

CONFLICT BETWEEN POLITICAL ELITES AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS: IT'S GENESIS AND PUBLIC SERVICE REFORMS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT :*The paper was able to identify what led to the differences and disagreements existing between the Political Elites and the Public Administrators in terms of who does what, when and how, as one of the core reasons for most of the abuses in the public service. Also identified by the paper were the abuses emanating from the various reforms in the public service, which invariably breed inefficiency and corruption. To ameliorate these, the paper recommended that the Nigerian public sector requires mental revolution of both the political elites and the public servants and also by both parties going back to the drawing board to clarify their positions as to who does what, how and when and the need to alienate the top public servants from politics.*

KEYWORDS: *Political Elites, Public Administrators, Public Service Reforms, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

The Public Service/Civil Service, made up of Ministries, Departments, Parastatals, Boards, Statutory Corporations and the Security Agencies, has always been the tools used by the Nigerian Governments for the formulation and implementation of its policies. While the Civil Service provided the atmosphere for the realization of these policies. The Public service on the other hand, is responsible for the provision of an appropriate and conducive environment in which all the sectors within the Nigerian economy perform optimally. It is based on these attributes that the Nigerian government continues to search for better ways to deliver their services. Hence the various reforms put in place. However, one of the salient issues bedeviling the service is the hidden conflict between the Political Elites and the Public Administrators. While it is the responsibility of the political elites to formulate policies for the benefit of his/her constituencies, it is the responsibility of the public administrator to ensure the implementation and the realization of the objectives of these policies. It is in the process of the formulation and implementation of these policies that turbulences set in. Was the turbulence between them a recent development or it has origin? This paper therefore sets out to trace the origin of this turbulence and its relevance to public service reform, using extensive secondary sources of data.

Conceptual clarification

In order to properly understand and comprehend this paper, certain concepts as used in the paper would be clarified.

Public Service: refers to the totality of services that are organized under government authority. It includes not only those who work in the regular government ministries and departments, but

also boards, statutory corporations, and the Security Agencies like the Police, Army, and other Para-military Agencies. Specifically, all those who worked for the government are members of the Public Service (Obiajulu and Obiemeka, 2004). While the Civil Service, which is also part of the Public Service, is defined as a body or departments in the executive arm of the government responsible for the execution of government policies and its programmes. The civil service and its workers known as civil servants, perform purely administrative, technical, professional and executive functions which entails the formulation and implementation of government policies (Johnson, 2005). Therefore, in this paper, the public service and the civil service shall be used simultaneously and interchangeably.

Statement of Problem

The Nigerian Public Service, during the colonial and the immediate post-colonial era used to be an efficient and effective service full of positive promises. It used to have a cherished history of impartiality, loyalty, hard work, dedication, commitment and invaluable service. However, all these expectations started to dwindle as a result of the conflicts between the political elites and the public administrators (Bureaucrats), which started between the colonial bureaucrats and their Nigerian counterparts. These were further aggravated when reckless misrule under authoritarian regimes came on board and became worst with the enthronement of contemporary democratic regimes. The result was that the Public Service was characterized by selfishness, greed, excessive partisanship, corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness. This paper is therefore further intended to identify the genesis of the turbulence between the political elites and the public administrators and the abuses and usefulness of the various reforms put in place to ameliorate these lapses.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

First, Frederick Taylor's principal concern throughout his life was that of increasing efficiency in production, not only to lower cost and raise profits, but also to make possible increased pay for workers. Taylor saw productivity as the answer to both higher wages and higher profits, but that the management and the workers were concerned too much with how they could divide the surpluses that arose from productivity and not enough with increasing the surplus, so that both management and workers could get more compensation (Harold, 1983). This explains the various salary increases in the Nigerian Public Service with less emphasis on productivity.

Perhaps, no better way to understand the reforms in the public sector in Nigeria, than to look at Taylor's thinking through his own testimonies before the House Committee in 1912, when he stated that Scientific Management theory involves a complete mental revolution on the part of the workingman engaged in any particular establishment or industry; a complete mental revolution on the part of these men as to their duties toward their work, toward their fellow men and toward their employers; it involves the complete mental revolution on the part of those on the management side i.e. a complete mental revolution on their part as to their duties toward their fellow workers in the management, toward their workmen and towards all their daily problems. Second, the Nigerian State came into existence through force, i.e. British colonialists forced the state to come into existence. Explaining the force theory of state creation, Leacock, according to Kapur (1996), stated that government is the outcome of human aggression that led to the creation of the state through the capture and enslavement of man by man. The theory established that the state came into existence as a result of the cunning and powerful group of individuals who imposed themselves on the weak in a society and then appropriating their wealth. It is clear that Nigeria came into being as a result of the superior physical and

technological force used on her by, first, the colonialist who conquered Nigeria and used the same force to amalgamate its southern part with the northern part in 1914, thus forming a united Nigeria. It was in the process of bringing the state into being that brought about the conflict between the earliest political elites and the emerging public administrators (Asirvatham and Misra, 2006). In order to deal with the conflict, Mary Parker Follett's theory of conflict resolution which emphasizes conflict domination i.e. the high handed use of hierarchical force to obtain compliance was used in the name of reform in the Nigerian Public Service. These Public Service reforms in essence, try to look at all issues that can improve the service thus leading to efficiency, effectiveness and increased productivity.

The Nigerian Public Service

A brief on the Nigerian Public Service/Civil Service; the Political Elites; the Ministers and Permanent Secretaries as postulated by Longe (1992) and the various reasons for inefficiency in the Public Service (Adebayo, 2004), will put us in a good stead to appreciate the turbulence between the political elites and the public administrators and its effect on public service reforms in Nigeria: The Nigerian Public Service was started by the British colonialists as Colonial Service. It was developed and patterned after the British Civil Service, with its doctrine of anonymity, impartiality and neutrality. In Britain and most Common wealth countries, the term Public/Civil Service is very often used as synonymous with government. The Colonial Public Service was not designed to work for the interest of Nigeria and its people, but to serve British Colonial interests in the area of maintenance of law and order by ensuring that the 'natives' paid their taxes as and when due, and express their full allegiance to the British Monarchy; and ensuring that raw materials required by the British industries were supplied on time and finished products brought back to the colonies for consumption. As a result of these colonial interests, it was difficult even after independence for the Service to evolve good plans for the development of Nigeria. However, with political awareness on the part of the Nigerian workers, they started to agitate for better working conditions through their various labour movements, especially on issues pertaining to remuneration. In response, the Nigerian government then, instituted various committees and commissions to look at these agitations (Adebayo, 2004). These agitations seemed to serve as the origin of the need for the idea of a public service reform in the colonial era.

The dichotomy between Politics and Administration

The understanding of the dichotomy between Politics and Administration will lead to the proper understanding and assimilation of the relationship between Administrators and the Political Elites. Adamolekun (2004), quoting Wilson (1887), gave two dimensions to the issues: The first, he stated that in all governmental systems, there existed two primary functions of government: the expression of the will of the state and the execution of that will by separate organs. These functions are Politics and Administration. The second proposition gave two dimensions to the understanding of the dichotomy between Administration and Politics. The first dimension stated that two distinct groups of people operate the executive branch of government in a democratic setting. One category consisted of elected temporary political officials who serve for as long as they succeeded in obtaining a popular mandate at elections conducted at intervals. The second category is made up of officials who are appointed into permanent (career) service which is expected to serve successive sets of political officials. The second dimension sees administration as an instrument in the hands of political officials who are the dominant group in the executive branch of government. This means that the sovereignty of the people is exercised on their behalf by their representative in a parliament, while the

career administrators (civil servants) serve as the instruments for carrying out the mandate obtained from the sovereign people by successive teams of political officials. All these were clearly summed up by Wilson (1887)'s article, as put forward by Adamolekun (2004) as follows:

... that administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the tasks for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices. This is distinction of high authority. The policy of government will have no taint of officialdom about it. It will not be the creation of permanent officials, but of statesmen whose responsibility to public opinion will be direct and inevitable.

The Political Elites/Executive in Nigeria

The Political Elites/Executive in Nigeria emerges from the two regime type of western democracies of the British Parliamentary System and the United States of America's Presidential System of governments. In the British system, the political elites or executive emerges from the party that succeeds in winning the largest number of parliamentary seats that forms the government (i.e. the elected representatives of the people) and thus exercises sovereign power on behalf of the people through the members of the cabinet called Ministers, who are directly responsible to the parliament for the activities of the government. This is known as the doctrine of ministerial responsibility. While the permanent groups of officials called the civil servants assists the Ministers in the formulation of policies and performs the duties of executing the policies. These civil servants are expected to observe the norms of anonymity, impartiality and political neutrality. The civil servants under the parliamentary system of government are confidential advisers of the Ministers, but the Ministers take responsibility for every activity carried out by the civil servants, i.e. they take credit for the good things done and accept the blame for all the mistakes (Adamolekun, 2004). This system existed in Nigeria from 1960 to 1966.

In the United States of America's Presidential System of government, the political elites or executive emerges from the three separate arms of government: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, thus emphasizing the doctrine of the separation of powers. The head of the political executive is the President, who is elected every four years and exercises power by associating with political appointees, prominent among whom are the Secretary of States or Ministers. These appointees constitute the President's cabinet. Unlike in the United Kingdom, these cabinet members are not members of the legislature. The President is accountable to the electorate and not the congress. In the Presidential System of government, the civil servants will only implement policies made by the political executives. Unlike in the United Kingdom Parliamentary system, where the top civil servants are part of the political elites/executive as confidential advisers, in the United State, the career civil service functions at some distance from the political executive. This is to ensure that those who create policy are directly responsible to the public (Adamolekun, 2004). .

However, it should be noted that during the first century of the American Presidential system of government, the dominant practice was for each president to appoint persons to all posts in the government service and these officials will leave office at the end of the president's term or terms of office. This practice was emulated in Nigeria courtesy of the 1988 Civil Service Reform, when the post of the Permanent Secretary was abolished and replaced with the post of Director-General. These Director-Generals were appointed by the President or Governor and

leave office with them at the end of their respective term or germs. This arrangement was later abolished in 1997 by the Mike Akhigbe's Committee.

Origin of the conflict between the Political Elites and Public Administrators

It was the McPherson Constitution of 1952 which connected the Nigerian Politicians with the Executive Arm of the Government, thus making them a factor in Nigeria's government and administration. Before then, the colonial administrators combine legislative, judicial, political and executive functions. They were therefore the law makers, policy formulators and policy implementers. Within this period (1952), Nigeria had a legislative council with elected members who belonged to one party or the other. The Cabinet-Ministerial institution was also introduced. Ministers have collective responsibilities over matters as members of the central or regional cabinets. The pre-dominantly expatriate colonial administrators' higher civil servants were still in charge of their departments. While they were willing to cooperate with the new ministers, they are determine to be in charge of both policy and administration. This brought the higher civil service into conflict with the new political elites, which was regarded as part of the struggle for the effective transfer of power from the imperial authority to the nationalists. Thus planting the first phase of the seed of discord between the political elites and the public administrators (Adedeji, 1992).

The 1954 constitution which replaced the McPherson constitution gave the Ministers both collective and individual responsibility over the administration of the Ministries thus introducing in principle and form the Westminster-Whitehall model of cabinet system of government in Nigeria. The next event was the Nigerianization process period initiated by the Nationalist Party for patriotic reasons, partly in order to remove the anomaly whereby the political power would seemingly lie in the hands of Nigerians while administrative control continues to reside in the hands of colonial administrators, and partly because the political leaders were genuinely convinced that a Nigerianized higher civil service would cooperate more readily with the political elites than an expatriate controlled civil service and would in fact be more submissive or could be forced to do so (Adedeji, 1992).

The first generation of top Nigerian civil servants seemed over anxious to establish the master-servant relationships with the politicians partly out of gratitude and partly out of genuine desire on their part to ensure the success of the newly established nationalist government. However, the politicians were not reluctant to remind civil servants that the latter had not taken part in the "political struggle" and accordingly deserve to play a subordinate role. Thus politics had established its hegemony over administration and the politicians were lording it over the higher civil service. The second seed of discord had been sown ever since. The period 1960 - 1966 was marked by conflicts of growing intensity of constant interference by politicians in the administration of the civil service, particularly in such matters as appointments, promotion and discipline and by the arbitrary use of powers such as the indefinite suspension of some higher civil servants. In the same period, the average Minister then conceived his role as approving or disapproving whatever proposals or recommendations were placed before him by his Permanent Secretary. He expected the higher civil service to think out the policy and submit it for approval. During this period, the cases of Political Boss exercising his right and discharging his duty of giving leadership and laying down policy guidelines for his department were few (Adedeji, 1992)

The Conflict in the Colonial and Post colonial era

The turbulence between the Political elites and the Public Administrators is not a recent development, rather it has its root from the British Colonial Era. Within these period, there were

Conflicts between the Nigerian Ministers and their British Colonial Officials represented by Governor/Governor-General, Lieutenant-Governors/Governors and their Senior Civil Servants. Within the Colonial Executives there were two types of conflicts. These started with the Nigerian Ministers resentment of the veto power over policy possessed by the leading colonial officials at the Federal and Regional levels. The Nigerian Ministers then sought for means of neutralizing the veto power of the colonialists. For example, in Western Nigeria, the majority party, the Action Group (AG) rejected all but only one of the Governor's nominees for appointment as Ministers and got the Lieutenant-Governor to accept the list proposed by the Action Group Party Executives. Likewise, in the Eastern Nigeria, the Nigerian Ministers usually met privately under the Chairmanship of the Premier in order to establish common positions that they will pitch against the Governor's at the meetings of the Executive Council presided over by the Governor in the event of any disagreement (Adamolekun, 2004).

Another type of conflict as put forward by Adamolekun (2004), was between the Nigerian Ministers and the Colonial Senior Civil Servants in the Ministries and Departments. For example, the recorded account of leading Minister in the Executive Council for Northern Nigeria will suffice: Well, here we were, Ministers and Members of Executive Council, but we had no Ministries. We then found that, owing to a peculiarity in drafting the Constitution did not say in so many words that we were completely responsible for the departments assigned to us (which is what we believed to be the case): we were only responsible for the 'subjects'. So the department (or departments) concerned went gaily on as though they had not heard of our existence. I am quite sure that so far as some individuals were concerned, they were quite indifferent to our existence; even if they had heard of us they did not think we were worth consideration... The departments were very suspicious of the ministerial set up, for they saw in it, and very rightly too, the end of the empires they were running.

Another Minister in Western Nigeria also presented his experience with the Colonial Senior Civil Servants thus: Our understanding was that, however silent the Constitution might be on the point, the appointment of a Minister necessarily implied the existence of a Ministry. Officials in the Western Region had refused to accept our interpretation of the Constitution on this point, with the result that the Minister who should be the head of his Ministry was just an appendage to a Department presided over by a civil servant. The attitude of the heads of Departments and senior officials (all expatriates) was forbidding and irritating. The professed no loyalty to the Regional Government and they gave none, simply because constitutionally they were servants not (sic) of the Regional but of the Nigerian Government.

Similar problems were also experience in the Eastern Regional Government of Nigeria. This experience was summed up by Minister in the form of a motion carried in the House of Representative on the 30th of March 1953, as follows:

In the opinion of this House, the time has come for Ministers to have general direction and control of and individual responsibility for the departments within their portfolios.

On the relationship between Ministers and the Civil Servants, my colleagues and I would like to make it clear that control and responsibility for our departments does not mean that we want to hold in our hands the life and death of the civil servants in our Departments We accept the principle that the affairs of the Civil Service should be handed over to an independent Civil Service Commission. This respect for good, healthy traditions in the Civil Service naturally carries with it the corollary that civil servants will play their part faithfully; to advise the Ministers conscientiously while decisions are being formulated, but to remember that determination of policy is the function of Ministers and that once policy is determined it is the unquestioned, and indeed the unquestionable business of the civil servant to strive to carry out that policy with precisely the same good will whether he agrees with it or not.

Furthermore, in 1955, a Colonial Permanent Secretary and a Chief Secretary decided to bypass a Nigerian Federal Minister in charge of Information, in the preparation for the visit of Her Majesty the Queen to Nigeria. When the Federal Minister requested to know the reason as the Minister in charge of Information he was by-passed. The Colonial Permanent Secretary then informed the Minister that he has nothing to offer and that as the Permanent Secretary he is more experienced than the Minister. The Nigerian Minister later requested for the removal of the Colonial Permanent Secretary from his Ministry.

Therefore, in order to avoid further conflicts, a Handbook for officers joining the Western Region Public Service told Young Administrative Officers that as a young civil servant they must never forget that however well qualified and expert they may become in their job, they have not been elected to it by any vote; and that in a democratic country, it is the elected representatives, in their case, the Regional Legislature - who must settle the lines on which the government of the community is to work, as such, they Administrators must do what the Regional Legislature wants them to do, and that their loyalty is to the Minister of the day. On the relationship between the Minister and Permanent Secretary, the White Paper on the Reorganization of Ministries in the Western Region stated that the Permanent Secretary acts on behalf of and in the name of the Minister and that he must answer to him for what he has done on behalf of the Minister, it is thus the essential function of the Permanent Secretary to ensure the regularity of all acts performed by or on behalf of the Minister. The Permanent Secretary is therefore the chief adviser on policy questions arising out of the subjects and functions within the portfolio (Adamolekun, 2004).

The Failure of the immediate Post Colonial Political Elites

Adedeji (1992) gave the reasons for the failure of the political elites to play effectively their ascribed roles of policy makers during the first republic. These reasons were as relevant in this 21st century in Nigeria as it was in the 19th and 20th centuries:

- i) First, the inability of the Politicians to represent national interest. They mistaken party and personal interests as the national interest; of course, the higher civil service gradually assumed the role of the custodian of public conscience, the trustee and protector of true national interest against wily and corrupt politicians. This is true because a ruling political party in Nigeria has broken into two factions. One faction with seven governors is being controlled by a one time Vice-President of Nigeria and the other faction is controlled by the party National Chairman. All these happened because of party or personal interests.
- ii) Political instability sapped the energies of the politicians. The internal crisis within the Action Group and the subsequent split of the party sapped the energies of the politicians and the government of Western Nigeria for years. In fact they never recovered until the party was

banned in 1966. Just as presently internal crisis within the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) political parties have sapped their energies to the extent that the PDP and some of their Governors are not the best of friends.

iii) There was the question of the caliber of the persons who were appointed Ministers. While some of them were highly educated and experienced for the posts to which they were appointed, quite a number were ill-equipped either by education or training or by experience for the post to which they were appointed; as such they have no choice but to depend on their Permanent Secretaries for leadership.

iv) The dependence of Ministers on their Permanent Secretaries because of their incapacities and inadequacies brought a great deal of resentment and lack of mutual trust and confidence partly because of the agonizing realization by the Politicians of their limitations and partly because of the ignorance and general ineptitude of the so called political masters in policy fields bred contempt for them from the higher civil service.

v) There is the excessive control of and interference with administration by the political elites. The task of supervising junior staff was made difficult due to their interference; the public service commission was rendered ineffective by the interference of the politicians in appointment, promotion, and discipline of civil servants.

vi) Finally, there was the gross misunderstanding of the true meaning and nature of power. In as much as it is true that politicians are men and women who compete for power with a view to using it to achieve goals in the areas of public welfare and economic and social change, the First Republic Nigerian Politicians generally tended to behave like the politicians described by Naipaul cited by Adedeji (1992, page 21):

Politicians are people who truly make something out of nothing. They have few concrete gifts to offer. They are not engineers or artists or makers. They are manipulators. Having no gifts to offer, they seldom know what they seek. They might say they seek power. But their definition of power is vague and unreliable. Is power the chauffeured limousine...the men from Special Branch outside the gates, the skilled and differential servants?... Is it power to bully or humiliate or take revenge?The politician is more than a man with a cause, even when this cause is no more than self-advancement, he is driven by some little hurt, some little incompetence.

Adedeji (1992, further stated that in the Third World Countries, particularly in Africa, many politicians tend to mistake words and the acclamation of words for power. Politics for them are a do-or-die, once-for-all affair. It is a "winner-takes-all" game, with no second prizes whatever. Such as the state of the political process in Nigeria by the end of the First Republic (and the subsequent republics that followed). For example, he stated that the first military administration made some civil servants to be heard and more powerful in their own right, such that the 1975-1979 military administration shocked the country when it cleaned up the public service to remove abuses it claimed had crept into the service, with the hope that the powers of the public administrators had been curbed; rather the action of the military tended to erode the confidence the civil servants had in themselves and the creation of the distrust of the leadership in their eyes.

In an ideal situation, the roles of the political elites and the public administrators are interrelated but distinct. In principle, policy determination and goal setting are for the political leadership, while the implementation of policy to meet goals set by the political leadership is for the public administrators. In practice however, the roles of public administrators and politicians were not so strictly detached. The civil servants not only implements policy decisions but also influence the nature and outcome of such policies in his advisory capacity. The civil servants perform

some functions which are political in nature, which do not involve conflicts between rival partisan or interest groups (Adebayo, 2004). Contemporarily, the political elites abhorred anything that will make the public administrator heard or seen in whatever capacity. Also, the public administrator abhorred any act of the political elites that is not in tune with the rules and regulations.

Efficiency and its problems in the Public Service

Having discussed the genesis of conflicts in the Public Service, what then were the causes of inefficiency in the Public Service of Nigeria? Adebayo, (2004) posits that the public service of Nigeria is often described by the press and members of the public generally as inefficient. What precisely do people understand by the notion of efficiency? The Oxford English dictionary defines efficiency as fitness or power to accomplish, or success in accomplishing the purpose intended; adequate power effectiveness, efficacy. The Encyclopaedia of social sciences described efficiency as follows: Efficiency in the sense of a ratio between input and output, effort and result, expenditure and income, cost and the resulting pleasure, is a relatively recent term. These are the notion of efficiency in the context of Public Administration.

Causes of Inefficiency in the Nigerian Public Service

Certain factors were described by Adebayo (2004), as being responsible for inefficiency in the Nigerian Public Service. Among these were the recruitment of mediocre or totally unsuitable candidates in preference to candidates of high merit is one of the banes of the Nigerian Public Service. These can be traced to candidates who may be blood relations, from a family friend or someone from the same clan or town with the officers concerned with the recruitment. Another cause of inefficiency in the service is inadequate training; because since the introduction of a result oriented approach to public service following the report of the Public Service Review Commission of 1972, there had been improvements in the area of training. But attention appears to be focused on senior management training to the relative neglect of the numerous other cadres in the public service. The lower cadres in the public service need training. These cadres are often hostile or downright cold or rude to members of the public who approached them for information or service. This is followed by the deterioration in health whereby most Nigerian Public Officers whose health has deteriorated to the point of permanent impairment of efficiency, never learn to retire gracefully from public office. They hold on and drag themselves to work, painfully labouring with their official assignment by day, and collapsing on their backs after office hours. Mental concentration on work is difficult for a man afflicted with a physical ailment, usually aggravated by the psychological fear of the possible outcome of the illness.

In addition, there is the great malady which afflicts most of the work in the public service; which is the complete absence of goals or objectives forming targets for public officers to pursue. A public officer placed on a schedule of work, or assigned to take charge of some specific department or organ of government, believes that his main role is to attend to any work coming into the in-tray on his table. As he comes in every morning and sits at his desk, he glances at the in-tray and commences one after the other, to attend to the letters and other papers placed in files in the tray. The Conflict between Administrators and Professional Officers is a major cause of inefficiency in the Public Service. The situation which the public service review commission in Nigeria saw and described in 1974 is still very much the same today. The Report of the Commission observed that as between the administrators and professionals the relationship is one of acrimony and antagonism in a conflict rather than partnership in an

enterprise, with resultant lack of the team work necessary in modern management. Closely to this, is that Political developments have in Nigeria during the past years inadvertently brought in its wake a lowering of efficiency in the public service. First there was the creation of states. This brought with it the catapulting of officers to the various ranks in the public service to meet the needs of the new States. This process of mass preferment was sudden and most of the officials involved were ill-prepared to assume higher responsibilities. Another major impediment to the efficiency in the Public Service is the Legislative negative interference in the administration of Ministries and Public Enterprises or Organization by the various Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Politics had crept into the Public Service as a result of the second enthronement of democracy in Nigeria from 1999 to date. The clear line of demarcation existing between the public administrator and the political elites as far as the involvement of the former in politics has been removed by the political elites. To the extent that the position of the permanent secretary has been politicized such that becoming a permanent secretary is no more based on experience, qualification, length of service and training but on who the political elites wants and not necessarily a public official. In addition, public administrators are forced to go to their various towns and villages to canvass for the ruling government's political party.

Reforms In the Public Service

Conflicts in the Public Service invariably breed inefficiency that ultimately led to the putting into place various reforms with the aim of ameliorating the scourges. As such the Adebo Commission came into existence in 1970 after the Nigerian Civil War, that led to a serious setback in Nigerian economy and workers faced lots of problems. General Gowon then appointed Chief S.O. Adebo Commission, to review wages and salaries in the public service. The Commission at the end, identified the civil war as the cause of inflation in the Nigerian Economy. The Commission recommended uniform minimum wage in public and private sectors and encouraged the formulation of Trade Unions among others. However, the Government did not accept all the recommendations of the Commission and workers on their part condemned the award, describing it as far too short of their expectations. General Gowon in 1972, because of the various reactions that emanated from the Adebo Commission, again set up the Udoji Public Service Review Commission.

The Commission reviewed the organizational structure and management of the Nigerian Public Service. At the end, the Commission recommended N720.00 as the minimum wage; created grade level 17 salary in the public sector; introduced new management style based on Planning, Programming and Budgeting System and Management By Objectives. Virtually, all Senior Professionals in government service rejected the award because of the wide disparities between their earnings and those of their counterparts working in administrative capacities (Adebayo, 2004). In 1988, the Federal Military Government under General Ibrahim Babangida decided to make a reform by enacting the Civil Service (Reorganization) decree no. 43 of 1988, which aimed at building and sustaining a viable, dynamic, efficient and result oriented civil service through professionalization. The reform made the Minister/Commissioner the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the Ministry and the Permanent Secretary becomes the Director-General to leave the service at the end of the term or terms of the President or Governor; The reform further emphasized on good leadership, accountability and result-oriented management; Also under the reform, each Ministry will appoint, promote and discipline its staff through the Personnel Management Board as against the Civil Service Commission, which now supervises

their actions. Promotions in the Civil Service under the Reform were based on 50% performance; 30% interview; 15% additional qualification and 5% for seniority (Aminu, 1995). Late General Sani Abatcha, when he became the Head of State in 1993, set up the Civil Service Reforms Review Panel in 1997, under the Chairmanship of Rear Admiral O.M. Akhigbe. The highlights of the Panel's recommendations that were accepted by the government included: the Repeal of decree 43 of 1988 and the promulgation that the management of the Civil Service should be guided by the provision of the Constitution, the Civil Service Rules, Financial Regulations and Circulars; that Permanent Secretaries should revert and be Accounting Officers and not Ministers or Commissioners anymore; that the post of Head of Service should be re-established; that recruitment into the Federal Civil Service should be based on merit and Federal Character at the entry point; and that maturity for promotion should be 2 years for officers on Grade Level 01 to 13 and 3 years for officers on Grade Level 14 to 17 etc (Akhigbe, 1997.)

The 2003 Public Service Reform was based on a new Public Administration Paradigm, known as New Public Management. The objectives of the 2003 Public Service Reform, according to the then Head of Service, Yayale Ahmed, was that the government want a situation whereby the Civil Service as a machinery of government is the main implementer of decisions, therefore translating the intentions and actions that will impact positively on the lives of ordinary Nigerians. That ideally, the machinery of government, should be efficient and productive; service delivery should be unquestionable, and corruption should not be part of the system. Competence, he continued, should be the whole essence, together with loyalty, patriotism and ability to direct and advice political leaders on the way forward. Also, that there is need to inject fresh graduates and new ideas into the service (Ahmed, 2005). The 2003 Public Service Reform emanated from a comprehensive reform programme: National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS). This programme focused on four (4) main areas: improving the macroeconomic environment; pursuing structural reforms; strengthening public expenditure management and implementing institutional and governance reforms.

Prominent among the 2003 reform were the Structural Reforms, specifically, the Public Service Reform and the Public Enterprises Reforms. The Reform emphasizes the reduction in the size of personnel within the service, which then stood at 160,000, with 70% within the ages of 50 years and above and made up of Officers on grade levels 01-06 (Ahmed, 2005). About 35,000 workers were severed from the Public Service. This is because, government spends a significant portion of its resources on workers salaries and allowances, and thus, it has become necessary for the federal government to reduce the size of the Public civil service. The sum of N26 billion was paid to the workers affected by the exercise, while the sum of N2.598 billion was to be used to settle workers in the first phase of the exercise (Imam, 2009). To effectively carryout the retrenchment exercises in the Federal Government Ministries and Parastatals, the government set-up the Bureau of Public Service Reforms, with Mal. Nasir el-Rufai as its Chairman. The criteria for the retrenchment exercise were: workers whose mode of employment were not proper; Workers who have attained the mandatory age of retirement or years of service, i.e. 60 years of age or 35 years of service; workers with bad record; workers with ill-health, i.e. the medically unfit; workers who were unable to pass their promotions examination after several attempts; workers with very low qualification; workers with cases of serious misconduct and workers who voluntarily retire from service during the exercise. The Reform also abolished the position of cooks, stewards, gardeners, drivers and security

personnel. Those on ground were all retrenched. These positions will henceforth be contracted out (Generic Guidelines for the Reform of Parastatals, 2006).

In line with these, in November 2006, the Federal Capital Territory Administration planned to retrench 4,398 staff from Grade Level O1-15. Also, the Federal Ministry of Works will sack 4,427 staff. While in the case of parastatal, the University of Maiduguri had terminated retired and outsourced 711 staff as part of the reform exercise (Reform Committee Report, 2007). All staff so affected will be given pre-retirement/disengagement training on how to manage their lives and disengagement/retirement benefits, after which, they will all be issued with their pay-cheques. One of the aims of this reform is to have fewer qualified personnel who will be adequately remunerated. To this end, the Federal Government had approved new salary package known as the Consolidated Salary Structure for federal civil servants, with effect from 1st January, 2007 (Circular No. SWC/S/04/S. 302/1, 2007). The items consolidated with the basic salary were transport allowance, meal subsidy, utility allowance, leave grant, furniture allowance, responsibility allowance etc (Circular No. SWC/S/04/S. 302/1, 2007). In the area of privatization of Public Enterprises, between 1999 and 2006, about 116 enterprises were privatized. In addition, the telecommunication sector was liberalized and GSM came on board to ameliorate the shortcomings of the telecommunication industries in Nigeria. (Okonjo-Iweala and Phillip, 2007).

These reforms were aimed at turning around the public service for better and efficient performances. In other words, some of these reforms were aimed at ensuring the supremacy of the political elites over the administrative elites, the process which further damaged the service, hence a reversal to the status quo.

The Impact of the Public Service Reform

The usefulness of the public service reforms in Nigeria varied from one reform to the other, depending on the objectives to be attained. The Adebo Public Service Reform of 1970 was able to cushion the effect of inflation bedeviling the country as a result of three years civil war. The reform again ensures that both workers in the public and the private sector enjoyed equal minimum wage, this discourages comparison and competition between the two sectors in terms of minimum wage. In addition the reform spearheaded the establishment of the Public Service Commission, Labour court, National Board for Productivity etc. The Udoji Commission of 1972 serves as a milestone in reforms in Nigeria because it was a thorough-going public service review. It introduced a unified salary grading system which terminates at grade level 17; it provided that promotion should be based on merit in addition to other criteria; more importantly, the commission advocated new management techniques such as Project Management, Planning, Programming and Budgeting System and the Management By Objectives and also introduced the Open Reporting System as against the Confidential Reporting System. The Commission abolished the class structure in the Public Service and unified the generalist and the specialists so that both can rise to the top most position on equal pay. In addition, the commission ensures that Public Servants are constantly trained to meet changing circumstances and technologies.

The 1988 Civil Service Reform was an American Civil Service System adopted by the Babangida Administration; this was a sharp departure from the British parliamentary civil service system where the Minister is primarily concerned with dictating political direction while the day-to-day running of the department and all administrative issues are the

responsibility of the Permanent Secretary. However, the reform removed the uncertainties in the role of the political head of a department and that of his chief civil servant adviser. The removal of the uncertainties is hoped would automatically remove the constant source of conflict (which had its root from the colonial times to post independence as earlier enumerated) and friction between the two functionaries. The 1988 reform also infused new life into the civil service giving it purpose and direction and thereby overhauling the whole civil service machine to make it more efficient and effective and better able to service a development-oriented modern economy. To be candid, the usefulness of the 1988 civil service reform is highly limited.

The 2003 Public Service Reform is one of the highly organized reform programmes in Nigeria. This is because the reform was part of a package of reforms. In fact, the Public Service Reform this time around it was under taken by an autonomous body - the Bureau for Public Service Reform- headed by a Director-General. The reform first and foremost drastically reduced the number of public servants via retrenchment, outsourcing and voluntary retirement. In addition, about one thousand (1000) first and second class upper class of degree candidates were recruited into the Public Service; the reform took care of the lingering issues of ghost workers when it detected and removed eight thousand (8,000) ghost names from the pay roll of the government; the reform reduced the burden of the government having to pay pensions and gratuities to cleaners, messengers, office attendants, cooks, stewards, gardeners, drivers and security personnel. These categories of personnel will henceforth be engaged from Contracting Firms. As a result of the 2003 reform measures, the salaries of public servants were consolidated with the aim of increasing efficiency and productivity.

The Fall-out of the Public Service Reforms

All the public service reforms discussed above have in one way or the other been abused: Common to most of the reforms discussed, were the issues of lack of implementation of some aspects of the various recommendations made by the Commissions for either selfish reasons or deliberate attempt to frustrate a particular government's good intention. The Adebayo commission's recommendation on the setting up of the Productivity Board etc was taken up then by the New Nigerian Newspaper, when that recommendation was not implemented. Also, the workers organizations condemned the salary award describing it as far too short of their expectations. Nigerian Workers immediately started agitating for more pay. This led the government to set up the Udoji Public Service Commission.

It was very disheartening that in spite of the management techniques introduced by the Udoji commission to promote efficiency, productivity and make the service result oriented, the purge of 1975 and 1984, made the public service to deteriorate rapidly to the verge of collapse because these purges have no rational basis to account for the sacking of 10,000 highly flying public servants. This exercise destroyed the morale in the public service leading to frustration and uncertainty which inevitably shattered productivity and efficiency. This was properly put forward by Karl (2007). Yet many of Mohammed administration's policies, however widely acclaimed at the time, proved damaging in the long run. and embarked on an exercise of "cleansing" ten thousand allegedly incompetent and corrupt public servants. The purge proved to be a body blow to morale from which the civil service has never recovered, according to the then Inspector General of Police M.D. Yusuf "All the old assurances that the civil service had of staying in the office - they cannot be sacked without due process - were thrown overboard."

While General Olusegun Obasanjo who stepped-in after the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed, lamented by saying that:

This administration has tried to reshape and redirect the society since its inception in July 1975. Although we have achieved a halt from the drift of the past, it was to a clan break. We started with mass retirements from our public service in the hope that new lessons would be learnt and new attitudes cultivated. The popular acclamation which the exercise received from the public accentuated our hopes but after a short time, the hopes receded. In their utterances, most Nigerians displayed shocking callousness and sadism, and in their actions gross indiscipline and selfishness. I came to realize later that what really interested many Nigerians in the retirement exercise were not the positive lessons of it but the misfortune it brought to some families. Immediately the exercise was halted, all the enthusiasms hitherto displayed disappeared and the people relaxed into their careless old ways of indiscipline, inefficiency and slackness while the Government, in spite of its efforts, turned out to be the victim of their gullible criticism of these same ills which they have refused to abandon. A society that measures the effectiveness of any Government by the number of forced retirement and dismissal of public officers and takes delight in the misfortune and downfall of others must be a sick and inhuman society.

The 1988 reforms virtually destroyed what was left of the Public Service. This was based first on the testimonies of States that attended a national workshop on the 1988 civil service reform, who condemned the reform and blamed it for the collapse of the civil service in their respective states. Alison (1990) put it this way: Why should a senior officer who has held a responsible position for over ten years wake up one day to hear on the radio or read in the news paper that he has been removed from office for incompetence, declining productivity, old age etc. by a Minister without prior notice, as if these were offences of fraud etc. discovered over night.

Specifically, the following abuses (Adebayo, 2004) arose from the 1988 reform which was clearly responsible for the collapse of the public service: with the abolition of the post of Head of Civil Service, the service was left without a head who should provide leadership and ensure that all parts of the civil service machinery function smoothly. There was no one to provide leadership, motivation and inspiration. Each department was left to its own devices. Also, the decision to make the Minister/Commissioner the accounting officer of his Ministry led to financial recklessness and outrageous corruption. The check and balances which operated when career civil servants were accounting officers were no longer there. Minister/Commissioners were political appointees who were in post for only a brief while and were intent on making as much money as they could. This was clearly followed by the politicization of the top echelon of the civil service together with the demand that they must retire with the government which appointed them, did a lot of havoc to the services. Efficient and experienced officers were lost rapidly with every change of government. Morale was destroyed in the service since serving officers knew that to aspire to the highest position was to be ready to be thrown out.

The requirement that civil servants must make their career in one single Ministry, under the name of specialization, deprived serving officers of the opportunity to move round various Ministries to gain experience. It meant that each Ministry had to recruit new candidates even though there were capable and experienced hands languishing in other Ministries from where they could have been deployed. This was one of the reasons for the bloating of the Public Service since 1988 to date. Another factor responsible for the "bloating" of the civil service

was the stipulation that every Ministry may have up to a maximum of five operational departments and three common services department. The practical result was that every ministry aspires to the maximum allowed. Small size ministries expanded to operate on the maximum permissible level. There was also massive brain drain and exodus of brilliant, seasoned and experienced officers. There were two categories. The first category was those appointed directors-general and who had to leave with the administration which appointed them. The second categories were the officers down the line who, seeing the limitation to their career expectations left the service for greener pastures.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the conflicts between the political elites and the public administrators are not a recent development. It has its root in the colonial period. On close observation of the entire analysis, it will be discovered the reforms in the Public Sector in Nigeria emanated from two sources: The first source was due to the lack of trust between the Political Masters and the Higher Public Servants which caused constant conflicts in the running of the government. The Political Masters feel that the insistent by the Public Servants to go by the rules and regulations, the Public Servants were undermining their authority and superiority thus felt being over showed. There is the problem of inferiority complex as earlier explained, on the side of the Politicians. While the public servant does his/her work diligently in an anonymous manner, the politicians prefer the fun-fare approach which the public servant distastes and often ignores. Therefore, the evolutionary relationship between the political masters and the public servants earlier detailed is a clear testimony and provided the genesis to most of the public sector reforms to enable the political masters have their ways as able demonstrated with the 1975, 1984, 1988 and 2003 reforms.

Secondly, the contemporary reforms emanated from the International Monetary Fund's and the World Bank Economic Reform Agenda, which they set as a pre-condition for providing assistance. It was General Babangida who accepted the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) between 1986 and 1993, using it as the frame work for commercialization and privatization of public enterprises (Jega, 2007). These were re-enforced by the Obasanjo administration (1999-2007). The Administration privatized public enterprises and reduced the labour force. All these reforms only succeeded in reducing the public sector to: a tool to be used and manipulated by the political masters. For example, even within the contemporary political setting, public servants like the Permanent Secretaries and Directors were being compelled by some State Governors to go to their various constituencies/local governments and canvass for the ruling party in their respective states or else they will be labelled as belonging to the opposition party or an outright lost of their jobs or positions; to unproductive and inefficient service with demoralized and focus less civil servants who only worked for survival and not for the progress of their fatherland because of threat and intimidation from the political masters; a tool to be manipulated by the Bretton Woods institutions who prefer technocratic policies than to be subjected to the alertness of the Nigerian public servant in meeting their wishes in putting through their agendas. This paper was able to highlight the dichotomy between public service and civil service; the genesis of the conflict between the political elites and the public service; the factors facilitating inefficiency in the Public Sector, the uses and abuses of the various reforms in the public sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nigerian Public Sector requires complete mental revolution of the Political Masters and the Public Servants. The rules, regulation, procedures etc guiding the Public Sector are not the problems of the Public Sector. Rather, it is the conflict between the Political Masters and the Public Servants. There is therefore the need for the two parties to go back to the drawing board and iron out their differences in the interest of the country. It should be made clear who does what, how and when, to what extent, so that the Public Sector will grow. The Political Elites should accept that there is a need for continuity in running the State i.e. the machinery of government have to be piloted by the Public Servants during or after their respective tenures, as such it is not wise to leave a vacuum. Hence the need to alienate the top public servants from politics.

The contemporary problem facing the public sector is that of corruption. The reason is simply due to lack of security of tenure and the various abuses from the political masters in terms of financial accountability. A situation whereby a public servant retires and cannot get his or her entitlement to settle down to a retiring life, of course, calls for a rethinking on the part of the public servant while he or she is still active in service i.e. try and provide for a raining day! This can be stopped by returning confidence into the service; as an interim measure, death penalty to corrupt officials as in China, will automatically stopped it.

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