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A Critique Of The Applicability Of Max Weber's Ideal Bureaucracy To African Public Service

Olugbenga Ebenezer Olatunji
Department Of Political Science, Faculty Of The Social Sciences
Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria

Abstract
This paper examines the effects of ecology on the adoption and practice of Max Weber's ideal bureaucracy in the African public service. Beginning with a comprehensive statement of the main propositions and criticisms of Weber's ideal bureaucracy, the paper goes ahead to identify the ecological factors of colonial origin, developmental history, culture, family, social structure, economy and politics, among others, that have impacted on the adoption and practice of Weber's ideal bureaucracy in African states. The paper notes that, due to the historically specific social milieu within which Weber developed his ideal bureaucracy, its adoption and operation in Africa has to be tempered by relevant ecological factors in order to adapt it to local realities and produce expected results in the African environment.

1.Introduction

Bureaucracy is the major idea in modern administration while bureaucratic organizations constitute the dominant feature of modern industrial, globalized society. Max Weber (1864–1920), the foremost exponent of the theory of bureaucracy, rationalizes it as a response to the problems of administration, no matter the nature of the society. For him: The development of the modern form of the organization of corporate groups in all fields is nothing less than identical with the development and continual spread of bureaucratic administration…its development is, to take the most striking case, the most crucial phenomenon of the modern Western State. The whole pattern of everyday life is cut to fit this framework…for the needs of mass administration to-day, it is completely indispensable.   (Weber, 1952:24).

Before Weber, however, the essential features of bureaucracy had been identified in the pre-industrial or pre-modern states of China, Greece and Rome (Plato and Xenophon, 1910:82-84; Shih, 1941; Haralambos and Head, 1980:283; and Adebayo 1981:93). It was also identified in African administrative history, particularly among the Zulu of South Africa who maintained a well organized, standing army under Shaka, and among the inhabitants of ancient Egypt, who built the Egyptian pyramids and established the Azars University, one of the first in the world (Lepawski, 1949:78-81; Rodney, 1972:56-83, 126, 144; and Mamdani, 2002:39-61). It was also identified in the 19th Century government in Azuza (Smith, 1960: 34–70) and in the government of the Fulani Zazau around 1865 (Smith, 1960: 73–123). Also, elements of bureaucracy were identified in the Zaria Native Authority system under the Emir between 1950 and 1970 (Yahaya, 1980: 6).

However, Weber was the first to provide an influential and systematized social- scientific analysis of the phenomenon of bureaucracy. He pioneered other ideas related to bureaucracy, ranging across a whole spectrum of historical, political, economic and social thought. Weber identified the traditional, the charismatic and the legal-rational bases of authority and argued that the ideal bureaucracy is technically superior to all others where the goal is the attainment of efficiency in large-scale organizations (Haralambos and Head, 1980:283-284). In Weber's words:

Experience tends universally to show that the purely bureaucratic type of administrative organization, that is, the monocratic variety of bureaucracy – is, from a purely technical point of view, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally the most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings. It is superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and its reliability. It thus makes possible a particularly high degree of calculability of results … It is finally superior both in intensive efficiency and in the scope of its operations, and is capable of application to all kinds of administrative tasks.   (Weber, 1978:223).

Since then, the concept has been applied to the organization and administration of human society, the public services inclusive, irrespective of the level of development of that society. However, the avalanche of data from cross-cultural studies on bureaucracy does suggest that attempts to apply Weber's ideal-type to public bureaucracies in non-Western countries suffer setbacks. To succeed, such would require explicit synthesis of conceptual theory with the results of empirical field research Writers in this perspective include Gaus (1947), Presthus (1959), Burin (1952), Riggs (1964) and Jan – Erik Lane (2000), among others.

In particular, Friedrich (1952:29) argues that "whatever aspects or criteria a working concept of bureaucracy should stress is a question which should be settled, not by an intentional typology, but by comparison of relevant historical documents". In

Gouldner (1952:49) submits that Weber's ideal-type bureaucracy failed to take cognizance of variations in bureaucratic forms. Emphasizing the importance of ecology in the study of public administration, Robert Presthus has noted, quite correctly, that: Personality structures are not discarded like snakes' skins when one enters the bureaucratic arena; rather, the patterns of bureaucratic authority and deference reflect the values of institutions through which the bureaucrat has grown. (Presthus, 1959).

Therefore, it is the aim of this study to examine the application of Weber's ideal bureaucracy to the Nigerian public service. In doing so, we shall look at both the strengths and failures of the theory in explaining the situation of the Nigerian public service. The intention is to carry out an assessment of the ecological factors that condition the performance of the Nigerian public service vis-à-vis the prescriptions of the ideal bureaucracy.

2.The Ideal Bureaucracy
Webber's theory of bureaucracy was propounded on the basis of certain assumptions about the man that agrees with Douglas McGregor's theory X, one of which is that man is inherently lazy but is equally materialistic (Salawu, 2000:41) and interest-seeking. As such, man is portrayed as lacking self-discipline, highly deficient in the sense of responsibility and has the natural tendency to be controlled (Olufayo, 2000:4). In effect, Weber believed that man needs uniformity and "order" (Haralambos and Head, 1980:284) for him to do things right.

Two, that because of the above, man dislikes work but wants economic reward at the same time. He therefore pursues economic gain selfishly and competes, mostly in an unfair manner. It was on this basis, and in order to combat the above-mentioned tendencies in man that Weber designed his ideal bureaucracy, suggesting that the use of coercive authority would enhance efficient performance in organizations. He opined that the increasing level of rationalization in the society necessitates legal-rational domination. Hence, bureaucracies are organized according to rational principles in order to provide an effective organizational structure. It is designed to accomplish large-scale administrative tasks by coordinating the work of large numbers of persons in a systematic manner (Salawu, 2000: 38).

Weber (1947:329-349) argued that the effectiveness of legal authority rests on the acceptability of the validity of the following ideas:

One, that a given legal norm may be established by agreement or by imposing, on grounds of expediency or rational values or both, with a claim to obedience at least on the part of the members of the corporate group. Such affects all persons within the sphere of authority or of the power in question who stand in certain social relationships or carry our forms of social action which are relevant to the governing norm of the corporate group.   Two, that law consists in a consistent system of abstract rules that are normally intentionally established, which application to particular cases constitutes the administration of law. The administrative process, therefore, consists of the rational pursuit of the interests of the order governing the corporate group within limits set by legal precepts. Such should conform to generalized formulation and should be in tandem with the order governing the group, or at least not disapproved of it.

Three, as a result of the above, the typical person in authority occupies an "office", and is subject to an impersonal order to which his actions are oriented. Four, the person who obeys authority does so only in his capacity as a "member" of the group. Consequently, he obeys only "the law" and not the official. He owes obedience not to the official, but to the impersonal order. Obligation to obedience exists only within the rationally delimited authority that has been conferred on the official.

Furthermore, Weber summarized the fundamental categories of legal-rational authority to include:

- A continuous organization of official functions bound by rules;
- A specified sphere of competence, which defines what Weber calls an "administrative organ". It involves three elements, namely (i) a sphere of obligations to perform functions that have been marked off as part of a systematic division of labour, (ii) provision of the incumbent with authority to carry out the specified functions, and (iii) definition of the means of compulsion which use is not arbitrary but subject to certain conditions;
- The organization of offices follows the principle of hierarchy, where each lower office is subject to the control and supervision of a higher one;
- The rules that regulate the conduct of an office may be technical rules or norms. As such, only persons who possess adequate technical training are eligible for appointment as "officials";
- Separation of the members of the administrative staff from the ownership of the means of production;
- Following from the above, there is an absence of appropriation of official positions by the incumbent;
- Codification of administrative acts, decisions, orders and rules (in writing). These written documents, combined with a continuous organization of official functions constitute the "office", which is the focus of all types of modern corporate action; and
- Legal authority can be exercised in a wide variety of different forms that constitute the ideal types of officialdom or bureaucracy. (Weber, 1947:329-349).

With respect to the ultimate source of authority, Weber identities the charismatic, the traditional and the legal-rational (Haralambos and Head, 1980:281). He admits that there are very important types of rational imperative co-ordination which, with respect to the ultimate source of authority, belong to other categories and produce varying mixtures of rational, bureaucratic and charismatic components, an example of which he calls "patrimonial bureaucracy".

However, Webber argues that the purest type of exercise of legal authority is that which employs a bureaucratic administrative staff. This is the type in which only the head occupies his position of authority by virtue of appropriation, of election, or of having been designated for the succession (Weber, 1947:329-349). In spite of this, the authority of the head consists in a sphere of legal

"competence". In the purely bureaucratic administrative organization of the monocratic type, individual officials who are appointed function according to the following criteria:

- Officials are personally free and subject to authority only with respect to their impersonal official obligations;
- They are organized in a clearly defined hierarchy of "offices", the central focus of all modern corporate actions;
- Each office has a clearly defined sphere of competence in the legal sense;
- Officials are chosen through a free contractual relationship in a manner that guarantees free selection;
- Candidates are not elected, but selected on the basis of technical qualifications through examinations, interviews or certificates of competency;
- Officials are often remunerated by fixed salaries with a right to pensions;
- The office is the sole, or at least the primary, occupation of the incumbent;
- The office constitutes a career, where promotion depends either on seniority, achievement or a combination of both. Here, promotion depends on the judgement of superiors;
- The official is separated from ownership of the means of administration. He cannot appropriate his position; and finally
- He is subject to strict and systematic discipline and control in the conduct of the office. (Weber, 1947:329-349).

3.Criticisms of Weber's Ideal Bureaucracy

Weber's concept of the ideal bureaucracy has been criticized by many scholars, some of whom doubt the scientific status of Weber's methodology in arriving at his 'ideal types'. As Carl Friedrich argues, Weber's method in arriving at his ideal types was not empirical. He argues that:

Weber…instead of proceeding by empirical observation and analysis of the ascertainable givens of (an) experience, sets forth his "ideal types" as mental constructs which are neither derived by a process of deductive rationalization from higher concepts, not built up from empirical data by relevant inference, nor demonstrably developed as working hypothesis from such data.   (Friedrich, 1952:28).

He describes Weber's discussion of bureaucracy as a "nebulous entity" because of the methodological confusion that is associated with his notion of "ideal types". As far as he was concerned, "Weber's concept of 'ideal types' contravenes the standards of empirical science and implies some kind of intuitional ground which appears beyond rational analyses". At best, the propositions would qualify not as theory, but as hypotheses (Friedrich, 1952:28, 29). Parsons (1937:605) also argue that a general ideal type is a construction of a hypothetical course of events with two other characteristics that detract from the virtues of empirical inquiry, namely (1) abstract generality; and (2) the ideal type exaggeration of empirical reality. Weber simply based his 'ideal-type' bureaucratic construction on intuition, rendering the theory relatively innocent of "spatio-temporal cautions, constructed … out of elements which may be constant, regardless of varying social structures" (Gouldner, 1952:48).

Two, in presenting his ideas on the ideal bureaucracy, Weber relied extensively on the German experience and tradition which closely approximated the Eastern world view that is contrary to the Western experience in significant respects. Thus, Friedrich opines that "… Weber's fully developed bureaucracy is most nearly represented by three modern organizations namely an army, a business concern without any sort of employee or labour participation in management, or a totalitarian party and its bureaucratic administration (Friedrich, 1952:31-32). Weber's use of the words "imperative control", "discipline" and "power", vibrates with something of the Prussian enthusiasm for the military type of organization, so that his analysis of bureaucracy bars the way to any kind of consultative or cooperative managerial pattern (Parsons, 1937: 324, 152). However, experience indicates that the opposite is an integral part of the management culture in other parts of the world. To an extent, therefore, by omitting the place of morale and motivation, in his analysis, Weber's bureaucracy may not guarantee effective result-oriented administration in other places, contrary to Weber's assumptions.

Three, Weber avoids any statement of scientific exactitude on what 'responsibility' entails, the conditions under which it functions, and what determines its operations or limits its scope. As such, his analysis of bureaucracy fails to discuss the problems of policy formulation and implementation, two important issues that public bureaucracies must deal with. Because implementation of public policy takes place mainly through the instrumentality of public bureaucracy, Weber's bureaucracy may not be clear enough to deal with grey areas on such issues in every culture.

Scholars of various persuasions have leveled various other criticisms against bureaucracy. Examples include the Marxist–Leninist perspective that views bureaucracy as an apparatus through which the few who rule the state exercise domination over the rest of the society, and a means of consolidating and perpetuating the capitalist social order. Lenin believed that the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat would gradually wipe out the bureaucratic apparatus of the capitalist class. This would come about, he argued, as all members of the civil society are enlisted as bureaucrats, all with equal pay (Lenin, 1969). Other critics include Merton (1968), Michels (1949), Blau (1963, 1974), Adesina (2000) and Olaoye (2002), among others.

The main lines of criticism of Weber's bureaucratic theory can be summarized as follows:

- That bureaucracy involves a danger of the means becoming the end or goal as procedures become ritualized and the official strives to apply all rules to every detail of the job. Because bureaucracies are usually characterized by red tape, formalism, rigid rules, precision and reliability, Merton (1968) argued, behaviour becomes stereotyped in ways that may not be appropriate to the specific set of circumstances currently confronting the bureaucrat. The results include conformity, timidity and conservatism that may not serve the needs of the organization for adaptation and goal achievement (Sofer, 1973). This is especially true in periods of change, uncertainties and emergencies.

- Because office holding is based on rights and duties in an atmosphere where communication is not emphasized; insensitivity to the clientele may result. This may prove very costly in the case of public bureaucracies serving sensitive, educated, sophisticated and a more demanding clientele as of modern society.
- Standardization makes change difficult when circumstances change. This has been the bane of development in the new and developing states of the Third World, Africa inclusive. Indeed, routinization is opposed to man's freedom, his spontaneity and his internationality. Bureaucracy replaces decision-making activity with routine procedures, thus negating the principle of accountability, an essential component of public bureaucracies. Furthermore, the hierarchical structure of appointment, control and accountability without any element of consensus runs counter to the notion that decisions should be made jointly by superiors and their subordinates in order to promote responsibility and to foster transformational leadership.
- By excessive reliance on rules and orders, bureaucracy breeds conservatism, timidity and under-utilizes human potentials in the organization. This is particularly detrimental to goal achievement in the public services in developing countries where training, acquisition of modern equipment and new ideas are either not taken seriously or misapplied. This may breed low performance; inhibit the ability to make correct decisions and to achieve high efficiency in any organization.

In spite of the above and many other dysfunctions, bureaucracy remains an inevitable feature of modern societies, which, therefore, must come to terms with it within their particular experiences. As Aluko (2000:77) has argued, "bureaucracy can be modified to reflect the peculiarity and the uniqueness of … culture to accommodate the influx of change in ideas, culture and values, and adapt to new situations or changing circumstances". It is on this basis that we turn now to examine the application of the ideal bureaucracy to the public service in Africa, bearing in mind the ecology of African public administration.

4.The Importance Of Ecology To Public Administration

Ecology refers to the study of the relationship of a system to its total environment. John Gaus popularized the concept of ecology in the study of public administration in 1947. Since then, it has grown in acceptability as many scholars recognized its importance to the understanding of public administration. Political ecology implies the study of the relationship of a political system to its environment (Plano, Riggs and Robin, 1982:102). The ecology of African public administration implies the study of the relationship of the African public service to its total environment, which includes physical, cultural and social components. These are considered to have a great significance for the performance of the public services in the continent.Emphasizing the impact of ecology on national bureaucracies, Aluko has noted that: Bureaucracies are products of the specific settings from where they originated. For instance, Weber's bureaucracy is associated with the Protestant ethnic and the German tradition and orientation. It is therefore interesting to note that bureaucracy has its socio-cultural dimensions…There are certain ways in which the culture of a society determines the type of bureaucracy that emerges within the society. This has been aptly demonstrated in Crozier's (1964) study of the French bureaucracy…Crozier found some uniqueness and some traits of cultural values traceable to the French people in the French bureaucracy… It is clear that bureaucracy cannot be rigidly divorced or separated from the immediate socio-cultural environment.

Agagu (2001:75) has posited that "the relevance of ecology in the analysis of comparative public administration is premised on the fact that bureaucracies and other political and administrative institutions are better understood if the forces, conditions, influences and values that shape them can be known and dealt with. The notion of ecology helps us to classify nations according to levels of development". For Adebayo and Olufayo (2000:96), "a critical assessment of any bureaucracy would reveal that the Weberian ideal type is hardly ever practiced to the letter in any organization. It is being constantly influenced by other (human and environmental) factors". In his effort to understand public administration in developing countries, Riggs (1964) went into details studying the environments in which such public services are located and function. For Robert Fried:

An even more important concept for Riggs was the ecology of administration. Here he joined the camp in the analysis of government bureaucracy that stressed the importance of social forces in shaping bureaucratic behaviour and conditioning performance. Riggs was combating the technocratic camp that stressed the cultural (or supra-cultural) imperatives of administrative organization and behaviour.   (Fried, 1990).

Indeed, it is from the environment that the public administrator perceives the problems to be resolved, the alternative possibilities within which choices can be made, the resources to be employed, and the support and opposition to policies and programmes … the clients to be served and regulated, the market forces which establishes the costs of the goods and services provided by government, special interest groups that have a particular concern about what the public and private institutions do, and which may offer support or opposition (Richardson and Baldwin, 1976:24). As such, Olaoye (2002:201) argued, "both politics, which determines policy, and administration, which executes policy exist in environments that have peculiar cultural, social, religious and legal under-pinnings that affect both policy determination and its execution".

Hague and Harrop, (1982:8) identified three popular approaches that are often adopted in the study of comparative public administration, namely the institutional, the behavioural and the functional. The latter two are considered as more appropriate for the study of public administration in developing countries, Africa inclusive. The institutional (also traditional or historical) approach does not emphasize the human dynamics involved in administration but concentrates on the study of structures. Therefore, it is considered as better suited for the analysis of administration in developed societies that have relatively stable institutions and systems.

For prismatic societies that are transiting on a continuum between tradition and modernity, and which exhibit clustered social structures that do not allow for clear dichotomies amongst the social, political, legal, economic and other institutions of society, the behavioural and functional approaches hold promises of offering better explanations of the socio-economic and political forces and processes. This is because, quite often, such societies run on hybrid structures and institutions that conform neither exactly to the traditional nor specifically to the modern administrative formats. They are unique institutions whose functioning cannot be

explained exclusively either by the traditional or modern approaches. An example of this is what Hyden, (1985) calls the "economy of affection" that captures the essence of the rationalized impacts of social structure on economic, social, political and administrative relations in prismatic societies of developing countries. Weber's ideal bureaucracy can neither comprehend nor explain the functioning of such systems in their totality. For the study of bureaucracy and administration in transitional societies of Africa, parts of Asia and Latin America, Riggs rejected the 'Sala' model and, instead, recommended what he called the "prismatic–Sala combination model":

… the inefficiency of the Sala (model) (for the analysis of public administration in transitional societies) is reinforced by the price indeterminacy of the bazaar–canteen, by pariah entrepreneurship and intrusive access to the elite, by the agglomeration of values, by strategic spending and strategic learning as instruments of elite recruitment, by poly-communalism and poly-normativism, by double talk, blocked throughputs, bifocalism and equivocacy, by the dependency syndrome, interference complex and formalism effect   (Riggs, 1964:284).

As Olaoye (2002:202) has argued, attempting to wish-away the above realities would necessarily involve responsibilities for 'detribalization', 'deracialization' and 'de-communalization' of the various peoples and societies. Rather, it is easier to identify the factors that shape the character of the Nigerian public service so that one can analyze their effects on the system. To do this, it is important to identify the values and ideological underpinnings that guide administration in developing countries, including Africa. These constitute what Agagu (2001:78) describes as the "political and administrative features" of such states, which includes the following:
- A widely shared ideology as the source of basic political goals, and a tendency for the political elements to assume a major importance almost automatically;
- A high degree of reliance on the political sector for achieving results in the society;
- High level of political instability. Such is rare among the developed nations save for the few cases of France, Germany and Italy (in the past);
- Concentration of political leadership among a very limited segment of the population coupled with great "political gap" between the government and the governed; and
- The existence of an imbalance in the growth of political institutions vis-à-vis the administrative structure.
Furthermore, Agagu (2001:78) listed the peculiar administrative patterns among developing nations to include the following:
One, public administration is imitative of the developed nations, rather than being indigenous. This means that the administrative models are imported. Two, the bureaucracies lack adequately skilled and technically competent personnel required for development purposes. It is a paradox that there is over-employment of unskilled labour while in the aggregate, there is mass unemployment amongst the potential workforce. Three, there is a tendency towards emphasizing orientations that are contrary to high productivity. Riggs (1964) had noted that bureaucrats in developing countries exhibit preferences that are opposed to public-principled interests but rather, are based on personal interests. An indication of this is the high level of corruption in the bureaucracies of developing countries. Furthermore, there is noticeable discrepancy between form and reality. Riggs (1964) termed this "formalism" which Agagu (2001) exemplified with the making of good laws that may be unenforceable under prevailing circumstances. Finally, Agagu (2001:78) noted that bureaucrats in developing countries enjoy relatively high level of autonomy because only few groups are able to enforce close political checks on them.
It is with these in mind that we shall examine the ecology of African public administration with a view to assessing how applicable the Weberian "ideal" bureaucracy is applicable to it.

5. The Ecology Of African Public Administration
The above features, values and patterns describe in general, the ecology of public administration in Africa, and other developing countries. When administrative processes in developing societies are analyzed from the Western viewpoint, there is the tendency to misunderstand the values, misinterpret the purposes and misrepresent the processes of public administration in the developing nations. For instance, in discussing the ethical crisis surrounding Africa's public services, Claude Ake has noted the denigrating effect of colonial language (Western viewpoint) and its epistemology on whatever is African, including its public services. He argues that:
The denigration arises from seeing Africa through received concepts such as the state, civil society and bureaucracy, which look like abstract universals but are, in effect, descriptive terms abstracted from Western experience (Ake, 2000:492).
Due to the above, attempts to understand and explain African political institutions, (including structures) and processes such as the state, bureaucratic organization, interest aggregation and articulation, representation, democracy, separation of powers, political competition, political culture or civil society often portrays the African situation as a deviation from the norm, with imperfections, corruption, lose of integrity and entitlement to 'civilized' norms (Ake, 2000:493).
The first reality, which is an integral aspect of the ecology of (African) public administration is that the state which the public service is supposed to serve, constitutes on ill-defined, amorphous, rudimentary entity which, rather than being a concrete universal, is a "disorderly aggregation of particularities" that have displaced it (the state) as its primary focus of political allegiance (Ake, 2000: 496). Considering the mode of creation of most African states, it is easy to realize that many of them do not actually constitute a 'public'.
There is therefore a need decipher the nature of the 'public' that the African public service is expected to serve. Peter Ekeh (1975) and Claude Ake (2000) provide insights into the composition and nature of this public. According to Ekeh (1975:106-111), there are two publics in Africa: the 'civic', which is amoral, and the 'primordial', which is moral. These are what Ake (2000) described as "two kinds of polities" in Africa; the 'central, formal political 'system' and the 'informal, alternative polities' based on region, primary loyalties, sub-nationalities, etc. According to Ekeh:

At one level is the public realm in which primordial public groupings, ties, and sentiments influence and determine the individual's public behaviour … The primordial public is moral and operates on the same moral imperatives as the private realm. On the other hand, there is the public realm which is historically associated with the colonial administration and which has become identified with popular politics in post-colonial Africa. It is based on civil structures, the military, the civil service, the police, etc. Its chief characteristic is that it has no moral linkages with the private realm… The civic public in Africa is amoral and lacks the generalized moral imperatives operative in the private realm and in the primordial public. (Ekeh, 1975: 92).

The civic public or central political system is a legacy of colonialism and has inherited the animosities of the colonial peoples against the colonial state. Therefore, in the civic public, transition from power to authority has proven difficult; right remains largely co-existent with power; while accountability and political participation are lacking. Consisted mainly of individuals and groups who are strangers (in culture, habits, world-view, etc) to each other, the civic public does not actually constitute a "public" or an "interpretative community" in the real sense. Citizens of the civic public in post-colonial Africa do not 'speak' the same grammar of politics and their relationships are based on a moral calculus of strength. (Ake, 2000:496).

The alienation that results from citizens' relationships with the civic public leads to the improvising of informal alternative polities that are based on primary loyalties such as regions, ethnic identity and sub-nationalities, etc. Citizens of the alternative or primordial public are homogenous, forms an integrated public based on "interpretative communities". Claude Ake submits that:

It is here that the authentic African 'state' is to be found (where) … people direct their energy to collective self-realization through common enterprise by which the community seeks to reproduce itself at increasingly higher levels of spiritual and material well-being. It is here that people co-operate, sacrifice, and work for a better society (Ake, 2000:496).

The relationship between the people and the primordial public is mutual, whereby people give to the community and the community gives back to them in ways that are more psychological than material. The primordial polity secures for its members security, emotional support and social welfare, which the civil polity is unable to assure. Ake argues that the values that govern relations between individuals in the primordial public include participation, consensus-building, accountability of power, inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness, responsibility rather than rights and power, regard for the rules, honesty, integrity, 'public' spiritedness, attention to one's obligations and consideration for others (Ake, 2000:497).

 Thus, explaining the behavior of public servants in Africa, he rationalizes that:

What we have here is not a peculiar African schizophrenia; this dualism illustrates with poignant simplicity, the structural constraints on behaviour and the pitfalls of explaining the performance of the public service in Africa in psychological terms making moralistic judgements about what public servants in Africa do. (Ake, 2000:497).

It is against this background that the behaviour of public servants in Africa can be examined. It constitutes a foremost aspect of the ecology of African public administration that runs contrary to Weber's expectations about his 'ideal type' bureaucracy. Weber's demand for impersonality on the part of public servants cannot be fully realized in such a situation.

Apart from the above, other ecological factors that shape the character of the African public service and which, therefore, impact on the applicability of the Weberian model to it include culture (Aluko, 2000), the social, physical and technological environments (Agagu, 1997: 242); as well as national goals and aspirations (Olugbemi, 1979:96-109). Others include family and social structures as well as the economy (Presthus, 1959).

Culture defines the total ways of life of a people. It is therefore a "design for living" (Kluckhorn, 1951) since it "directs their actions and defines their outlook on life" (Haralambos and Head, 1980:3). The above suggests that culture determines how a people's problems are formulated and how they are resolved. It is therefore logical that since governments exist to pursue and preserve a people's collective values, the public service must, of necessity, reflect those values. In many instances, the particular issues that a public service deals with, including the social technology it adopts in resolving issues are culturally derived.

As a demonstration of the fact that the Weberian model does not take enough cognizance of the ways in which culture determines or influences organizational behaviour vis-à-vis work relationships, values, norms and ethics, in the African public service, Aluko (2000:76) has submitted that:

(a) Contrary to the "I" or the individualism suggested in the Weberian model, the African society is built on the "we" or the collective tradition. Ake (2000:497) is also of this view.

(b) That whereas Weberian bureaucracy emphasizes formal relationships, African culture recognizes and values informal aspects of social life. In different societies of the developing world, Africa inclusive, this is still true to a large extent in spite of the suggestion that traditional values are deteriorating amongst the populace.

(c) That unlike in the Western bureaucracies where particular importance is not attached to face-to-face interactions in formalized settings, in the Nigerian culture there is desire and demand for face-to-face interactions in every sphere of social life. Aluko (2000:76) argues further that in the dealings of the African bureaucracy with the public, the common requests or questions are "who is the boss here? I'd like to see him"; "who will treat this file? Let me have a discussion with him", which are reflective of Yoruba sayings such as "oju loro wa" and "ka foju rin ju", meaning a desire for face-to-face interaction.

According to Ake (2000:76):

African cultures "value" the communalization of being rather than its privatization, which are what Western culture values.

In the Western tradition, 'being' is seen in terms of separation, independence, and conflict. It constitutes a domain whose separateness is treasured and regarded as intrinsic to the integrity of being. And it is only when privatized that being has identity, autonomy, and freedom. By contrast, African cultures regard 'being' (as) communal. Persons have identity only because they belong to a community; integrity lies in their location in a community and the ways in which one manages the entitlements and obligations of community membership.

Aluko (2000:76) argues further that whereas Weber stipulated the adoption of vertical communication channels only, the African tradition demands both vertical and horizontal communication channels. This suggests that for organizations to operate effectively and efficiently in the African environment, the vertical (hierarchical) and horizontal (informal groups, collective desires that run through the rank and file members, irrespective of office) communication channels must be explored. This is a reference to the concept of "throwing gangplanks" for effective communication and teamwork, which the African cherishes.

Furthermore, certain expectations that are indigenous to Africa have ways of affecting the role perceptions of the public servant. Among the Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria, for instance, there is a prayer for bountiful profits on minimal investments, hence the saying "ka sise kekere, ka ri ere to po". There is also the belief that in the public service, one does not necessarily have to over-labour oneself. This breeds the saying "A a kii sise Oba ka laagun" (There is little or no need to sweat doing public service, presumably because of the belief that the public service cannot run at a loss. Also, it is often said that "ofiisi lo n r'eyin akowe", literally meaning that no single individual can finish government work; every public servant will retire someday.

These and similar feelings may also predominate in places where there has been ethnic or racist limitations to recruitment into the public services. In this perspective, for instance, it is possible to understand the animosity of black South Africans towards the Apartheid government and their reluctance to contribute maximally to the public bureaucracy under that regime. One can then compare this with the zeal with which most public servants in the country work after the end of Apartheid. These and similar beliefs, which also exist among different ethnic groups in various countries in the continent, are, in part, products of antagonism to colonial political and administrative power, the ways in which modern African states came into being and how they are sustained. These have definite effects on the performances of the public services in contemporary Africa, but Weber's bureaucracy, cannot explain them all.

Another identifiable pathology with the African public service is the pattern of family and political relations in which personal and primordial loyalties outweigh the demands of technical supremacy that Weber's bureaucracy emphasizes. Because allocation of scarce values is often done (in reality) on the basis of ethnicity, political patronage and, or charisma, rather than on merit (for instance, the use of federal character policy in employment in Nigeria's federal civil service; the dominance of the Eyadema and Gbagbo political dynasties on Togolese and Ivorien politics and administration; or the political and administrative scheming that went on for long between the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, etc), considerations of loyalty, blood affinity, place of origin, etc takes on an automatic air of importance in the African public service. Hence the question "who is going to allocate" rather that "what is the criteria for allocation?" In such systems, Weber's technical qualifications, competence, rationality, etc are pushed to the background. There is thus a good reason to suspect that primordial structures affect the operations of many public bureaucracies in Africa, contrary to Weber's assumptions of universalistic criteria. Therefore, public policy making and its implementation in Africa would be significantly different from Weber's universalistic expectations.

In many cases, public policy reflects the whims and caprices of a ruling oligarchy. The modes of recruitment and of selection, promotion, remuneration, etc reflect ascriptive rather than the achievement orientation. Riggs (1957:23-110) substantiates this through his conclusions from a study of public administration in developing areas, that public organizations such as government and the bureaucracy "tend to resemble large primary organizations, somehow wrenched out of their natural rural setting". As a result, they often resemble a "greatly extended joint family or clan".

In the bureaucracies of many African states, effects of this are reflected in the ascriptive criteria that are given priority over universalistic ones. To a large extent, this accounts for several bureaucratic pathologies like the incidence of corruption, incompetence or inefficiency, lack of security of tenure for public servants as evidenced by the massive purge of 1975 in the Nigerian public service, the rivalry between the administrative and professional cadres within the service and a host of other challenges.

Furthermore, the ideological frameworks and cognitive processes that characterize administration in some African countries are essentially subjective, sacred and almost mystical. It stands in contradistinction with objectivity and rationality that predominate in Western cultures where Weber's bureaucracy is more directly applicable. In many African communities and invariably, the public services, knowledge and sometimes, judgemments are communally owned. Occasionally, therefore, primordial communal judgements influence civic ones.

The average African believes in the 'endlessness' of time; hence the idea of an 'African time'. All these are antithetical to the purposes of standardization, merit, performance, and result orientation of Weber's ideal bureaucracy. Ake echoed this view when he opined that:

the salient values of African cultures are uniquely antithetical to the values underlying the state, bureaucracy, and the market … In their fierce resistance, they constitute an important reality, namely an alternative criterion of legitimacy which remains influential for the way we behave-and usefully, so.   (Ake, 2000:497).

As far as Ake is concerned, this communization of being and of interest, though antithetical to the norms of bureaucracy, is a progressive mechanism that has served the needs of Nigerian communities through collective labour organization and consumption of wealth. Because of the rising indices of state failure in Africa at this dawn of the twenty-first century, particularly in situations where governments are failing or have failed to meet the basic popular needs of the citizenry, this is sadly true. In many cases, people unite and decide to take their destinies in their own hands to meet their most pressing needs, thereby characterizing the state as almost irrelevant to their daily existence.

6.Towards An Indigenous Public Bureaucracy For Africa
Weber's analysis of bureaucracy suggests that it is an ideal towards which all large organizations (including national bureaucracies) should strive in the performance of their functions. However, studies by various researchers have revealed that, for various reasons ranging from history to cultural values and specificities, Weber's theory does not apply uniformly to all

bureaucracies in time and space. For instance, in his cross-cultural research on the influences of culture on the internal workings of organizations, Crozier discovered that each national culture has a unique effect on organizations (that is, bureaucracies) operating in that culture (Crozier, 1964:60). Burin (1952) also drew related conclusions from a separate study of the National Socialist Regime in Germany.

By and large, Weber's bureaucratic model has proven to be an inadequate tool of analysis, not only for understanding, but also for explaining the behaviour of bureaucrats and bureaucracies everywhere. In a sense, therefore, on the strength of available evidences, one can infer that there is no universal bureaucracy. There is therefore, a need to explain the pathologies or better still, the cultural specificities of the African bureaucracy. As Ake (2000) explains, these specificities are as follows:

- The nature and character of the typical African state as a vestige of colonialism. This factor determines the relation of the state and its bureaucracy with society as a tool of exploitation of the lower classes. This facort has the main consequence of breeding a continuous struggle among the elite for the appropriation and privatization of state power. Hence, the idea of a 'public morality' that should regulate the struggle is questionable, problematic and indeterminate. In the circumstance, the public service (or bureaucracy) becomes an inheritance or a booty (to be shared) in the hands of power holders, their cronies and their collaborators;
- The African bureaucracy has the problem of conflicting legitimacies, which exists at three major levels.
  - The first exists at a politico-structural level, in which there is a conflict of legitimacy between the received state whose "public" is nominal on the one hand, and the motley of informal, kinship-based, local, homogenous entities that constitute an alternative "public" with which individuals readily identify. This refers to Ekeh's (1975) "civic" and "primordial" publics and Ake's (2000) "central formal political system" and informal alternative polities". This conflict explains the problems and dilemmas of African bureaucrats in upholding public ethics and morality at the civic level.
  - The second conflict of legitimacy exists at the structural level. This defines a conflict between the salient values of indigenous African cultures and those of the value systems of the modern state and its correlates such as bureaucracy and the market. African institutions and practices such as the family, social structure, the 'economy of affection', the communal organization of life, consideration and mercy for others, respect for age, etc, are patently antithetical to the values of the modern state, economy and bureaucracy such as individualism, strictness, emotional detachment, etc.
  - Ake (2000) notes the third aspect of the problem of conflicting legitimacies as that of epistemology. Western scholarship eulogizes and prides the Western experience over and above the African experience and culture. Juxtaposing this with the reality on ground in Africa easily exposes the distortions, confusions and deceit that have gone into the enterprise of Western scholarship. For instance, some assumptions and conclusions of Weber's ideal bureaucracy conflict headlong with some cultural norms and practices that influence administrative behaviour in Africa. For example, while Western social and economic theories indicate that the human is first and foremost an economic being, the imperatives of the African way of life depicts man as first and foremost a social and communal being, after which comes his economic importance or worth. The African values man first, for his humanity and only after comes his economic worth. Thus, the African is first and foremost his brother's keeper.

7.The Way Forward

Should bureaucracy be abandoned, therefore, simply because it does not guarantee maximum efficiency in the African public service? The answer can only be in the negative, for as Chapman (1961) (cited in Adesina, 2000:19)) argues, "bureaucracy is like sin: we all know something about it, but only those who practice it enjoy it… (however) if you believe all bureaucracies are degenerate, you are simply registering a protest against modern society". This is true mainly because there is hardly any aspect of life that bureaucracy does not touch in the modern state.

The way out, therefore, is to pursue a programme aimed at 'indigenizing' the public bureaucracy in Africa. A public service is as good as the society it serves. Therefore, we should not expect an efficient public service in Africa until the fundamental issues raised above are addressed, the most pressing of which is the disconnect between state and society. Therefore, service-worthy states, which citizens will owe allegiance and serve willingly, have to be created first. The uncaring, destitute, violent, illegitimate and largely orphan character of the African state continues to rob it of patriotic, loyal and selfless service from the citizenry who readily bestow such on the communal, kinship-based alternative primordial, polities.

From the Western perspective, solving this crisis of legitimacy would involve the breakdown of primary group solidarities and the re-connection of individuals in commodity relations in order to create new African nations that are expected to earn the respect, support, loyalty and legitimacy of the citizenry. However, this process will amount to "homogenization" and will involve wafting for the process of industrialization to atomize our societies and turn us into market societies" (Ake, 2000:499). But this process, Ake concludes, is irrelevant to the African experience and will take a very long time to achieve. Du Gay (2000) notes that no administrative institutions are good enough to govern a nation that faces ultimate questions concerning its own survival and identity.

Instead of homogenization and 'uniformization', the African state could consider harmonization, reconciliation and consensus-building amongst its socio-ethnic pluralities. This will promote unity and displace or at least, render less important, the primordial publics/informal polities that currently constitute the repositories of the primary loyalty of the 'subjects' and in the process, transform them into real citizens. By so doing, the capacity of the African state to minister faithfully to the physical, social, emotional and security needs of the citizenry will be greatly enhanced. To achieve this, the following measures are suggested:

One, there is a need to change the basis of political representation from the inherited, colonially induced mode that recognizes political units which lack organic unity to one that fosters organic unity. Such bases of representation could be ethnic, linguistic or other considerations that have the capacity to dispel feelings of political alienation from the state. Such arrangements hold the promise of linking the peasants to the power-centres, enlarge and open up the political space, improve accountability, legitimacy, support for the state and government and ultimately, performance in the public sector. This is because a public, properly defined, would have been created with a right sense of citizenship.

Two, the African state must change its inherited image of a hostile force of occupation and exploitation, a prize to be captured and used by the captor as a tool of oppression of the ordinary citizens (Olaoye, 2005). This is in agreement with the view that:

As long as the state … is perceived as being essentially a hostile force to appropriate for exploitation or plunder, even its employees will tend to treat it exploitatively as they share the prevailing political consciousness of the broader society … To shed this image … it (the state) has to stand on consent rather than coercion, and turn power into authority, domination into hegemony. (Ake, 2000:500).

To hasten such a change in Africa, the state must remove the welfare and economic sources of alienation that had been forced on the citizenry by the harsh effects of the economic programmes of structural adjustment, deregulation, commercialization and privatization that have been undertaken in the past, up to and beyond the   millennium. Good, dedicated and focused leadership that is able to come up with people-oriented economic policies can make the change.

Three, political leadership and authority in Africa requires re-orientation. Leadership structure and the use of authority in Africa are often more personalized than anything else and there is often a tendency towards monopolization of power. This results in insecurity of political office-holders, the sit-tight political syndrome that is so common on the continent and alienation of the state from society. If power is monopolized and personalized at the policy-making level (politics), it affects administration (the bureaucracy) adversely. This instrumental conception of bureaucracy derives from a theory of democracy according to which sovereignty resides in the people.

However, the nature and character of the state within which leaders seek power does not encourage selfless service at the civic level. The purpose of policy therefore becomes perverted as politicians use their offices to feather their own nests. The process results in the lowering and perversion of standards in the bureaucracy. Corruption and inefficiency is the logical result. Therefore, apart from a change in the character of the state, the leadership needs to be re-orientated towards sincerity, loyalty and performance, just as African politics has to be changed from the largely zero-sum-game that it presently is, to one that guarantees distributive justice. Weber postulated very generally that remuneration is one of the fundamental categories on which bureaucracy rests. However, he did not elaborate either on its adequacy in meeting the bureaucrat's needs or on other matters of welfare that may affect the performance of the public servant. Because bureaucrats in many African countries are not paid a 'living wage', their survival has become problematic. It is thus difficult for them to live up to the standards of integrity required of bureaucrats. Also, partly for these reasons, many bureaucrats cannot maintain their political neutrality as required of them by bureaucratic ethos. They engage in acts that are detrimental to their calling as they struggle to make ends meet.

The inference here is that the performance of the public service in Africa is directly related to the prevailing economic situation within the continent and the remuneration within the bureaucracy. There will be no significant improvement in the performance of the public service bureaucracy unless we can bring extreme poverty under control, increase productivity and ensure a more equitable distribution of the outcomes of production. For effectiveness and results, none of the above can be carried out in isolation of the others. Indeed, they form a complete package in order to make bureaucracy produce visible and desirable results in Africa.

8.Conclusion

The main object of discussion in this paper has been the objective conditions that circumscribe and determine the success or failure of the application of Weber's ideal bureaucracy in the public services of African states. It notes the subjectivity and shortcomings of attempting to explain the situation of the African public service bureaucracy in terms of Weber's ideal type. The paper concludes by arguing for an understanding of the objective factors that shape both the character and performance of African public services, with a view to restructuring and re-orientating both the state, the bureaucracy, the civil society and political actors in the business of governing Africa. The policy recommendations represent the objective realities in an effort to address the monster that the undomesticated adoption of Weber's ideal bureaucracy has become to Africa.

9.References

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