

An Appraisal of the Two Faces of Bureaucracy in Relation to the Nigerian Society

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INTRODUCTION

The principle of social organization which characterize the twentieth-century industrial societies is “rational coordination” otherwise known as ‘Bureaucracy’. Under this form of organization, people are brought together in formal and complex settings run by professionals and experts. The professionals are called ‘Bureaucrats’ while the organizations they run are known as ‘Bureaucracies’. The nineteenth century produced a number of brilliantly descriptive and literary accounts of modern bureaucracies. Many writers call attention to the increasing bureaucratization of human activity but Max Weber a German Sociologist, historian and economist, is credited with having made the most thorough analysis of bureaucracy (Mullins, 1999).

The main contention in the writings of these scholars is that more and more spheres of life are being dominated by large organizations and increasing numbers of people are becoming employees of complex organizations. As a matter of fact, quite a few aspects of modern society can be studied without reference to bureaucracy. Most obviously in the business world and in modern establishments, the coordination of specialists, in accordance with impersonal rules is highly developed and adopted. The same trend has also been observed to be the pattern in every other areas of the society. Wilmot (1985) and Applebaum and Chamblis (1995) argued that bureaucracy starts from birth (health bureaucracy) to family upbringing (social welfare), to school (educational) to work (civil service, military, commercial, industrial) to worship and death (religion): man is increasingly dominated by bureaucracy. Every sphere of modern life has thus become very bureaucratic as people are born into bureaucracies, grow in it, live with it, and even die in it. It is bureaucracy all the way and all the time.

CAUSES OR NEED FOR BUREAUCRACY

There are four historical conditions which

have helped to promote the development of bureaucracy in the contemporary society. These are:

1. *Money Economy*: This promoted the development of bureaucratic organizations in the sense that payment of money for services rendered creates a proper degree of commitment among bureaucrats and the work force. A money economy brings into association people who have no other interactions. Their relations may be limited to the exchange of goods or services for money without further involvement. Simmel (1955) showed how the growth of money economy contributes to impersonality in social relations. When compensation is based strictly on money, people tend to restrict their relations with one another and to ignore personal considerations.

In contrast, a slave or volunteer economy cannot foster bureaucratic development. A slave is too dependent on his master and would not want to assume responsibility or exercise any personal initiative. Unpaid voluntary workers are too independent and will necessarily refuse to follow bureaucratic procedures. In such a situation rigid discipline cannot be strictly enforced.

2. *Capitalism*: It is conceptually difficult to separate a money economy from capitalism as both go hand in hand in promoting bureaucracy. History has shown that it is under capitalism that formal and complex organization emerges to ensure that governmental operations succeed. Bureaucracy thus understood, is fully developed in the private economy, only in the most advanced institutions of capitalism. To Weber the distinguishing characteristic of modern capitalism was the “rational organization of free labour”.

3. *Protestant Ethic*: Weber’s main thesis is that the ‘Protestant ethic’ which strongly emphasized hard work and other individualistic values gave rise to capitalism and capitalism in turn gave rise to bureaucracy. One important sociological dimension of the ‘protestant ethic’ is that attitudes towards work changed and there

was a growing emphasis on unlimited gain. These new attitudes and values were not 'natural' but had their origin in the Protestant ethic and capitalism.

4. *Large Size*: This is undoubtedly the single most important and popular factor that led to Bureaucratization. For the most part, the existence of bureaucracy in any sense is associated with large organizations. Dimock and Hyde (1940) stated that "*The broadest structural cause of bureaucracy, whether in business or in government is the tremendous size of the organization*". Bureaucracy is therefore seen as the inevitable and product of increased size and complexity of organizations.

All the characteristics of bureaucracy are built around the framework of large system water ways in ancient Egypt, the maintenance of a far reaching network of roads in Roman Empire, the control over millions of people's religious life by the Roman Catholic Church would probably not have been possible without bureaucracy (Stoner and Wankel, 1988).

To Weber, to whom much of bureaucracy is associated with, bureaucracy is an inevitable feature and the outcome of modernization and the increasing complexities of human institutions. He saw bureaucracy as the decisive feature of modernity, the key to change in economics, politics, law and even cultural life. It is the effort to run large organizations with greater effectiveness that brought bureaucracy. According to Bennis (1968) the bureaucratic "machine model" emerged as a reaction against the personal subjugation, nepotism and cruelty, and the capricious and subjective judgements which passed for managerial practices during the early days of the industrial revolution. Bureaucracy emerged out of the organization's need for order precision and the workers demand for impartial treatment.

Having discussed the underlying causes and the need for bureaucracy, our next task in this paper is to operationalize and define in concise terms the concept 'Bureaucracy'. This is quite necessary as the term 'Bureaucracy' has been a subject of wrong interpretations and misgivings. The sociologists are value-neutral towards bureaucracy and as such it must be studied objectively as a form of complex organization. The term bureaucracy is derived from the French word 'bureau' which means 'office' literally bureaucracy means that power is in the hand of

officials. Sociologists use the term to designate a certain type of structure, a particular organization of rationally coordinated unequal, and rejects the term which equates bureaucracy with "*red tape*", inefficiency and the likes. Most social scientists define bureaucracy in a more neutral way as the formal organization of administrative tasks. In defining bureaucracy as the formal organization of administrative officials, social scientists have tried to avoid prejudgments. A bureaucracy is not necessarily rigid, insensitive or power striving. Nevertheless, the idea of bureaucracy, as it is used in social science theory does carry special connotations. Bureaucracy is a kind of formal administrative structure. It has distinctive characteristics and problems as the discussions that follow here make clear.

Max Weber is credited with having made the most thorough analysis of bureaucracy. He is ranked as the greatest exponent of bureaucracy as his work in this area is treated in academic discourse as a classical piece. From this background, Weber's conception is therefore crucial to our discussions here. Max Weber (1946) conceived bureaucracy thus:

"The fully developed bureaucratic mechanism compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs - these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration ... Its specific nature develops the more perfectly the more bureaucracy is 'dehumanized', the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business, love, hatred, and all purely personal irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation".

Webster's Third International Dictionary (1971) defined bureaucracy as "*a system of administration marked by constant striving for increased functions and power; by lack of initiative and flexibility, by indifference of human needs or public opinion, and by a tendency to defer decisions to superior or to impede action with red tape... the body of officials that gives effect to such a system*". Coser and Rosenberg (1976) defined bureaucracy as that type of hierarchical organization which is designed rationally to coordinate the work of many individuals in the pursuit of large-scale

administrative tasks. This last definition seems to be in place for our purposes here. This is because the definition took a neutral position unlike the one presented by Webster's Dictionary earlier on. Sociologists must be value-neutral, and as such only value-neutral definitions are acceptable to them.

Nobbs (1984), Olughbile (1997) and Mullins (1999) summarized the main features of Weber's ideal bureaucracy. These are: (1) appointment of officials according to technical qualifications and merit: officials are not elected; (2) rules and regulations govern official's specialized work: officials work impersonally showing neither fear nor favour to anyone; (3) promotion allows efficient officials to climb higher in the hierarchical power structure: officials enter a career and do not expect preferential treatment, or property rights related to the office; (4) full-time officials devote themselves to the work of the organization: officials are expected to carry out their duties impersonally and completely; (5) continuous business is carried on faithfully by the officials: the office does not come to an end with the death of the holder; (6) written documents are used to conduct official business: everyone is subject to formal equality before the rules; (7) public and private life are divided by the segregation of organizational activity from the official's private life; public monies and property are separated from the official's private property; and (8) limited compulsion by officials is allowed but without hatred or passion, and hence without affection or enthusiasm.

Having highlighted the essential features and characteristics of bureaucracy, we shall proceed by examining the various ideas of writers and scholars on the positive side of bureaucracy. Is bureaucracy desirable? If yes, how? If not, why?

Laski (1931) emphasized the fact that since the work is professionalized; nepotism is guarded against and the conditions of work operate in favour of economic morality and against corruption. In his own submissions, Gouldner (1954); Bovee et al. (1993) and Giddens (1996) argued that rules in bureaucracy act as substitutes for orders, since they comprise an explicit body of standing obligations. They narrow workers' areas of discretion. They remove some of the personal friction associated with strict surveillance while one works. They alleviate the problem of repeatedly choosing specific individuals for unpleasant aspects of jobs since those aspects

become a routine part of certain jobs. They remove alibis for not acting as management wishes. The public character of the rules allows deviation to be detected by large number of people and makes punishments legitimate, since correct behaviour and penalties for deviation are known in advance. Victimization is less likely to be alleged or suspected. The rules specify a minimum level of acceptable performance. Bureaucracy allows individuals to work without emotional commitment, if they wish so.

Moore (1962) stated that bureaucracies have the virtue of securing cooperation between the numbers of people without those people necessarily feeling cooperative. No matter what they feel about each other, or about their tasks, sheer discharge of their stated functions ensures that the total bureaucracy is working.

In another instance, Wilmot (1985) claimed that on the positive side, bureaucracy is economical. According to him:

"Like other social structures and pattern of routine such as habits, norms and culture it regulates behaviour, lays the basis for reciprocal expectations, and reduces arbitrariness, unpredictability and potential disorder. The criterion of expertise, as a basis for recruitment makes the ideal of the "right man for the right job" possible. This together with the division and specialization of labour, hierarchical control and accountability from above, theoretically increases the probability of performing the set objectives of complex, large-scale tasks. The assurance of a fixed salary and the existence of public, rational criteria for assessing performance and conduct, allow the ideal bureaucrat to concentrate on the specific task he has been assigned and for which he is qualified".

In spite of these numerous positive connotations of bureaucracy, there still exist some important negative connotations from the standpoint of modern management. With the exception of Max Weber, other sociologists and philosophers have been very critical of bureaucracies. Karl Marx believed that bureaucracies were used by the dominant capitalist class to control the working class. From the Marxists' point of view, bureaucracies are characterized by strict hierarchy and discipline, veneration of authority, incompetent officials, lack of initiative or imagination, fear of responsibility and a process of self aggrandizement. For the Marxists therefore bureaucracy only exists to benefit the

capitalists and helps to subdue the working class and in the process the workers become alienated.

Laski (1931) claimed that in public bureaucracies, the concentration of power in the hands of bureaucrats can jeopardize the liberties of individual citizens. The bureaucracies become the exclusive preserve of oligarchies of specialists. It becomes uneasy and sometimes difficult to control the expert, with his specialized knowledge, skill and data. Because the bureaucrats are often called upon to justify or rationalize their actions, some of them fear to take some necessary initiatives, risks and experiments thereby introducing timidity and conservatism into the system. As a result of their openness to public criticisms, the bureaucrats are usually trying to ensure accuracy and insisting on rehearsing every possible criticism. This again leads to timidity and undue and prolonged delays in taking actions and decisions.

Merton (1957) suggested that bureaucracies are usually characterized by red tape formalism and rigid rules. Merton argued that behaviour becomes stereotyped in ways that are not necessarily appropriate to the specific set of circumstances currently confronting the bureaucrats. He also identified the tendency for goals to become displaced on to procedures and rituals in some bureaucracies. Merton went further by saying that the system can easily breed over conformity, timidity and conservatism. Discipline can become overemphasized, with great importance placed on people doing as they are told whether or not they have been told to do the right thing. The expert tend to become narrow-minded and blinkered, developing ways of not seeing circumstances that do not fit easily with their preprogrammed behaviour. In bureaucracies, Merton argued that a defensive 'esprit de corps' can develop among colleagues, who combine to protect persons and procedures rather than concentrating on problem-solving.

Finally, Merton concluded by saying that the emphasis placed on precision and reliability in administration have self-defeating consequences in that rules designed to be means to ends become ends in themselves. In case where officials are to serve the public, the very norms of impersonality which govern their behaviour run them into trouble with the public.

Corroborating Laski and Merton's submission, Sofer (1973) argued that bureaucracy generates forms of professionalism and

specialization that result in conservatism, timidity, rigidity and dependence on seniors and may divert attention from the need to adaptability in the face of changing circumstances. Juniors lean on the rules to protect their rights, and seniors may easily become trapped in cage of prescription. With growth in the use of scientists and professionals, bureaucratic structures and prescriptions are challenged and modified by staff whose training, dispositions and affiliations incline them to discipline that is derived from outside the organization.

There is also the size effect or limit. Bureaucracies can be disadvantageous when it becomes too large to deal adequately with individual or personal situations. The larger the bureaucracy the bigger its problems as there comes a time when size (bigness) becomes a problem, what economists call *limit to scale*.

Wilmot (1985) argued that routinisation is opposed to man's freedom, his spontaneity, the very notion of intentionality. This is, because bureaucracy replaces decision-making activity with routine procedures, thus negating the principle of accountability which is an essential component of the system. This displacement of accountability where the superior rather than the actor is held accountable for his action, allows the bureaucrat who has committed crimes in the name of procedure to excuse himself by saying that he was only obeying orders. Wilmot went further by saying that the hierarchical structure of appointment, control and accountability, without any element of consensus runs counter to the notion that decisions should be taken with the consent of the workers or subordinates. Wilmot finally stated that the division and specialization of labour without a conscious effort to educate bureaucrats about their roles in relation to the overall structure of the bureaucracy are likely to cause anomalies.

Warren Bennis (1968) perhaps best summarized the many deficiencies of bureaucracy, and listed the following:- (1) bureaucracy does not adequately allow for personal growth and the development of mature personality; (2) bureaucracy develops conformity and 'group-think'; (3) bureaucracy does not take into account the informal organization and the emergent and unanticipated problems; (4) its systems of control and authority are hopelessly outdated; (5) bureaucracy does not possess nor prescribe adequate means of

resolving differences and conflicts between ranks and most particularly between functional groups in the organization; (6) communication and innovative ideas are frustrated or distorted due to hierarchical divisions; (7) the full human resources of bureaucracy are not being utilized due to mistrust and fear to reprisals; (8) bureaucracy cannot assimilate the influx of new technologists or scientists entering the organization; and (9) it modifies personality structure so that people become the dull, gray, conditioned “*organization man*”.

Threats to Bureaucracy

Bennis also went ahead by identifying four relevant threats to bureaucracy. These according to him are:

1. Rapid and unexpected change: Bureaucracy with its nicely defined chain of command, its rules and rigidities, is ill-adopted to the rapid change the environment in most cases demands in contemporary times.
2. Growth in size: This happens where the volume of an organization’s traditional activities is not enough to sustain growth. A number of factors are at work here, these include: (i) Bureaucratic overhead; (ii) tighter controls and impersonality due to bureaucratic sprawls; and (iii) outmoded rules and organisational structures.
3. Complexity of modern technology where integration between activities and persons of very diverse, highly specialized competence is required. Today’s activities require persons of very diverse, highly specialized competence. Hurried growth, rapid change and increase in specialization - all these put together against bureaucracy will make it to begin crumbling.
4. A basically psychological threat springing from a change in managerial behaviour. This rests on: (i) a new concept of man, based on increased knowledge of his complex and shifting needs, which replaces an over simplified, innocent, push-button idea of man; (ii) a new concept of power, based on collaboration and reason, which replaces a model of power based on coercion and threat; and (iii) a new concept of organizational values based on humanistic-democratic ideals, which replaces the depersonalized mechanistic-value system

of bureaucracy.

THE NIGERIAN BUREAUCRACY

A logical question that readily comes to mind now is, must the theory of bureaucracy be culture specific? We raised this question in order to clarify any confusion which may arise in the minds of our readers as to our interest in appraising the realities of bureaucracy in Nigeria. At the onset we want to make it categorically clear that it is not everywhere and in all society that one finds all the Weberian attributes and characteristics of bureaucracy. Bureaucracies are products of the specific settings from where they originated. For instance, Weber’s bureaucracy is associated with the ‘protestant ethic’ and the German tradition and as such it has a complete Western perspective and orientation.

It is therefore interesting to note that bureaucracy has its socio-cultural dimensions. That is, there are certain ways in which culture of a society determines the type of bureaucracy that emerges within the society. This has been aptly demonstrated in Crozier’s (1964) study of the French bureaucracy. In essence therefore, we can talk of British, American, Japanese or Nigerian bureaucracies. Crozier found some uniqueness and some traits of cultural values traceable to the French people in the French bureaucracy. For instance the French bureaucracy is highly centralized while some of the revolutionary traits continue to reappear. The French do not dislike change disorder and this is seen as purely a French phenomenon. From this background, it is clear that bureaucracy cannot be rigidly divorced or separated from the immediate socio-cultural environment.

What does the Nigerian bureaucracy look like? Narrowly conceived, the Nigerian bureaucracy includes the administrative machinery, personnel of government and the corpus of rules and regulations that govern their behaviour. Anise (1986) provided a broader and more elastic conception of the Nigerian bureaucracy. Included in this elastic view are the following: (1) Civil services of all the thirty-one governments and the seven hundred and seventy-six local governments (as at 1986) that constitute the Federal republic of Nigeria presently; (2) parastatal and public enterprise bureaucracies; (3) armed forces bureaucracy; (4) internal security or policy bureaucracy; (5) higher education bureaucracy; (6) teaching service

bureaucracy; (7) public media bureaucracy; (8) judicial service bureaucracy; (9) political party bureaucracy; and (10) private sector bureaucracy.

Problems of the Nigerian Bureaucracy

As stated earlier, there are ways in which the cultures of societies determine the functioning and the operations of the bureaucracies in such societies. Nigeria is not an exception to this rule.

Ekpo (1979) observed that the Nigerian bureaucracies are corrupt, inefficient and over-staffed. Complementing this is the Udoji Report of 1974 which charged the bureaucracies with nepotism, ethnic loyalties, corruption, elitism, inability of superiors to delegate responsibilities: unreliability of junior staff in executing delegated tasks: failure of all to apply specialized knowledge and training skills in the management of the public service and failure to appreciate the importance of timeliness or efficiency in the performance of tasks. The report concluded by saying that the entire Nigerian bureaucracy was not results-oriented.

In some other instances, Amucheazi (1980), Anise (1986) among others have observed how politics enters into the spheres of administration and in the process the whole bureaucratic apparatus is disrupted and put into disarray. The whole political bureaucracy which ought to be a non-partisan and neutral body with no permanent loyalties to any group has had to take sides in many instances. This was aptly reflected in the Western Region crises between 1962 and 1963 when the government bureaucracy became partisan. During the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) the federal bureaucracy as a whole were openly partisan and strongly in the defence of the federal case. As a result of the inefficiency and ineffectiveness and lack of public accountability of those in the executive arm of government, the band wagon effect has been transferred to bureaucracies that served them. By the same token and in the same manner, the bureaucracies have grown inefficient and unaccountable to the people in the delivery of goods and services.

Anise (1986) argued that what has grown in the Nigerian bureaucracies is the awareness of institutional, elite class interests preserved and nourished through an interconnected chain of internal bureaucratic networks of influence and shared self-protectionism. Over the years routine bureaucratic services have been slowly

converted into an intricate network of favours provided only in exchange for some other kinds of favours given or expected. Because the Nigerian society have been excessively corrupt, the bureaucrats too have grown corruptible and corrupt. Thus in Nigeria, corruption is a permanent integral feature of bureaucracy. It is therefore not unusual to find the bureaucrats bending rules and jumping official procedures and protocols in order to achieve selfish ends.

In pursuit of private goals, several officials in the Nigerian bureaucracies form cliques and informal groups in order to maximize their benefits: all at the expense of the attainment of institutional goals. In effect, bureaucracies which are corrupt and steadily suffer goal displacement can hardly be expected to be efficient. If the bureaucracies are efficient at all in any way, it is in the special role of protecting its class interests rather than serving the masses whose interests it was created to serve. Like the human relations the school would argue, to understand bureaucracy, one has to transcend its formal structure into interest groups and other social groups activities that impinge on the individual role within a bureaucratic set up.

There are also allegations of favouritism and nepotism in the Nigerian bureaucracies. The power of the bureaucrat is stretched to the limit or even beyond limit. The bureaucrat is made to do things beyond the realms of his power and office as he is made to do things which he is not competent or qualified to do. There is a lack of compartmentalization of roles. We thus have a bureaucracy that is functioning on other criteria other than the Weberian model. Coupled with the above is the 'collectivistic' tradition in Nigeria. Like in most African societies the individual does not exist for himself but for his nuclear, and the extended families as well as his town and the immediate environment. In many instances rules are bent in order to assist a kin, a closer relation, someone from the same clan, village or town. This is a thing that disrupts rather than support bureaucracy and in the end what you have is an inefficient system.

The impact of the ethnic factor on the Nigerian bureaucracies cannot be overlooked. Both in the public and the private sectors, personnel selections and appointments are based on non-bureaucratic criteria such as the state of origin, home town, ethnic group that reflect the peculiar problem of the Nigerian nation as against objectively measurable criteria

like qualifications, professional competence, intelligent quotient and the likes. As a matter of fact, the ethnic factor has been entrenched in the 1979 Constitution and the subsequent ones under the name 'Federal Character'. Presently a 'Federal Character Commission' has been established to monitor both public and private bureaucracies and ensure that this clause is implemented. The use of subjective criteria like ethnicity in deciding who is to be employed is a negation of bureaucratic ideals any day. Invariably the best applicants from the South are kept out of the bureaucracies for the worst from the North. No wonder the Nigerian bureaucracies are grossly inefficient. While one can sympathize with the reasons for adopting the Federal character concept, there is also the inherent danger that the adoption can become an obsession and consequently become demoralizing, demotivating and counter-productive. In many instances, it had been a source of acrimony and resentment thus leading to general paralysis of the bureaucracies. Anise (1986) stated that there have been complaints from serving bureaucrats in Nigeria against the frustration which the Federal character concept poses to serving bureaucrats from states which are not favoured by its implementation.

According to Olugbile (1997) nepotism had shaded into ethnicity. The favoured bureaucrat is selected over his peers (and sometimes even over his seniors). He is advanced preferentially. He is moved to strategically preferred positions in the bureaucracy and he is more likely to be let off with infractions of the bureaucratic rules. Olugbile concluded by saying that something needs to be done about this culturally ingrained habit and tendency, which everyone knows from theory is supposed to be deleterious to the harmonious functioning of the bureaucracies. This is because it destroys trust, creates suspicion and insecurity, and puts people in inappropriate positions for which the bureaucracies are apt to suffer later on.

The issue of discipline has also been identified as a problem having its toll on the Nigerian bureaucracies. There are factors within the Nigerian culture which makes the enforcement of discipline a problematic task in the Nigerian bureaucracies. The procedures stipulated for enforcing discipline in the ideal bureaucracy does not conform with the traditional procedures for enforcing discipline. Why is this so? Olugbile

(1997) argued that there is a traditional approach to discipline which on one hand recognizes that a worker should be punished, but insists that when elders intervene to plead on behalf of the offender, the boss is duty bound to take the elder's pleas. A contrary or counter approach is the logic that justice must be done irrespective of the status of the worker or his connections. The bureaucrat owes a duty to the bureaucracy to act equitably without fear or favour at all times. If he derelicts in this duty, ultimately it is the bureaucracy that bears the brunt. Our tradition and culture is one that stipulates that the counsel of the elders must not be discarded or jettisoned, otherwise the bureaucrat can be ostracized or treated as a social misfit. Most top bureaucrats always face this dilemma, and sometimes discover that there will be situations in which he cannot strictly enforce the code of conduct stipulated by bureaucracy to the letter. For instance, what does a permanent secretary do when he suspends an accountant in his ministry for fraud and the erring accountant brings a letter from the king of the permanent secretary's town pleading that the accountant should be pardoned. To disregard the King's letter will amount to insult and disrespect for tradition while to pardon the erring accountant brings a bad precedence and amounts to injustice and betrayal of trust. What does the Permanent Secretary do then? He is quite in a fix and a big dilemma. This is a typical example of what happens in the Nigerian bureaucracies most especially public ones.

From all indications, there are several problems confronting the Nigerian bureaucracies in general but some can be conveniently traced to the culture of the people as shown in the foregoing discussions in this paper. What is responsible for this deviation or departure from the real bureaucratic ideals? The answer to this question are quite immediate and numerous. First and foremost, it is argued that the Weberian bureaucracy is completely westernized and very prescriptive. It does not coincide with reality as it does not prescribe the way things work in reality or real life situations.

Secondly, it is argued that the Weberian bureaucratic model does not take enough cognisance of the ways in which culture determines or influences organizational behaviour vis a vis work relationships, values, norms and ethics. Cultural variation dominates social life.

Thirdly, the Nigerian society is built on the “*we or the collective tradition*” which negates the “*I or the individualistic tradition*” specified in the Weberian model.

Fourthly, in the Weberian bureaucracy there is strong emphasis on formal relationship whereas the Nigerian culture recognizes the informal aspects of social life as revealed by the Hawthorne studies.

Fifthly, unlike in the Western bureaucracies where particular importance is not attached to face-to-face interactions in formalized settings, in the Nigerian culture there is demand for face-to-face interactions in every sphere of social life. In situations where a bureaucracy deals with the public, the common requests or the questions are - ‘Who is the boss, I like to see him?’ who will treat this case, let me have a discussion with him. This is reflected in some local Yoruba slogans such as “*Oju loro wa*” and “*Ka foju rin ju*” all which literally means desire for face-to-face interaction.

Finally, the Nigerian tradition demands for both vertical and horizontal communication as against the adoption of vertical communication channels only as stipulated and specified in the Weberian model. The submission here is that even though information goes up and down it must also spread horizontally, that is, from one department to another or to colleagues and peers at work.

CONCLUSION

We shall be concluding this paper by restating some of the things we have discussed about the two faces of bureaucracy. First, bureaucracy is desired for its reliability, speed, precision, accuracy, rationality, efficiency, explicitly, objectivity and dependability.

Secondly, as it is not all that glitters is gold, bureaucracy is hated because of its alleged sluggish response to changes, inflexibility, timidity, red-tapism, conservatism, excessive rigidity, impersonality, lack of initiative, individualism and displacement of accountability.

Thirdly, it is clear from the foregoing discussions that bureaucracy has its socio-cultural dimensions. And as such we can talk of a unique Nigerian or French bureaucracy. On the basis of this submission, the problem of the Nigerian bureaucracy was identified and analyzed. It was at the same time argued that

Weber’s ideal bureaucracy is purely a Western phenomenon. It should also be admitted that Weber was ethnocentric, (cultural bias) in that he regarded Western Europe, especially his native Germany, as the most advanced of all societies.

Finally, whether bureaucracy is desirable or not, it had come to stay as it is from all indications an inevitable feature of modern societies. What cannot be avoided or discarded must be accommodated. As such modern societies must come to terms with it. At best bureaucracies can be modified to reflect the peculiarity and the uniqueness of the Nigerian culture. Thus bureaucracies can be modified to accommodate the influx of change in ideas, culture and values, and adapt to new situations or changing circumstances. Our final thesis is that it may be impossible to dismantle bureaucracy, but it is important to reform it.

KEYWORDS Function; organizational efficiency; modern society; reform

ABSTRACT This paper is an evaluation of the two faces of bureaucracy. The point of focus is on whether bureaucracy is desirable or not. The discussions in the paper shows that there is no rose without its thorns as bureaucracy is characterized by both functions and dysfunctions. While bureaucracy provides greater organizational efficiency in work settings, it is at the same time creating an uncaring “iron cage” from which there is little escape in modern society. The paper concluded with the thesis that it may be impossible to dismantle bureaucracy, but it is important to reform it.

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