackey Committees of 1982, which identified the deficiencies of Ghana's civil service and made recommendations, took the same form. There were no PNDC laws or any legislative or executive instruments to back their activities. The PARDIC could, therefore, not take authoritative and binding decisions and ensure the implementation of the reorganization.

It is important to note that the previous commissions were established by law. The Mills-Odoi Commission was established by Executive Instrument 31 of 1967, signed by the then Head of State, Lieutenant General J.A. Ankrah, Chairman of the National Liberation Council (NLC). The Okoh Commission was also established by NRC 264 of 1974, signed also by the then Head of State, Colonel I.K. Acheampong, Chairman of the National Redemption Council (NRC). Even with this legal basis for action, the commissions had problems getting their recommendations implemented.

The absence of a law backing the establishment of the PARDIC was a significant factor because it affected the recognition and reception accorded its

recommendations by the civil servants, especially those within the Ministry of Agriculture - the ministry chosen as the model for the restructuring exercise because of its large size and the vital role it plays in the Ghanaian economy.²⁹

Another obstacle was the lack of dedication of members of the reform committees. The members of the bodies established at various times for the restructuring exercise had other permanent appointments. They were, other than attending regular meetings, unable to make time for serious working sessions on critical decisions on the technical aspects of their work. As a result, problems arising from different orientations with regard to the nature of the restructuring proved an obstacle to the establishment of a congenial team spirit which was a critical prerequisite for the successful accomplishment of the reform effort. The problem itself laid within a wider one, i.e. the difference in understanding of the problems facing Ghana's public administration system. The issue was whether the reorganization should start with decentralization or with ministerial restructuring as we indicated earlier on. The PARDIC's work therefore, from the onset was not really accomplished by the PARDIC as a team but by individuals or small groups (two or three persons) within it.

Moreover, the PARDIC had a secretariat which was not qualified and competent, and therefore, not capable of supporting its critical activities on matters of reform such as the preparation of job descriptions. The secretariat for instance, was not able to support the PARDIC's effort to finalize its proposals, guidelines, programmes, etc. which largely remained in draft form. Thus collectively, the members of the PARDIC and its secretariat, at various times, lacked the capacity to effectively direct and manage all the related exercises it was responsible for. They could, therefore, not bring their tasks into focus as a unified, coherent, time-bound programme for effecting the restructuring exercise.

Another problem was that most of the timetable for the implementation of reform measures were unrealistically drawn up. The PARDIC, for instance, repeatedly set deadlines in the assignment of various activities in the implementation of the restructuring and decentralization policies without taking into consideration the resources available to it. In December 1983, for example, the PARDIC itself set the task of completing the entire implementation exercise by the end of 1985 with some monitoring activities spilling over to June 1986. However, by July 1987, the PARDIC had officially ceased to operate without implementing its restructuring proposals.

It is also significant to note that the initial relationship between the PARDIC and international agencies was not cordial. This situation arose partly because the PARDIC did not fully appreciate the scope, depth, consequences of, and the need

for, assistance and cooperation from others. For instance, the PARDIC lacked the strategy to meet the resistance or non-cooperation of some of the senior civil servants (especially, in the Ministry of Agriculture) who countered PARDIC moves by inviting experts of international agencies to work in literally the same areas as the PARDIC was operating. This situation arose because the PARDIC sought to effect a radical change in the organizational structure of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) without convincing the civil servants of its authority and the need to effect the changes. The international organizations, in contrast, went for minimal change.

Indeed, there were confrontations between members of the PARDIC and some of the foreign experts of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. This experience in the "model" ministry (MOA) during the restructuring exercise accounted for the initial non-cordial relationship with the international organizations.³⁰

However, the PARDIC later did not only manage to establish its authority in its area of work but also relaxed its views on the assistance that could be obtained for both the formulation and implementation stages of its work. The necessity for a change of approach by the PARDIC to a more receptive attitude towards the international organizations was prompted by the embarrassing fact that without a back-up professional secretariat and adequate resources, the PARDIC could not cope with its mandate of coordinating the restructuring of the entire public administration system of Ghana.

Out of necessity, therefore, the PARDIC and the international organizations learned to work together. Significantly, the UNDP an agency with which the PARDIC had some of its initial confrontations, was the first organization to help the PARDIC see the usefulness of such cooperation. Thus UNDP invited PARDIC to participate in the Review of the Third Country Programme for Ghana in October 1984. In that programme, it was proposed to use the "principles" the PARDIC had prepared for the implementation of the restructuring and decentralization programme.

Another organization, the World Bank, accepted and appreciated the PARDIC participation in June/July 1986 in the discussions of one of the programme components of the second phase of the Economic Recovery Programme - the Public Sector Management Programme (PSMP). The outcome was that the principles developed by the PARDIC for the revamping of the civil service, especially the restructuring of the hierarchy of positions within the public service and senior staff-supporting staff ratio in the generalized staff formulae for the ministerial organizations were adopted for implementation under the PSMP.

Indeed, some of the implementation activities of the reform started because of the conditionality imposed by international organizations in considering requests for assistance. For instance, the reorganization of the Ministry of Health (MOH) began in January 1990, by which time it (the reorganization) had become a conditionality for the loans sought by the MOH from the World Bank for the Second Health and Population Project. The PARDIC finally acknowledged the fact that the volume of assistance provided by the international organizations was largely responsible for expediting the pace of the entire restructuring exercise.

A further problem that impeded the smooth implementation of the restructuring exercise is the inconsistent decisions by the Committee of PNDC Secretaries (cabinet). The Committee decided in October 1988 that there should be only one Chief Director for each ministry. This decision was contrary to the Committee's own decision in June 1984 to peg the number of Chief Director for the ministerial organizations at a maximum of four and a minimum of two, i.e. to ensure the broadening of the ministry's advisory mechanism and ultimately enhance democratization. The recommendation for the multiple first-line advisers of Chief Directors as opposed to the sole first-line adviser role of the Principal Secretary was based on the Kaku Kyiamah Committee Report, which we earlier on discussed. The decision of the Committee of Secretaries that a ministry should have one Chief Director showed that the Committee wanted to maintain the *status quo*. In reverting to the *status quo* the Committee did not give any reasons. The decision might have been due to the fact that the radical social, political and economic environment of the early 1980s had given way to a more conservative attitude of the government with the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme in line with IMF and World Bank prescriptions. Definitely the change from the multiple first-line advisers of a minimum of two and maximum of four to a single adviser (one Chief Director) is essentially similar to the traditional position of the Principal Secretary.

The inconsistency of the Committee of PNDC Secretaries is also reflected in the hasty manner it directed the PARDIC to fold up its activities in July 1987. After asking the PARDIC to fold up its operations, the Committee of PNDC Secretaries decided that the Management Services Division (MSD) of the OHCS, be revamped not, only to serve as the secretariat for the then on-going World Bank-supported Civil Service Reform Programme (CSR), but also to take over the functions of the PARDIC.

The MSD of the OHCS which was assigned the responsibility for producing the operational guidelines for the implementation of the ministerial restructuring, after it took over from the PARDIC, could not do so because of lack of basic documents for the assignment. These documents were not available because the

PARDIC did not have a professional secretariat that could take care of the documentation work. Consequently, the MSD produced an operational guideline which was simply a compilation of the various papers which had been circulated at one point or the other during the reform exercise. The compilation was without most of the relevant papers on the work already done by the PARDIC.

The restructuring of ministerial organization also foundered because of resistance from within the bureaucracy itself. The restructuring entails the politicization of the top echelons of the civil service by designating a politician as the head of the ministry and requiring political and ideological test for the appointment of the Chief Director, together with the weakening of the position of the career professionals through the abolition of the post of the Principal Secretary. All these created complications that alarmed the career officers and "blinded them to the necessity of having to do more policy analysis, monitoring, planning and evaluation which ministerial restructuring was all about"³¹. Also, the bureaucracy itself seemed to lack the skills and knowledge required to undertake some of the tasks of restructuring. The design of organizational and operational manuals, for instance, required expertise not then available.

The rapid turnover of PNDC Secretaries (Ministers) also contributed to the ineffective implementation of the restructuring. Between 1982 and 1988, for instance, the headship of the Ministry of Local Government changed on ten occasions. With each change of PNDC Secretary, fresh briefings by the PARDIC sub-committee became necessary. These often lasted for months rather than weeks. The length of time depended on how familiar the new PNDC Secretary was with his new ministry and also with the general principles of ministerial restructuring and decentralization.

The frequent changes of the PARDIC leadership also added to the problems of the restructuring. The quick succession of leaders including Kaku Kyiamah, G.K. Sackey, J.S.A. Jantuah, J.A. Kuffour, K. Dwomoh Kesse, C.M.K. Sowu and E.A. Sai denied the PARDIC the ability to focus on "well defined inputs and outputs for pursuing specified and measurable objectives"³²

Conclusion

This paper has tried to show that the implementation of ministerial restructuring in Ghana has suffered largely as a result of the "complexity of joint action". The problems that faced the implementation process were prosaic in nature. The implementation of the restructuring was hampered by changing actors, inconsistent and erratic leadership, inertia within the bureaucracy, incompetence on the part of PARDIC, and lack of commitment. What is more, the various

institutions involved in the implementation exercise were in conflict with one another. In short, the activities of individuals and bodies assigned the task of restructuring the ministerial organization failed to go beyond ideas and the drawing up of programmes which were largely not implemented.

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STRENGTHENING THE LINKAGES BETWEEN PUBLIC POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION: A REVIEW OF ZIMBABWE'S EXPERIENCE

S. Agere

"There were some people in the offices who deliberately delayed approving projects and some Ministers were concerned about the state of affairs. I know that there are certain projects that have been killed in the offices."¹

– President R.G. Mugabe

Introduction

The statement referred to above was made by the President of Zimbabwe in October 1992 during his tour of Mashonaland Central Province. The statement brings to the fore the complexity of the nature of the contemporary public administration and the sometimes delicate relationship between policy makers and the career civil service. It is not unusual for the former (the policy makers) to criticize what they perceive as the inadequacies of the civil service. Specifically, and as reflected in the President's statement, the civil service is accused of undermining the efforts of the government by failing to implement priority projects effectively, and to make optimum use of the resources allocated to them.

In contrast, the career officials attribute the failure of government policies and projects to the policy makers' lack of appreciation of the problems associated with the formulation and implementation of public policy.

While acknowledging that the management culture which prevails in the civil service at any point in time might serve as an impediment to the aspirations of policy makers, this article argues that strengthening the linkages between policy and its implementation rests mainly in the adoption of a framework which allows the participation of all interested parties in the policy process.

In order to trace the origin of the contemporary management culture in the Zimbabwe civil service, the article begins by looking at the public service during the colonial era. It then goes on to discuss the problems encountered during the post-colonial period in resolving the differences between the ideological orientation of the government and the class interests of the inherited civil service.

The third section focuses on the civil service management culture, while the fourth suggests how the gap between policy formulation and implementation could be bridged.

I. The Public Service in a Colonial State

The public service (the civil service, parastatals and local authorities) is an instrument or machinery of the state in much the same way as the army, police judiciary and the prison service. It is expected to serve the interest of, and owe its allegiance to, the state, which in the first place determines its nature and type. The state arises out of politics, and to that extent, the civil service, which it creates, serves also the political interest of the state. A state is usually dominated by a class whose interests it serves. For this reason we can not expect to see a colonial or capitalist state served by a socialist-oriented public service and conversely. The public service, therefore, pursues the political, economic and social interest of the state from which it derives its authority and power and to which it is accountable.

If this theoretical position is accepted, there is no public service that is neutral to the ideologies of the state. To illustrate this view, Leeson, who carried out extensive research on health services as an instrument of a colonial state, points out that

*"the colonial government doctor has as his first concern the health of his fellow expatriates and as his second that of a local employee"*².

Public health preventive measures were extended to the local people around European settlements only out of fear of the spread of the diseases to the colonial officials. Leeson further argues that the colonial civil servants were responsible for moving indigenous people to the then tsetse fly infested areas such as Kariba, Gokwe and Mwenezi in what was then Southern Rhodesia. Tsetse flies, as known today, carry parasites that cause, amongst other diseases, sleeping sickness in human beings. The civil servants of the day were responsible for the implementation of that policy and to that extent they carried out the political objectives of the state.

In the social services sector, the colonial bureaucracy's child-care programme favoured an exclusive group (European children) and defined a child as

*"any young person below the age of 15 who was not an African"*³.

In public service recruitment, the colonial service reflected the wishes of the colonial government. In 1931, a Public Service Act was passed by parliament legally excluding Africans and people of mixed race from holding established posts in the

civil service. Africans and coloureds could, however, continue to be employed in the low grade, non-established posts⁴.

The 1931 act must be seen within the context of the political and social pressures and class interests for the protection of white labour. During the period covered by the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) the illegal regime made its position on public servants very clear. Not only were blacks largely excluded from the established posts in the government but also liberal whites known to support African demands for equality and self determination were barred from competing for government jobs. The then Minister of Public Service in 1973 said,

*"The mere possession of an academic qualification is not in itself a criterion for appointment to any job; we have to consider the suitability of the candidates bearing in mind certain factors. Perhaps The most important single factor so far as the public service is concerned is loyalty to the state, secondly the national security."*⁵

Africans were therefore excluded from the public service because they were considered not to be loyal to the state and were, according to the criteria then applicable, regarded as a threat to national security.

In all the instances cited above, public servants were used to carry out the functions of the State and to design methods and procedures for translating and implementing the philosophy and objectives of the then government. The legislature too enacted laws which did not challenge the *status quo*, while the judiciary in this case interpreted the laws. The public service, therefore, in its loyalty to the state and from which it derived its authority, had to carry out unbelievably the most notorious pieces of legislation.

To the extent that the public service implemented such policies and enactments, it was not neutral in its ideology, culture, and philosophy. The pre-independence or colonial state's main interests was to maintain law and order and to provide an administrative structure that would facilitate the extraction of raw materials from Zimbabwe. To the extent that the state was seeking raw materials, it was entirely subject to the imperative of primary accumulation of capital. As the structure of production and exploitation expanded to cover new areas such as farms, mines and factories, the colonial administration also spread its activities accordingly. District administration offices were established to ensure that local inhabitants were kept under control, and to provide back-up administrative support when necessary⁶.

The pre-independence state, therefore, had a different philosophy and objectives from the post-colonial state. Its adaptability and strategies for managing human resources designed by the public service were in response to the social and political environment of the day and were considered necessary for the survival of the pre-independence state. The shift from a pre- to a post-independence state would inevitably require fundamentally radical transformation of the state machinery itself. The structure of the civil service of yesterday would be at variance with the type of service that would be loyal to the new post-colonial state. Post-independence Zimbabwe as will be shown later, faced various social and political problems in inheriting the previous system and in designing a public service that would execute and manage its policies and programmes in accordance with its ideology.

II. Public Service As An Arena of Class Struggle

It has been argued that the public service is an instrument of the state which is expected to implement the policy decision emanating from the political and legislative processes. This is only one perspective of the nature of the public service.

The public service, examined from another perspective, is in essence an arena of class struggle. It is a battle ground on which many forces would like to dominate in order to ensure that their views, policies and interests prevail over others. The workers, for example, as a class would want their interests protected in the process of implementing state policies. The strikes by doctors, nurses and teachers in 1990 and the threats of strikes in subsequent years by income tax collectors, airport controllers etc., though meant to improve their own conditions of service as well as salaries, were a reflection of struggles to protect the interests of a class.

Even before independence, the interests of workers were taken into consideration by the state. During the colonial era, for example, the state in 1927 established the first Public Service Board. The Board comprised three members, the chairman and two civil servants. One of the civil servants was appointed by the government while the other was nominated by the civil service association.

The Public Service Board was responsible for the recruitment, appointment, promotions and discipline of staff in the civil service. At independence the Public Service Commission was reconstituted to reflect racial, sex and class interests. These changes were enshrined in the constitution to safeguard the interests of the new state and the masses.

In order to address the imbalances in the appointments of civil servants, the President, on the basis of Section 75(2) of the Constitution, issued a directive spelling out certain changes in public service recruitment without disrupting the

performance of the service. The previous imbalances were to be corrected by the new Public Service Commission through:

- (a) the recruitment of personnel for all grades in a manner that would bring about a balanced representation of the various racial and social groups in Zimbabwe;
- (b) the advancement and promotion of Africans to senior posts in the public service (without sacrificing the efficiency of the service);
- (c) embarking on an extensive training programme to ensure that the civil service was staffed with human resources adequately skilled to discharge government functions expeditiously;
- (d) increasing the participation of females in decision making positions in an attempt to demonstrate equal opportunities for both sexes.

If these measures had not been instituted, the class and colonial orientation of the civil service would have resisted the reforms which negatively affected itself. Some of the whites resisted these reforms as shown by their immediate departure from the civil service upon the attainment of independence. Their departure, a sign of protest and of protection of class interests, was provided for in the constitution, as it had been anticipated.

However, while pursuing affirmative action policies to rectify the previous imbalances, the new leaders made no serious effort to force their ideology on the bureaucracy. The major attributes of the colonial state were preserved, particularly civil service rules, as well as the doctrines of political neutrality, security of tenure, and professionalism. It is true that attempts were made to get civil servants to send financial contributions to the headquarters of the ruling party (ZANU, PF) and to bring career officials under the direct control and supervision of party cadres. These attempts were quietly resisted and subsequently laid to rest.

It should also be noted that in spite of the socialist bent of the post-independence state, relatively little has been achieved to redress the inequalities in the private sector of the economy. The decision making processes in industry continue to be heavily weighted in favour of a few. Appointments to board and management positions continue to favour only one social group to the consternation of the majority black population.

III. Public Services and Management Culture

The persistence of colonial traditions in the post-independence civil service may be explained by the prevailing management culture. Public servants, as is well known, are guided by rules, regulations, procedures and precedents. In the execution of their duties, they develop a particular culture as a result of their positions in the bureaucracy. Certain organisational and cultural values which are generally applied are universality of standards, continuity and consistence in the application of rules, compliance with superior directives, etc.

The management culture which emerges from the rules and procedures may be an impediment to the successful execution of policies and programmes. Such a negative culture may be used to protect the interests of those applying the rules and procedures.

The civil service should therefore be conceptualised not only as an instrument of the state but also as representing a class or social group with its own culture and interests. Politicians who entertain the illusion that bureaucrats are neutral "instruments" of policy are likely to be disappointed. An example of how a bureaucratic culture may serve as an impediment to change is in the application of the municipal laws which work against the informal sector, particularly, in the area of employment creation. The Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, recently called on local authorities to relax their by-laws to allow open trade, given the current economic climate. Both calls fell on deaf ears. Local authorities refused to relax the laws, arguing that such a move would cause environmental and health hazards⁷.

Some of the problems relating to management culture have been highlighted not only by politicians but also by members of the public. Specifically, questions have been raised concerning the impact of this culture on effective and efficient delivery of services, the relevance of organizational structures and practices to the needs of tax-payers' or clients, and the extent to which the bureaucratic culture addresses the fundamental issues of morale, motivation and productivity of the average employee⁸.

The way forward lies in reforming an antiquated management culture and improving the capacity of the civil service to render services to the public in a cost-effective manner. Training and staff development are part of the strategies worth exploring in shaping the culture of the public service and promoting the ethics of service, responsiveness and accountability.

IV. Bridging the Gap Between Policy and Implementation

An analysis of a number of public policies that have been formulated and implemented since independence has revealed that there are serious problems which need to be addressed. Students of public policy and public administration have not analysed those problems in great detail to enable both the policy makers and those who implement the policies to review them so that they can achieve the desired results.

While the problems of policy management are many, the few that have been debated publicly are concerned with the lack of information and statistics, lack of communication and coordination, and lack of capable and effective policy analysts. Discussion here will focus only on a few problems which may serve to highlight the problems associated with the whole cycle of public policy management (formulation, implementation and evaluation).

The Senior Minister of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperatives, once complained of the apparent gap between policy makers and civil servants. Referring to civil servants, he said, "you wonder whether probably they want us to fail because of multi-party politics."⁹ It is not conceivable that such a problem has anything to do with the current wave of multi-party democracy. The problem lies rather in the complex nature of public administration. However, the Minister, in his perception, believes that it is the civil service as an instrument of the state that has failed to implement government policy.

One member of Parliament even went further to call civil servants saboteurs and to accuse them of undermining government policies and projects. A member of the legislature who takes a simplistic view of the public servant, has not cared to analyse the complex relationships between the executive and the legislature. He confines himself to a particular problem that arises in the implementation public policy.

The Head of State himself in his address to a ZANU (PF) rally said, "people are now interested in what the party achieved for them in improving the quality of their lives. Empty slogans and promises will serve to undo the party."¹⁰

The President further criticized party leaders at branch and district levels for not excelling themselves in party duties. Such leaders, he alleged, were letting the masses down by not turning up for meetings that they (the leaders) called.

However, the complaints the President levelled at branch and district leaders of the party equally apply to the civil servants. The President is quoted as saying

"There are some (civil servants) who from day to day get into the office, take off their jackets, take a piece of paper, perhaps write one or two things, take a newspaper and start reading. When they put their jackets on, it is tea time."¹¹

The problems cited by the Head of State specifically refer to the absence of goal- and achievement-oriented management culture both within the ruling party as an organisation as well as in the Public Service. These problems, in very general form, equally apply to many Ministries, Departments and parastatals. In the educational policy the President stated clearly that no child would be sent away from school for non-payment of school fees. In his visit to Mashonaland East Province, the President was horrified to hear that almost half of the pupils at Chikukwa Secondary School in Uzumba, had dropped out of school because parents and guardians were unable to raise school fees. He advised people who could not pay fees to go to the Social Welfare Department which administered the Social Dimension of Adjustment Programme.

However a few days after the President's policy pronouncements, almost half of the more than 3,000 form four students in Binga, Matebeleland North, were said to be unable to write their "0" level examinations due to start the following month because they could not pay examination fees. The Education Officer of Binga said that the same number of Form II students in the district's nine secondary schools faced the same predicament. Shortage of books and equipment was reported to be contributing significantly to the continued decline of standards in local schools. At yet another school (Katarira Secondary School) in Mukumbura, 300 students were turned away from school because they could not pay school fees for the term as the drought had left their parents with no income. The Deputy Headmaster of the school reported that most of the parents in Mukumbura could not afford to pay \$50,00 in school fees because of the drought. As a result the school had no option but to send the children home. The children in question had been referred to the Social Welfare Department through the Social Dimension Fund but none had qualified for assistance. The Headmaster of the school believed that most of the students genuinely needed the assistance but did not know why they did not qualify for the help they desperately needed¹².

The examples cited above relating to the educational policy clearly indicate the gap between policy intentions and administrative action. They show that the policy maker (President and Ministers) formulated a policy which was not being implemented. Secondly, the implementors of the policy applied the rules and regulations passed to them by the Minister of Education and Culture. Thirdly the criteria for assessment used by the Social Welfare Department which were approved by the State appeared to have been strictly adhered to resulting in many students

being denied assistance. Fourthly, it would appear that there were not enough social workers to cope with the number of students looking for assistance. Fifthly, the policy was probably formulated without any analysis of the nature and size of the problem, the number of students in need, and the level of poverty in the rural areas. Similar problems are experienced in many policy areas such as Health, Agriculture, Labour, Economic Development etc. The public policy processes appear to have serious flaws. The framework which facilitates the attainment of policy objectives has not been clearly defined and coordinated by the appropriate organisational structures.

Towards an Improved Policy Framework

The first essential task is to gain an understanding of the issues that constitute the focus of a specific public policy which is being analyzed or developed. This involves the conceptualisation of the nature, scope and spread of the issues. A theoretical perspective of the causes of the problems would highlight the intricate issues and point out stake-holders in the policy process.

The second task is to analyse the chain of substantive effects resulting or expected to result, from the implementation of a given public policy, including intended and unintended, short- and long-term effects. This involves a clear explanation of the policy objectives, the value premises underlying these objectives, and the strategies which will assist implementation of policy.

The third major task is to generate alternative policies or policy options aimed at the same or at different objectives. Each policy option is to be examined and different policies can then be compared and evaluated, in terms of impact on, or implications for, the social system as a whole, unintended effects, and overall costs and benefits.

The last, but by no means the least, important task is the involvement of all interested parties in the policy process. By "interested parties" we mean all those without whom the formulation of policy is incomplete and the implementation, in jeopardy. The experience of Zimbabwe in implementing the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme [ESAP] particularly underscores the need to broaden the base of participation in the policy process. A few months after the launching of the Programme, some Members of Parliament called for its suspension. It was not only the MPs who did not understand the broad thrusts of ESAP: some members of the Central Committee of the ruling party joined MPs in asking for clarifications from public officials about the scope and intent of the reform programme.

It is therefore essential that if policies are to be sustainable and implemented as desired, inputs into their formulation be solicited from a wide circle of people – Ministers, legislators, civil servants, the manufacturers' associations, the chambers of commerce, trade unions, women associations, university lecturers and administrators, to mention a few.

The formulation of policy should, in addition, be preceded by a thorough analysis of the antecedents, options, and possible pay-offs. This requires the recruitment (and training) of policy analysts.

Conclusion

The sustainability of any economic and social development programme depends largely on the capacity and capability of the available human resources. Accordingly, the development, and effective utilization and management of the resources are essential if Africa is to stem the deepening socio-economic crisis.

Equally important is the need to develop and constantly review a framework which enables different parties to make inputs into the policy process.

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EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR INSTITUTIONAL AND MANAGEMENT CAPACITY-BUILDING IN AFRICA: THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT EXPERIENCE*

Olu Fadahunsi

The Challenge

The debate on the management of technical assistance in recent times has centred on the impact of the projects on the overall development of the recipient countries and the sustainability of whatever success is attributable to assistance from foreign donors. A recent study on the subject defined technical cooperation in Africa from the content viewpoint as "any activity aimed at enhancing human and institutional capabilities through the transfer, adaptation and utilization of knowledge, skills and technology"¹. The study also found that most technical cooperation schemes in Africa entailed providing resident advisers, short-term consultants, training (seminars, study tours, fellowships) and small amounts for vehicles, computers and office equipment. By and large, the technical assistance programme of the Commonwealth Secretariat focuses exclusively on institutional and capacity building.

The management of technical cooperation programmes tends to be characterized by a number of problems. It has, for instance, been revealed that:

- (a) The majority of technical cooperation programmes seem to consist of long-term resident advisers;
- (b) Relatively few of the experts, especially from bilateral donors, originate from other developing countries;
- (c) The use of local experts is limited (not more than 5%);
- (c) Few TC programmes include funds for the recipient countries to meet recruitment costs².

Other related issues that constitute a challenge to the donors are:

- (a) Lack of clarity of objectives, especially, in terms of capacity building and self-reliance;
- (b) In-built devices by donors and their experts to perpetuate aid and the dependence syndrome;

- (c) the suitability or otherwise of the policy environment in which technical cooperation takes place;
- (d) the availability of the institutional framework to facilitate the smooth functioning of technical assistance projects;
- (e) brain drain (total withdrawal of skill by nationals for a period) and brain cycle (transfer of skill from public to private sector). A UN Report estimated that between 50,000 and 60,000 middle and high-level African managers were estimated to have emigrated between 1986 and 1990;³
- (f) the high risk of diverting technical cooperation funds from capacity-building and self-reliance objectives towards ameliorating pressing socio-economic problems in the recipient countries;
- (g) the bias towards a short-term project implementation strategy instead of long-term institutional building that calls for the establishment of a genuine partnership;
- (h) The failure of the expert-counterpart system;
- (i) the relatively low priority accorded education and training, which according to J. Bossut *et al* accounted for only 15 - 20% of TC budget;
- (j) Poor or weak coordination mechanisms for technical cooperation in recipient countries;
- (k) Burdensome procedure and documentation for aid management by some donors.⁴

These and other challenges face bilateral and multi-lateral agencies in assisting countries to overcome their development problems.

II. EVOLUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH FUND FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION (CFTC)

The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) is the main operational arm of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the principal source of financial support for the Secretariat's developmental activities. It was established in Singapore in 1971 as an instrument for working towards the achievement of the *Declaration of Commonwealth Principles* under which the member states of the Commonwealth committed themselves to work towards a new, equitable, and harmonious world order, to mobilise their efforts to overcome poverty, ignorance

and disease, and to raise living standards. The Fund is a multi-lateral technical assistance agency through which experts, advisers and consultants are sent to assist developing countries of the Commonwealth. The Fund also provides opportunities for nationals of these countries to receive training outside their environments - mainly in other developing countries.

As a multi-lateral agency, the CFTC is responsible to Commonwealth Governments collectively, and it is financed by the voluntary contributions of all member-governments with the industrialised countries topping the list of donors. Its charter is a *Memorandum of Understanding* agreed by all Commonwealth governments at the Senior Officials Meeting in Cyprus in 1970 as amended in 1976 and 1980. The charter spelt out clearly the purpose of the Fund as follows:

"to take advantage of shared experiences and similarities to promote development in the Commonwealth, thereby demonstrating in a practical way the ideals of cooperation and mutual assistance and strengthening the multi-lateral links among Commonwealth countries and peoples"⁵.

It is the Fund's policy to draw its expertise from Commonwealth countries and it undertakes virtually all its training in Commonwealth countries. The Fund cherishes this distinctive feature of its operations which enables it to make available training resources and expertise from developing countries for other developing countries. It also prides itself as a pioneer in promoting technical cooperation among developing countries and a credible agent of South-South cooperation.

The Fund's field of operations is spelt out in its Memorandum of Understanding:

- (a) Planning (including manpower and education planning and sectoral analysis) and plan implementation;
- (b) the preparation, appraisal, execution and evaluation of development projects;
- (c) statistics, finance, tourism, transport, and public administration;
- (d) taxation and development of resource-based industries;
- (e) regional and sub-regional co-operation in a variety of fields; and
- (f) activities related to the foregoing (Sect. 2.2).

The Fund is also authorised to provide further technical assistance as may be agreed by participating governments.

III. THE MANAGEMENT OF THE FUND

The Fund's general policies are set by a Board of Representatives (BOR) consisting of a representative of each participating government with an elected member as Chairman and one or more elected members as Vice-Chairman. The Secretary-General attends as an ex-officio member. The Board meets twice a year – once in London, normally in June to review operations and approve a Plan of Expenditure for the following financial year starting on 1 July. The second meeting in September, which is held in conjunction with the annual meeting of Finance Ministers, considers broad policy issues and the annual evaluation report.

A Committee of Management (COM) under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General and comprising the five major donors and five other members selected to reflect a wide geographical representation of the regions of the Commonwealth, meets between the meetings of the BOR to give general operational direction within the broad guidelines laid down by the BOR. The Chairman of the BOR is also a member unless the country which he or she represents on the Board is already represented on the Committee.

The Commonwealth Secretary-General is responsible for conducting the operations of the Fund in accordance with the decisions of the BOR and COM. The Fund's Managing Director, now re-designated Deputy Secretary-General (Development Cooperation) is responsible to the Secretary-General for its day-to-day management and operations.

As at February 1993, the Fund's headquarters staff numbered 128 out of a total Secretariat establishment of 421 positions, and comprised nationals from 34 Commonwealth countries. Its budget in 1971/72 when it started was £400,000 out of which £0.2 million was disbursed. The budget remained under £10 million for the next seven years of its existence. In 1978/79, the budget rose to £11.3 million but fell to £9.4 million in 1979/80 reflecting the voluntary nature of the Fund's system of contribution. However, the Fund's expenditure has steadily increased, reaching a level of £30 million in 1990/91. Its long-term and short-term experts increased from 2,785 in 1986/87 to about 5,000 in 1989/90. The scope of the CFTC's activities also reflect its modest size.

IV. Major Activities of the CFTC

The major focus of the CFTC is to transfer skills and improve the performance of institutions. In recent years, governments have asked the Fund to pay particular attention to environmental issues and the role of women in development. Also, the Fund's activities are increasingly reflecting Commonwealth involvement in helping member countries to strengthen their democracies.

The work of the CFTC is done principally through four divisions, viz the General Technical Assistance, the Management and Training, the Export and Industrial Development, the Economic and the Legal Assistance Services (these reflect the consolidation of the five existing divisions into four divisions recently approved under the restructuring of the Secretariat). In addition, there are the Secretariat functional Divisions which utilise about 7% of the CFTC's funds for their activities. These include the following Divisions: Human Resource Development, Women and Youth Affairs, Economic Affairs, as well as Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

These divisions provide every year:

- * some 350 qualified specialists working in critical development areas;
- * specialised training for nearly 5000 officials and technical staff;
- * some 60 marketing projects, and about 50 exporting advisers, leading to additional export earnings for the beneficiaries;
- * assistance to set up, improve or resuscitate over 100 industries;
- * consultancy services - confidential and expert advice in economic and financial management, and in developing mineral and other natural resources;
- * special, separately funded programmes to help strengthen the southern Africa region through technical support for Namibia and Mozambique, and training for South African victims of apartheid.

The CFTC is not a capital Fund. It provides hands-on expertise, advice and training but does not supply capital equipment. However, where necessary, it helps governments to obtain finance or equipment from other sources.

V. CFTC and the African Region

The African region of the Commonwealth has benefitted substantially from the activities of the CFTC during the last two decades. Programme expenditure for the Region amounted £7.942 million in 1988/89 (or 44.8 percent of the total), £9.005 million in 1989/90 (or 42 percent of the total), £10.507 million (or 46.9 percent of the total) and £9.860 million in 1991/92 or 43.6 percent of the total. The current year Plan of Expenditures provides for a total budget of £25.5 million (compared with £30 million in 1990/91) but expenditures per region will not be known until the year ends. It should be mentioned that, for programme expenditure analysis, developing Commonwealth countries are classified into the following regions: Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Atlantic, Mediterranean, Pacific and Commonwealth General. All regions share in Commonwealth-wide activities which in the last four years accounted for 10.9 percent, 12.1 percent, 8.8 percent, and 11.5 percent of total programme expenditure respectively.

In terms of size, the Fund's expenditure in the African Region during the last five years (1988-93) averaged 44.3 percent of total expenditure, excluding the participation of African countries in Commonwealth-wide activities. The activities are classified into seventeen sectors for purposes of expenditure analysis in 1991/92 and these include: Public Administration (13.4%), Industry (15.1%), Agriculture and Rural Development (10.24%), Finance and Taxation (12.14%), Commerce and Trade (9.06%) and Education (8.5%). These sectors reflect the main focus of the CFTC's activities since CFTC responds primarily to priority requests from member-governments. Fund allocation to the sectors are not necessarily fixed, except that fairly substantial fund expenditures may suggest areas which most of the member-governments deemed crucial since these sectors have not been broken down into regions. For instance, in 1989/90, Public Administration sector expenditure was 16.4%, Industry 22.8%, Finance 9.7%, Agriculture 7.5% and Education 8%⁶ while comparative figures for 1985/86 were 15.5%, 26.4%¹ 8%, 9.6% and 9.7%. A substantial proportion of the key activities which were brought about by various policies of the governments were in the African Region and a review of the policy changes is undertaken hereunder.

VI. Major Policy Changes

Technical assistance at the Commonwealth Secretariat responds directly to the expressed needs of the member-countries. These needs, from time to time, are reflected in major policy decisions taken by the Governments as recommended by the BOR and the COM. The changes which have been introduced during the last two decades demonstrate the Fund's flexibility in its operations, the relevance of

the programmes to the development problems of the recipient countries and the pragmatism with which the Fund carried out its work.

It is necessary to stress that these priorities are set by member governments, individually or collectively, and not by the Management. In as much as the Fund remains primarily responsive to individual government requests, it may be rightly assumed that its projects reflect their priorities. However, the direction of CFTC programmes in terms of their scope, spread and content have changed significantly over the years to take account of Commonwealth priorities as enunciated at the Meetings of Heads of Government, Ministers, Senior Officials and Board of Representatives. Some of the priority sectors are discussed below.

Export Promotion and Industrial Development

In 1972 and 1980, the CFTC's activities were increased by adding export promotion and industrial development respectively. While the former helps governments to increase exports, and supports product development and marketing programmes among others, the latter assists governments and regional organisations to plan, establish, upgrade and rehabilitate industrial enterprises, and helps in adapting technologies using indigenous resources wherever possible. The Industrial Development Unit came into being following the recommendations made by the Ministers of Industry in Bangalore in 1979.

Commonwealth Youth Programme and Management Development

Further expansion was brought about in 1973 by the establishment of Commonwealth Youth Programme which is guided by the Commonwealth Youth Affairs Council to promote the involvement of youth in development. It operates through its four regional centres one of which is Africa. In 1975, the Commonwealth Studies in Applied Government (re-named Management Development Programme) was established to help governments strengthen their administrative and managerial capacities through training, research, consulting and information dissemination. In the same year, the Commonwealth Science Council was integrated into the Secretariat.

Mozambique Development

In January 1988, the Special Commonwealth Fund for Mozambique (SFCM) was established primarily to provide technical assistance to Mozambique with a target of £10 million over three to five years. Guaranteed resources during the first 18 months amounted to £2.02 million. Eighteen Commonwealth countries have so far pledged £5.96 million and by mid 1991, £4.11 million had been disbursed on

170 projects. The Mozambique Government has indicated transport, communications and agriculture as priority areas for Commonwealth assistance together with institutional and human resource development⁷. During the period 1976-1986, a similar Fund raised a little over £1 million to aid Mozambique following the country's decision to apply sanctions against the then Southern Rhodesia.

Training Zimbabweans

Southern Africa has been a major concern to the Commonwealth, and major policy changes have been aimed at redressing the educational disadvantages arising from racial discrimination and to reduce the economic dependence of the countries in the region on South Africa. The Fund coordinated a special Commonwealth Programme for Zimbabweans assisting over 4500 Zimbabwean refugees including providing over 1000 awards to study in 25 Commonwealth countries in preparation for Zimbabwe's independence which was achieved in 1980.

Skills Development in Namibia

In 1975, Commonwealth governments began a programme of assistance for Namibia primarily to assist her create a stock of skilled personnel for the new state. By independence in 1990, the Commonwealth Namibian Programme had assisted about 10,000 people with full-time study in other Commonwealth countries and through the distance education provided by the Namibian Extension Unit which has now been transferred to Windhoek as part of the country's distance education system. By mid-1991, CFTC had sent 36 experts from 12 Commonwealth countries to Namibia while arrangements for additional 20 experts were being made. The Fund is also currently providing awards for about 600 Namibians to develop their skills in over 20 countries.

Combatting Apartheid in South Africa

Ending apartheid peacefully has been a major Commonwealth concern for over 30 years. The provision of technical programmes was supplemented with intense political pressure.

The South African Extension unit was begun in exile in Tanzania in 1984 and by mid-1991 had about 3000 students in various settlements located in six Southern African countries. About half were studying basic English, mathematics and agriculture, the rest studying 'O' and 'A' level courses by correspondence.

The Nassau Fellowships Scheme, created in 1985, enabled South Africans to study in Commonwealth Universities and Colleges and by mid-1991, over 600 fellowships had been awarded to students. This figure will be substantially higher if account is taken of those who received awards under bilateral arrangements to enable South Africans to study in donor countries.

In recent times, CFTC has also supported the activities of the "Skills for South Africa" programme, a Commonwealth-wide network of NGOs. A major policy decision was taken in Harare in October 1991 by the Heads of Government to prepare black South Africans to assume key responsibilities in post-apartheid South Africa. The Secretariat is exploring with the UN the possibility of convening a donor's conference on human resource development in post-apartheid South Africa.

Priority for Small States

Over half of the Commonwealth member countries have around a million people or less and some of these are from the African continent. The Commonwealth had agreed on major policy changes designed to cater for the needs of the small states and CFTC has responded by allocating to them a substantial share of the technical assistance resources. In recent years, for instance, two-thirds of its experts have worked in small states. Approximately half of the fellowship awards for training is made to small states.

Protecting the Environment

The challenges of the environment has been met by major policy decisions aimed at tackling critical environmental problems. The Lankagwi Declaration on environment in 1989 by Heads of Government, including a sixteen-point programme of action, stated that "the need to protect the environment should be viewed in a balanced perspective and due emphasis be accorded to promoting economic growth and sustainable development including eradication of poverty, meeting basic needs and enhancing the quality of life". The Secretariat, in the last two years, has been very active in key environmental areas such as climate change, sea-level rise, disaster prevention and management, the Management of Exclusive Economic Zones and their resources, toxic or hazardous waste management etc. A multi-disciplinary group within the Secretariat coordinates environment-related activities in all divisions. An Expert Group on Environmental Concerns and the Commonwealth was set up in 1991 to examine a number of issues on the agenda of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Heads of Government had pledged their full support for the outcome of the UNCED meeting which was held in Brazil in June 1992.

During the past three years, CFTC's Fellowships and Training Programme awarded a large number of Fellowships on environment-related training courses while the General Technical Assistance Division provided short-term specialists to help run training workshops in environmental broadcasting and education. The environmental content of the Secretariat-funded training in education, economics, industry and health has been increased.

The Secretariat is also preparing a directory of institutions - some of them in Commonwealth African countries - offering training in environment-related fields. Also, with British support, it has begun a project, Institutional Development for Environmental Action, to help planners adopt a comprehensive approach to environmental management. It has arranged exchange visits for nine officials from the SADD region to tour soil and water research and training institutions in India. In return, seven senior Indian scientists including the directors of three research institutes visited Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe in September 1990 to discuss training opportunities and other matters. This led to the design of a special course which was conducted in India in 1992.

Advancing Regional Cooperation

A feature of the Fund's work is the recognition of regional cooperation as a valuable means of accelerating development. In Africa, SADD, PTA, ESAMI and the two sub-regional health Secretariats operating from Nigeria and Tanzania have been assisted. Two regional management associations - in Eastern and Southern Africa (AMTIESA) and in West Africa (WAMDEVIN) - with memberships drawn from management development institutes and tertiary institutions have operated with substantial assistance from the Fund. Also, arrangements have been concluded to launch a Commonwealth-wide management association to work with the regional associations. The Secretariat has also responded positively to cooperation arrangements with the ACBF in Zimbabwe.

VII. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CFTC APPROACH

It is generally agreed that the success of the work of a technical assistance agency may not necessarily be measured in terms of resources provided and the number of projects managed or executed. A mere catalogue of projects completed or funds disbursed does not by itself translate into the development of human and institutional capacities, which is what technical assistance is all about. The Commonwealth Secretariat, with its technical assistance arm, the CFTC, entertains no illusion about this. However, the formulation and implementation of the technical assistance system of the Secretariat have taken into account, over the past several years, the common problems that face technical assistance

management. Undoubtedly, the success of the Commonwealth governments in this area appears to have arisen from the way the governments and the Secretariat play their role.

The key to success is the clarity of technical assistance objectives and the criteria for funding requests from individual governments and other organisations. The Memorandum of Understanding and the Financial Regulations and Rules of the Fund spell out these terms of reference in detail. The key features which have contributed to the success of CFTC are:

- (a) *Priority requests through Points of Contacts (POCs)* The Fund provides assistance in response to priority request from governments, inter-governmental organisations and regional institutions submitted through POCs officially designated by recipients. This is particularly important to the receiving governments because it ensures that CFTC funds are disbursed only on priority projects in the countries consistent with their overall development plans and strategies.
- (b) *Development-centred objective:* The assistance provided should promote the economic and social development of the recipient countries. CFTC funds, for instance, cannot be used to promote arts for which the Commonwealth Foundation was established.
- (c) *Clear identification of beneficiaries:* The Fund can provide assistance only to developing member countries of the Commonwealth, states associated with member-countries and inter-governmental organisations and regional institutions in the Commonwealth. Recipients of Training Fellowships, for instance, are normally expected to be placed in institutions in the developing countries to make transfer of skill, knowledge and attitudes easier, and to lessen the impact of culture shock. Only in exceptional cases where the courses of study are not available in the developing countries or where the benefits of such attendance in a developed Commonwealth country have been clearly identified are trainees sent to developed areas. Also, only in exceptional cases are trainees sent to non-Commonwealth countries and in such cases, the benefits accruing to Commonwealth governments are clear e.g.: Village du Benin for French language study in Togo.
- (d) *No capital aid:* The Fund cannot provide capital aid except that a limited provision is made for project-related items such as equipment, reference books, and visual aids – especially if such provisions are required for the expert to perform effectively.

In addition to these key funding criteria entrenched in the Memorandum of Understanding, the Fund has other special features which have made it perform so successfully during these last two decades. These include:

- (e) *Mutual Assistance*: This is a unique feature which characterizes CFTC's operations. Training resources and expertise come from developing countries for the development of other developing countries, thereby avoiding the one-way flow of assistance from North to South with all its complications. While the developed countries have an important role to play, the Fund provides ample chance for developing countries to help themselves. In 1989/90, for instance, 64 percent of all CFTC experts came from developing countries while 36 percent came from the developed countries. All of them worked in the developing countries including 39 percent that worked in the African region.
- (f) *Gap-filling*: A traditional and valuable role of the Fund is to fill the gap in technical assistance packages of requesting member-governments. Sufficient care is taken to avoid duplicating programmes which are better executed by other agencies.
- (g) *Simple Procedures*: The relative simplicity of the procedures involved in obtaining assistance and the absence of lengthy and complicated project documents and agreements ensure speed and timeliness. Except for Fellowships and Training Programme which uses a form, most of the requests can be initiated by discussion, followed by a letter.
- (h) *Intimate Relationship*: The Fund enjoys intimate relationship with requesting governments which is devoid of the traditional donor/recipient relationship. There is a considerable degree of confidentiality between the CFTC and the government and this enables CFTC to be involved in sensitive projects.
- (i) *Cost Effectiveness*: The technical assistance and training provided by the Fund is among the world's most cost-effective. Costs per person-month for experts and training are below comparable figures for other international agencies some of which according to the ECPDM (European Centre for Policy Development and Management) cost between USD 100,000 to USD 150,000. The reasons for this are that high level experts from the Commonwealth are able to accept the relatively modest terms offered by the Fund and training facilities are heavily subsidized. Receiving governments are usually willing to contribute in kind to the Fund's resources.

- (j) *The Block Grant System:* A few institutions are selected for block grants by the Fund's Fellowships and Training Programme. Roughly 1000 trainees benefit from the courses annually. The institutions and courses are selected in collaboration with governments to suit the priorities of the governments. The programmes are required to be regional in nature and innovative in content. The system allows CFTC to train at relatively low cost, and helps strengthen the relationship between governments and regional training institutions for the benefit of all concerned. Roughly £0.5 million of FTP's allocation to the African Region have been set aside between 1986/87 and 1992/93 for Block Grant allocation. This is complemented with an Academic Exchange Programme which has made an annual award of about 40 fellowships to deserving faculty members and other individuals to enable them gain exposure and expertise in other Commonwealth Environments.
- (K) *Evaluation System:* CFTC programmes are systematically evaluated with the overall aim of improving their quality and assessing their effectiveness. Project Completion Reports and the in-depth Evaluation Studies introduced in 1985, form the basis of the evaluation system which made the Fund not only responsive but accountable to member-governments.

VIII. Emerging Challenges in the 1990s and Beyond

As indicated earlier on in this paper, the Commonwealth Secretariat and its technical assistance arm, the CFTC, are under-going a major restructuring. In addition to its representation function in global meetings and consensus building and policy development on key political issues, the Secretariat will be expected to emphasize the promotion of fundamental political values of the Commonwealth, the establishment of a democratic government in South Africa including assistance to South Africans. Other areas that will be accorded priority attention include: Economic management, Administrative and Managerial Reform, Human Resource Development, Environment and Science and Technology.⁸

Perhaps the most visible aspect of the Secretariat's management and capacity-building work is the support to democratic and political institutions - including monitoring and observing elections, strengthening election machineries and supporting the training of election officials. In Africa, Seychelles, Ghana and Kenya, among others, have benefited from this new programme emphasis. In these days when technical assistance is linked with democracy and the rule of law, the role of the Secretariat in this regard cannot be over-emphasised. Another area that

will receive greater attention is Strategic Planning and Evaluation. It is envisaged that the Secretariat will strengthen its capacity in this area to ensure timely delivery of information and to strengthen performance evaluation procedures and processes.

As should be expected, the demand for the Secretariat's services from governments far out-strips the resources - financial and human - available to the Secretariat. This explains the need to adhere to priority areas decided by governments. There is the temptation for the divisions to spread themselves too thin in order to cope with the volume of requests. The Secretariat will be expected to concentrate on those areas where the Commonwealth has a comparative advantage and where it can have maximum impact. For instance, while the Secretariat will be expected to pay attention to environmental concerns because of the importance attached to the subject by the governments, it is likely to do so within the context of the global strategy already developed by major international organisations which have far larger resources to tackle environmental problems.

One of the major activities of the CFTC's Technical Assistance Group (in-house consultancy) is the development of a computer software for debt management - the Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System - (CS - DRMS). The system, which has been acclaimed by Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth governments, enables governments to obtain a clear picture of their overall commitments and to make sound financial judgement about managing them. Thirty (including 18 from Africa) have installed the software and compilation of debt data has been completed in most of them. The new version 5 of CS-DRMS incorporates sophisticated and specially designed management tools which allow the users to evaluate different loan offers and proposals for refinancing and re-scheduling of loan as well as monitors exchange rate gains and losses in multi-currency loans.

At a time when Africa's debt burden in 1992, according to UN sources grew (by two and a half times since 1980) to around US \$290 billion, (equivalent to 90 percent of the continent's GNP), and at a time when it paid its creditors US \$26 billion which was over four times more than it spent on health services for the continent's 600 million people⁹, the importance of the development of this tool cannot be over-emphasized. It would appear therefore that the use of this instrument will be expanded considerably in the future. Training is provided on-site to users and skills are developed for use where they are needed. Where necessary, special courses are organised - e.g. in Nigeria and Mozambique - in addition to regional debt management courses which are regularly organised. It is one of the most effective ways of building institutional and management capacity and an experience worth sharing among international agencies. A Newsletter, the

Commonwealth Secretariat Debt Recording and Management System - CS-DRMS
- was started in February 1993.

Conclusion

The CFTC was a pioneer in technical cooperation among developing countries. We have reviewed some of the features of the organisation and how these have influenced its performance as a technical assistance agency. We have also highlighted some of the priority areas where the Fund will be expected to concentrate its activities in the 1990s and, perhaps, into the 21st century. The successful implementation of these programmes which will further improve institutional and management capacity will depend on the continued support voluntarily given by the governments. In the words of the current Secretary-General: "Ultimately, what the Commonwealth is and what it does depend on political will" of the member countries.¹⁰

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