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Political influence on bureaucratic growth and social responsiveness: A case of Ondo State, Nigeria

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This study takes a critical look at the ways through which political office holders manipulated recruitment into the public service of Ondo State between 1999 and 2003. It holds that the phenomenal rise in the size of the public service of Ondo state during this period was due largely to political exertion; something akin to the spoils systems in the 18th century United States. The cost implication of this increase was adjudged disturbing as 65.31% of the revenue accruable to the State goes to the payment of the emolument of these public servants who constitute just 1% of the entire population. This paper notes the complacency of the top echelon of the public service as regards the abandonment of the merit system in recruitment in to the public service during this period. It concludes that the implications of this phenomenal rise in the size of the public service, including the manner of accomplishing it are of far reaching implications for the public service and the society.

Key words: Political, influence, bureaucracy, growth, responsiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Government in modern times is administered with the aid of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy refers to all State organizations engaged in formulating and implementing policy as well as in regulating and delivering services. According to Goran et al. (2003); bureaucratic governance are not constitutive of development per se, they are seen as crucial determinants of the degree to which a country makes social and economic progress or fail to do so. The role and the important position bureaucracy has occupied is central among academics and in the practicing world of administration since the advent of Max Weber some hundreds of years ago.

This paper seeks to examine the effort of political influence on bureaucratic growth and social responsiveness in Ondo State between 1999 - 2003. The paper contends that political exertion enlarged the size of the public service of Ondo State from 15,210 in May 1999 to 27,719 in May 2003; representing an increase of 82.24% in four years. Political exertion here is construed as the influence that political practitioners and policy makers bring to bear on the normal course of administration so as

to alter its direction. What pattern did it take and how did it impact on the growth and the size of the public service? What is the cost of the growth in size on the public service? It also suggests measures of ameliorating these nagging questions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The analytical perspective of the Public Choice Theory useful in this discourse. The theory began as a critique of the increasing politicisation of the apparatuses of government and the self serving tendencies of bureaucracies in modern State (Parson, 1999: 307 - 308). Some of the fundamental assumptions of the theory, according to Parson (1999) and Roberts (1997) are that: The political processes of liberal democracy are failing to control the growth of political and bureaucratic power due to the influence of party politics;

(a) Parties make excessive promises to win votes hence politicians have to cut deals when in power so as to secure support and this pushes up the budget;
(b) Bureaucrats are just interested in maximizing their own self-interest rather than the public interest hence; the self-serving tendencies of bureaucrats rarely permit them to

contest the increasing politicisation of State apparatuses. (c) The disorganized and silent clients who finance public expenditure are the losers.

Public Choice Theory advocates the rolling back of the frontiers of State but promotes greater private involvement in the provision of social services and the creation of wealth. It also holds welfare democracy in high contempt based on the assumption that welfare democracy breeds corruption, inefficiency and intense rent seeking (Ostrum and Ostrum, 1991: 302-316).

A close look at the ingredients of this theory reveals its intricate link with those basic economic principles that motivate men in society. It testifies to the claim that politicians and bureaucrats often do not act altruistically. It is in this context, for example, that Takaya (1989: 69) viewed the role of the Nigerian higher civil service in ensuring the continuity and unity of Nigeria as an indivisible sovereign entity during the civil war, as being dictated more by self interest than by patriotism. According to him,

“None of the senior civil servants during that period would have wanted to go back to serve in the smaller and less powerful regional services even if their absorption into it would not be a problem”.

If the prognosis on the inevitability of corruption, nepotism and rent seeking in welfare democracy remains valid, then the increase in the size of Nigeria's public service and the concomitant decline in professionalism, productivity, efficiency and increasing budget are inevitable. Justifying the Public Choice perspective in this context was Roberts' (1997: 16) conclusion that the theory (Public Choice Theory)

“Regards the existing democratic arrangements as poor predictors of citizens preferences and demands with bureaucracies tending in the long run towards abandonment of collective goals in preference for self interested goals by officials all of whom share vested interests over time”.

CONCEPTUAL LINKAGE: POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION

The academic disputations on the relationship between politics and administration and by extension politicians and technocrats remain an ongoing concern. Prominent debates on this rest on two contradictory propositions viz (1) That politics and administration are two distinct spheres, and (2) That a rigid distinction cannot be maintained between politics (policymaking) and administration. The first proposition is traceable to the writings of Woodrow Wilson in 1887 where he contended that administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics. In his words, “Administrative questions are not political questions, although politics sets the task for administra-

tion, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices”. The two broad divisions of government corresponding with those specified by Woodrow Wilson are in the words of Goodnow (1914), (1) The expression of the will of the state and (2) The execution of the will. The second proposition however posited that a rigid distinction could not be maintained between politics and administration (Dimock, 1937; Fredrich, 1940; Appleby, 1949). This point was put more forcefully by Chapman (1970: 153) when he argued that

“Any division of government into political and administrative activities is inadequate because the governing process is a seamless web of discretions and actions”.

However, Adamolekun (1993: 14) argued that two reconcilable facts are discernible from the two contradictory propositions on the relationship between politics and administration. First is that both schools of thought are in agreement that two distinct groups of people operate the executive branch of government in a democratic polity viz (1) The elected temporary political officials and (2) Those appointed into permanent career. Second is the recognition by both schools of thought of the dominance of political officials over the instrument of administration.

It must be stressed that the dominance of the political officials over the instrument of administration exists in Nigeria, at best, in theory. Giving the history of Nigeria's polity, democracy in its present form, is at its infancy hence its inability to fully develop the institutional capacity through which its sustenance could be assured. Again, elected officials in the polity are mostly inexperienced and rent seeking individuals who lack the capacity to take informed decisions in spite of the constitutional responsibility entrusted to them. Decisions from these political officials therefore, are to a large extent prejudiced by their inexperience, ineptitude and their perception of public offices as instruments of patron-clientelism. The era of military involvement in governance in Nigeria also represents an invalidation of the assumption of the dominance of political officials in the control of the instrument of administration. Available literatures succinctly demonstrate the dominant influence of top bureaucrats in Nigeria's policy processes especially during the first and second military regimes in Nigeria (Asiodu, 1971; Gboyega, 1995; Adebayo, 1997).

Beyond the reconciliation of the propositions on the relationship between politics and administration, the issue of the determination of the extent to which politics should impact on administration subsists. In short, the contention centers so much on role differentials between political and administrative leaders. Oshionebo (1995: 242) noted that the resolution of this impasse in Nigeria came through the provisions of the Constitution especially, beginning from the Second Republic. According to him, “faced with the unresolved question about the proper definition of the respective roles of political

and administrative leaders in the conduct of government business, the makers of the 1979 Constitution decided to strengthen the role of the political leaders". The 1999 Constitution embraced this principle by conceding both the control of decision making and the management of the public service to the political class.

The public service of a nation constitutes the administrative structure that has been aptly described by Max Weber as bureaucracy. Stillman (1996: 54) posited that "the term bureaucracy denotes the general, formal structural elements of a type of human organization, particularly a governmental organization." It derives from one of the three categories postulated by Max Weber - the legal rational authority, the category aptly described by Friedrich (1940) as "the core of modern government". It has been argued that bureaucracy holds a central role in ordering, controlling and maintaining civilization in modern societies hence, it grew because society needed to do things - to build roads, to educate students, to collect taxes, to fight battles and to dispense justice (Stillman, 1996: 56).

AN OVERVIEW OF ONDO STATE PUBLIC SERVICE

As noted by Erero (1988: 163), the Nigerian public service has its roots in colonialism. The public services of the federating States also derived from the public service of the Federation. This explains the uniformity in structure, functions and direction of the public service in Nigeria. Unfortunately, Nigeria's public service, and the public services of the component states have had their fair share of political tinkering with sundry reforms, thus altering their normal course.

The origin of the Ondo State Public Service is traceable to the public service of the Western Region. Indeed, the Western Regional bureaucracy was patterned after the Federal public service, an inheritance from the British civil service system of Public Administration characterized by anonymity, impartiality, neutrality and security of tenure (Sani, 1999: 87; Gboyega and Abubakar, 1989: 1) largely constituted by indigenes of the areas hitherto categorized as Ondo Province, the Public Service of Ondo State debuted in 1976.

The general feeling of the people in the area that constituted the old Ondo Province prior 1976 was that the pace of socio-economic and political development was slow due to marginalisation within the old region (Olomola, 1996). Isijola (1996: 74) highlighted the point on marginalisation when he submits "there is no question that the old Ondo Province was completely neglected in the scheme of things by successive governments of the old region". However, irrespective of the veracity of this argument, the point has been made that the allegation of marginalisation and indeed the entire crusade for the creation of Ondo State was essentially elite biased. As noted by Mimiko (1996: 92), "the marginalisation card

played by the proponent of the creation of Ondo State was due to the perceived wishes, aspirations, fears and hopes of the elites". This, according to him, was evident as "no effort was made either prior to, or since the creation of Ondo State, to directly involve the masses of the citizenry in the business of what constitute development.

Mimiko's elite thesis is consistent with some fundamental ingredients of the time that conditioned the thinking and the behaviour of public servants and political/social elites in the immediate years of military rule in Nigeria. These ingredients amongst others, include, a complete change in the orientation of public servants as a result of their incorporation into the policy formulation processes; a phenomenon which galvanized them from their administrative role to more political roles. In this regard, Asiodu (1971: 9) noted that "In the formulation of government policy, the civil services in Nigeria enjoyed potential primacy". Gboyega (1995: 260) attributed this to the ascension of military rule. In his words, "the coming into power of the military enhanced their (civil servants) role". The uncanny desire of politicians/civil elites to benefit from the financial windfalls of the oil boom was also a potent factor. It is on record that the early 1970s represented one of Nigeria's most affluent periods due largely to the sudden rise in the international price of crude oil as result of the Yom Kippur war. The argument is that, indeed, certain elite groups seized the opportunity of the disparity in physical development of the segment consisting the present Ondo State within the old Western Region to champion the crusade for the creation of Ondo State; a process that ultimately resulted into benefits for the technocratic and the political elites almost to the exclusion of the generality of the population.

It is apposite to note that at its creation, the public service of Ondo State did not derive from the masses, as the populace had no pact with the military regime that decreed it into existence. The implication of this is that, whereas the legality of the existence of the public service was indisputable, its constitutionality poses serious doubts. In other words, the public service of Ondo State, from inception, suffered from the crisis of legitimacy in a democratic context. The norm is that the public service must perform only tasks agreed upon and assigned to it by the duly chosen representatives of the people. This is why Adebayo (1997: 93) noted that: "The civil service evolved as the bed-rock of the executive arm of government (which) main task came to be the implementation and execution of the policies decided on by its legislature or those appointed by the legislature to carry on the executive work of government". It is therefore incontrovertible that the public service of Ondo State between 1976 and October 1979 operated without popular consent.

The investiture of Ondo State's public service with constitutionality came in 1979 with the inauguration of the first elected civilian government. This made the service to be meaningfully perceived in terms of its responsive-

ness to people's wishes; meeting as it were, those basic responsibilities and obligations duly assigned to it by the democratic organs of the public. The cost of maintaining the public service as well as its growth in size therefore became the legitimate burden of the citizens from 1979. Unfortunately, Nigeria's democracy suffered another military assault in 1983 through a coup d'état. From 1983 to 1999; with the exception of 1991/92 when civilians were elected to run the administration of various States of the Federation as part of the transition to civil rule programme, the public service reverted to its old characteristics. This presupposes lack of pattern to its growth and size due to series of ad-hoc policy measures. From May 29, 1999, the public service of Ondo State regained its constitutionality and legitimacy, thus imposing on it (Public Service) a number of legitimate responsibilities. Quite logically, the growth and size of the bureaucracy were expected to be guided by constitutional procedures in the context of modern principles of administration. To what extent was this expectation met?

TREND OF THE INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF ONDO STATE, 1999 TO 2003

On May 29, 1999, Nigeria entered into a new era of democratic governance. In Ondo State, the Alliance for Democracy; a political party with a welfarist agenda emerged with Chief Adebayo Adefarati as the Governor. Indeed, the inherited public service in Ondo State as at May 1999 had spent the greater part of its existence under military administration; hence it was expedient that it undergo some processes of reorientation to reposition it for the nuances of democratic rule. The government recognized this much as various seminars, workshops and retreats were organized for the various cadres in the public service. The climax of this reorientation of the public service was a book publication, sponsored by the State Government in November 1999, titled Democracy and Public Administration in Nigeria (Adewole et al., 2001). In it is to be found incisive administrative norms and procedures needed in a new democracy. This was followed by the review of all the existing civil service statute books to bring them up to date. The task immediately after this was to position the public service as to optimally enhance the implementation of the Party's programmes.

Quite naturally, such issues of growth, size, morale of personnel and cost, etc, came to the fore at the inception of the Administration. The issue of growth and morale were tackled through the promotion of qualified personnel in all the cadres while hitherto suspended welfare packages were restored. These include, granting of car loan, housing loan and the reintroduction and intensification of training and retraining. Suffice to say the public service entered the democratic terrain with a renewed confidence, high morale and a determined effort to fulfill its social responsibilities to the citizenry.

Indeed, the programmes of the Alliance for Democracy formed the basis on which the public service was to dispense services. These programmes included amongst others, the provision of employment for the youth, school leavers, and graduates and other working class citizens, free education for all, free healthcare for all, rehabilitation of roads, provision of infrastructural facilities, and integrated rural development (Adewole et al., 2001:13). At the planning stage, the Government discovered some shortfalls in the personnel requirement in some sectors especially, in education, health and agriculture. This shortfall was determined by asking all the departments in the public service to render returns on their manpower requirements using the required indices in each sectors of the public service. The need to fill these identified vacancies led to the State-wide recruitment of qualified personnel into the Ondo State public service from May 1999 to December 1999. Indeed, the recruitment at this time was done with due consideration for established procedures. The net effect was that the workforce grew by 6.23% from total personnel of 15,210 in May 1999, to 16,158 in December, 1999 and this was matched by corresponding wage increase. In December 2000, the work force increased to 19,380; representing 27.41% over the figure in May 1999. It grew by 55% in July 2001 as the total work force increased to 23,597. In May 2003 the total work force in Ondo State had increased to 27,719; an increase of 82.24% over the 1999 figure. The situation is as reflected in Table 1.

From the table above, it is shown that the Adebayo Adefarati administration inherited in May 1999 a total workforce of 15,210 with a wage bill of ₦148, 257,334.45. This increased by 6.23% in December 1999 and 27.41% in December 2000. The wage bill during this period also increased from ₦145, 300,541 to ₦ 413, 676,928. In July 2001, the workforce increased to 23,597 representing 55.14% over the May 1999 figure of 15,210. Correspondingly, the wage bill came to a monthly ₦455, 526,122.18 in July 2001. At the expiration of the tenure of the Administration in May 2003, the workforce had increased to 27,719 with a monthly wage bill of ₦646, 774,240. This increase in workforce translates to 82.2% over the figure in May 1999.

It is significant to note that only this initial increase between May 1999 and December 1999 represents the true personnel requirement in the public service, needed for the effective and efficient implementation of the basic educational, health and agricultural policies of the administration from the year 2000. On subsequent increase, sundry explanations are available.

One cardinal programme of the administration was the provision of gainful employment. The implementation of the programmes of the Adebayo Adefarati's administration, and by extension, the Party's (Alliance for Democracy) manifesto on provision of employment therefore provided the basis for the increase in the size of the public service in Ondo State between December 1999 and July 2001. The increase in the number of the State's

Table 1. Table of periodic staff strength and wage bill in Ondo State, May 1999 to May 2003.

S/No.	Period	Number of staff	% Staff increase	Monthly wage bill (₦)
1.	May, 1999	15,210		148,257,334.45
2.	December, 1999	16,158	6.23	145,300,541.00
3.	December, 2000	19,380	27.41	413,679,928.00
4.	July, 2001	23,597	55.14	455,526,122.18
5.	May, 2003	27,719	82.24	646,774,240.00

Source: Department of Establishment and Service Matters. Office of the Head of Service, Ondo State.

workforce during this period therefore arose from the employment of young school leavers, graduates and artisans to mop-up the teeming number of the unemployed in the State. However, while this was consistent with the Party's electoral manifesto, it remained a contradiction of contemporary welfarist agenda.

The noticeable trend in employment creation by hitherto welfarist States is the encouragement of private sector initiatives and enhancing social infrastructures that would attract private capital. For example, from 1951 in the United Kingdom, electoral promises had centred on reducing waste and extravagance through greater de-emphasis on recruitment into the public service. As Rees (1994: 44) rightly observed, from the late 1960s, the general policy of rolling back the frontiers of the State had become an important policy package in Britain. Across Europe, the price strains of the mid-1970s provided the platform for a number of welfare States to fully appreciate the limitations of the State in relation to the provision of welfare. And in confronting this task of rolling back the frontiers of the States, the Thatcher Administration gave new impetus to the private sector such that employment became competitive. Summing up this phenomenon, Flynn (1997: 34) submitted that welfare States changed from managing demand for full employment to policies that will stimulate profits by removing regulations so as to stimulate the labour market.

An interesting phenomenon began immediately after July 2001, which in fact accounts for the present size of the public service. Beginning from July 2001, when the then incumbent Governor Chief Adebayo Adefarati signified his intention to recontest the position of Governor in the upcoming April 2003 election, the public service witnessed a phenomenal increase in size. Two reasons were central to this increase. First was the need to compensate party loyalists. In doing this, the political party's machinery played a central role. Principal Officers of the party were given opportunity to nominate a given number of people for immediate appointment to the public service. Members of the State House of Assembly, Commissioners, and Special Advisers to the Governor, etc, were also to nominate a given number of people from their constituencies for this purpose. The single most important qualification for nomination was political affiliation. The overriding purposes of this were to compensate loyalists, and to rekindle and build the confi-

dence of party loyalists in the incumbent in his bid for the Party's gubernatorial ticket. The second level of increase began with the actual campaign of Chief Adebayo Adefarati for the gubernatorial seat. As his campaign train moved across the Local Governments in Ondo State, appointment into the public service became an instrument of campaign and indeed a token in exchange for votes. Consequently, the size of personnel in the public service of Ondo State increased from 23,597 in July 2001 to 27,719 in May 2003. Virtually all those employed during this period did not go through the usual competition that characterized entry into the public service.

Three phases are therefore identifiable in the trend of growth in the size of Ondo State public service between May 1999 and May 2003. First was the phase of realistic appraisal of the strength of the public service vis-à-vis the programmes of the Government and the Party culminating in the initial increase in size from 15,210 in May 1999 to 16,158 in December 1999. Second was the increase consequent upon the implementation of the Administration's policy of gainful employment and in fulfillment of the Alliance for Democracy's manifesto and campaign promise. It was an era of increase for the sake of providing employment, not necessarily based on needs. The third phase was the increase consequent upon the desire of the Governor and his party to secure electoral victory.

RENASCENT SPOILS SYSTEM IN ONDO STATE: UNITED STATES' EXPERIENCE

The analysis of the patterns of employment into the public service by the Adefarati Administration succinctly reflects the attributes of the spoils systems prevalent in 18th century United States. The spoils systems according to Gladdens (1972: 309)

"Was brought about by the electoral victory of the Republican Party and the subsequent pressure from Party faithful who opined that they had a right to appointments hitherto held by Federalists".

He further noted that:

"Contrary to the established standard of administration

prior to the time, the Republicans evolved a new doctrine that administration was an activity that any reasonably equipped citizen would be able to perform quite adequately”.

The full acceptance of the spoil system, he argued, came with the advent of Andrew Jackson to the Presidency in 1829 and it lasted till about 1861.

Highlighting the consequences of the spoils system, Gladden (1972), observed that

“The system produced counteracting trends, because, the extension of the franchise and the growth of political parties heightened the desire of the ordinary citizen to hold office and converted the transferable office into a currency suitable for meeting obligations due to party supporters for their election efforts”.

He concluded that the American public service consequently became valuable spoils for the victorious party.

Stillman (1996: 197) observed that through the spoils system ‘there was steep decline in efficiency through the injection of semi-literate and the creation of useless office... lazy clerks were in excess, while the few energetic ones which the indiscriminateness of spoils did not keep out often, found it difficult to discover anything useful to do’. He thus concluded that ‘the American public service was bedeviled with crass incompetence, graft, favoritism and partisanship’. Gladden (1972: 318) noted that in spite of the short comings of the spoils system party supporters continued to entertain the hope for patronage. And when one of such office seekers felt disappointed, he resorted to shooting President James Garfield in 1881. It is important to emphasise that prior to this tragic incident, the campaign against the spoil systems and the clamour for increased efficiency and economy in the public service had mounted. However, as observed by Stillman (1996: 313), opposition to the clamour for such a reform was intense. The opposition, according to him, was from party organisers who could not bear the thought of losing valuable spoils and from the many that benefited from the maintenance of the status-quo. The assassination of President Garfield in 1881 thus provided the opportunity to decisively address the monstrous spoils system.

Consequently, the civil service Act of 1883, otherwise referred to as the Pendleton Act, was enacted. The Act, amongst others, recognized the Civil Service Commission in the United States in matters of appointment and promotion. It prescribed competitive examination for appointment and promotion. It also specified that appointment in the classified service should be done from amongst those with the highest grades. Another significant provision of the Act was its entrenchment of the principle of geo-political representation, akin to Nigeria’s extant Federal Character principle in appointments. The

Act also banned political interference in all of the civil service processes. Like all laws, the Act stipulated sanctions against violations of its provisions (Gladden, 1972: 318).

LIKELY IMPLICATIONS

While it might be too early to evaluate the possible consequence of the abandonment by the Adebayo Adefarati Administration, of the merit system of entry in to the public service, it is reasonable to draw from the experiences of the past in conjecturing the possible immediate and future implications of this act. The political experiment of the Second Republic in Nigeria (1979 - 1983) provided a worthy reference on the application of the spoils system in the public service. About this, Chinweizu opined, “the public service became an adjunct of party patronage machines” (The Guardian, November 24, 1985). The consequences of this, according to Erero (1988: 181), is that “since the degree of partisanship and constituency strength determined the selection of those to occupy future leadership positions without considering competence, poor policy articulation, implementation and evaluation will not be unlikely”. Adebayo (1997: 93) agreed no less when he argued that the operation of the spoils system in the Second Republic frustrated the public service and made the task of management virtually impossible (because) the operation of spoils politics was incompatible with and is an obstacle to the achievement of efficiency in public administration.

These observations are applicable to the public service of Ondo State for obvious reasons. First, the abandonment of the public service procedure, which correctly evaluates the competence of candidates at the point of entry into the public service, would inadvertently have opened the gate of entry into the service for incompetent persons. While it is true that such entrants could be “brushed up” through the internal training modules in the service, it must be appreciated that the modules were developed using some fundamental benchmarks of competence determinable at the point of entry. The incompetence of these officers would invariably manifest in poor policy articulation, implementation and evaluation.

The preponderance of this phenomenon would, in the long run, impact negatively on the efficiency of service delivery in the public service of Ondo State thus eroding the confidence of the public in the service. Interestingly, democracy is about service delivery, aggregating as it were, the desires of the masses, reducing these desires to policy packages and translating them into tangible actions for the people through the instrumentality of the public service. The loss of public confidence in the public service will therefore constitute a serious danger to the democratisation project.

Available record (Agagu, 2003), put the monthly revenue accruable to the State from Statutory Allocation, State’s share of Mineral Derivation Fund, Value Added

Tax and Internally Generated Revenue at about ₦1.2 billion out of which, a total of ₦646,774,240.00 was spent on personnel cost. Running cost also amounted to ₦137,000,000.00 per month. This left the State with just 34.7% of the total monthly revenue for capital expenditures on roads, water, health, and other infrastructural facilities. Chief Adefarati's successor as Governor, Dr. Olusegun Agagu lamented this development in his 'State of the State' address when he declared that the State was made to carry a very heavy administrative structure over a weak economic and infrastructural base (Agagu, 2003: 5).

As of now, the public service in Ondo State is an admixture of the competent and the incompetent, which poses a great threat to public policy and service delivery. Unfortunately, the present state of the Ondo State public service has resulted in the underemployment, especially, of the junior cadre; a sizeable percentage of which are with high political affinity. This is certainly a danger to public accountability as it is doubtful whether this large army of 'political' public servants will possess enough discipline to resist temptation of any kind.

Conclusion

Except for the appointments into the public service in Ondo State between May and December 1999, subsequent appointments were not based on any realistic appraisal. Rather, such appointments were either to fulfill electoral promises or to secure political patronage. Against this, Wilson (1887) had cautioned when he said:

"Although politics sets the task for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices".

It is against this backdrop that the political elite need to be reminded that the gains of democracy might as well continue to be elusive if the task of public administration, the original conveyor of democratic benefits, is made to suffer through improper flooding of the service with incompetent 'political' individuals. In the case of Ondo State, during the period under review, positive resistance by way of objective advice from the top echelon of the public service to the political leadership on the dangers of polluting the public service is unknown, (at least no such advice, upon investigation, could be located in any File at the Department of Establishment and Service Matters of the Office of the Head of Service). This therefore renders the higher echelon of the service culpable as this merely reflects the abdication of their responsibility of advising and alerting political office holders to the dangers inherent in policies. This perhaps confirms the public choice prognosis that bureaucrats in fact want ever bigger bureaux due to their own self interest rather than the public interest. Within the framework of the social responsibility of the public service, the admonition of Maduabum (2002: 160) is apt. In his words:

"while the civil servant must carry out decisions and policy laid down by the political boss, he must resist illegitimate political demands and pressures...the civil servant must learn that it is in his own interest to resist political encroachments upon the internal self regulation of the civil service systems".

Government should therefore embark on an immediate census of those who were recruited into the service during this period, so as to determine their statuses, postings and schedules. Conscious effort should be made to evolve special training packages for them with a view to enhancing their competencies and re-orientate them towards Public Service norms. There is also the need to evaluate the extant expectation of the public so as to determine areas of critical need. These officers could therefore be retrained and redeployed to these areas of need to make them more productive and as such, justify their pay.

It is unlikely that the people of Ondo State will in the immediate be relieved of the heavy burden and cost that the spoils system has foisted on them through the unreasonable increase of the public service. As it stands now, 65.31% of revenue accruable to the State goes to the payment of the emolument of these public servants who constitute just 1% of the entire population.

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