

## BOOK REVIEW

Ladipo Adamolekun (2006) *Politics, Bureaucracy and Development in Africa*  
Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited. 244 pages

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### Introduction

In the Preface to the book, the author, Ladipo Adamolekun was succinct in his purpose for the publication "... to share with students, researchers and the general public the insights gained from about four decades of continuous study of, and reflection on, an area of scholarly inquiry in the field of Public Administration: the relationship between politicians and civil servants that are linked implicitly or explicitly to the development process" (p. ix). The book is structured into ten chapters on varied areas within the subjects-matter.

Titled 'Introduction: Overview of the Main Issues' chapter one gives the general direction of the publication, which is essentially, the relationship between bureaucracy and political development of Africa. The author is not happy with the slow development of African countries in governance – a trend he traces to military interregnum that occasioned the relegation of democratic ethos to the background. He also points out that the inter-play of administration and politics has not helped matters as politics adversely affects the role of administration in development.

### Sequential Discourses

In chapter 2, 'Politics and Administration in West Africa: The Guinean Model' the author discusses how politics is fully blended with administration in that country. With the aid of a diagram, he illustrates the fusing of every segment of the administration of Guinea with politics and how it led to class war between politicians and intellectuals who ordinarily should have manned administration. The chapter ends with acknowledging that the phenomenon has its advantages and disadvantages. Though the author refrained from passing judgment, this Reviewer believes he should have examined merits and demerits for the instruction of other countries. There are a few typographical and syntax errors, especially on Page 14, where he uses 'elites' rather

than 'elite' and the old names -- Upper Volta and Dahomey -- for Burkina Faso and Benin Republic respectively.

In chapter 3, 'Bureaucrats and the Senegalese Political Process' he traces the history and development of administration in Senegal from 1957 and the role played by her civil servants. The author reveals that politics in that country was so fused with the bureaucracy that the bureaucrats were free to engage in partisan politics. Using relevant statistics, he further examines the situation under the Mamadou Dia Presidency, 1957-1962, and submits that bureaucrats participated actively in politics, though they did not occupy party positions in a proportionate manner. In the same vein, he compares the fore-going with the tenure of President Leopold Sedar Senghor, 1962-1970. Having upheld the supremacy of the Constitution over the party, Senghor gave an initial indication he would not involve bureaucrats like his predecessor did. However, subsequently, he relaxed his posture, as the author notes: *"There was a slight increase, both numerically and proportionally, in the number of bureaucrats-Deputies in the two Assemblies under Senghor compared with the two under Dia"* (p.42). He concludes that Senghor's increasing use of bureaucrats was borne out of his disdain for professional politicians.

The author compares Anglophone and Francophone countries on the issues of accountability and control in chapter 4. On control in Anglophone countries, he mentions *"Ministerial Responsibility, Internal and Judicial Control"* (p.42). The author also recognizes similar forms of control -- *"Political, Judicial and Internal Control"* (p.58) -- in Francophone countries. On balance, he submits that judicial control was the most effective through special administrative courts. After a critical examination of enforcement of accountability in Nigeria, Tanzania, Guinea and Senegal, the author decries weak institutions inherited from the colonialists; while commending the efforts of French-style administrative courts in Guinea and Senegal as well as the establishment of the Ombudsman in Tanzania, which was adopted by three other sub-Saharan African countries and by 2005 had spread to 21 other countries. The author recommends that each country should identify what is good from among them and integrate same into their own legal framework. His thinking in that direction is instructive: *"For example, Guinea and other States which are seriously committed to the eradication of corruption from their public bureaucracies could consider the introduction of a leadership code of conduct based on the Tanzanian model"* (p.91). In the same vein, he makes the realistic observation that *While a committed socialist State like Guinea would find it easy to adopt most of the clauses in the Tanzanian code, a capitalist-oriented State like Nigeria will hesitate to adopt the clauses preventing civil servants from engaging in private business. Whatever may be the details of the Nigeria code, it will have to include well-reasoned anti-corruption clause* (p.91).

In chapter 5, 'Towards Development-Oriented Bureaucracies in Africa' the author defines 'development-oriented' as used in those States as "*one capable of bearing the major responsibility for promoting economic and social development*" (p.94). The author delineates the reforms as targeted at three broad problems areas: "*Structural re-organization of the machinery of government, human problems with emphasis on manpower development, and management practices and techniques*" (p.95). He contends that the institutionalization of strong and purposeful political leadership, a clear conception of public service and administrative reforms are necessary towards achieving development-oriented bureaucracy. Admitting that no African State was inspired by the model he posited, he noted the bureaucracy in China reflects those features. Going further, he uses the various reforms in Nigeria, Tanzania, Senegal, and the Lusophone States to demonstrate that African countries have embraced the model; that effectively views administration as a major key to development. For the Nigerian example, he uses the Udoji Commission which recommended "*new style of public service attuned to the demands of development*" (p.106), and the adoption of *Project Management, Management by Objectives and Programme and Performance Budgeting*" (p.106).

In chapter 6, 'The Civil Service and Development in Nigeria' submits that the British Civil Service was transported into Nigeria under the assumption that Nigeria would be and remain a parliamentary democracy. The author also examines the efforts of Nigeria to institutionalize an effective Local Government System. He reveals that civil servants have played important roles in the economic development of the country, with references to specific economic policies and development plans. However, quoting some authorities like Olugbemi, Myers and Fajemirokun, he observes that by their training and operations, civil servants are not equipped for economic management. He, therefore, submits that *the contribution of the civil service to socio-economic development to date has been rather limited. While there are a few positive achievements, the overall performances of these institutions have been rated as ranging between poor and mediocre* (p.133). As a way forward, he suggests that Nigeria should fashion a national philosophy of development, professionalize her institutions and re-orientate the civil service.

The author deals with political transition, economic liberalization and civil service reforms in Malawi in chapter 7. He cites World Bank studies on the challenges of endemic corruption and recommendations on remedial measures against the menace. He advocates transparent political transition, economic and civil service reforms for a number of reasons, including the restoration of donor agencies' confidence to continue to engage with the affected countries. Chapters 8 and 9 are reproductions of published journal articles. In chapter 8, 'Reflections on the Politics and Administration Nexus in Africa' he recommends the strengthening of technical

competence, clarification of the roles of political appointees, orientation of politicians and nurturing the culture of good governance. Among other success factors, the author identifies separation of political participation from career in administration; rehabilitation of small professionals; and de-linking of local government parastatals from the civil service. Titled 'Postscript: Re-orientating the Leadership of Governmental Administration for Improved Development Performance' Chapter 10 is a synthesis of the previous segments. In conclusion, the author advocates "*strong linkage between the quality of the leadership of governmental administration and a government's development performance*" (p.235). He contends, finally, that a strong and developed public bureaucracy would hold the country together even if the leadership is weak.

### **Observations and Conclusion**

Though the book was published in 2006, a relatively year that could be used effectively to analyse developments in Africa, but the truth is that some of the collated articles like chapter 4 was published in 1977. Thus, it is now difficult to use them to measure developments in Africa, except as a reference material. As a collation of past articles, the book did not set out to examine identified issue(s) sequentially; it is therefore full of articles that are not logically connected to one another. However, it is valuable to particular topics discussed in each chapter.

As earlier noted, countries should have been referred in their new names, instead of their old names as in the case of Upper Volta and Dahomey for Burkina Faso and Benin Republic respectively, as used in Chapter 2. In Nigeria where the study of history even in primary schools is no longer compulsory, the younger ones would be lost at seeing those archaic names. All in all, the book is valuable for serious scholars interested in knowing alternative viewpoints that are at once meaningful and apposite to the study of developments in Africa.

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