

Myth versus Reality: Weberian Tenets and the Post-Independence Nigerian Public Service Experience

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Abstract

The Weberian theoretical perspective occupies a prominent place among the theories developed on organizations. The Weberian theoretical assumptions are found in all modern organizations. This paper, which is based on secondary data, examined the myth and reality of Weberian tenets in post-independence Nigerian public service. It indicated that the Weberian tenets such as fixed tenure, impartiality, professionalism, and specialization are recognized and adopted in the post-colonial Nigerian public service but essentially in haphazardly forms. The defilement of these norms has correspondingly affected the efficiency and productivity in Nigerian public service. Thus, to ensure efficiency and productivity in the public service and effective adaptation of the Weberian tenets, this paper recommended need for indigenized bureaucracy, value re-orientation and redesigning of the Nigerian state.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, public service, professionalism.

Introduction

Max Weber is the most renowned authority on bureaucracy characterized as administrative machinery for carrying on the business of government based on formal measure and routine procedure. For Weber, bureaucracy is the one and only most efficient way of organizing modern society (capitalist or socialist) or organization whether political, economic, religious or military (Alapiki, 2004). The Weberian bureaucratic norms have elicited furious debate as to whether it is hero or villain. A handful of social scientists have contributed to the debate. Some social scientists see the bureaucracy as a tardy and snail-speed mode of organization (Idode, 1988). Some others have noted that the Weberian strict emphasis on procedures, rules and regulation leaves no room for flexibility and thus, in the face of new and dynamic situation, it may result in unmitigated disaster (Merton, 1957; Merton, 1976; Burns and Stalker, 1961; Selznick, 1949; Gouldner, 1954). In addition, bureaucratic system has been characterized as adversary, subtle, herculean for a good worker and sanctuary for incompetent, lazy, morally deficient or ignorant workers (Jimoh 2009).

With all the defects, other scholars such as Peter Blau (1972) argued that there is no alternative to bureaucracy in the modern world if the large-scale organization were to run efficiently and the activities of their members were to be successfully coordinated. According to Blau (1972:264) “antagonism towards bureaucracy usually results from the ruthless efficiency of bureaucracy, not its inefficiency. People antagonize bureaucracy because it is efficient in carrying out its task as defined... When people rebel, they are upset by the bureaucracy’s impersonal objectivity and efficiency, for it tends not to be recognized by human and individual characteristics”.

As society or organization grows more and more complex, the greater is the necessity to rely on bureaucracy. As Gortner (1981:1) noted “with all its faults, it (bureaucracy) is still the most efficient structure that has yet been discovered when attempting to coordinate the actions of large groups of people towards a specific goal”. Furthermore, bureaucracy is regarded as indispensable machinery for achieving a high degree of rationality, efficiency, uniformity and predictability of behavior of the workforce of organization. Through the Weberian model, employees or workforce of modern organization can have some degree of specialization, standardization, formalization and concentration. Added to this, the Weberian administrative model is regarded as imperative riding off of nepotism, favoritism and incompetence in modern organization. It is perhaps in this light that Winston Churchill argued that “bureaucracy is the most efficient system of organizing people known to man except for all of the other systems” (Okotoni, 2001a:228).

To be sure, the Weberian tenets are the best and most applied theories to the administration of modern organization. It has been applied to the Church, security establishment and civil service. However, every organization is at various stages or distance on its journey to Weberian ideal or the end of the continuum (Imhanlahimi and Edosa, 2010). From the vantage point of comparative prism, the public services in different nations achieve various degrees of success in the performance of their duties. Within the same country, the public service is also given different rating in its contribution to national development at various periods. The public service like that of post-colonial Nigeria is expected to utilize the Weberian constructs.

This paper examines the adaptation or application of the Weberian ideals to the Nigerian public service in the post-independence era. Methodologically, the paper which deploys desk information based on descriptive analysis is structured into five sections. Following this introduction is the historical overview of the Nigerian public service. The next section outlines the Weberian theoretical frames, the subsequent section reflects on the application of the Weberian norms within the Nigerian public service. This is followed by the section on explanations for disjuncture between Weberian themes and operations of the post-colonial public service and then concluding remarks.

Background to the Nigeria Public Service

The Nigerian public service includes all public organizations or agencies owned and controlled by government. The Udoji Commission of 1974 conceptualized the public service to mean public service of the Federation and States including local government service, teaching service, service at the universities, statutory corporation, state-owned companies, the police and the judiciary, with the exception of the military (Imhanlahimi and Edosa, 2010). Also, the meaning of Public service is contained in section 277 (91) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria of 1979 now section 169 of the 1999 Constitution as encompassing the civil service (Ministerial departments), statutory corporations or parastatals, judiciary, legislature, educational institutions, financially wholly or principally owned by government at the State, Local and Federal levels, Nigeria Police or Armed Forces and other organizations in which the Federal or state governments owned controlling share or interest.

Within the post-colonial Nigerian public service, the civil service is the nucleus or the heart (Onuoha, 1999). Civil service can thus be defined as a well organized body of permanent paid officials of ministries and departments under the executive arm of government, charged with the responsibility of implementing government policies and programmes in accordance with laid-down rules and procedures (Ikeanyibe, 2010).

The Nigeria public service is a colonial heritage. It was birthed during the British colonial rule over the geo-political entity today known as Nigeria. Following the annexation of Lagos in 1861, a modest form of civil service was established. When the British colonial government later took over the Southern and Northern protectorates, it institutionalized central administrative organ for each of the protectorates. In 1899, the administration of Southern protectorate was transferred from the Foreign office to the Colonial Office, while the Royal Niger Company in 1900 administered the Northern protectorate.

Sequel to the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914, these administrative organs were replaced by a single government of Nigeria under a Governor-General constituted under new Letters and Patent and Order-in-Council with a new seal and flag. Between 1914 and 1954 when the public service was regionalized, the British colonial government influenced the growth and development of the Nigerian public service. During this period, the senior positions in the public service were dominated by expatriates. As at late 1945, the number of permanent senior civil servants in Nigeria was less than 1,400. Out of this number, there were 1,300 expatriates and 75 Africans (Okotoni, 2001). In preparation for independence, the British colonial government saw the need to replace the expatriate civil servants with indigenous civil servants. By the middle of 1948 out of 3,786 posts in the Nigerian public service, 1,245 were vacant. By 1954, only 550 posts out of the 2,450 vacant positions were filled by Nigerians (Okotoni, 2001). This led to the introduction of the Nigerianization policy. The Nigerianization policy refers to the process of replacing expatriate civil servants by indigenous ones through planned infusion of Nigerians into the senior service by means of accelerated programme of recruitment, training, supernumerary appointments and promotion. The policy was rooted in the Foot Commission of 1948.

Following the attainment of independence in 1960, Nigerians replaced the expatriate civil servants. In 1960/1961, the number of federal civil servants which was 30,390 rose to 292,985 in 1983 (Okotoni, 2001). As at 2015, the Nigerian public service both at the state and federal levels is staffed by approximately 5 million workers. Of this number, about 1.1 million belong to the federal service while others are states and local government workers (Abhuere, 2015).

Between 1960 and 1966, when Nigeria operated a Westminster parliamentary system of government, there were five public services in Nigeria, namely; the Federal Public Service, the Eastern Region Public Service, the Northern Public Service, the Western Public Service and the Mid-Western Public Service (created in 1963). Over the years, the number of federal ministries has increased to 20 in 1977 to 24 in 1983 and the number of state civil services increased from 12 in 1967 to 19 in 1975, in 21 in 1987 and 36 in 1996.

Apart from the change of personnel, the public service retained the Weberian structure and principles of the British civil service in terms of ethics, values, culture and tradition, training, procedures and esprit de corps (Ikeanyibe, 2010). As it was under the British colonial rule, the principal mandate of the service has been to enforce law and collect revenue to meet cost of these services. At independence, the public service continued with these functions. In addition, the service designs, plans and implements most public oriented programmes. These activities are quite crucial to the basic needs, welfare and survival of the citizens and the society (Ikelegbe, 1995).

Besides, the functional activities of the Nigerian public service, it is also the object of a chunk of public expenditure. A significant portion of recurrent expenditure in the national budgets has recurrently been proposed for the payment of salaries and overheads in institutions that provide critical public services. Besides, the Nigerian public service unlike their private sector counterpart has an uncanny reputation of being notorious for low productivity, gross inefficiency, crisis, corruption, lack of proper record keeping and management (Onimawo, 2017). The workforce of the Nigerian public service is largely notorious for acts of indiscipline such as appropriation of corporate time for private duty, indolence, dishonesty, lateness, poor commitment, and shoddiness in delivery of service (Ikelegbe, 1995). In addition to the above pathologies, the Nigerian public service has been plagued by the problem of poor staff motivation, job insecurity, patronage and tendencies such as sectional ethnic, religious and other sentiments in the management of its personnel.

To address these pathologies various reforms have been introduced by successive governments. Some of the reforms include Public Service Review Commission headed by Udoji set up in 1972, the Dotun Phillips Study Team of 1985, and the 1988 Civil Service Reforms. The extent to which these reforms mirror the Weberian themes is the crux of this discourse. Before proceeding with the mirror image or otherwise of the Nigerian public service of the Weberian norms, it is imperative to outline the Weberian themes.

Weberian Theoretical Perspective on Organization

Max Weber did a study on how authority is wielded in organizations. In this regard he distinguished between power and authority. According to him power denotes the exercise of force on people in order to elicit compliance regardless of their perception of the ruler and his rules. On the other hand, authority to him presupposes the acceptance of rules willingly by people because of the legitimacy ascribed to both the ruler and his rules. At the heart of authority is the notion of legitimacy.

On the basis of legitimacy, Weber classified three ideal types of authority, viz; charismatic authority, traditional authority and legal-rational authority. According to Weber traditional authority is a system in which authority is rooted in established belief in the sanctity of age-long and time-honoured tradition of doing things and in the legitimacy of those who exercise authority under them. In this system, the leader has authority by virtue of the status that he had inherited and the limit, scope and latitude of his authority is fixed by custom. Orders or rules are obeyed because tradition so demands.

Charismatic authority according to Weber is rooted in the exceptional personal attributes of the leaders by virtue of which he is regarded by those he leads as endowed with extra-human qualities, power, influence. Prime cases of the holders of charismatic authority include prophets, messiahs, warriors, and political leaders. Weber noted that charisma lies in the eyes of the beholders. The charismatic leader is obeyed because of the personal trust his disciples have in him and his exceptional qualities, capabilities and influence as much as they fall within the purview of the followers' in his

charisma. Weber also noted that in the charismatic authority structure, followers are given positions on the basis of their extra-human power and qualities.

Rational-legal authority according to Weber people owe obedience to established impersonal order. The authority structure is legal because it is exercised by means of a system of rules and procedures. It is rational because in it, the means are expressly designed to achieve specific end. This type of authority structure, which Weber circumspectly dubbed bureaucracy, is a dominant practice in institutions in modern society.

Weber outlined the operational characteristics of the bureaucracy as follows; (a) A clear-cut division of labour among officials, each officer performs a specific schedule of duties or tasks called official duties thus leading to a high degree of specialization among them. (b) Following from the above, there will also be a proper distinction of offices and officers, each office and official will be responsible to those above him for his action. This implies that all officers are not equal, their offices will be arranged in hierarchical manner. (c) Impersonal relationship among officials, all task are carried out and correspondence entered into in a very formal manner. (d) Bureaucratic official are employed based on their technical qualification and normally through a rigorous process of interview. (e) As a corollary to the above, officials are paid a fixed salary which is usually graded to correspond to their different ranks in the organization, while promotion to higher ranks for subordinates is based on seniority or expertise, or both (f) The office constitutes his primary occupation (a career) and he devotes his whole intellect to it (Erero and Ikelegbe, 1995). Other Weberian tenets include (g) official activity requiring full devotion of obligatory time of worker (h) continuity (i) political neutrality (j) anonymity (Alapiki, 2004, Adamolekun, 2010, Imhanlahimin and Edosa 2010).

Having concluded this classical exercise in theoretical abstraction, Weber declared that bureaucracy is technically the most advanced and the most efficient form of organization possible.

Nigerian Public Service and Weberian Tenets in Practice: Myth and Reality

The Weberian bureaucratic characteristics are applied in vary degrees in the Nigerian public service. In this section, the Weberian tenets are juxtaposed with the practices in the Nigerian public service with a view to establish the degree to which they align or contradict them. One of the key Weberian tenets is emphasis on hierarchy of authority intended to meet the functional need for leadership in any organization. In the post-colonial public service, the Weberian principle of hierarchical structure and authority has been adopted. In an administrative ministry in Nigeria, the Minister/Commissioner is the head, followed by a permanent secretary followed by deputies, assistants and so on down the line. As enjoined Weber communication, instructions and order flows from the top to the bottom while obedience flows from bottom to the top.

However, in contrast to the postulation of Weber, subordinates in Nigerian public service are absurdly expected by their superiors under personal authority to perform unlimited range of activities rather than those specified by the official rules. For example, some Nigerian university professors send their junior colleagues on non-corporate errands such as school runs and take their vehicles to the mechanic for repair. Some ask their junior colleagues as personal drivers. This opportunistic and self-serving behavior which is at the expense of the organization defeats the Weberian authority relationship which is explicitly limited to the pursuit of organizational goals. Meanwhile, as insiders of a public institution, it is a common observation that most superior officials who have under them subordinates older than them in age because of demand of African traditions for respect for elders found themselves in a maze when giving out directives. They often pander to their older subordinates. A superior official who undermines the age of his older subordinate when giving out instructions is often begrudged and labeled as uncultured, arrogant and disrespectful. Instructively, most often such older subordinates suborn age to shirk official responsibility from their superiors or blackmail them for personal cause.

In tandem with the Weberian insistence on the idea that all operations in modern organizations should be rooted on the use of rules and regulations, the Nigerian public service has adopted, and developed certain codified rules. The General Orders, and Financial Instruction and other instruction manuals for public service inherited from the British colonial Nigerian administration, with updates and reviews were transformed into the Public Service Rules, Financial Orders, and lately the Procurement and Due Process Acts represent the management or governing of office based on the Weberian general rule principle. These documents in the main define the pattern of relationships among personnel in the

Nigerian public service and their clients. Sanctions are imposed in cases of contravention of the rules by appropriate units of the public service. However, common experience shows that public servants infringe on rules and norms set to govern their operations and escape such violations without appropriate sanctions (Aghayere and Alimi, 2009)

In addition, legality which is enjoined by Weber has not only been the only measure of legitimacy in the Nigerian public service. There are occasions when legality is not recognized as a criterion for legitimacy. Many top public servants rely on somewhat more informal divine sanction, charisma and traditions. The overbearing influence of the traditional authority can be discerned from the statement of Benue state governor, Samuel Ortom thus; "I know of a local government her (Benue state), where a traditional ruler in the council has 15 wives, all the wives and their children are workers of local government. In some instances, unborn children are listed as staff of local government (Babajide, 2017:3). Added to this is the idea that the top bureaucrat is a god or hero who deserves to be hero-worshipped (Adamolekun, 2006).

Another Weberian ideal or construct is that a bureaucracy must be premised on appropriate documentation or record keeping. In the Nigerian public service, this norm seems to be the most observed. Official transactions are often found in letters, memoranda, circulars, minutes of meetings and other official means of communication. These official documentation and means of business transaction are quick reference point or source of reliable data for calling to mind decisions and actions that have been taken in the past. The strong need to jealously guard records has grown in the dimension of secrecy and highly classified information. Such records are filed and warehoused in strong rooms where access is highly restricted. Record keeping ensures permanence, stability and continuity. However, it has been asserted that record keeping and handling in Nigeria public service has generally been sloppy. Records are often falsified or destroyed to cover up fraud (Aghemelo and Osumah, 2009). The sloppy nature of record keeping in the Nigerian public service is indicative in the ghost workers fraud. A ghost worker is a payroll personality not actually employed by the public service institution. Put differently, a ghost worker is a fictitious persons invented by a dishonest employee. In December 2016, the Federal Government identified 50,000 ghost workers on its pay roll (Enoghase, Okwuke, Apata, Oluikpe, and Utulu, 2016). The Kano State government following a biometric verification exercise in April 2016, discovered 7629 ghost workers on its pay roll (Vanguard News 2016; Enoghase, Okwuke, Apata, Oluikpe, and Utulu, 2016). Also, indicative of poor record keeping in the Nigerian public service is the common tales of missing documents. For example, in 2011, it was reported that the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC) could not trace the case files containing allegations of corrupt practices against some sitting and outgoing governors (Mukhtar, 2016).

The Weberian tenet also recognized and applied in the Nigerian public service is salaried career intended to facilitate workers alignment of their interest with those of the organization. This is reinforced by a career structure, which gives workers a long term interest in succeeding with the organization. Full-time career fosters commitment and provides a bank of experience. Furthermore, a salaried career encourages value-rational duty to office. Because officials are appointed by their immediate boss, they are directly accountable to their pursuit of organizational goals. This is in contrast to the elected officials who owe allegiance to their party leaders or the group that elected them rather than the organization. In the context of the Nigerian public service salary has tended not to be a sufficient factor to encourage and sustain the loyalty of workers to their duty.

On account of the harsh economic environment, it is common to hear workers complain that they are paid slave wage, which does not take them home and hence regularly demand for a living wage. In view of the rising cost of living, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) have called for an upward review of minimum wage for workers from ₦18,000 to ₦56,000 representing 300 percent (Business Day Reporter, 2016).

This situation is compounded when workers are owed backlog of salaries and pension. At the moment, some of the states owing arrears of unpaid salaries to their workers for over two months include Bayelsa, (five months), Ondo, and Oyo (four months) Benue, Ekiti, Kogi, Kwara, and Plateau (three months). In Osun State, grade level 01-07 civil servants receive full salary but are being owed for two months while since July 2015 grade level 08 and above civil servants have been on half salary (Oyebade, 2016). Most of the workers in these states have been surviving on begging, loan from their cooperative

societies, handouts from charitable individuals and organizations (Abayomi, Olarinoye, Olatunji, Duru, Obahopo & Nanlong, 2015). Teachers and local government employees have been the worst hit categories of workers in most of these states. Like other categories of workers, teachers and local government employees have had to down tools to protest several months of their unpaid salaries. In Edo State, as at the time of this writing the backlog of unpaid salaries owed to local government employees range from four months to fourteen months. In most government establishments, ghost workers and salary padding are responsible for huge wage bill (Babajide, 2017).

A Weberian principle also haphazardly applied or in defiled form in the Nigerian public service is the merit-based system for recruitment and promotion. To Weber, specified criteria such as merit-based principle for appointment and promotion foster long term orientation and duty to office. However, in the Nigerian public service the merit-based systems of appointment and promotion have either been waived or compromised. Appointment and promotion in the service have been based on criteria such as federal character, quota system and geographical spread which tend to down play merit and promote mediocrity (Briggs, 2007, Gberevbie, 2010, Osumah 2016). As Huque (1984:16) noted:

the ideal of a representative bureaucracy is as redundant as the benefits it is supposed to produce are tentative, and cannot be ensured even under optimal conditions... Ideally, a bureaucracy is expected to be neutral and ultimately efficient. But the inclusion of representatives of groups may result in a loss of efficiency as well as the generation of conflict among officials recruited on different bases. Bureaucracy will no longer be effective as a cohesive force. The result will be more cleavages to already fragmented societies.

Furthermore, the Weberian merit tenet is defiled by some unscrupulous Nigerian public officials through the demand of bribe from job applicants. These unscrupulous government officials in ministries, departments and agencies at the local, state and federal levels and their collaborators in the private sector ask and collect from job seekers between ₦200,000 and ₦500, 000 to help them secure jobs (Suleiman 2013).

An additional factor which undermines merit based system in the recruitment of personnel in the Nigerian public service is patronage. During the Second Republic, partisan-political loyalties shattered the cohesion and efficiency of the civil service. The 1979 Constitution empowered the president or Head of Government to exercise discretionary power to appoint whoever he wishes as permanent secretary. This resulted in a partisan-politicization of the top echelon of the civil service particularly at the state level. The size of the Federal Civil Service which was 157,000 in 1978 rose to 292,000 at the end of 1983 as jobs were created for party loyalists (Okotoni, 2001b). The rapid growth was facilitated by “the great laxity in the recruitment activities of the various ministries and departments especially under the (Shehu Shagari) civilian administration” (Okotoni 2001b:84). Also, the 1988 civil service reform rather than pursue the desirable feature of non-politicization of the public service, politicized the top hierarchies of the service and concentrated political and administrative power in the hands of its appointees. A more recent reflection of the adoption of patronage in the recruitment of local government personnel was made by the Benue State governor, Samuel Ortom. According to him, “Every (local government) chairman who comes on board always gives employment to all his family members, friends and political associates without recourse to laid-down rules” (Babajide, 2017:3). This often results in overstaffing. In Vandeliya Local Government Council of Benue State, according to Ortom, only about 250 staff are required but the council has over 1,500 workers on its pay roll (Babajide, 2017:3).

Expert training is another Weberian principle recognized but haphazardly applied in post-independence Nigerian public service. In the post-colonial Nigerian public service, in conformity with the Weberian construct and concern for training of workers, the need for expert training has been recognized. Quite often new entrants into the service go on induction courses. Successive reforms such as the Udoji reform Commission of 1974 and the 1988 reform emphasized expert training for public servants (Adamolekun, 2006, Ikeanyibe 2010). More genuine efforts at expert training find expression in the award of scholarship and study leave to many public servants. Added to these efforts is the establishment of specialized training schools for the enhancement of the expert skills of the public servants. A few examples may suffice here. There is the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) with the mandate of promoting and encouraging the acquisition of skills to improve the

competence of bureaucrats. In some states, there are training schools for local government employees. There are training schools for police personnel across the country.

However, these genuine efforts aimed at staff training and orientations have been far from being adequate and satisfactory. This is partly because there is no clearly articulated training policy in most ministries, most new public servants rarely attend induction courses, and the central training agencies adopt ad-hoc approach, with the result that training is often viewed by some public official as either reward or punishment instead of being positively viewed as a right or duty (Adamolekun, 2006). These inadequacies of expert training manifest in dearth of technical and managerial expertise of Nigerian public servants for the task they are expected to perform. As Fajemiroku (1974) argued civil servant do not possess the necessary training and orientation for economic management. Drawing similar concern Adamolekun (2006:132) noted that "with regard to training, there is abundant evidence that the leadership team of the federal and state civil services have not done to develop the managerial competence of the staff members of their organizations. This failure is critical to what is perceived as their poor or mediocre record of performance in economic management".

Some other Weberian norms such as political neutrality, impartiality and anonymity, have been brutally assaulted in practice in the Nigerian public service. These norms were severely eroded under the various military regimes particularly the General Yakubu Gowon administration (1966-1975). Under the Gowon regime, senior public servants participated actively in federal executive council meetings. They presented and defended their ministries' policy proposals and programmes at the executive council meetings and publicly. In this entirely process, they were lobbied during the preparation of proposals, during and after executive council meeting so as to manipulate a few matters and bring political connotations to influence considerations and decision-making. Adebayo (2000:84) accused the Gowon regime of encouraging "officials attend meeting of the Federal Executive Council and of the Supreme Military Council and to speak after his Commissioner had spoken, and to take an entirely different line from that of his Commissioner when the latter's views were supposed to represent the official department stand". The story was not totally different under civilian regimes especially under the Alhaji Shehu Shagari presidency (1979-1983). Civil service had become a veritable political arena. Several top civil servants were both heard and seen, especially at the federal government level (Imhanlahimi and Edosa, 2010).

In the Weberian bent, workers are expected to enjoy fixed tenure of office. Although in the public service rule, tenure of office for public servants is defined. A public servant is expected to disengage from service after 35 years length of service without blemish or the attainment of 65 years of age in service without blemish. This has been brazenly defiled in the context of the Nigerian public service. Direct evidence is the mass retirement and retrenchment of about 11,000 workers in the Nigerian Civil Service for alleged "inefficiency, old age, declining productivity and doubtful probity" by the Murtala/Obasanjo military administration in 1975 (Imhanlahimi and Edosa, 2010). This exercise contravened the procedures for dismissal and termination of appointment as contained in the Federal Public Service of Nigeria, Notes for Guidance of 1972, and the Fourth Chapter of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Civil Service Rules of 1974 (Adebayo, 2000:85). Like the Murtala/Obasanjo administration, the Buhari military administration in defilement of the procedure for dismissal of public servants also sacked between 150,000 and 200,000 government employees (Okotoni, 2001b:82, 2003:23). These exercises resulted in loss of valuable skills/expertise which Weber emphasized.

Mass rationalization heightened fear and anxiety of insecurity of the civil servants. The regular mass rationalization and its attendant fear of insecurity are not suitable for efficiency and productivity, which Weber sought. According to Merkl (1972:293)

in a career service where the individual administrator expects to spend lifetime at his career, the rewards and punishments can be quite subtle without losing their effectiveness. In fact drastic measures or a constant threat of dismissal would be more likely to create poor working climate and feeling of job insecurity that can be just as injurious to productivity in the public service as they are in industry. It is far wiser to engage in person's pride and ambition in his optimal performance than to worry about how to deter him from wrongdoing.

On another plane, in pursuit of the Weberian tenet of professionalism, there has been efforts aimed at promoting professionalism in the Nigerian public service. One striking feature of the 1988 Civil Service Reforms is the professionalization of the civil service in the sense that posting of officers from one ministry to another should stop and officers are encouraged to make a career in a Ministry or Department of his/her choice (Abdulsalami, 1998:51). The retention of the personnel management board (Obikeze and Obi, 2004:158) in each ministry by the Ayida panel that reviewed the 1988 reform is a testimony to efforts at professionalizing the Nigerian bureaucracy. In contrast to the Weberian tenet of specialization in the Nigerian public service, it is common to find square pegs in round holes in critical areas outside of the traditional registrable professional fields. In 1980, the Dutton Philips report identified inappropriate staff deployment practices often in defilement of profession or specialization of staff as a striking feature of Nigerian civil service (Ikeanyibe, 2010). More broadly, the government estimated that about 70 percent of federal civil servants had a high school diploma or lower, with less than 5 percent possessing modern computer skills (Lawanson and Adeoye, 2013). A weak work ethic and poor service delivery by many government ministries, often characterized by hidden or outright corrupt behavior on the part of many civil servants are indicative of low sense of professionalism in the Nigerian public service (Lawanson and Adeoye, 2013).

Weber enjoined that bureaucrats should see their entrance to public office as an acceptance of a specific obligation of faithful management. This principle has largely been a myth than reality in the Nigerian public service. This is because most post-colonial public servants are more associated with nepotism, favoritism, financial rascality, greed, corruption enrichment, brazen embezzlement, low commitment, truancy laziness and appropriation of official time for personal business. With particular reference to disloyalty of local government employees in his state, the Benue state governor, Samuel Ortom, aptly captured the attitude of local government staff thus:

Go to any local government area during working days, you can hardly see people who are workers that are up to 10, but go there when they are receiving salary. The crowd always overwhelm the council. Some people (workers) just hide under the pretence of working for government and receiving free salaries to the detriment of government. They are busy doing their normal businesses somewhere far away or near the local government (Babajide (2017:3).

It is important to note that defilement and abandonment of Weberian themes is not peculiar to Nigeria. Even in the advanced countries of the U.S.A., Europe (France, Germany and Britain) and in other third world nations, the Weberian themes have not been applied fully. As in Nigeria, the doctrine of merit recruitment has been defiled in developed countries such as the USA. In the USA, recruitment or appointment of public servants is governed by patronage system in contrast to the Weberian bent on merit consideration (Sipio, 2010). Also, in France, the principle of merit-based system in the recruitment of civil servants has not been applied fully. Recruitment of top civil servants is limited to graduates of elite educational institutions known as grandes ecoles. In the admission into the grandes ecoles, children from culturally and economically favoured milieux have an immense advantage (Kesselman, 2010). Similarly, in Germany, the merit-based principle of recruitment into the civil service has not been applied fully. Although majority of the civil servants in the country are recruited based on merit, some top federal civil servants are appointed on the basis of party affiliation, following the traditional German pattern of proportionality of allowing all major groupings to be represented in the society's institutions. Also, the reputation of the German public service for impartiality and fairness was tainted following the anti-radical decree issued in the 1970s by the Social Democratic Brandt government, which was intended to purge the bureaucracy of suspected left-wing radicals (Allen, 2010).

Similarly, the Weberian doctrines of impartiality and anonymity were defiled in Tanzania under President Julius Nyerere, following his proclamation of a democratic one party system. Under the new democratic one party system, Nyerere frowned at the insulation of civil servants from participating in politics. Following his proclamation of a one party system Nyerere noted that it becomes "absurd to exclude a whole group of the most intelligent and able members of the community from participating in the discussion of policy simply because they happen to be civil servants" (Adamolekun, 2006:75).

Furthermore, as in Nigeria, the policy of downsizing or staff rationalization in the public service has been applied at various times in developed countries of the USA, Canada and Europe and in the

developing countries of Asia and Latin America. But the policy has since been abandoned because of the negative multiplier effects. Also, as in Nigeria, countries such as Cameroun, Malawi, Swaziland and India, behavior and attitudes of civil servants are heavily influenced by neo-patrimonialism (Osumah, 2013).

Bases of the disjuncture between Practices in Nigerian Public Service and Weberian Themes

A number of explanations can be constructed for the disjuncture between the operations of the post-independence public service and Weberian themes. One explanation is the pervasiveness of amorality in the Nigerian society. In the general society in Nigeria, the expectation and success index measure for a public official is the use of his / her office to feather private and communal interest. Ekeh (1975), Dudley (1982) and Joseph (1987) share this assertion. For example Ekeh in his theory of the two publics argued that by the nature of the imposition of colonial state and by extension the post-colonial state on the Nigerian society, an amoral milieu was entrenched as the code of behavior in the public realm. To him, the public realm in the Western metropolitan countries wherein it was invented, imported and transplanted to colonial African state was one. In contrast to Western countries, the public realm in African states had two publics (civic and primordial) existing side by side rather than one. In the civic public, which corresponded with the government domain, amorality was enjoined with emphasis on individual's dishonesty and disloyalty to obligation of the public service. On the other hand, in the primordial public, moral ethos was enjoined with emphasis on individual's commitment to communal service rather than state's duty. Thus, the disjuncture in the operation of the Nigerian public service and Weberian themes can be attributed to the fact that bureaucrats operate in two publics working at cross purposes.

Dudley (1982) linked the prevalence and ambivalence in the Weberian themes in Nigeria to the need for the individual not only to safeguard against the insecurity of the present but to insure against the future. This in practice means the use of one's office to enrich one's self... in so far as a successful individual contribute to the welfare of his community. In Joseph's (1987) prebendal aperture, the disjuncture between the Weberian norms and the operation of the public service is anchored on the use of official position and resources for personal ends in terms of patron-client relations. This underlies patronage system in staff recruitment in public service in contradistinction to the merit-based system enjoined by Weber

Another aspect of the Nigerian society central to the appreciation of the disjuncture between the Weberian norms and the operations of the public service is its plurality, disorderly aggregates or deeply entrenched divisions. Nigerian society comprises over 250 ethnic groups, historically entrenched regions and serious religion division, which need to be accommodated or balance in the scheme of things or conduct of government business. It is these sharp divisions that have led to adoption of various accommodation stratagems such as representative bureaucracy, which compromised the merit-based system enjoined in the Weberian construct.

A factor also central to the understanding of the bases of the disjuncture between the Weberian themes and the operations of the Nigerian public service is the negative attitude to government institutions, which was rooted in the colonial past. The post-colonial Nigerian public service was manufactured in metropolitan Britain and transplanted to the country. Largely the post-colonial public service was nurtured without integration into the society and essentially deployed to serve the exploitative interest of the British imperialists. During the anti-colonial struggle, the nationalists mobilized popular support by harping on begotten interest that government institutions were alien. This perception became embed in the popular consciousness, with the result that society at large did not imbibe moral ethos and serious stake in the well-being and survival of public institutions (Osaghae 2002). Rather public institutions were approached as the property of the colonialists which deserved no individual citizen's moral obligation and could be robbed to advance private and communal interest. While the construction of negative attitude towards public institutions served the colonial situation, it has become the Achilles heel of post-colonial public service and its disjuncture from the Weberian themes and many of the problems such as corruption, indolence and laxity which have afflicted and disabled it. It is a popular parlance in Nigeria which took root under colonial rule that government job is nobody's job, which should be kept on one's shoulder rather than one's head so that when it becomes a burden it can easily be off-loaded.

Concluding Remarks

The public service is at the heart of public administration in both developed and developing countries. It is the public service that ensures the continuity of government businesses and the protection of public interest through policy formulation and implementation. The Nigerian public service, which was birthed under the British colonial government apart from the personnel change after independence in 1960 retained the structure and authority of the British civil service rooted in the Weberian norms. However, the activities of most Nigerian public servants and the reforms of successive governments in the country have to significant degree compromise, defiled, assaulted and eroded the Weberian tenets intended to ensure its efficiency. The Weberian norms and values such as professionalism, political neutrality, fixed and security of tenure of office of public servants and devotion of public servants to official duty have largely been myth than reality.

The defilement of the Weberian themes has not been peculiar to Nigeria. There is no country developed and developing country that has fully applied the Weberian themes. Like Nigeria, in developed countries of the U.S.A., Germany, Britain, France, Canada and Europe and in developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America countries the Weberian norms have in one way or the other been abandoned or defiled. The basis of the critical disjuncture in Weberian bureaucratic ideals in virtually all the countries (developed and developing) is a function of the political implications and dangers of strict adherence with the ideals.

However, some peculiar explanations for the disjuncture between the operations of the post-colonial Nigerian public service are rooted in the pervasiveness of amoralism in the Nigerian society, its plurality nature and the negative attitude towards public institutions, which was embed in the colonial past. Considering these attitudes and institution in the Nigerian society and its plurality nature, there is the need to reconstruct the Weberian themes in line with prevailing cultural milieu in the country, which is perhaps radically different from the context where Weber conceptualized bureaucratic ideals. Reconstruction of some of the Weberian models by taking into consideration the cultural milieu of the Nigerian society is essential in developing a model of administrative system that can be wholly applied with minimal socio-political implications and dangers of over bureaucratization, which Weber did not contemplate.

Thus, as a way forward, there is the need to indigenizing public bureaucracy in Nigeria taking into consideration our cultural values. In addition, there is the need to for a re-orientation of the political leadership and authority by de-emphasizing monopolization, personailization and privatization of power and stressing integrity, loyalty and performance. Also, there is the need to reconstruct the Nigerian state and public service from its inherited image as of belonging to nobody, uncaring, insensitivity, hostile and exploitative tool of the colonial masters to one that is welfare oriented and guarantees distributive justice.

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