

TITLE

Bureaucracy and Ethnicity in Contemporary Ghana

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Introduction

The role of public administration in post-independent sub-Saharan Africa oscillates between two ideologies: that of administrative efficiency and that of responsiveness to ethnic groups. At the dawn of independence, many scholars, especially social scientists, found the continent of Africa to be a fertile ground for intellectual exploration of socio-politico-economic developments. The optimism of pursuit of these opportunities was soon replaced by pessimism due to organizational weaknesses that hindered progress in the sub-Saharan region.

The organizational weaknesses of public sector bureaucracies were revealed by economic stagnation and by political instability that became characterized by military coups. Administrative inefficiency and ethnic conflict, coupled with military takeovers, have become a smouldering cancer in Africa.

Given the apparent organizational weaknesses in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa, it is important for scholars and students of public administration to seek adequate models at all levels of government that are suitable to the African social, political and economic environment. The theories found in literature as root causes of administrative weakness in third world countries are placed under two general rubrics—psychological and ecological.¹ Psychological approaches focus on individual actors in transitional organizations and find their behavior to be nonrational or “distorted” because of unsuccessful or incomplete psychological adjustment to the reality of social change.² For instance, Lucian Pye

¹ Robert Price, *Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana*, 8.

² *Ibid.*, 9.

writes, "There is no questioning, the extent to which the acculturation process in transitional societies twists and warps people's motivations and their capacities to strive effectively for any goals which they are able to articulate."³ Pye's work, associated with psychological maladjustment of bureaucrats in developing countries, as Robert Price pointed out in his book, Bureaucracy and Society in Contemporary Ghana, views certain bureaucrats as possessing malintegrated personalities as a consequence of discontinuities in their process of socialization (primary socialization taking place within traditional social structures, and secondary socialization within colonially introduced modern bureaucratic institutions). As a result of these discontinuities in the process of socialization, Pye argues that the transitional bureaucrat is lacking in commitment, insecure in action, suspicious in interpersonal behavior, dominated by anxiety, and generally ineffectual in the "art of associating together."⁴

A second variant of psychological explanation for ubiquitous organizational weakness discussed by Price in transitional politics focuses on malintegration at the level of the bureaucrat's system of attitudes, beliefs and values. The image presented in this model, as Price further explained, is of the transitional actor attempting to operate in terms of the secular norms of the formal organization, but being constantly pulled in another direction by the internalized sacred values and primordial sentiment of his traditional background. In Price's own words, "Caught between two worlds and unable to come to grips with conflicts between the traditional and modern, the traditional bureaucrat, it is proposed, engages in wildly

³ Lucian W. Pye, *Politics, Personality, and Nation-building*, 50.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 53.

erratic anomic type behavior, or is overcome by inertia, or retreats from the situation behind a facade of bureaucratic ritualism.”⁵ Such behavior, viewed as characteristics of incomplete adaptation to social change, as nonrational, or as Hahn-Been Lee put it, “distorted response to pressure and tension of change.”⁶

It is worth noting from the onset that the psychological approach to organizational weakness in developing countries is not without controversy. One cannot make a case pertaining to administrative inefficiency based on psychological maladjustment only.

The fact that the psychological approach is not enough to explain administrative inefficiency in developing countries has caused researchers to access another way of understanding perennial weakness. Researchers therefore use the ecological approach to explain their assumptions of organizational weakness.

The ecological studies of administrative inefficiency in developing countries included the works of Fred W. Riggs. Riggs offered the most detailed and carefully worked out presentation of this point of view in his theory of the prismatic society. He states the basic perspective this way: “The new formal apparatus, like the administrative bureau, gives an illusory impression of autonomousness, whereas in fact it is deeply enmeshed in, and cross-influenced by remnants of older traditional social, economic, religious, and political systems.”⁷ The major thrust of Riggs, as paraphrased by Price as an explanation for administrative weakness in transitional societies, lies in the idea that organizations whose formal

⁵ Price, 9.

⁶ Lee Hahn-Been, “Developmentalist Time and Leadership in Developing Countries,” 5.

⁷ Fred W. Riggs, “Theory of Prismatic Society,” 15.

aspects have been transplanted from highly industrial societies, and which therefore appear to observers as “modern” social structures, are, beneath the visual surface, affected by the aspects of the indigenous (“traditional”) social system. These are hybrid institutions, many of whose features are dysfunctional to achievement of organizational goals.⁸ Riggs refers to this socio-cultural hybrid as “poly-normativism.”

Even though Riggs’ theory of a prismatic society has been strongly criticized and in many cases rejected, it plays a role in our analysis of administrative efficiency and responsiveness to ethnic groups. In the prismatic model, a new set of norms, political formulas, and myths, based on foreign experience, are superimposed on a social order which is composed, in large measure, of older traditional norms, formulas and myths. The result is naturally dissensus, poly-normativism, and normless.⁹ Thus the mixture of traditional and modern within the same social structure does not necessarily produce integration or synthesis. It is the interpenetration of traditional and modern elements without their integration that is seen to produce the seemingly nonrational, inconsistent, and chaotic behavior which underlies administrative weakness in transitional societies.¹⁰

In Ghana, as Price pointed out, “prismatic” poly-normativism is clearly revealed by the research findings of past decades. For example, Phillip Foster, writing on social change, states the following:

⁸ Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries*, 15-17.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 277.

¹⁰ Phillip Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, 301. For a similar view, see David Brokensha, *Social Change at Lanteh, Ghana*.

A considerable body of evidence points to the persistence of elements of traditional social structure even within the most “modern” sectors of Ghanaian society. Ethnic background, kinship affiliation and traditional residence patterns still play a role within the urban context and indeed may provide the basis for organizations which appear at first sight to be essentially western in nature.¹¹

In this study, “Public administration oscillates between two ideologies of administrative efficiency and responsiveness to ethnic groups”, I will present a historical analysis of modern bureaucracy and ethnicity based on a cursory look at ecological theory of bureaucratic behavior in developing sub-Saharan Africa countries. I will then attempt an analytical comparison of Ghana and Nigeria during the wave of military intervention. The theory of prismatic society has helped to shed light on administrative weakness as a direct outcome of organizations whose formal aspects have been transplanted from highly industrial societies to less or nonindustrial societies. I will set out drawing from the existing literature in order to analyze public bureaucracy and ethnicity in contemporary Ghana. Chapter 1 provides a critical look at institutional transfers and indigenous organizational effectiveness. Chapter 2 argues the pros and cons of military takeovers. Chapter 3 discusses the ideals of efficient administration and Chapter 4 offers suggestions for study in the field public bureaucracy in the less developed countries.

¹¹ Phillip Foster, *Education and Social Change in Ghana*, p. 301. For a similar view, see David Brokensha, *Social Change at Carteh, Ghana*.

Chapter 1: Mesh of Ethnic and Bureaucratic Structures

The complexity of group demands that face African states has received a great deal of attention in the studies of politics and society in contemporary Africa. According to Chazan et al there is a constant engagement of rival interest in the contemporary political arena, an interaction among various groups mobilized to secure public resources from those in authority. These groups, as Chazan et al pointed out in Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa, are based on ethnicity, region, race, religion, generation, class, and so forth, may be distinctive in terms of origins and appeals, but may share common features in the way they organize to engage in a dynamic interplay of conflict and collaboration.¹ Based on Chazan et al and for the purpose of this research, we will concentrate on ethnicity and its impact on bureaucracy in developing sub-Saharan Africa nations, using Ghana as a case study.

Ethnicity, as Chazan et al were quick to point out, has a subjective perception that comes from common origins, historical memories, ties or aspirations. The authors of Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa think that the term pertains to organized activities by persons, linked by consciousness of a special identity, who jointly seek to maximize their corporate, political, economic and social interests. In this study, we will use ethnicity and ethnic groups interchangeably. We would like to appeal to the reader that ethnicity and ethnic group as used in this paper means the same thing and should not give rise to controversy. As Chazan et al noted, ethnicity-

¹ Naomi Chazan et al, Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa, 105.

ethnic group will refer to the subjective perception of individuals with common origin, historical memories, ties and aspirations. This explanation is in line with the fact that ethnicity, or sense of peoplehood, has its foundations in combined remembrances of past experience and common aspirations, values, norms and expectations.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide some analysis on institutional transfers and indigenous organizational effectiveness. The chapter will rely heavily on studies done on social groupings. Within this framework, we will examine the cultural and economic activities, and the manner and extent of their impact on bureaucracy. First, we will begin by looking at the fundamental social groupings and the elements that influence them. Unlike the industrial societies, political and economic activity revolves around groups rather than individuals. Social structures in Africa consist of indigenous institutions that have deep historical roots, such as clans, lineages, cultural associations, and village communities. These indigenous institutions, as social-anthropology literature on Africa points out, are ascriptive. Thus one has to be born into them. These ascribed groups divide African societies along vertical lines: they highlight the differences between groups but do not order them hierarchically. Four main subtypes fall into this rubric: groups based on kinship; territory or location; traditional political affiliation; and cultural affinity.² Given these primary differences of African social environment, the argument by many a scholar or student of public administration that efficiency can be maximized when the group involved in administrative procedures is homogeneous is virtually

² Naomi Chazan et al, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, 77.

impossible. This argument of efficiency in homogeneous organization hinges on specialization and division of labor as a prerequisite for increase in productivity. The notion of homogeneity is applicable and suitable to utilization of varying skills of a work force and not a group of people with different social characteristics. In other words, a homogeneous group is not necessarily an answer to administrative efficiency. Besides, it would be naive to think of any given society, whether Riggs' prismatic society or an ultra-advanced industrial society, as homogeneous. The assumption that every society, irrespective of its level of development, is essentially heterogeneous, lead us to discuss the role ethnicity plays in Ghanaian civil service.

The so-called modern public administration in transitional societies has not in any way divorced itself from traditional practices that resisted colonial domination. Civil service in Ghana within the context of prismatic society theory, as discussed by Riggs, may be likened to the biblical saying of putting new wine in an old skin. The ultimate outcome will be the destruction of the skin and the spilling of the wine. Civil service in Ghana depicts every feature of modernism, but in reality, it is nothing more than what we term a "symbiotic association of modern bureaucracy and ethnicity", symbiotic because both are entangled together, creating ethical dilemmas for the transitional bureaucrat. The said bureaucrat is torn between two choices: following the whims and caprices of his or her ethnic group, or concentrating on public duties. In both cases, he or she is not better off. Listening and attending only to one's ethnic group reduces one to the level of corruption and nepotism according to the parameters of efficient administration. On the other hand,

adherence strictly to efficient norms of public administration may be termed unresponsive to tenets, tenets here referring to various ethnic groups. Uncompromising public officials can face serious threats and the risk of pressure to vacate office. Ethnic groups constitute a political force to be reckoned with in sub-Saharan Africa. Ethnic conflicts are the causes of civil wars and even military coup d'états. These groups can mobilize their members using every tool, formal and informal to influence decisions made by policy-makers in their favor.

Peoplehood, the sense of community as a cornerstone of social life is portrayed in every area social, economic and political. Kinship as expressed by Chazan et al is the bedrock of African social relationships. The extended family, the lineage, and in some cases the more inclusive clan defines a person's immediate social networks and obligations. Kinship not only defines a person's identity but also a set of values, norms, responsibilities, and lifestyles.³ The kin group is an individual's initial community. Relations with other members of the group are governed by rules deeply embedded in the local cultures. This sense of community and solidarity can account for the reason civil servants are more likely to operate along ethnic lines instead of being responsive to all and sundry, as required by the ethics of public administration.

Ethnicity, which has received a considerable discussion in this chapter, is in effect a strong variable related to administrative inefficiency and corruption. If we assume or agree with past studies of sub-Saharan African societies as societies based on the principle of

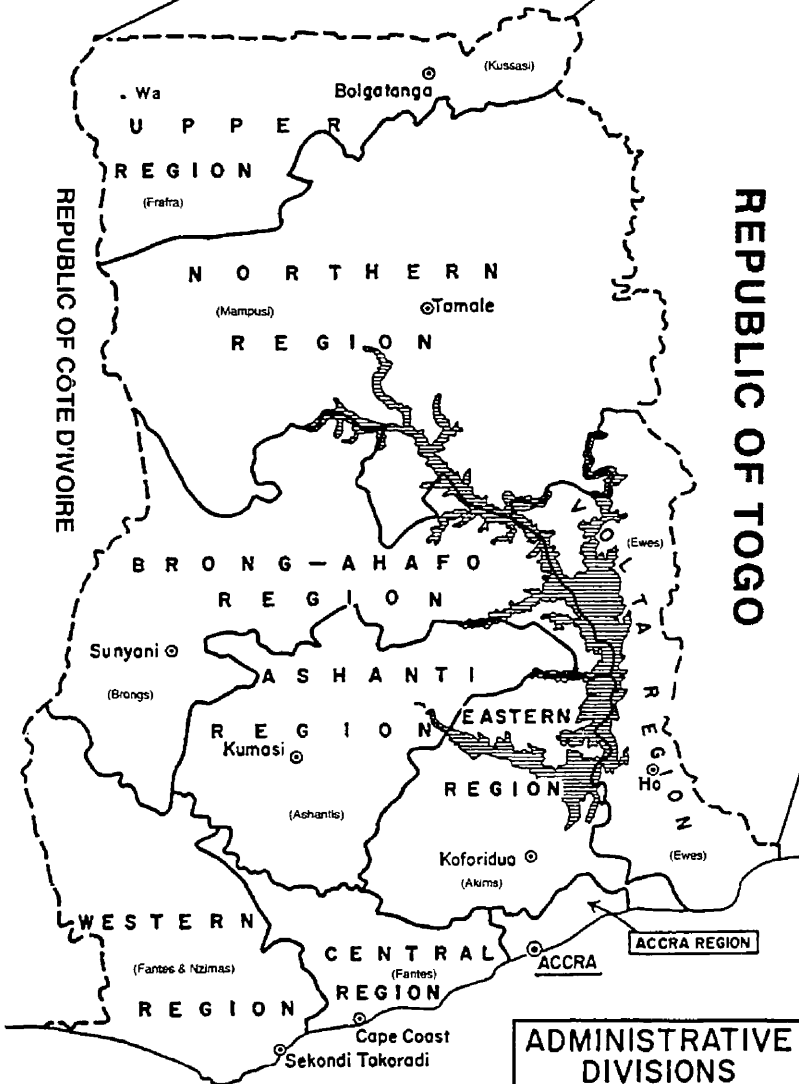
³ Naomi Chazan et al, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, 77.

people organizing themselves along ethnic definitions of identity and obligations, then we could agree that bureaucrats would look out for kinspeople first. It is therefore not uncommon in the Ghanaian society to see extended family members of high civil servants looking unto the civil service posts as a means of partaking in a share of the national cake. This explanation confirms Price's observation: influence associated with a higher position in public office makes it easier to obtain jobs for relatives and other favors such as securing scholarships and fellowships for immediate and extended family members.⁴ One's social standing in Ghanaian society, to a great degree, is a function of services rendered to family.

To understand why a bureaucrat must use his or her official position to the advantage of family members, one must put oneself in the sociocultural setting of Ghanaian society. It is important for the reader to know that family ties or blood relations in sub-Saharan Africa are stronger than public obligations. Price hit the nail on the head when he said, "upholding one's public trust would constitute ignoring one's primary obligation."⁵ It is ironic that this generosity to one's extended family, which from African perspective is considered a virtue, is in reality the cradle of nepotism and corruption. The sociocultural setting that imposes its ethics on public officials to put kinspeople first and official duty second is the root cause of administrative and economic stagnation. Further, ethnic groups' demands on their members are compounded by unequal

⁴ Robert Price, *Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975): 151.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 151.



ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

- ⊙ Regional Headquarters
- ⊕ National Capital
- Regional Boundaries
- ▨ Volta Lake
- (Ethnic/Linguistic Divisions)

50 miles

distribution of scarce resources. The unequal distribution of resources, a consequence of ethnic inequality, constitutes one major cause of nepotism. It is also worth knowing that Ghana's ten administrative regions which are based on ethnic groups have unequal distribution of economic resources. Thus the coastal regions, Greater Accra, Central, Western and Volta, and centrally located ones, those of Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo and Eastern are endowed with more human and natural resources than their northern counterparts, Northern, Upper East and Upper West. (See map: Administrative Division of Ghana) Fabiri aptly described ethnic differences in Ghana using the following scenarios:

1. Western education was introduced to the people of the coast—Nzima-Ahanta, Fante, Ga-Adangke, Ewe—at almost the same period, but it is only the Ewes, because of the importance they attach to professional and civil service careers, who used the education to create political/economic hegemony.

2. The Kwau, Ashanti, and Brong groups of the Akan, though they have been introduced to western education since the 1900s, generally take education less seriously because of their business orientation (trading, cash crop farming, working abroad for capital, etc.).

3. The Kwaus and the Gas are both principal ethnic groups in Accra (capital of Ghana), but the Gas are wealthy mainly because of their adherence to principles similar to the classical Protestant ethics.

4. The northern ethnic groups have been given free access to western education since the 1960s but still many parents prefer their children caring for their livestock and going through Arabic education rather than Western education.⁶

The uneven access to western education as well as unevenly distributed natural resources create a strong sense of ethno-regional pluralism. The ethno-regional differences observed by Fabiri are strong indications for which spokespeople from less advantaged subregions made use of parliamentary forums immediately after independence to push development of their home areas.⁷ Some of these developments may not have been appropriate because they were carried out without feasibility studies. Come what may, these spokespeople think it is the right thing to do in order to achieve redistribution of wealth.

One of the most important phenomena of administrative inefficiency referred to in literature is the proliferation of public bureaucracy immediately after independence. The nature of expansion, and its significance for politics and development, have been the subjects of considerable controversy. Some scholars see proliferation of public bureaucracy as evidence of the emergence of a monopolistic class that preys on society and systematically extracts its resources. Others view this process as a sign of inefficiency, a further

⁶ F.A. Fabiri, "Marxism, Social Class, Ethnic and Gender Inequality in Contemporary Africa Societies," *The Africa Review, A Journal of African Politics, Development and International Affairs*, 18.1-2 (1992): 39-56.

⁷ Naomi Chazan et al, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, 79.

indication of the absence of rational norms of public behavior. Sympathizers of the African plight bemoan the lack of experience and skills that continue to plague the public sector, pointing to the dearth of qualified administrators as the immediate cause of inefficiency.⁸ It is an undeniable fact that the growth of administrative structures in post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa has done little to salvage the continent from economic impoverishment and political chaos. The growth according to analysts of African political environment during the last three decades responded to persistent calls for Africanization of civil service. In order to fill the vacant post left by the expatriate personnel, higher education and vocational training institutions were strengthened to produce local cadre. Graduates from these local institutions were quickly assimilated into the civil service and senior positions. In each year during the 1960s, the civil service in Africa grew at a rate of 7 percent. with at least 50 percent of government expenditures allocated to salaries.⁹

Chazan et al, noted that the outcome of this growth was not only skewed expenditure patterns but, almost inevitably, the creation of a privileged group that would gradually develop corporate interest of its own. The civil servants, the authors said, stood out in comparison to the other groups in African nations in their ability to advance themselves financially. It may therefore be acceptable and convincing to say that bureaucratic expansion opened opportunities for personal aggrandizement of state officials at the expense of other

⁸ Gahan F. Lungi and John O. Oni, "The Administrative Weakness in Contemporary Africa," *Africa Quarterly* 24.4 (1979): 3-16.

⁹ Irving Leonard Markovitz, "Bureaucratic Development and Economic Growth," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 81.14.2 (1970): 183-200.

groups. Crook made a sound observation that supports the idea of waste in public bureaucracy. He said that the growth of bureaucracy not only created a system of unequals but lacked an assured efficiency.¹⁰ Apart from the fact that there is inadequacy in the administrative structures, there also existed ill-defined bureaucratic roles. The lack of clear-cut demarcation between politics and public administration was inherited from the colonial masters. As Carew aptly described, the post-colonial bureaucracy was mainly determined by the inherited colonial bureaucracy, and it was not good enough to serve the African purpose. Carew gave the following reasons to support his argument:

First, the colonial bureaucracy was statist and overcentralized. Thus the post-colonial bureaucracy similarly engaged in overcentralization and became worse than the former. Like the colonial bureaucracy, it became inefficient and wasteful in a majority of cases.

Second, since the colonial bureaucracy owed its allegiance to the imperial government, it did not seem to change its modus operandi in the post-colonial state. It continued to function like a government within a government, often countermanding orders from nationalist leaders, who in many cases were viewed socioeconomically and intellectually as their inferiors. The bureaucracy eventually joined the politicians in institutionalizing corruption.¹¹ Overcentralization mentioned by Carew, was the characteristic of the Nkrumah's regime immediately after

¹⁰ Richard Crook, "Bureaucracy and Politics in Ghana," *A Comparative Perspective, Transfer and Transformations: Political Institution in the New Commonwealth*, eds. Peter Lyon and James Mamor (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983) 21.

independence. Nkrumah's approach to power was intimidation of opponents. Lack of clear-cut demarcation, ill-defined public administration roles and politics contributed to Nkrumah's ability to suppress and oppress his fellow citizens. In Botchway's words, "in a country that was beset with traditional and tribal recriminations, a country that has had no history of political freedom, it was relatively easy for Nkrumah to induce silence and sufficient obedience from the masses."¹² Botchway further pointed out that overcentralization posed a major problem to Nkrumah because it was difficult to sustain other functions of government, including solving the grave economic problems. In order to cope with the increasing difficulties of office, Botchway said that Nkrumah resorted to political recruitment. Even though this recruitment cut across socioeconomic strata, the people recruited remained ethnically oriented in character. They were only "emancipated children of traditional social structure"¹³, said Botchway.

We may not conclude this chapter without giving a little attention to the bureaucrat in developing societies. Somewhere in this chapter we argue that proliferation of public bureaucracy and the increasing number of civil servants constitute a drain on the meager resources of post-colonial Africa. However as Price observed during his stay in Ghana, taken in the aggregate and compared with the rest of the population, civil servants are overpaid; but when viewed as

¹¹ George Menda Carew, "Development Theory and The Promise of Democracy: The Future of Postcolonial African States, *Africa Today*, 4 (1993): 31-53.

¹² Francis A. Botchway, *A Political Development and Social Change in Ghana*, (New York: Leisbar Vale, 1972): 86.

¹³ Robert Price, *Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

individual social actors, public bureaucrats receive salaries that are insufficient to meet the demands of their social environment. The social environment is a strong factor to reckon with because in order to maintain status quo, the civil servant must prove himself to be what Price observed from the Ghanaian jargon, “big man” status. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the Ghanaian bureaucrat, and for that matter any civil servant in the sub-Saharan Africa is caught up in the web of trying to live up to the social standards bestowed on him as a big man. This problem of the bureaucrat being what he cannot afford to be is accentuated in the presence of economic bottlenecks where the government is unable to pay adequate salaries. The bureaucrat then uses his position and office to enrich himself at the expense of the state. Thus, in order to maintain the living standards of a big man, the tendency to resort to corruption becomes stronger than discharging public duties. The big man phenomenon of the bureaucrat is the outcome of his society’s expectation for him to maintain the material aspect of European life-style, the life-style of the colonial bureaucrat. A Mercedes-Benz or Jaguar car, a western-style house (preferably more than one story), imported western clothing, and so forth become the symbols of exalted social position in African society. The emulation of western life-style coupled with financial assistance to extended family members in the form of periodic contribution of school fees for younger relatives, subsistence and housing for those less fortunate and the like,¹⁴ constitute a tremendous financial burden that leads to corruption. To borrow Price's words, in sum then, part of the colonial legacy has been a form

¹⁴ As stated by Chenua Achebe, in his contemporary novel, *No Longer at Ease*, (New York, 1962).

of social emulation that has meant, for an individual acquiring a post in civil service, an obligation to maintain the outward appearance of European life-style through the acquisition of consumer goods, many of which are imported.¹⁵ When combined with financial obligation to extended family, this will entail great expense, which tends to outdistance what is available to the civil servant through his salary.

¹⁵ *Robert Price, Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana.*

Chapter 2: Military: Checks and Balances, or Another Form of Elitism.

The Africanization of administrative institutions in 1960s came hand-in-hand with the growth of the law enforcement agencies, most significantly the army and the police. The armed forces were retained at first as a symbol of sovereignty and national independence. Later on, just like the colonial administration before independence, they were sustained and expanded to quell disturbances, ensure compliance, and provide necessary props for frail regimes.¹⁶ As already mentioned in Chapter 1, the colonial states created an administrative hierarchy through the concentration of political and administrative functions in the hands of colonial civil service. This civil service was backed with a well-developed coercive apparatus. The coercive apparatus was not only to maintain order, but also to ensure compliance with specific dictates.¹⁷ In this chapter, we will discuss the growth of military institutions, their politicization, friction between senior officer corps and lower ranks, as well as interethnic relations through the comparison of Ghana and Nigeria, both members of commonwealth who experienced waves of coups d'état since the 1960s.

The civil servants of post-colonial Ghana and Nigeria, following the whims and caprices of the socio-cultural setting that creates an atmosphere of corruption, combined with the ill-defined political and administrative roles, give a salient reason to “trigger-

¹⁶ Chazan et al., *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Linne Reimer Publishers, Inc., 1975) 42-54.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

happy” young military officers to stage coups. Even though the military was meant to carry out the same duties as its colonial predecessor, it became a highly organized group with distinct professional and corporate interests, as noted by Chazan et al. The professional and corporate interests of the military were illustrated during Ghana’s first military takeover in 1966. Lt. General, then Colonel, Akwesi A. Afrifa gives his reasons for toppling Dr. Kwame Nkrumah’s Republican Administration. Afrifa begins by remarking that he was aware that his brigade commander, Lieutenant General, then Colonel, Emmanuel K. Kotoka, disliked the Convention People’s Party (CPP) and the way the army was being run. He also points out that the president had the intention of retiring or replacing senior officers he felt would not be in favor of his socialist policies. Afrifa argues that Nkrumah was interfering with the military, citing an instance when Nkrumah decided to replace Emmanuel Kotoka, his brigade commander, with the son-in-law of an influential woman in Ghana’s National Council of Women. Afrifa strongly resented this idea, as it can be gathered in the following statement he made:

I detest these moves. Our army was going to be run on family sentiments unbefitting any decent army. I felt if that was the way our army was going to be run, there was no future for the young officers who had decided to make it their career.¹⁸

¹⁸ A. A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1967) 42.

There was no doubt at the time that Nkrumah pursued whatever necessary means it took to silence his political opponents. Various sources of literature on Ghana's First Republic demonstrate that there was often a mysterious disappearance of an opponent or his political incarceration without trial. Kotoka had a legitimate cause to dislike the CPP because it was the vehicle through which Nkrumah informed himself of what was going on in Ghana. It was the CPP which he used to intimidate and to infuse into the civil servants, the army and the police, businessmen, religious leaders, and the seats of higher learning the appropriate attitudes and performance which the political system demanded.¹⁹ The constitution of the First Republic, coupled with the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) of July, 1958, gave the president a limitless power. The PDA stipulated the arrest and detention of persons known to be "dangerous" to society, and such persons could be imprisoned up to a period of five years without trial.²⁰ The downfall of Kwame Nkrumah was the result of his half-digested theories of Marxism and Leninism through which he thought he could change Ghana into a socialist paradise. Ghanaians under Kwame Nkrumah's regime had no voice; the approach left for a political change was by use of arms, and that was exactly what Afrifa and his colleagues did.

However, it is worth noting that if the military's attempts to stage coups stem from dissatisfaction with the treatment being meted out to it and intimidations by constitutionally elected government,

¹⁹ Francis A. Botchway, *Political Development and Social Change in Ghana*, (New York: Black Academy Press, 1972) 87.

²⁰ A. A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1967) 75.

rest assured that it is also out to create another class of elites or benefactors. One Ghanaian novelist, A. K. Armah, in his novel, The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, suggested that the coup merely replaced one group of exploiters with another. The major character, on being told that the army and the police had seized power, remarked: "I thought they always had power. Together with Nkrumah and his fat men."²¹ Armah's suggestion raises a question as to how we identify and define corruption. Corruption can involve a wide spectrum of practices, but for simplicity's sake let us borrow the definition given by Nye as the handiest definition. According to this definition, "Corruption is behavior which deviates from the formal duties of public role because of private-regarding status; or violates rules against the exercise of certain type of private-regarding influence."²²

To establish the relevance of Nye's definition of corruption, we must analyze the political and economic situation under General I. K. Acheampong's regimes in the late 1970s. According to Richard Jefferies, the Ghanaian economy was characterized by negative growth, huge balance of payments, and budgetary deficits, an acute shortage of foreign exchange, and hence a shortage of not only imported consumer goods, but also essential agricultural and industrial inputs for local commodity production. There was an escalation of governmental corruption and commercial profiteering—especially clearly related in the allocation of import

²¹ A. K. Armah, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, (London, Heinemann, 1968).

²² Joseph S. Nye, "Corruption and Political Development: Cost-Benefit Analysis," *American Political Science Review* (June, 1967): 61-419.

licenses—which significantly gave rise to the coining of a new word to describe it: “Kalabule”.²³ The situation was so out of hand that top officials issued chits to young women who paraded the corridors of power offering themselves for libidinal pleasures in return for favors.²⁴

This situation of gross malpractices was worsened by inflation. The inflation reduced the mass of population, especially in the urban areas, to an appalling level of destitution and demoralization. According to a conservative estimate offered by Jeffries, the purchasing power of a worker’s wage had fallen in 1975 to one-quarter of what it had been before the coup d’etat in 1972. Thus in a situation where hyper-inflation rapidly outrun increases in salaries, bribery and corruption are very appealing. Worsening the already deplorable conditions, truckloads of rice were being driven across the borders to be sold in neighboring countries of Togo and Côte d’Ivoire under the instructions of the military officers. There was straightforward pocketing of “cocoa money.”²⁵ Humorously, Jeffries asked: “Why did the ‘Boy Scouts’ turn into ‘Mafiosi?’”²⁶ referring to the military. The answer is simple: political accountability has been weakly institutionalized in Ghana, as in most post-colonial African states.

²³ Richard Jeffries, “Ghana: The Political Economy and Personal Rule,” *Contemporary West African States*, eds. Donal B. Cruise O’Brien, John Dunn and Richard Rathbone, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1991): 75.

Kalabule: Hausa word, *kere bure* (keep it quiet).

²⁴ Mike Quaye, *Politics in Ghana, 1972 - 1979*, (Accra: Tornado Publication, 1980): 17.

²⁵ Richard Jeffries, “Ghana: The Political Economy and Personal Rule,” *Contemporary West African States*, eds. Donal B. Cruise O’Brien, John Dunn and Richard Rathbone, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1991).

²⁶ John Lonsdale, “Political Accountability in Africa’s History,” in Patrick Chabal (ed.), *Political Domination in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986): 26-57.

Ironically, Acheampong made the same mistake Nkrumah made during the 1960s. That is to say, with the economy collapsing around him he steadfastly maintained his belief that no one could govern better and that, even more certainly, no one else was going to get the chance.²⁷ Acheampong's fantasies came to an end on July 5, 1978, in a 'palace coup' led by Lt. General Frederick Akuffo, who promised, more credibly than his predecessor, an early but orderly return to civilian rule.

The brief Akuffo regime (Supreme Military Council II (SMC II), July 5, 1978 to June 4, 1979), as described by Jeffries, had two public faces: On one hand it implemented a number of well-intentioned measures such as the release of the political detainees, dismissal of the most notorious racketeer members of the previous regime (SMC I), appointment of a Constituent Assembly to formulate a new constitution, and from January 1, 1979, legalization of the formation of political parties to contest in general election scheduled for June the same year. On the other hand, it did nothing to bring to account the racketeers. Akuffo had sought to justify his coup on grounds that Acheampong had been running the government as a 'one-man show', but the latter was merely stripped of his military rank and confined to his village. None of his assets were to be confiscated by the state and no legal moves were instituted against him.²⁸ Critics saw this move as a ruse by members of SMC II to exonerate themselves from a blame which they shared.

²⁷ Richard Jeffries, "Ghana: The Political Economy and Personal Rule," *Contemporary West African States*, eds. Donal B. Cruise O'Brien, John Dunn and Richard Rathbone, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1991): 82.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

The imminent return to civilian rule and the attempt by the SMC II members to conceal their pillage was the direct result of Jerry John Rawlings' intervention. It had got to a point where there was friction between the senior officer corps and the lower ranks because of grossly unequal distribution of privileges. It was in this situation, the feelings of injustice and frustration, that Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings led a mutiny of junior officers and lower ranks on the night of May 15th, 1979. He was arrested, but he was sprung from jail on the morning of June 4th, 1979, and was nominated chairman of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC).²⁹ Rawlings, explaining his stand for toppling the SMC II regime in the court-martial, pronounced the following:

People were dying of starvation in the teeth of a few well-fed and when the economy of this country was being dominated by foreigners, especially Arabs and Lebanese who successive governments had failed to question about their nefarious activities. The first accused then started talking about widespread corruption in high places... [which] be remedied only by going the Ethiopian.
(sic)

Whatever Rawlings meant by this statement, we can deduce that he was seeking satisfaction for the rank and file whom he felt were victims of the greedy senior military officers. Rawlings pressure for revolution was designed to reassert the moral rectitude, probity, and accountability in ruling circles.³⁰ It was in this vein that Rawlings consulted with the rank and file leaders who agreed to go

²⁹ A vivid account of the events of the period is provided by Barbra E. Okeke, *4th June: Revolution Betrayed*. (Enugu: Kega Publishers, 1982): 130.

ahead with the execution of eight senior military officers, including three former heads of state: Afrifa, the architect of Ghana's first coup, the National Liberation Council (NLC), Acheampong and Akuffo of SMC I and SMC II respectively. Rawlings called his action "house-cleaning."³¹ Even though the "Kalabule" had touched every socio-economic structure of Ghanaian society, "he thought it important to distinguish the prime responsibility of a few government leaders, the opportunistic self-enrichment of a larger group of senior military officers and bureaucratic officials together with local and foreign business."³² Rawlings' house-cleaning logically entailed that Ghanaians should be exhorted to elect their own government and to hold it to account once elected. As he put it:

*We are trying to get the public to take up its responsibility about its own government. The armed forces is not a time-bomb behind a civilian government — We want the civilians — We want to show you that you have been in bondage. We broke your chains for you, now we leave you to go where you want to.*³³

By this statement we assume that Rawlings was more than willing to hand over the reign of administration to a civilian government. However, as we will discuss later in this chapter, he

³⁰ Chazan et al., *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Linne Reimer Publishers, Inc., 1975) 160.

³¹ Richard Jeffries, "Ghana: The Political Economy and Personal Rule," *Contemporary West African States*, eds. Donal B. Cruise O'Brien, John Dunn and Richard Rathbone, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1991): 85.

³² *Ibid.*, 85.

³³ *West Africa*, 9 July, 1979: 1199.

returned to power, ruled as a chairman of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) and served as head of state for ten years now as the elected President of the Fourth Republic of Ghana.

Rawlings' second coming to power toppled Dr. Hiller Limann's People's National Party (PNP) government on December 31, 1981. Although there is hardly anything worth discussing about the third republic under Dr. Limann, let us consider some points listed by Richard Jeffries so that we may establish the rationale of Rawlings' comeback to power.

First, the PNP government became so absorbed in internal factional squabbles that it found scarcely any time to address itself to the concerns of most Ghanaians, especially the state of the economy. Second, insofar as it did not find any time, it refused to address or even recognize the scale of structural causes of the problem, preferring instead to solicit additional foreign aid and contract more debts in order to muddle through. This was more intolerable when scandals broke, showing that some government and party leaders were engaged in self-enrichment through corruption and embezzlement. Third, the Limann government's inept attempts first to buy off and then to disparage Rawlings, to use intelligence operatives to harass him and his close associates, even to denigrate the AFRC episode, simply backfired, lending a touch of martyrdom to his already heroic popular status.³⁴

The three points listed here justified Rawlings' coup on December 31, 1981. Rawlings came to power seeking, in his own

³⁴ Richard Jeffries, "Ghana: The Political Economy and Personal Rule," *Contemporary West African States*, eds. Donal B. Cruise O'Brien, John Dunn and Richard Rathbone, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1991): 92.

words, “nothing less than a revolution.”³⁵ The new Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), as the group of civilians and army officers who ruled with Rawlings called themselves, then went about proclaiming a revolution.³⁶ It was clear that Rawlings was not ready to hand over power for the second time. When the association of Professional Bodies called on the PNDC to hand over power by September, 1983, he clearly stated, “There will be no U-turn. The 31st December revolution has launched people’s power in the country, and people are prepared to defend their power with their lives. There is no compromise on this issue.”³⁷ Flt. Lt. Rawlings’ message is significant. It gives a finality to repeated statements that the PNDC had no intentions of returning to party politics. He also assures the ordinary people that the power is with them.

Even though Rawlings detested party politics, the wave of democracy sweeping across the countries of sub-Saharan Africa finally caused him to lift his ban on multi-party politics. As reported in Africa Confidential, enthusiasm runs high for the transition to civil rule, despite the slippage in the time table. The Consultative Assembly was due to deliver its report on the new constitution to government by the end of March, some three months later than originally scheduled. Lifting the ban on political parties after a referendum in June, gave parties less than six months to organize legally before the scheduled national elections.³⁸ The elections

³⁵ *Radio Broadcast to the Nation, December 31, 1981, reprinted in A Revolutionary Journey: Selected Speeches of Flt. Lt. Jerry J. Rawlings, 1 (Accra: Information Services Dept., n.d.).*

³⁶ *Jeffrey Herbert, The Politics of Reform in Ghana, 1982 - 1991, (Berkeley: University of California Press; Oxford, 1993): 27.*

³⁷ “People’s Power to Stay”, *Africa* 132 (1982): 34.

became crucial, and some opposition parties threatened to boycott. Local and foreign observers advised that it would be in the interest of the government to exercise magnanimity in the wake of Rawlings' substantial, albeit disputed victory over Abo Boahen in the November Presidential election. Rawlings won 58.4 percent of the vote followed by Boahen, representing the Danquah/Busia tradition, with 30.4 percent.³⁹ A National Assembly without the participation of an effective opposition would lack credibility. It could deter both Ghanaian and foreign investors from bringing in the private capital needed to sustain the impetus of the government's economic reforms as multinational agency support is reduced. In a nutshell, Rawlings had won the election by relying extensively on support from rural people who have benefited from much higher producer prices and expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars on rural beautification, water supply, health, and education projects.⁴⁰

Ghana, in principle, has a democratically elected government headed by Rawlings, an Airforce pilot who staged two coups in the history of African politics, second to only that of Togo by Gnassingbe Eyadema. How democratic this election was and what its impact on future elections will be, must be left for future discussion. However, one last question that needs our attention in this chapter is the interethnic relations with respect to corruption and preferential treatment in the armed forces. The Ghanaian armed forces, unlike their Nigerian counterparts, never had a sharp division along ethnic

³⁸ "Ghana: Pushing off the Political Suits," *Africa Confidential*, 7 Feb. 1992: 1-2.

³⁹ "Ghana: Elections and the Rawlings Factor," *Africa Confidential*, 20 Nov. 1992: 5-6.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

lines. Earlier in this chapter, I quoted General Afrifa saying that he detested Nkrumah's approach of trying to run the military on family sentiments or ethnic affiliations.⁴¹ Afrifa's comments clearly demonstrated that the military was not to be seen as a kinship corporate, but as a professional corporate or class.

For example, in one of his charismatic speeches, Rawlings said, "Of late, certain persons and organization have been calling our attention to conflicts and tensions in our society as if it was a new discovery. Tensions and conflicts we have and we shall continue to have them so long as the social conditions which give rise to them are still with us. To say that there are only two tribes in this country, one rich and the other poor, is not to invoke tension but to state a fact."⁴² This statement says simply that within the armed forces as well as the general public, the perennial problem revolves around the "haves and the have nots." He further emphasized that it was the gross inequalities in the Ghanaian social system that were at the root of all tensions and conflicts.⁴³

The Nigerian armed forces to some extent lacked this cohesiveness of professional corporate ties. For instance, the January, 1966, coup which installed Major General Johnson Thomas Umunnike Aguiyi-Ironsi, Ibo, head of Nigerian first Military government, was seen as an Ibo coup. A counter coup on July 29 of the same year installed General Yakubu Gowon, a Northerner. During the counter coup, together with Ironsi, thirty-three officers of

⁴¹ A. A. Afrifa, *The Ghana Coup*, (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1967) 42.

⁴² "People's Power to Stay" by Africa Correspondent, *Africa*, 132 (1982).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Eastern Nigerian origin, the majority of whom were Ibo, were killed.⁴⁴ This division among the military corps led to Nigeria's bloodiest civil war from 1967 to 1970, when Biafra was defeated. We may assume here that timing of the coup coincided with the time that ethnic hostility was at its peak. According to Lloyd, the action was taken by a section of educated elite, possessed of physical power and free from the taint of corruption, and against elected politicians who failed to control the masses that threatened the stability of the country.⁴⁵ From this perspective, it would not have been an Ibo coup, but the fact that most of the young officers, as Lloyd pointed out, were Ibo and did not share the secrets with other ethnic groups, gave rise to or poured more fuel to the flame of already tense ethnic conflicts. The situation was worsened by General Ironsi leaning more on the advice of Ibo colleagues and tolerating those Ibo who rushed to the State House to proffer advice.⁴⁶ The promotion of young Ibo officers to fill the depleted senior military positions after the coup was itself an act of nepotism and favoritism from one Ibo to others. Thus Ghana and Nigeria may have experienced waves of military takeovers for reasons of inefficiency and corruption in civilian administration, but there is difference between this and ethnic struggles.

The justification for all the military takeovers in Ghana were tied to its long social, political and economic decline. The National Liberation Council, which overthrew Dr. Nkrumah in 1966, said

⁴⁴ Arthur A. Nkwankwo, *Nigeria: The Challenge of Biafra*, (London: Rex Collings, 1972): 11.

⁴⁵ P.C. Lloyd, "The Ethnic Background to the Nigerian Crisis, in *Nigerian Politics and Military Rule: Prelude to Civil War*," ed. S. K. Panther (Borick: University of London, The Athlone Press, 1970): 1-13.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-13.

Ghana was “on the brink of a national bankruptcy.”⁴⁷ Similarly, General Acheampong argued that he was forced to overthrow the Busia regime in 1971 because Ghana was a “nation whose roots appeared diseased.”⁴⁸ Rawlings, who came back for the second time, overthrowing Dr. Limann’s People’s National Party, claims the social system of Ghana based on “two tribes of rich and poor needs a change,”⁴⁹ and there is “no U-turn or compromise on this issue.”⁵⁰ Against this background of almost continual decline and successive governments identifying correctly the shortcomings but doing little to change the fundamentals of socio-economic structure, may lead to the assumption that efficient administration is an illusion in Ghana, and that military takeovers only create or replace one elite group by another, as will be seen in Chapter 3 of this study.

⁴⁷ *Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, “Our Destiny is in Our Hands, (Accra: Ministry of Information, 1966):* 117.

⁴⁸ *General Kutu Acheampong, “The Fifth Milestone,” Government Papers, (Accra: Supreme Military Council, 1977) 1.*

⁴⁹ “People: Power to Stay” by *Africa Correspondent, Africa 132 (1982): 42.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

Chapter 3: Administrative Efficiency: Why an Illusion?

To this point, our analysis has been centered on and around the fundamental elements of weakness and corruption in transitional bureaucracies and their subsequent invasion by military takeovers, with special emphasis on the contemporary Ghanaian public sector. In order to understand the earlier analysis based on ethnic and class interests, with special reference to the military, it would be worth looking at some models of administrative efficiency in relation to civil service.

When one speaks of efficient administration, some figures that come to mind include Woodrow Wilson and Max Weber. Wilson was among the classical scholars in public administration who argued that a democratic government does not necessarily mean a decentralized administration. He was of the opinion that division of power can be dangerous and irresponsible because none of the people in position can be held responsible for mismanagement. In 1887, the time when he wrote his brilliant essay, "The Study of Public Administration", the United States Constitution was over 100 years old. However, Wilson argued that checks and balances, the backbone of the United States Constitution, create a hindrance rather than a smooth and harmonious relationship among the various decision-making bodies within the American system of governing.⁵¹ There is no question that Wilson thought centralized administration is an effective means of achieving efficiency in the public sector. Wilson

⁵¹ Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Public Administration," *Classics of Public Administration*, eds. Jay M. Shafritz and Albert C. Hyde, 3rd ed. (Pacific Grove Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1992): 11-24.

also agreed with public administration scholars of his day that there was need for reform in civil service, but he added that “reform must not be limited to personnel, but must also include the entire organization and methods government offices.”⁵²

President Wilson was right in many cases, but it is worth noting that power concentrated in one hand can be abused, and it may become equally if not more irresponsible and dangerous than when it is shared between various organs of government. Ghanaian public administration immediately after independence experienced what we may modestly refer to as overcentralized administration; in reality it was as bad as dictatorial rule. Even though at independence Ghana might have had the best civil service in relation to all sub-Saharan African nations at the time, “The effectiveness of the bureaucracy was sapped by the political maneuvering and interference of Nkrumah and the Convention People Party (CPP).”⁵³ In attempts to reform the public sector, as President Wilson made us believe that reform is necessary for effective and efficient administering of government, the early years of independence in Ghana were characterized by an intrusion of political elements into decision-enforcing institutions of government.⁵⁴ The supporters of CPP had been appointed to most of the boards and commissions, even though civil service is said to have remained an essentially neutral instrument of public policy.⁵⁵

Tampering with the neutrality of public administration has been one

⁵² Woodrow Wilson, “The Study of Public Administration,” *Classics of Public Administration*, eds. Jay M. Shafritz and Albert C. Hyde, 3rd ed. (Pacific Grove Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1992): 11-24.

⁵³ William Tordoff, *Government and Politics in Africa*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984): 129.

⁵⁴ Chazan et al., *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*

⁵⁵ Almond and Coleman, *The Politics of Developing Areas*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) 317.

of the worst mistakes African governments commit over and over, to the point that one may call it a cancer. President Wilson recommended centralization of public administration and not the fusion of public administration and politics. As a matter of fact, Wilson argued that administration must be separated from politics. This argument was supported by his view on hiring or appointing people to various administrative positions based on fitness and merit rather than partisanship. It is impractical to deny the fact that a neutral civil service never existed in Ghana, and if it did at all, its erosion came about very quickly. Nkrumah's regime required civil servants to be committed to achievements of the goals which it laid down.⁵⁶ For instance, A New Charter for Civil Service issued in July, 1960 stated:

"...The civil servant should appropriately feel a positive and consistent loyalty to the interests of the Government as his employer. This concept will become clearer under a Republican Constitution when the focal point of the civil servant's loyalty becomes the President as both Head of State and Head of Government...The control of Civil Service will...in future be vested in the President...Where...a senior civil servant finds himself out of sympathy with the policies and objectives of government it is clearly his duty to retire voluntarily from the government service..."⁵⁷

According to Tordoff, it is true that this document also stressed that civil service should be non-political in character and that individual civil servants should avoid identification with a political

⁵⁶ William Tordoff, *Government and Politics in Africa*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984): 135.

⁵⁷ *Ghana: A New Charter for Civil Service*, (Accra Government Printer, 1960): 1-3.

ideology or party; but in practice, such provisions were never very meaningful, and they disappeared with the creation of one-party state in Ghana in 1964.⁵⁸

The immediate post-independent development in Ghana was the same in Nigeria. Nigeria, with its heavy and diversified population made it very complicated even to create one party. At the dawn of independence, political parties in Nigeria were formed based on ethnic affiliations or regional divisions. For example, in the northern region of Nigeria, the dominant Northern People's Congress and the bureaucracy were fused through an interlocking directorate of personalities. All members of the bureaucracy were expected to be NPC supporters, and NPC activists were usually ensured a suitable post in the bureaucracy.⁵⁹ This observation made by Coleman and Almond was noted by Chazan et al, who pointed out that political parties were more often than not "used as a means of bureaucratic supervision."⁶⁰

As we talk of the illusion of efficiency in public administration in Africa, it should be clear as stated earlier in this study that ethnicity is one of the central factors in contemporary Ghanaian bureaucracy. Just as in Nigeria, in Ghana political parties to some extent, are traditionally formed along ethnic lines. From Nkrumah—although less spectacular—to Rawlings, the pattern of ethnic attachments to political parties is well-demonstrated. The Progress Party of Professor Kofi A. Busia won a landslide victory

⁵⁸ William Tordoff, *Government and Politics in Africa*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984): 128-129.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁶⁰ Chazan et al, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*.

among the Akan-speaking peoples of Brong-Ahafo, Ashanti and the south during the 1969 general election. The victory had nothing to do with the political platform. It had to do with a direct challenge of Busia, an Akan, by Komla A. Gbedemah of National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), an Ewe.

Table 3-1 Seat in the Predominantly Akan Area:

Region	Progress	NAL	Others
Brong-Ahafo	13	0	0
Ashanti	22	0	0
Central	15	0	0
Eastern	18	4	0
Western	10	0	3

From D. Austin, Ghana Observed, p. 123.

The Progress Party had lost 3 seats in the extreme west among the Nzimas who still mourning the loss of their patron, Kwame Nkrumah, voted against Progress and NAL—and in the extreme east where the Akan shade off into Ga-Adangbe, who voted for Gbedemah. The picture is the other way round in the Volta Region, where 14 out the 16 seats went to NAL, a symbol of Ewe solidarity. Progress won its two seats in the northern part of the region, in what used to be known as “Akan-Krachi”, where the population is a mixture of Akan, Ewe and Northerners.⁶¹ There is no question about anti-sentiment against the Ewes as Austin noted. With the presence of the Ewes in the military and police holding senior positions, the

⁶¹ *Dennis Austin, Ghana Observed, 123-124.*

Akan-speaking peoples, the majority of the ethnic groups in Ghana, did not like to see the country run by a minority. Austin said the prevalent comment one hears then is, "Appoint an Ewe to public corporation or to a government department and within a year the entire hierarchy down to the messenger will be Ewe."⁶² There is always some evidence of the allegation levelled against Ewes. Ewes, because of the importance they attach to professional and civil service careers, used Western education,⁶³ to seize the opportunities of public employment, including positions in the army and police.⁶⁴ It is important to note that given the small number of Ewes in Ghana, it will be exaggerating to say that they dominated the bureaucracy. However, we cannot rule out the tendency of higher civil servants' attempts to satisfy immediate and extended family members' needs, using public office to the detriment of the entire society. The very fact that civil servants satisfy only a segment of the population under their jurisdiction defeats the definition of efficiency, which, according to William G. Fleming should be the normal characteristic of bureaucracy—hierarchical control, ability to maintain records routinized action patterns for dealing with specific problems, and so forth. Thus "authority" is a concept which describes the external relations between a political control agency and the people it governs, while "efficiency" is concerned with the internal standards of the bureaucracy.⁶⁵

Fleming, no doubt, believed his definition of Max Weber's

⁶² Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 125.

⁶³ F. A. Fabiri, "Marxism, Social Class, Ethnic and Gender Inequality in Contemporary Africa Societies," *The Africa Review, A Journal of African Politics Development and International Affairs*, 18.1-2 (1992) 39-56.

⁶⁴ Austin, *Ghana Observed*, 125.

theory of centralized administration in his essay, "Bureaucracy." The German sociologist's essay, published after world War II in the United States, was an ideal model for assessing performance in public administration. For instance, Weber insisted that an organizational structure be arranged in a hierarchy of subordination and supersubordination where members are subject to strict and systematic control and discipline. There must also be a set of rules and regulations binding the organization together. Thus, as Weber emphasized, hierarchical administration in which each unit is subordinate to the one above it and superior to the one below it on the basis of power, authority, status, or combination thereof, constitutes an effective approach to efficiency in government. In addition, the fact that an organization is bound together with the framework of a set of rules and regulations ensures stability and smooth operations.⁶⁶

This Weberian paradigm, though ideal and appealing to many a student of administrative science, can be misleading in transitional bureaucracies where ethnicity remains a frontier and a formidable factor to reckon with in public administration. Many governments, especially Nkrumah's administration, made mistakes in their attempts at overcentralizing administration, which hampered planning, regulation and management of the public sector. Nkrumah, like many nationalists of his time, thought that in order to overcome the "inefficiency resulting from the ethnic struggle, the one

¹⁵ William G. Fleming, "Authority, Efficiency, and Role Stress: Problems in the Development of East African Bureaucracies," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 2.3 (1966): 386-404.

⁶⁶ See Max Weber, "Bureaucracy," *Classics of Public Administration*.

solution is creating a single-party state.⁶⁷ Through this move, totalitarian in nature, Kwame Nkrumah, just as any dictator, used utilitarianism arguments to rationalize that the request for control of a broader notion of personal liberties was a necessary sacrifice to fulfill a broader notion of the public good.⁶⁸ Goodin and Wilenski, in their analysis of efficiency, agreed with other analysts that good administration is defined in terms of improved efficiency, but they thought that deprivation of liberty in the name of efficiency was self-defeating. According to these two writers, one of the fundamental goals of efficiency is “want of satisfaction,” which leads to the understanding that efficient use of resources will satisfy more wants than less, or that we can receive satisfaction of wants with a few resources so that there will be resources left to satisfy other wants.⁶⁹ Goodin and Wilenski, although looking at efficiency as a normal characteristic in industrial economy, cautioned its pursuers to shun such procedures that may thwart the desires of the people. The authors also pointed out the euphoria of boosting economic growth by the third-world dictators, who often maintain that denying people’s liberties is a method of administrative efficiency.⁷⁰ Indirectly, these writers were proscribing decentralization and public participation in decision-making for improving efficiency in administrative procedures, which I leave for the next chapter when

⁶⁷ See Austin, *Ghana Observed*.

⁶⁸ Thomas M. Callaghy, *Politics and Vision in Africa: The Interplay of Domination, Equality and Liberty. Political Domination in Africa*, ed. P. Chabool (London: Cambridge Press, 1986), 30-51.

⁶⁹ Robert E. Goodin and Peter Wilenski, “Beyond Efficiency: The Logical Underpinnings of Administrative Principles,” *Public Administration Review*, 44 (1984): 512-517.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 512-517.

discussing possible approaches to alleviate ethnic conflicts as a function of bureaucratic weakness in transitional societies.

The earlier analysis is a guide to understand that the main purpose of public bureaucracy is to serve the public. That is to say, bureaucrats should have a sense of obligation to dispense government services to all citizens who qualify under the rules governing their offices.⁷¹ As Price mentioned, the Ghana Civil Service itself takes official cognizance of importance of a service orientation for effective public administration. In the Service's Handbook for New Entrants, the following passage appears:

*The civil servant is first and foremost the servant of the people. Your service to members of the public is, therefore, one of the most fundamental things you have to remember. You must therefore be absolutely fair to all persons, polite and courteous and possessed of tact in your dealings with them. Also you must ...as far as the rules and practices of your department permit, show sympathy and offer as much help as possible to those who come in official contact with you.*⁷²

The passage taken from the Civil Service Handbook for New Entrants, illustrates that in public bureaucracy, a prerequisite for efficiency is the "notion of the separation of office and person." Thus if bureaucratic positions are conceived of as personal possessions, then they are likely to be used as a resource to be exploited for personal benefits, rather than as a means to further the service ends

⁷¹ Robert Price, Bureaucracy and Society in Contemporary Ghana, 129.

⁷² Ghana, The Civil Service, A Handbook for Entrants, 6.

of public policy.⁷³ The nature of a bureaucrat taking a public office as a possession in a country of diversified ethnic groups administration cannot be but susceptible corruption.

A number of writers, noting both centrality of the state and the prevalence of corrupt activities in most African societies, have examined corruption as an integral element of political power, in which state property and jobs are allocated to ethnic or political supporters in intricate and sometimes far reaching networks of patron-client relation.⁷⁴

⁷³ Robert Price, *Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975): 130.

⁷⁴ Ernest Harsch, "Accumulators and Democrats: Challenging State Corruption in Africa," *The Journal of Modern Africa Studies*, 31 (1993): 31-48.

Chapter 4: Public Administration and the Future

Scholars, though pessimistic about the future of bureaucratic institutions plagued by nepotism and corruption, often along ethnic lines, they have not given up pursuits of managing African public bureaucracies. As Nyang'oro noted in a recent article on public sector reform in Africa, "Current discourse in African studies has certainly taken a sharp turn from what it was only a few years ago."⁷⁵ Thus from the late 1960s to the mid 1980s, African studies—whether liberal, conservative or radical—was preoccupied with issues of economic development. Indeed, questions of ideology, policy and democracy were subsumed under the general discussion of development,⁷⁶ or what Richard Sklar called "developmentalism."⁷⁷ Discussion about socialism and/or capitalism were framed in terms of what system would be able to deliver more quickly the objective of development. However, as the economic problems on the continent mounted and structural programs became the focus of Africa's relation with international finance, one began to sense a shift in the debate. Developmentalism at the level of economy, as Nyang'oro put it, began to give way to structural adjustment. Structural adjustment, Nyang'oro said, came hand in hand with changes at the level of politics where democracy, especially liberal bourgeois democracy and the ideals it represents, became respectable again after having

⁷⁵ Julius E. Nyang'oro, "Reform Politics and the democratization Process in Africa," *Africa Studies Review*, (April, 1994): 133-149.

⁷⁶ Crawford Young, *Ideology and Development in Africa*. (New Haven: Yale University Press 1982).

⁷⁷ Richard Sklar, "Developmental Democracy," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 29.4 (October 1987): 686-714.

suffered theoretical abuse at the hands of socialists. Liberal democracy has since been justified on its own merits, even by writers who consider themselves socialists.⁷⁸ A few scholars such as Shaw, Amin and Shivji, who attempted to situate the debate on democracy in Africa in the context of a changing global economy, cautioned that democratizing movement in Africa must be examined in terms of process rather than in terms of a sharp break from authoritarianism to open political systems.⁷⁹ The authors, in their respective writings pointed out that African governments have always perceived autonomous organizations and institutions in society to be oppositional and conflictual in nature, and therefore dangerous. Taking the recent politico-economic changes, the purpose of this chapter is therefore to make some comparative study of public administration⁸⁰ and also to make some possible suggestions as to how public administration should operate with emphasis on transitional societies.

In order not to deviate from our main focus, bureaucracy and ethnicity in contemporary Ghana, it will be important to note that citizens do not interpret the behavior of their government and their public servants in a vacuum. They are equipped by the society with

⁷⁸ Nyang'oro, "Reform and the Democratization Process in Africa."

⁷⁹ Amin, Shaw, and Shivji, "Preface: The State and the Question of Development," in *the popular Struggles for Democracy in Africa*, ed. Peter A. Nyang'oro, 2nd ed. (London: United Nations University) 133-149.

Shaw, Timothy M., "Revisionism in African Political Economy in the 1990s," in *Beyond Structural Adjustment in Africa: The Political Economy of Sustainable and Democratic Development*, ed. Julius E. Nyang'oro and Timothy M. Shaw, (New York: Praeger, 1992) 49-70.

Shivji, Issa G., *The Concept of Human Rights in Africa*, Codesria Book Series (1989).

Issa G. Shivji ed., "Contradictory Class Perspectives in the Debate on Democracy," in *State and Constitutionalism: An African Debate on Democracy*, (Harare: Sapes, 1991) 253-260.

⁸⁰ Amin, Shaw and Shivji, 1-13.

an image of what constitutes good government and proper administration.⁸¹ Whatever composes good administration is commonly agreed to among all members of the society. Political scientists refer to this psychological orientation as political culture.⁸² The acquisition of a political culture is usually part of learning of the more general process of learning about the society. The reason for discussing culture is to point out that there is a consistent interaction of culture and politics that redefines the role of government.⁸³ For example, the concept of society, at least as it is used in African studies, applies to society in general, to all groups and institutions which are part of the state. This is what one gets from reading the collection of essays in Rothchild and Chazan.⁸⁴ Chazan has recently elaborated on the concept of society by pointing out “civil society” as distinct from general—although the two have frequently been used synonymously in literature—and referring to that segment of society that interacts with the state and yet is distinct from the state.⁸⁵ As Nyang’oro stated, borrowing the ideas of Chazan, a genuine civil society is one that makes the connection of recognizing the state’s proper role while advocating particularistic interests which the state must respond to if it is to remain legitimate.

⁸¹ B. Guy Peters, *The Politics of Bureaucracy*, 3rd ed. (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburgh; London: Longman, 1989).

⁸² See Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba, *Political Culture and Political Development*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); Mary T. Douglas and Aaron Wildovsky, *Risk and Culture*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

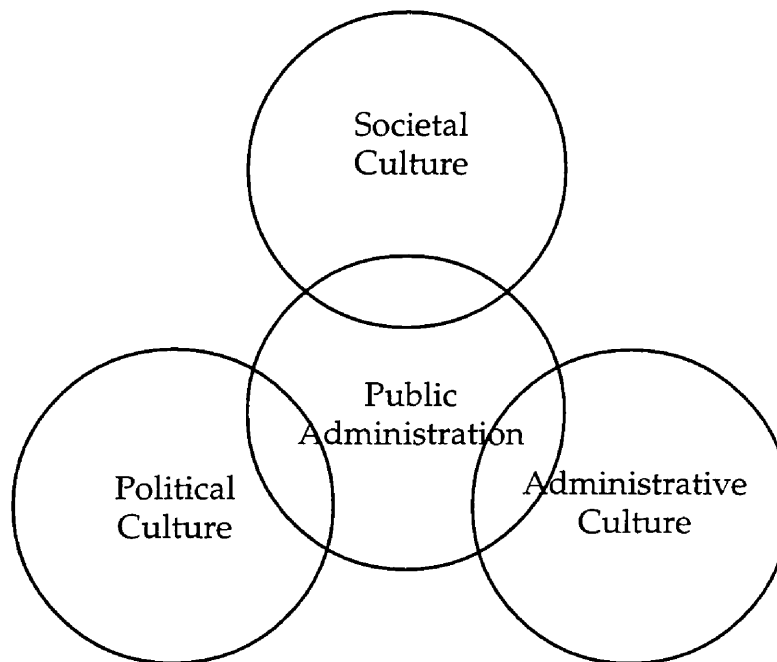
⁸³ Herbert Kaufman, “Emerging Conflicts in the Doctrine of Public Administration,” *American Political Science Review*, 50 (1956): 1057-1073.

⁸⁴ Rothchild and Chazan eds. “State and Society in Africa,” *Precarious Balance*, (1988). Naomi Chazan, “Africa’s Democratic Challenge,” *World Policy Journal*, 9.2 (1992): 279-305.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 279-305.

The comments of all these writers boil down to culture and administration, which can be identified to exist in three distinct levels: societal, political, and administrative. The conceptual relationship among these levels can be seen in Figure 4-1, Culture and Public Administration.

Figure 4-1 Culture and Public Administration



Culture and Public Administration adopted from The Politics of Bureaucracy by B. Guy Peters.

Notice that all three types of cultural influence—societal, political and administrative—influence the conduct of public administration. Thus general value orientations in the society will influence the behavior of individuals in formal organizations, as well as the manner in which these organizations are formed. The political culture will in part structure the relationships between political and bureaucratic elites and between the population and bureaucracy. Finally, the general orientation of society towards management and

impersonal authority in formal organization will also affect the behavior of public officials.⁸⁶ That is to say, public bureaucracies are bound by strong bonds to their societies and their values. These strong bonds that bind bureaucracies and their societies are well illustrated by Riggs, as already mentioned earlier in this analysis. Thus, attempts to import a Western concept of public administration into the African public bureaucratic arena have often resulted in the adoption of formal aspects of bureaucracy by the circumventing of procedural norms. Riggs' "sala" model of administration—having the form of Western bureaucracy but actually filled with individuals operating according to more traditional norms of family and communal loyalty—explains what is often considered as inefficiency or corruption in public sector in transitional societies.⁸⁷ The acceptance of impersonality and universality of rules as proscribed by scholars has not sunk into the African societies. The norms of impersonality, a principle developed by bureaucratic systems dominant in the Western bureaucracy, are easily undermined by societies that are not accustomed to them. For example, Katz and Eisenstadt pointed to an interesting case of Israel, which was settled initially by Jews of European origin who were unaccustomed to the norms of impersonal and universal rule applications. These norms were further undermined by an influx of later waves of immigrants from the Eastern branches of Judaism, who were accustomed to these norms. As the authors further pointed out, socialized into the largely personalistic and barter cultures of the underdeveloped nations, the

⁸⁶ B. Guy Peters, *The Politics of Bureaucracy*.

⁸⁷ Riggs, Warren, *Administration in Developing Countries*, 200-202.

new settlers were unwilling to accept even the most basic universal rules even, for example, that everyone who rides the bus should pay the same fare. Interestingly, both the clients and the administrative structures found it necessary to modify their behavior in order to accommodate the strains on their unusual behavior patterns. The immigrants tended to adopt some of the basic ideas of impersonality, but the administrators also become more aware of personal differences among clients.⁸⁸ Many are to be found in Ghana and, for that matter, in any sub-Saharan African nations “where individuals coming from rural areas confront the more ‘modern’ cultures that evolved in the urban areas.”⁸⁹ These inequalities in development are worsened by loyalty to family and ethnicity that put a strain on civil servants to respect the codes of impersonality and the rule of universality.

The above example points to three important aspects of the relationship between culture and public administration. The first is the “barter” nature of political cultures found in a good portion of the underdeveloped world, which includes Ghana. Ghana presents a variety and richness in cultural patterns, as Riggs pointed out as prevalent in discussion of prismatic theory in transitional societies. This point helps to explain that diversity may hamper to a certain extent universality and impersonal rules. It was for this same reason that Riggs noted that societies in transition from traditional societies to modernity adopt a style of decision-making that he refers to as

⁸⁸ Elitu Katz and S.N. Eisenstadt, “Some Sociological Observations on the Response of Israeli Organizations to New Immigrants,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 5.1 (June, 1960): 113-133.

⁸⁹ Gerald E. Caiden, *Institute of Government Studies, Israel's Administrative Culture*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1970).

“double-talk”. He notes:

Even more typically prismatic is a law which provides for one policy although in practice a different policy prevails. A rule is formally announced but is not effectively enforced. The formalistic appearance of the rule contrasts with its actual administration—officials are free to make choices, enforcing or disregarding the rule at will. We have already seen that over-conformity and nonenforcement of laws is typically prismatic. It makes possible prismatic code which, while by enforcement officials...Apparent rules mask without guiding actual choices.⁹⁰

As mentioned in the introductory part of this paper, Riggs' prismatic society raised a lot of controversies in the fields of political science and public administration.

Writers such as Peters argued that the form of administrative “double-talk” is prevalent in societies with well developed bureaucratic apparatuses but without the cultural infrastructure to support them. Thus we can imagine a rough continuum of cultural orientations towards impersonality and universalistic rules ranging from the barter cultures described by Riggs to the highly rationalistic attitudes of continental European countries. On such a continuum, the prismatic culture of United Kingdom, he said, might be close to a halfway point that is, compared with many non-Western political systems, the pragmatic culture of Great Britain would appear quite accepting of impersonal rules. When compared with other advanced

⁹⁰ Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries*, 200-202.

and industrial countries of Europe, however, the culture of the United Kingdom is more personal and less bureaucratic than most other nations at similar levels of development.⁹¹ Another point Riggs failed to make clear in his “Sala” model is the distinction between different forms of corruption. The fact that transitional bureaucracies are characterized by corruption, nepotism, self-seeking and inefficiency,⁹²—the more powerful officials become, the less effective they are as administrators⁹³—cannot be denied. There is also evidence to suggest that as bureaucrats seek to maintain their living standards in deteriorating economic circumstances, and as opportunities for upward mobility within the public service become progressively reduced, the incidence of corruption increases.⁹⁴ Ghana at independence 1957, had a public service sector that by all standards was closer to “modernity” than any nation in the region. However, this public service became the most corrupt between the late 1960s and 1970s (though it must be emphasized that Ghana had many excellent public servants who maintained the highest standards of integrity). Riggs would have avoided criticism had he differentiated between the preferential treatment of friends and relations and the system of rewards in return for services rendered, which lies at the heart of socially acceptable patron-client politics in African states in a way that theft, fraud and embezzlement are not. The latter forms of corruption are subject to legal prosecution in

⁹¹ B. Guy Peters, *Politics of Bureaucracy*.

⁹² Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries*, (1964): 227.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁹⁴ Tordoff, *Government and Politics in Africa*, (1984): 128.

virtually all countries. In addition Professor Riggs did not tell us the level that corruption must reach before it ceases to oil the machinery of government and adversely affect government performance. As for efficiency, sala bureaucrats—as Riggs conceives them—would have been incapable of sustaining existing African State machineries for almost thirty years. They were made to work in adverse conditions, which included political instability and military takeovers, ill-conceived presidential initiatives and frequently shifting in governmental programs, as well as exogenous events such as natural disasters and world economic depression.⁹⁵

The second point emphasized by the Katz and Eisenstadt research is interaction in the setting of the norms of administration. The case study of Israel and immigrants, of the organization modifying its basic orientation towards clients and toward administration on the basis of a problem in applying rules to specific clients is crucial to the African public sector. In this case organization chose to innovate and innovated successfully to meet clients needs. Thus organizations willing to make this type of innovation will be more successful in the long run than organizations that maintain rigid bureaucratic procedures, even in the face of non-bureaucratic clients.⁹⁶ Generally, when public bureaucracies are viewed from this angle of taking client needs into consideration, the stereotypical views of Riggs would be categorized as mere intellectual adventurism.

⁹⁵ Tordoff, *Government and Politics in Africa*, (1984): 129.

⁹⁶ S. N. Eisenstadt, "Bureaucracy, Bureaucratization and Debureaucratization," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 4 (1959): 302-320.

The point raised by the research on Israeli immigrants is that this reaction to bureaucracy may be becoming the rule rather than the exception. After all, societies are not static, but dynamic; hence many societies, either Western or non-Western, developed or less developed, are undergoing substantial cultural change. As Spretnak and Capra noted, a major characteristic of cultural change is a reaction to the impersonality and perceived inhumanity of large organizations in society and the desire to create bureaucratized social and political systems.⁹⁷ It is therefore worth noting that if Ghana can stop emulating Western bureau and debureacratize its imported pseudobureaucratized organizations, then it would be in a position to identify its own weaknesses.

The above discussion as a guide to suggesting future approaches of public bureaucracies was based on cultural values that are potentially important for understanding public administration. Let us now turn our attention to politics, or rather political culture. As illustrated in Figure 4-1, public administration is a component of government, and for a meaningful suggestion to or diagnosis of the protracted ailments of transitional bureaucracies, it may be analyzed best from a more politicized perspective, rather than being examined as simply another form of managerial activity.⁹⁸

There are many ways, and there have been a number of attempts to classify political cultures ranging from Riggs' prismatic societies to ultra industrial societies. However, for our purpose, a look at the four dimensions of political culture described by Pye in

⁹⁷ Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra, *Green Politics: The Global Promise*. (Santa Fe: Bear, 1986).

⁹⁸ B. Guy Peters, *Politics of Bureaucracy*, (1984): 45.

the introductory essay to Political Culture and Political Development,⁹⁹ will be helpful. These four dimensions are: hierarchy and equality, liberty and coercion, loyalty and commitment, trust and distrust.

The first dimension, hierarchy and equality, deals with administrative structures having hierarchical structuring of personnel and authority. As discussed by Weber, as well as by many other commentators such as Parsons on public administration, an individual's place in society is determined by ability. This achievement-oriented criteria, generally linked with "modern" societies, in theory determines that the advancement of an individual is based on what one can do, and not on who he or she is.¹⁰⁰ This is true in theory, but the actual application of the principle is close to non-existent in transitional societies where individuals may be recruited on the basis of ascriptive criteria such as ethnicity or class. The individual's position in society has nothing to do with achievement, but with the fact that he or she belongs to this or that ethnic group.

Equality raises a lot of controversial issues, even in industrial Western societies. Someone must be in charge in order to get things done. Superiors in organizations have always attempted to exercise their authority to tell subordinates what to do. However, it is argued that the best way to attain efficiency is not by a system of hierarchy, but by a system of cooperation and bargaining.¹⁰¹ In such an

⁹⁹ Lucian W. Pye, "Introduction: Political Culture and Political Development" in Pye and Verba's, Political Culture, 3-26.

¹⁰⁰ Parsons and Shils, Toward a General Theory of Action.

¹⁰¹ Barnard Chester, The Function of the Executive, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

approach to organizations, all levels of the organization are seen as having resources and power.¹⁰²

As Peters puts it, closely allied with hierarchy and equality is the dimension of liberty and its opposite, coercion. Once again it is worth noting that the dimensions of liberty and coercion vary from society to society. For example, the United States in the 1960s saw numerous student activist demonstrations against racial inequality, nuclear weapons, and nuclear power stations, just to mention a few.¹⁰³ In the same way, students' and professionals' demonstrations and strikes in the late 1970s in Ghana constituted their quest for liberty.¹⁰⁴ These demonstrations were repressed by whatever coercive method was appropriate to various situations. As mentioned earlier in this paper, organizations or open politics are dealt with in two related ways: ban the organizations and jail their leadership.¹⁰⁵ Whatever situation, whatever society, tensions between the quest for liberty by the polity and the attempt to repress civil rights, either directly or indirectly will continue to be the struggle of the human race.

The third dimension of political culture mentioned by Pye was loyalty and commitment, referring mainly to the terminal community to which the individual gives his or her ultimate loyalty. For many developing societies, and even for some industrialized societies, there

¹⁰² Crozier, *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*, 231-236.

¹⁰³ B. Guy Peters, *Politics of Bureaucracy*.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Jeffries, "Ghana: The Political Economy of Personal Rule", *Contemporary West African States*, eds. O'Brien et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 81.

¹⁰⁵ Nyang Oro, "Reform Politics and Democratization Process in Africa," *African Studies Review*, (April, 1994): 133-149.

is little identification with people outside the family. Even where the commitment to family is not paramount, loyalties to language, religion, caste, or ethnic group diminish individual commitment to the national political system and produce the potential for political unrest and instability.¹⁰⁶ Thus loyalty and commitment may lead to hostility, resentment, and reinforcement of existing prejudices between administrators and clients. For example as mentioned in Chapter 2, loyalty and commitment to one's ethnic group has caused such a chronic problem in Nigeria's post-independent political platform.

The fourth and final aspect of political culture is the level of trust and distrust among the population. The problem of distrust is very pronounced in Third World nations. The new nations tend to lack interpersonal trust among their population.¹⁰⁷ Each segment of the society tends to protect its interest against all others, rather than offering an alternative means of social decision making. Likewise, the long history of colonial rule and the lack of social and economic infrastructure usually associated with democratic government have made the bureaucracy and the army the two logical contenders for power in these societies.¹⁰⁸ The question that is crucial to underdeveloped countries such as Ghana is when will they be able to develop the political and interpersonal trust upon which viable nations can be built?

After having identified the sharp changes in African scenario

¹⁰⁶ B. Guy Peters, *Politics of Bureaucracy*.

¹⁰⁷ Victor Olorunsola, *The Politics of Cultural Sub-Nationalism in Africa*. (New York: Doubleday, 1972).

¹⁰⁸ Robert Price, "Military Officers and Political Leadership," *Comparative Politics*, 3.3 (April, 1971): 361-380.

and looking at typical case studies in different societies as well as analysis of public administration in relation to societal and political cultures, let us now turn our attention to possible suggestions for Ghanaian public sector bureaucracies. There are many recommendations, but in order to reduce complexity, we will restrict our suggestions to recruitment of public administrators in Ghana and for that matter, in any transitional society. Before anyone can make much progress toward administering a public program, the political system must enlist and form a group of public administrators. The importance of recruitment in the study of public administration cannot be overemphasized, given that in order to know what a public agency will do, we must have some idea of who will do it and for what purposes—public or personal.¹⁰⁹ Unlike earlier assumptions concerning organizational management, such as Weber's ideal conceptualization of bureaucrat or the Taylor's scientific management school, the individuals who occupy organizational positions are not interchangeable parts.¹¹⁰ Bureaucrats bring with them to their jobs a host of values, predispositions, and operating routines that will greatly affect the quality of their performance in the bureaucratic setting.¹¹¹

Reflecting on the above comment on bureaucrats, a possible suggestion for reform in Ghanaian public sector bureaucracy could

¹⁰⁹ B. Guy Peters, *Politics of Bureaucracy*.

¹¹⁰ Max Weber, "Bureaucracy", in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, from Max Weber: *Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964): 196-244; Frederick W. Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management* (New York, Hempter 1911).

¹¹¹ Robert Putnam, "The Political Attitudes of Senior Servants in Western Europe," *British Journal of Political Science*, 3 (1973): 272-290; Joe D. Aberbach, Robert D. Putnam and Bert A. Rockman, *Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

be based on representative bureaucracy.¹¹² Recruitment into administrative positions must be based on equality of opportunity and representativeness of public bureaucracy. Since Kingsley coined the term “representative bureaucracy,” there has been concern over the extent to which the bureaucracy does, or should, represent the characteristics of the population in whose name it administers policy.¹¹³ Thus, just as some scholars have emphasized the necessity of merit in recruitment of public administrators, others have stressed the importance of producing a set of administrators whose social and economic characteristics are similar to those of the people with whom they will be working. This argument could be well illustrated in societies such as the United States, where “Affirmative Action” programs make employers pledge to recruit minorities and women.¹¹⁴ One may ask: How can we apply this to the Ghanaian situation which is an ethnically plural society in which differences are not necessarily those of dominance or submission? In this case, the argument for representative recruitment may be altered to say that it would preserve the social structure and the rights of each ethnic group in administering policy.¹¹⁵ Another point about ethnicity and representativeness is that this is frequently a point of bargaining in societies attempting to manage internal ethnic divisions. In societies

¹¹² B. Guy Peters, *Politics of Bureaucracy*.

¹¹³ J. Donald Kingsley, *Representative Bureaucracy*, (Yellow Spring, Ohio: Antioch Press, 1944).

¹¹⁴ “The Future of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity: A Symposium”, *Review of Public Personnel, Administration*, ed. Jack Rasim.

¹¹⁵ See Martin O. Heisler, ed., “Pattern of European Politics”, *The European Political Model in Politics in Europe*, (New York: David McKay 1974): 27-89 and L. Dubois, “La Politique de Choix des Fonctionnaires dans les Communautés Européennes” in Charles Debbasch, ed., “La Politique de Choix des Fonctionnaires dans les pay Européens,” (Paris: CNRS, 1981): 261-283.

such as Nigeria with its diverse ethnic society, and of course to a lesser degree in Ghana application of the principle of representative bureaucracy could help to alleviate tension, and even curb future waves of military takeovers.

It is also worth mentioning that this study is not intended to simplify the African scenario because the narrow recruitment from ethnic groups can be itself a source of inefficiency throughout the highly industrial global economy. However, if this system combines the know-how of career bureaucrats and ethnic representativeness, the probability of improvement may be enhanced.

Conclusion

As Katz and Kahn stated in The Social Psychology of Organizations, behavior is considered to be organized when it is characterized by patterned activity of a cooperative and interdependent nature. When we speak of formal organizations, we refer to a conscious effort to establish such a system of cooperative and interdependent behavior through the assignment of roles to organizational membership, so that some goal or goals can be attained. Provided that organizational structure, or technology, serves its purposes, or technology is rationally related to its purposes, it follows logically that the efficiency and effectiveness of a formal organization in attaining its goals depend on the degree to which its members will behave in routine situations, in the manner prescribed for organizational positions, in nonroutine situations, and in an innovative manner that is informed by organizational goals.¹¹⁶ The central theme of this study is that, in transitional organizations, the behavior described by Katz and Kahn with regards to dependability and sustainability is determined by the relationship between the organization and its society which is made up of ethnic groups with different interests.

This study drawing heavily from literature on sub-Saharan African countries during their post-independence, “attempted to show that in Ghana the relationship between public administrative organizations and the socio-cultural environment”¹¹⁷ is such as to

¹¹⁶ In Robert M. Price, from Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations, 338.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 205-228.

inhibit the fulfillment of administrative efficiency. In a limited way, we also demonstrated that transplanted Western institutions and the blind emulation of these administrative apparatuses by transitional bureaucrats were bound to be unsupported by the masses. Thus when formal bureaucratic organizations are transplanted to such societies, it is very difficult, from the point view of social survival, for personnel in the performance of their bureaucratic roles to maintain the necessary universalistic posture and requisite commitment to national development and service goals. The social environment in which public servants are enmeshed demands commitment to other reference groups and fulfillment of obligations to others. Obtaining social approval and esteem necessitates the violation of the norms and requirements of the organizational role-set, so that precedence can be given to the obligations of some other personal role-set or tradition-oriented mode of social behavior. In such a situation, role performance is undependable, and organizational goals are not likely to mobilize a sufficient quotient of membership's energy to produce spontaneous and innovative behavior in the pursuit of organizational achievement. In short, the vector of social pressures which social psychologists have found so important in shaping of human behavior is directed against the needs of organizational effectiveness.¹¹⁸

Of course, in this analysis of transfers include military bureaucracy, political parties and of course the civil service organizations. The military, which was reformed as a symbol of sovereignty and national independence, later on developed interests of its own. It became a more highly organized group than any in

¹¹⁸ Robert M. Price, *Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana*, 205-228.

Ghana. The causes for the proliferation of coups, as we attempted to show in this study, were not identical. The history of military intervention reveals important shifts in the objectives of soldiers turned politicians and in the types of political changes their actions have generated. The common purpose of interventions was to depose ruling coalitions and their leaders and to establish other dominant alliances in their stead.¹¹⁹

It is also worth noting that the repeated military interventions in Ghana and Nigeria exposed a more complex pattern of military-induced political change. First the putsch technique had come into use: the impeachment of the ruling military leader to protect the interest of the military clique in power. The forced abdication of General Acheampong in Ghana and Major General Gowon and, later, General Buhari in Nigeria highlighted a growing tendency of senior military officers to preempt more radical change by regulating what they perceived to be unacceptable behavior by incumbents. The putsch, therefore, has become a method for bringing about a change in leaders without a change in government. Second, some coups had become instruments of political reform, as in the populist-inspired intervention of Jerry Rawlings. In these cases, fragments of the military, usually led by young officers joined by the rank-and-file, challenging not only the previous ruling coalition but also, more fundamentally, the hegemony of dominant elites in general.¹²⁰ The rationale behind coups such as Rawlings' was the redistribution of

¹¹⁹ Robert M. Price, *Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana*, 205-228.

¹²⁰ Maxwell Owusu, "Custom and Coups, A Juridicial Interpretation of Civil Order and Disorder," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 24.1 (1986): 72.

wealth.

Military regimes, once in power, have generally not diverged markedly from their civilian counterparts. In Ghana corruption was at its highest peak during the Acheampong regime. Any attempt to go beyond a specific case in drawing conclusions on the performance of soldiers as governors would be missing the central point that in the vast majority of African countries, the means by which formal power has been achieved, whether violent or not, are less significant than how that power has been used and for what ends. Thus, although later military interventions may have opened the door for widening the opportunities for political participation, "it is the conduct of the new regime and its leadership that has been the key of political transformations."¹²¹ This is especially true of military governments as they confront, more directly than civilian regimes, continuous problems of legitimization. Within a few years of their rise to power, they face a choice between attempting to routinize their rule or handing over power to civilians.¹²² Many leaders have opted for undergoing a process of civilianization: The general becomes a president, a party is formed, symbolic elections are held. In Ghana, Acheampong suggested a representative no-party union government with ongoing military involvement as a way of staying in power (an idea resurrected by Rawlings a decade later). The merits of military-civilian dyarchy have been debated in Nigeria since the beginning of the 1980s. In a nutshell, violent transitions have generally constituted

¹²¹ Chazam et al., *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, 218.

¹²² Claude E. Welch, "Military Disengagement From Politics," *Armed Forces and Society*, 9.4 (1983): 539-540. Also see William Gutteridge, "Undoing Military Coups in Africa," *Third World Quarterly*, 1 (1985): 78-89.

more a manifestation of chronic political uncertainty than an instrument for its elimination.

As much as socio-cultural norms militate against efficient administrative procedures, we may also say that chronic political uncertainty and political leadership are the root causes of administrative illusion. Even though the Wilsonian and Weberian paradigms are too idealistic, the institutionalization of the merit system for appointment and retention of administrators so that parties can no longer force large-scale changes of administrative personnel when there is change in governing parties still holds its ground in any administrative process.¹²³ Despite the recognition of the importance of meritocracy, less developed countries as shown in this study—especially in Ghana—have often resorted to nonmerit systems of appointment to administrative positions. In such situations, the justification of loyalty to the nation, or more exactly to the current regime, is considered more important than the possession of requisite diplomas.¹²⁴ For example, as NKrumah said in relationship to administration in Ghana:

*It is our intention to tighten up the regulations and to wipe out the disloyal elements of the civil service, even if by so doing we suffer some temporary dislocation of the service. For disloyal civil servants are no better than saboteurs.*¹²⁵

¹²³ Woodrow Wilson in the “Study of Public Administration,” (1887) and Max Weber in “Bureaucracy,” (1922).

¹²⁴ B. Guy Peters, *The Politics of Bureaucracy*, 1989.

¹²⁵ Kwame NKrumah, *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology*, (New York: Praeger, 1961), 173.

The language here is clear and explicit, demonstrating the fact that in Nkrumah's Ghana, there was no room for objectivity and neutrality. The idea of partisan control over the state bureaucracy is a phenomenon of communist countries. It is not an undeniable fact that during the First Republic, Nkrumah attempted to adopt a Leninist-type strategy. Ideally, the Convention People's Party (CPP) was made the society's focal institution. Its ideological mission was upgraded, and all other major institutions were "seeded" with its cadre, all with the purpose of penetrating and transforming the society. However, Nkrumah's aspiration to turn the CPP into a vanguard party never became a reality. Although the CPP came to reflect Ghanaian society, it was in a far different sense than what Nkrumah had intended when he coined the phrase "Ghana is the CPP, the CPP is Ghana." As a mechanism to control and upgrade the performance of public bureaucracy, the party, therefore, was of little use.¹²⁶

Beyond the problem of abuse of power by political leadership is the problem of finding administrators who are genuinely committed to the role aspects of their positions and who are insulated from social pressures to administer a system of rewards and punishments, in a manner that would produce dependable role performance and create innovative behavior in the pursuit of policy goals.¹²⁷ Through this analysis, one may deduce that Ghana has a long way to go in order to attain the levels of impersonality and universality in administrative procedures. A general administrative

¹²⁶ Robert M. Price, *Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana*, from "The Prerequisites of a Real Deconcentration: The Soviet Experience," a paper presented to the seminar on the spatial aspects of development administration, University of Pittsburg (July, 1965), 31-32. Also based on Price's experience in Ghana, 1975, where he noticed Nkrumah's attempt to pursue state-control bureaucracy was meaningless within the Ghanaian society which is ethno-plural. According to a Civil Servant Survey conducted by Price, Nkrumah's intentions were not followed. See "The Government's Business," *West Africa*, 9528 (23 July, 1973): 985.

¹²⁷ Robert Price, *Society and Bureaucracy in Contemporary Ghana*, (1975).

implementation, given the ethnic affiliations that exist in Ghana, is going to be undermined by the social environment. However, all is not lost; the Ghanaian organizational leadership has a choice of soliciting outside help from industrial nations in the form of technical assistance. This technical assistance so received must not be focused on transplanting foreign bureaucratic apparatuses in Ghana, but rather must attempt to modify their approaches to suit Ghanaian polity. Just as this analysis shows by example the case study of Israeli immigrants, Ghanaian bureaucrats must be ready to accept change and above all be creative.

Finally, it is absolutely impossible to say that political or bureaucratic corruption as well as organizational weaknesses do not exist in any given polity, be that developed or less developed. However, it is an undeniable fact that corruption and inherent organizational weakness are more pronounced in societies that are undergoing a change towards modernization. Ghanaian society, trapped in a web of ethnicity where groups identify themselves as distinct and different from one another, is bound to meet obstacles in carrying out official duties. Administrative inefficiency and the problem of ethnicity are further compounded by the military, the only highly organized sector in Ghanaian institutions, which thinks the only way to get rid of the "bad guys" is to stage coups. There is always a better way of doing things than application of force, and Ghana can do better than embarking upon military takeovers. A solution to reduce corruption, and therefore discourage the "Boy Scouts" from stepping in as redeemers, will be to seek adequate cooperation between the ethnic groups that inhabit the country. This explanation is to answer two questions: Does Ghana have objectives and goals for improved administration? With what sort of leadership would Ghanaians be willing to sign a social contract?

That is to say, the spirit of ethnicity must be replaced by the spirit of national welfare if efficiency and effectiveness are to be improved in the public bureaucracy in Ghana.

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