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Leadership Recruitment and Leadership Training:
A Critical Review of Trends in Nigeria**

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PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNMENT THROUGH LEADERSHIP
RECRUITMENT AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING:
A CRITICAL REVIEW OF TRENDS IN NIGERIA*

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* The views expressed in this paper are solely the author's and in no way reflect the official position of either The United Nations or the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

INTRODUCTION

To enhance the capacity of the African Public Service to manage the increasingly complex process of democratization and accountable government, it is essential that serious effort be made to improve the calibre of individuals operating the key public institutions. This is not as simple as it sounds. For one, the political functionaries who preside over the management of these institutions generally owe their jobs not to any formal qualifications but to popular support howsoever defined. Indeed, they are likely to object in the most vociferous language to any suggestion that standards be set for entry into the vocation of politics or that they be put through screening tests of one kind or the other. In any case, much of the controversy over the legitimacy of rulers in contemporary Africa is due to the lack of clear and universally acceptable guidelines on the selection and retrenchment of political office holders. The ballot box has been threatened on a number of occasions and the soldier's bullet is being increasingly defied by a restive public.

As regards the career officials, the rules and regulations governing their tenure do not always come with the immunity from politicization. It will therefore be naive to expect the elaborate arrangements made for the application of meritocratic principles to be the sole determining factor in the recruitment, promotion, discipline, and, for that matter, on-the-job behaviour of officials.

Yet the situation facing Africa today demands that the public service be revitalized to discharge its numerous and increasingly complex functions. Indeed, the time would appear to have come for Africa to make a choice between, on the one hand, a system of government and public administration with the will and capacity to deal with the pressing socio-economic as well as political issues, and, on the other, one that cracks, and, possibly, disintegrates, under the weight of unfulfilled expectations.

If the quest is for a system that works - and there are reasons to believe that the era of economic and socio-political pluralism cannot do with anything less - it is necessary to consider new, perhaps, revolutionary, ways of selecting, "training", and managing public service personnel. At the very least, persons seeking, or being considered for, leadership or "command" positions should be closely screened, and, like their counterparts in the military, be exposed to regular (including, if one may emphasize, psychological) evaluations. Suffice it to say that before we can expect this revolutionary effort to bear fruits, we should examine, and to the best of our ability, answer, the nagging questions about the efficacy of the electoral process as a method of leadership selection. The need for objectivity is predicated on the danger signals which are noticeable in countries undergoing the painful transition from dictatorship of one kind or the other, to representative and genuinely accountable government. An example is Nigeria where the so-called "national question" is

currently eliciting conflicting, but all the same, doom-day responses.

If public personnel selection process requires a clean break with the past, so does the entire strategy of training and human resource development. The occasional frustration with the outcomes of democratic (and not so democratic) elections may not be unconnected with the ignorance of the key actors (election candidates, constituency leaders, electors, and the electoral administration agencies) of how a democratic polity works. Many an aspirant to a political office is unable to package his/her policies and programmes and sell them (the policies and programmes) because he/she does not know the potential electors or what constitute their real problems or requirements. Instead of undertaking the difficult but essential tasks of geo-political analysis and electoral "market research", party candidates resort to the simple expedient of voter bribery and poll rigging. Either way, the cause of ethics, accountability and good government tends to be seriously undermined.

Proceeding on the basis of the assumption that a rejuvenated and properly staffed public service is a minimum prerequisite for the effective management of the process of pluralism and good government, this paper begins with a conceptual framework. It then proceeds to discuss the implications of the crisis of governance for human resource management in the public service. The third section examines the contemporary approaches to the recruitment of political functionaries and career officials, while

the fourth section focuses on the priorities in training and human resource development. The fifth and final section looks at the future.

**I. Leadership Selection and Systems of Governance:
a Paradigm and a Suggestion**

As the struggle for political pluralism and democratization intensifies in Africa, it is necessary to focus on the hurdles that ought to be surmounted to achieve the primary goal - good government. One of these is the calibre of persons holding key governmental positions or seeking to replace those currently in power. As argued in this paper, pluralism by itself will not enhance the chances of good government. For the latter to emerge, the former (i.e. the pluralistic process) must be managed in such a way that high-calibre leadership emerges and is sustained. To the extent that a pluralistic socio-economic and political order is conducive to the emergence of leaders with the "right" attributes, to that will it be possible for good government to thrive and grow. The assumption here is that there is a direct, perhaps, causal, relationship between systems of governance and the prevailing leadership standard.

Political systems and Leadership Patterns

While there is a direct link between systems of governance and the calibre of leadership in place at a particular time, it is not helpful, for the purpose of establishing the nature of the

relationship, to classify political systems under the "modern", "traditional" and "transitional" headings. This classification scheme leads, at best, to tautological conclusions, at worst, to conceptual ambiguities.

To trace the relationship between a particular system of government and the prevailing standard of leadership, it is necessary to adopt a classification scheme which provides an indication of how the governmental apparatus and the managers of this apparatus (both constituting the "state") relate to the citizenry in general. At least three ideal-types of state may be identified, viz. (a) the patrimonial, (b) the democratic and (c) the "democratizing" states. While attention in the subsequent sections will focus primarily on the last (the democratising) ideal-type, it is necessary to describe the main features of the three.

The Patrimonial States

This may be a "modern" or "feudal" state in which traditional authority structures prevail. Headship of the state resides in an all-powerful monarch with a divine mandate to rule. His wishes and decrees are carried out by a totally submissive and absolutely loyal house-hold staff.¹ As the ruler conquers or annexes new territories, he assigns his trusted officials to these new territories as law enforcers, administrators and tribute collectors. For example, among the Zande of the former Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, all chiefs belonged to the ruling class, the

Avungara, which was a class of notables. The chief ruled by despatching governors (also Avungara) to administer portions of the territory.²

The patron-client relations prevailing in patrimonial states are reflected in the extensive powers of the ruler. An example is the Bantu chief. Besides representing his people in their dealing with outsiders, he (the Bantu chief)

"organizes such communal activities as war, collective labour, and certain types of ritual....he is both legislator and judge, with power to inflict capital punishment; he claims many forms of tribute, in both labour and kind; he controls the distribution and use of land, coordinates agricultural activities, provides for the poor and needy, and rewards those who serve him well...."³

For the avoidance of doubt, "serving the ruler well" is not to be confused with serving his subjects. A meritorious service in a patrimonial state means protecting the person and office of the ruler, supporting him (the ruler) in conflicts with rivals, and manufacturing charms aimed at "fortifying" the ruler and his army against the evil designs of their enemies.⁴ In fact, were it not for the in-built "checks and balances" (such as palace intrigues, and the machinations of defeated contenders for power) as well as the obligations imposed on the ruler (to be "worthy" of the office, to rule with "wisdom", and to serve as the "father" and "herdsman" of the tribe or clan), the patrimonial state would have been

rightly described as a predatory state. The ruler does not have to answer to an inquisitive public, and his bureaucracy is a mere extension of his household or personal staff.

The predatory (that is, the tribute collecting and service-neglecting) orientation of patrimonial states informs the selection and promotion of officials. While blood and kinship ties no doubt play a major part in the recruitment of the ruler's principal staff and advisers, loyalty to the person and ways of the ruler is the decisive factor. An official who is suspected (even remotely) of siding with "enemies" or of revealing palace secrets risks losing his job if not his life. Under such circumstances, the attributes that tend to be highly prized include those of team-playing, bootlicking, reticence, and nimble-footed diplomacy.

Democratic States

In contrast to the self-serving tendencies which determine the incumbency of officials in patrimonial states, accountability to a wider public is the principle underlying government and public administration in democratic societies. Whether the reference is to monarchical or presidential systems, the legitimacy to rule is based on the consent of the people. To have access to this mandate, leaders of different political parties have to "sell" their policies and programmes to the electorate which, with its votes, settle the leadership issue.

The incoming administration will not be able to fulfil its election promises unless there is a bureaucracy whose officials

have been carefully selected and trained to manage certain specialized programmes - food and agriculture, science and technology, trade, industry and finance, to mention a few. In other words, just as the political leadership is "selected" on the merit of its campaign promises, the career public officials are recruited on the basis of their educational qualifications, experience, and technical or professional competence. This cannot be anyother way. Whereas the bureaucracy of a patrimonial state "serves" the ruler and other notables, the bureaucracy in a democratic order serves the generality of the people. The former stresses the need for continuity, secrecy, and mutual protection, while the latter sets its sight on responsiveness (to citizen demands), accountability, responsibility, and ethical uprightness. A patrimonial bureaucracy looks in prospective employees for the ability and zeal to serve the person of the ruler, not the competence to produce public goods. In contrast, bureacracies in democratic states are expected to carry out the wishes of the people as expressed through their elected representatives.

Democratizing States

The democratizing societies are those which started with patrimonial features before moving gradually towards openness and varying degrees of democratization. How democratic a state really is depends on the strength and sustainability of domestic change agents and institutions relative to the strength of anti-democratic forces. Where the two forces are evenly balanced, there is likely

to be stalemate. It is indeed, this stalemate that has been characterised in the next section as the crisis of governance. As pointed out in the section, a number of African countries face a dilemma as they seek to imbibe democratic ethos while struggling with old patrimonial legacies.

II. The Crisis of Governance and Human resource Management: An Overview

The challenges of political pluralism and democratization in Africa consist mainly in how to resolve the long-standing crisis of governance. This crisis is not simply that of popular participation or, for that matter, of legitimacy, but also of the credibility and accountability of state institutions. From the human resource management and development point of view, meeting these challenges entails recruiting into key political and managerial positions individuals who are genuinely committed to, and mentally prepared for, the ideals of the new age. These ideals include those of popular sovereignty, the rule of law, accountability, responsiveness, and individual as well as corporate discipline. In view of the fact that public service bureaucracies rarely set out by themselves to become paragons of democratic virtue, conscious steps will have to be taken to inculcate in officials as well as in their clients, the attributes required to sustain the drives towards pluralism and good government.

Africa is today faced with multiple crises - notably, economic, demographic, environmental, social (health, education, housing), energy and natural resource management crises, as well as the crisis of governance. Without any fear of contradiction, it may be argued that the last is the most devastating - perhaps, the harbinger - of all the crises. It is this which has manifested as a chronic lack of ability to evolve a universally acceptable formula for the "authoritative allocation of power and resources" among competing groups, and for managing even the least complicated public enterprise.

The question may be asked how the crisis of governance affects the management of human resources. The relationship between the two may be depicted as a vicious cycle: a corrupt and unaccountable government frustrates attempts at rational allocation and utilization of human resources. The widespread distortion of human resources in turn stands in the way of good government. A careful examination of the conditions prevailing under alternative (especially, open and democratic) systems will demonstrate the link between governance and human resource management.

Governance in Democratic Societies: The Search for Excellence

Under the liberal democratic tradition, the basic political question ("who gets what, why, when and how") tends to be answered after a clash of ideas on where society is, and ought to be, headed. Inspired by their vision of a better future, or motivated

by sheer lust for power, like-minded individuals team up as members of political parties or associations to defend a particular policy and to attack any position contrary to it. The interest that is "articulated" may have to do with the economy, income distribution, demographic-environmental balance, the scope, size and funding of welfare programmes, mineral exploration, law enforcement, and the role of the military in national development. On other occasions, the issues at stake may be those of ethics and accountability, regional economic co-operation and integration, privatization or nationalisation of industrial enterprises, trade liberalization or regulation, investment in science and technology, development of infrastructural services, as well as inflation and the strategies for controlling it.

Conflict, therefore, is a salient feature of democratic polities. It is expressed through open debate of existing and/or new policies, and brought to public attention by the print and electronic media. Implicit in the political confrontations is the understanding that there is no one-best-way of running human societies, and that any idea of the directions to follow is not on the same level as divine injunction. This assumption that is central to democratic political theory - i.e. the assumption that homo sapiens is no God - strengthens the citizen's resolve to question the policies of rulers and to hold public officials accountable for their actions.

The constant and unending search for perfection in democratic political cultures has a direct impact on the recruitment of

leaders. Determined not to be out-polled by rival parties at free and fair elections, each political party fields candidates who are not only committed to party policies but are also known to possess certain desirable attributes - among them, charisma or voter appeal, eloquence, in-depth knowledge of some specialised areas, such as defence or foreign affairs, and, where family values are highly prized, an irreproachable private life. Once entrusted with the people's mandate, the victorious party selects competent individuals to head key offices in the executive branch of government, while allowing the positions in the career service to be filled through open competition.

Governance: Non-democratic Models

In contrast to democratic systems which place high premium on merit in personnel selection and achievement as a basis for determining the tenure of public officials, positions in non-democratic societies tend to be bestowed as favours or as rewards for personal loyalty. The explanation for this vital difference lies in how political conflicts are perceived and managed. While democratic societies regard conflict of ideas as healthy (and in fact proceed from it before gradually working towards harmony) their non-democratic counterparts most frequently begin with an orchestrated unity which founders when overtaken by the realities of tribalism or ethnicity, religious fanaticism, and rapidly deteriorating socio-economic conditions.

In any case, by outlawing differences of opinion, a non-democratic polity cuts itself from an achievement- or results-oriented system of leadership selection. It approaches the multi-sided business of rulership from one narrow angle and decrees that other angles are no-go areas. It then proceeds to fill the major political and administrative offices with persons who are known not for any specific problem-solving asset but for loyalty to the person of a supreme leader or (loyalty) to the imaginary position of a dominant clique. Patrimonialism thus thrives best in circumstances where dissenting opinions are neither sought nor encouraged, and where sycophancy is rewarded over originality and innovativeness. In a nutshell, where there is no voting public to cultivate and an opposition party to reckon with, rulers are under no immediate pressure to staff the key state offices with achievers.

The experience in many African countries illustrates the direct link between systems of government and the calibre of persons holding strategic public service positions. It should be stated that not all African countries are run as fiefdoms in which public offices are shared out as patrimonies. Botswana, Benin Republic, The Gambia, and Zambia are living testimonies to the fact that democracy and good government are not alien to Africa. Varying degrees of success have been recorded in managing competitive political process in Burundi, Kenya, Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Ghana and Uganda. Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Nigeria are well on their way to a pluralist political order in which

conflict will be balanced with the will to pull together in the interest of the collectivity. Even war-ravaged Liberia, Somalia, Angola and Mozambique are determined to establish political and administrative structures in which diverse interests could be accommodated.

The Crisis of Governance

However, the issue of political recruitment - of who controls, allocates, and manages the resources of the state - is far from being settled in many parts of democratising Africa. This is to be expected. After decades of flirting with monistic (military and/or one-party) regimes in which leadership roles were by and large "ascribed" or forcefully acquired, a number of countries are today undergoing a difficult and painful transition to open systems in which achievement-oriented attributes are greatly valued. And it is precisely at this critical juncture - the twilight zone of despotism and popular participation - that the crisis of governance manifests in its most apocalyptic form, and threatens the basis and survival of post-colonial nation-states. A case in point is Nigeria where discontent with prolonged military despotism and widespread corruption of public institutions is raising fears about the very survival of the federation. High on the agenda of a forthcoming constitutional (or is it National?) conference is the oft-repeated but ill-defined "National Question". According to some, the conference provides a long-awaited opportunity to settle once and for all the

question of "who gets what, why, when and how". This, at least, is the expectation of the oil-producing but resource-starved communities of the southern delta. Not so the interpretation of other Nigerians. In the opinion of politicians from the southwestern part of the country, the "National Question" must elicit an unequivocal answer on who governs - i.e. it must point in a definitive way to the legal and constitutional basis of recruitment into the highest political office, which is that of President of the Federal Republic. Without waiting for a full-blown debate, some of these politicians have identified a solution in the form of "zoning" of the Presidency and other key offices of government. While discordant notes were sounded by different members of the incumbent (General Sani Abacha) regime, the government as an entity maintained a stony silence on the scope and limits of the "National Question".

The Nigerian case, in fact, illustrates the dilemma facing many of the democratising countries of Africa. After years during which political dissent was outlawed, Nigerians appeared at last to be savouring their freedom. Yet, unless this freedom is balanced with individual and collective responsibility, anarchy is not far off. The fact of the case is that generations of political leaders have been schooled in the politics of cake-sharing not in the ideas of cake-baking. To quote Claude Ake,

"...the political tradition into which the present generation of African leaders were socialized was not one that made them interested in fine debate about the

morality of power, the limits of political obligations, or indeed in good government".⁵

Politics, even under fairly competitive conditions, has turned out to be a cloak-and-dagger operation, and under autocratic regimes, a guerrilla war. This trench mentality is synonymous with what Ake terms:

"...political anxiety - the fear of the consequences of not being in control of the government, associated with a profound distrust of political opponents".⁶

The preoccupation with power rather than with how it is exercised has tragic consequences for development in general, and for governance, in particular. To begin with, the more engrossed the political contestants become with power, the less the time they have for matters affecting the welfare and interest of the people. Yet, unless and until the ground rules for the acquisition of power are properly defined, even the least eligible will always stake a claim and back this up with force. It is important to note that some of those who are most vocal in their advocacy of "zoning" as a formula for political recruitment have had opportunities to improve the living standards of the people - as functionaries of state and local governments and as opinion leaders at the "grass-roots" level. However, they have almost invariably disappointed their followers. With the possible exception of a few action-oriented state governors and local government chairpersons, most of the latter-day defenders of

"People power" have been known for nothing except ballot rigging, inflation of contract prices, acceptance of bribes, trails of abandoned projects, stripping of government assets (air-conditioners, motor vehicles etc.) and ethnic rabble rousing. The consequences of the failure of leadership are plain for all to see - a demoralized and generally ineffective public service; decaying infrastructures, falling health, nutrition and education standards; environmental pollution; poverty and destitution; rising crime rates (reflected in the increasing incidence of fraud, white collar crime, drug trafficking etc); declining industrial and agricultural productivity; inflation; as well as rising internal and external indebtedness. The squandering by the Babangida regime of approximately \$2 billion of Nigeria's scarce resources (from the so-called "dedication account") is to-date the most telling evidence of leadership decline.

**Paths to Good Government:
A Review of Alternatives**

It is clear that the attributes (among them, ethnic appeal, political terrorism, and ballot stuffing) which ensured the recruitment of "old breed" politicians into high office are inadequate for the challenges of today. This realization informed the decision of some military regimes to issue a blanket decree banning these elements from political competitions. However, the "new breed" politicians have not fared better than their predecessors. As a matter of fact, they (the "new breed"

politicians) have exceeded the old guard in acts of depravity. It should also be noted that the "new breed" have so far proved incapable of filling the moral and intellectual vacuum in African politics. Rather, they have hitched themselves tightly to the age-old mind-set of ethnic divisiveness, religious hypocrisy, political thuggery, and institutionalized corruption. A clear proof of this statement is their conception of power as an end in itself. Like the old-breed politicians, the new generation of leaders have viewed sole pursuit of power as a substitute for ideas on good government.

This takes us back to "zoning" - the formula being currently pushed as an infallible remedy for Nigeria's socio-economic and political ills. The argument in favour of "zoning" is well-known: if all parties to a political compact are to have a sense of belonging, they should have an equal access to the highest office of the state. In the Nigerian case, it is contended that unless the Presidency is rotated among different zones, one zone would regard the leadership of the country as its birth right.

All the same, zoning is not the answer to the "national question" - whatever that question may be. It is both an admission of failure of the democratic process and a return to the political stone age. To argue, as some have done, that political offices be "zoned" to a particular ethnic group, geographical area, or religious order is to lose faith either in the power of the people or the method by which that power is acquired, or both. It is true that after living with autocracy and/or systematic

ballot rigging for a long period, one is likely to become cynical about the democratic process. The decision by the military regime to annul the results of the presidential election held in Nigeria on 12 June 1993 might be interpreted as the triumph of force over popular will. At the same time, however, "June 12", as it is popularly referred to, is a vindication of the power of the people. It certainly accelerated the exit of the then head of the military administration, General Ibrahim Babangida. Besides, it revealed that in a free and fair election, the people are not incapable of crossing ethnic, religious and other divides to pick a candidate with the most appealing credentials. June 12, 1993, therefore signalled the end of an era, and the beginning of a new one.

By contrast, the clamour for the zoning of political offices is a retrograde step. It extols the virtues of the politics of the jungle over that of ideas. It regards the search for excellence in governance as an unachievable goal, and so proceeds to entrench mediocrity in the supreme law of the land.

The obvious conclusion from the preceding analysis is that the resolution of the perennial crisis of governance in Africa hinges on the political class and the military power-players taking that extra but significant step to accommodate dissent and to nurture democracy to full blossom. This entails building in each country, a broad national consensus around the doctrines of individual liberty, equality, justice and fairness. Central to all these is the need to rework the equation governing inter-

personal relations in such a way that every individual participating in a collective endeavour or who is affected by it will have:

"an equal right to the most extensive liberty compatible with a like liberty for all. In other words...each participant (will) enjoy equal liberty, which is liberty that is not incompatible with like liberty for all."⁷

The assumption here is that the crisis facing Africa requires that a moral tone be injected into political discourse and that the utilitarian bias in favour of "socially efficacious" solutions be reserved for the technical and administrative side of governance.

But even here too - i.e. the implementation arm of government - morality is not entirely out of place. Fine principles of personnel management have turned, in the hands of local "efficiency experts", into tools of patrimony and a succour to nepotism.⁸

For the avoidance of doubt, the starting point in the effort to improve the environment of governance in Africa is getting all the parties to agree that power rests with the people. If this is so - if it is accepted that the legitimacy to make "authoritative decisions on the allocation of resources" resides only with persons entrusted with the people's mandate - then it behoves those hankering after that legitimacy to take pains to find out what the people really want. As of now, many aspirants to high office do not even know their people let alone taking time to

study their needs. They prefer to take the short-cut to power - ballot stuffing, voter intimidation, deliberate miscounting of votes, and, if all else fails, outright military coup.

It is of course not enough to socialize the political actors to the values of political competition and good government. Incumbent regimes need to realize that in a genuinely competitive setting, there is no room for mediocrity. To this end, it is essential that the institutional mechanism for the recruitment and retrenchment of all classes of public servants - political, managerial, and advisory - be closely examined with a view to its being revitalized. The next section focuses on priorities in public service recruitment in an era of democratization and political pluralism.

III. Recruitment of Political Functionaries and the Higher Civil Service: Current Status and Future Priorities

The failure up now to resolve the crisis of governance in many African countries represents a major constraint on effective human resource management. It accounts in large measure for faulty recruitment of public service personnel - particularly, those serving in policy-making and policy management capacities. The inadequacy of the procedure for recruitment into the policy-making - nay, political - cadres is obvious. What is not so obvious is the cumulative effect of faulty political recruitment on resource allocation within the executive branch of government, in general, and the career civil service, in particular.

Political Recruitment: Patterns and Possibilities

One characteristic of the profession of politics, at least, in Africa, is the ease of entry and the pains of exit. In view of the immense benefits to be reaped and the few obligations involved, the profession has attracted elements ranging from patriotic and highly respectable citizens to common criminals. Civilian regimes are particularly noted for rewarding party loyalists with important offices and sinecures. The military are equally guilty. According to Olu Awotesu, a member of the Constituent Assembly established by Nigeria's military government in 1977, incompetence, nepotism and corruption were rapidly becoming the hall-marks of governance:

"People who have found themselves in power in this country (Nigeria) have always seen it as an opportunity to enrich themselves and the immediate members of their families. The military are not better. They are even worse. They appoint Commissioners [from] among their friends, their class-mates and their village brethren."⁹

At least two factors explain the contemporary approach to political recruitment. First is "political anxiety", a term coined by Ake, and mentioned earlier to depict the combative state of the politician's mind. To the extent that the politician's sole objective is power, and in so far as he is distrustful of "outsiders" who might be tempted to make a bid for same, he is likely to surround himself with loyalists, sycophants and bootlickers. The trusted aides are his shield against criticisms,

fair or foul, and against his enemies - real or imaginary. This is the basis of the patron-client (or patrimonial) relations in contemporary African public administration systems.

The question is whether such relations always correspond with ethnic or other primordial ties. If, for instance, the "spoils" invariably go to a particular area or region at the end of each political contest, the excluded groups will be justified to resist their eternal relegation to second-class citizenship, and the case for the "zoning" of leadership positions will be strong. However, if the facts of each situation reveal otherwise, the "ruling group" hypothesis will have to be drastically revised. Nigeria's case again confirms the need to be cautious in making blanket pronouncements on the ethnic origin of leaders. As the advocates of the "zoning" formula would have everyone believe, the Hausa-Fulani, through a deft manipulation of census figures, and with the collusion of succeeding regimes, have cornered the leadership of Nigeria. Unless it is decreed in a constitution that the presidency and other strategic offices be rotated among (6 - 8) zones, the other ethnic groups will not "taste" power. What the politician could not get in straight-forward political competitions, he expects the law to hand him on a platter of gold.

While ethnicity is a factor in politics - and Nigerian politicians of all shades and colours have always manipulated it - it is not historically true that political recruitment has been based solely on "tribe and tongue".¹⁰ Since the attainment of independence in 1960, Nigeria has been ruled more by the military

than by democratically elected officials. One implication of this is that even if one ethnic group enjoys an "undue" demographic advantage, it has not been able to translate this into lasting and meaningful political power. More significant is the fact that when the military and civilian inputs into governance are considered together, the "ruling tribe" hypothesis disintegrates (See Table A overleaf).

Table A: Ethnic and "Professional" Origins of Nigerian Heads of State: 1960 - 1994)

S/N	Name of Heads of State	Profession	Ethnic Origin	Tenure Dates
1.	Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	Politics/ Civilian	Ibo	1960-1966
2.	Major-General J.T.U. Aguiyi-Ironsi	Military	Ibo	1966-1966
3.	General Yakubu Gowon	Military	Angas (Minority)	1966-1975
4.	General Murtala Mohammed	Military	Hausa	1975-1976
5.	General Olusegun Obasanjo	Military	Yoruba	1975-1979
6.	Alhaji Sheu shagari	Politics/ Civilian	Fulani	1979-1983
7.	Major-General Mohammadu Buhari	Military	Fulani	1984-1985
8.	General Ibrahim Babangida	Military	Gwari (Minority)	1985-1993
9.	Chief Earnest Shonekan (a)	Business/ Civilian	Yoruba	1993-1993
10.	General Sani Abacha	Military	Kanuri (Minority)	1993 to date

N.B. (a) Chief Shonekan's Interim National Government was declared illegal by a court of law.

A careful study of the background of the power brokers at any point in time is further likely to reveal that it is affinity of interest, rather than ethnic origin, that determines one's place in the hierarchy of power. General Ibrahim Babangida who was often perceived as representing the interest of the "Muslim North"

was surrounded by lieutenants who were either non-Muslim or non-Northern. They came to public attention when they were relieved of their appointments by the Sani Abacha regime. The list accurately reflects Nigeria's "Federal Character", viz: Brigadiers-General Halilu Akilu, Ahmed Daku, David Mark, Tunde Ogbeha, Adetunji Olurin, John Shagaya, Raji Rasaki, Shelpidi Teidi, Anthony Ukpo, Colonels Abdulmumuni Aminu, John Madaki, A. Saba, Lt. Colonels M.S. Dasuki, Nyam Y. Nonah, Major M. Mohammed, and Captain A, Suleiman. If their selection was faulty, it was not on account of their ethnic status, but because they owed their appointments to the patron-client network built by the former President (Babangida) to consolidate his personal power and to provide an environment conducive to profligacy, mutual protection rackets, and rent-seeking activities.

The case of major Debo Akande, General Babangida's former public relations assistant, clearly indicates that when interests correspond, ethnic origin or religious belief takes a secondary place in political recruitment decisions. Until he was ousted by palace intrigue and driven into exile, Debo Akande, a christian from the southern part of Nigeria was, by his own admission, an honorary member of the former president's family. In an interview he granted The News Magazine (24 January 1994) from his hide-out in the United States of America, he revealed that he "was virtually in-charge of domestic affairs at Dodan Barracks". Being "in charge" means having direct access to Babangida's inner chambers, settling disputes between the then president and his wife,

enrolling the first family's children at schools, and presenting the family in good light to the outside world. He lost his position when, according to him, rivals for Babangida's favour told him in no uncertain terms to choose between his job and his life.

The second factor which accounts for the durability of patron-client relations within government in Africa is the relatively underdeveloped nature of the political environment. To the extent that the public, however defined, does not place any serious developmental obligations on leaders and does not hold the leaders accountable for the exercise of power, governance will remain a self-serving enterprise. Different generations of leaders will come and go, but the condition of the average citizen will not improve.

What are the possibilities for the reform of the system of political recruitment? So far as one can see, the solution to the perennial crisis of governance lies in the establishment of new institutional arrangements for the selection of political decision makers and for the determination of their appointments. This goes beyond prescribing minimum entry qualifications or requiring aspirants to high office to furnish proof of competence. As a matter of fact, a study of the academic qualifications and experience of persons holding ministerial positions in Nigeria's First Republic reveals that the politicians were, at least in these two respects, not inferior to senior career officials.¹¹ It is possible that the standard has fallen in recent years. However, while screening the curriculum vitae of each candidate

for a policy making or senior managerial position, particular attention should be paid to what the facts reveal (or fail to reveal) about his/her:

- (a) motivation;
- (b) sense of responsibility and integrity;
- (c) managerial competence;
- (d) knowledge of, and competence in, a specialized area; and
- (e) state of mind or sanity.

Let us start by looking at the motivation of candidates. It is highly unlikely that a person seeking to be President of a country would come up front and announce that the reason he is running for the office is to enrich himself, or find a glamorous role for a nagging wife (or an unemployed husband) or build palaces and monuments, or to plant cronies or business associates in strategic, rent-seeking positions. The usual practice is to appear meek and submissive before the electorate and swear to serve them to the very end. The smart politician, realizing that the public no longer falls for oratory, tends to enhance his/her chances at the polls by handing out raw cash. The military for its own part dispenses both with promises and actual delivery, preferring to settle political disputes with force. Under the competitive, pluralist arrangement envisioned in this paper, pro-democracy movements and other interest groups will play an active part in compiling dossiers on the actual motivations of office seekers and educate the public about same.

The candidates' stand on the burning socio-economic issues should become public knowledge.

In addition to ferreting for information on why individuals are seeking a public office, it is necessary to probe each candidate's character. Flaws which have been revealed by reports of commissions of inquiries or other independent and objective assessments should be closely examined. If a particular candidate is found wanting in respect of a position, he/she should be advised to "serve penance" by accepting menial jobs somewhere and being actively involved in non-renumerative community service. This, however, is no substitute for any sentence passed by a court of law on a government official found guilty of violating his/her oath of office. The need to expose the ambitious politician to lessons in humility, integrity, and responsibility, is predicated on the persistent failure to recognise the limits of power. Graham-Douglas, former Attorney-General of Nigeria and Minister of Justice could not help noticing that power often went to the head of the average politician:

"Once this very humble man who comes from a village somewhere is placed in that position of power, he thinks that he has all the answers to every problem."¹²

Graham-Douglas' observation reveals another side of governance - i.e. the frequent elevation of upstarts and inexperienced persons to high office. Persons who have not as much as run a village cooperative may suddenly find themselves presiding over multi-million dollar enterprises. They may not

know from where to start: Is it by peremptorily ordering the career officials around? Insisting on being consulted on the appointment of clerks and stenographers? or taking over the power and functions of the tenders board? It is conceded that some individuals learn very fast and can quickly adjust to new situations. All the same, it is essential that persons looking, or being considered, for policy-making positions have proven and demonstrable experience in the management of human, material, and financial resources.

In view of the increasingly complex nature of modern public administration it is also important that decision makers have in-depth, multi-disciplinary knowledge of some specialized area - e.g. policy analysis and management, development and finance, energy economics and management, human resource planning and development, environment and natural resources management, science and technology, foreign affairs, and social services administration.

However, of all the prerequisites for leadership in the complex environment of Africa, none is more important than soundness of mind and body. Lunatics are easy to recognize because of their plainly abnormal behaviour. It will take in-depth clinical analysis to spot apparently normal individuals who have gone round the bend. And, in the view of a leading psychiatrist, Adeoye Lambo, many of such individuals are not only on the loose, but are taking decisions affecting the life and well-being of their mentally healthy compatriots. Lambo, who

once served as Deputy Director-General of the World Health Organisation, starts by commending the wisdom, foresight and patriotism of the first generation of African leaders. What he finds alarming is the precipitate decline in the quality of leadership in recent years. After analyzing patterns of policy makers' behaviour, he concludes that governance had become a psychiatric case. He declares:

"We are now experiencing in Africa and in this country (the impact of) leaders with warped minds. They believe in decay...They enjoy...to see the disintegration, the falling apart, the virtual dissolution of society."¹³

Lambo traces the leadership's psychosis to two main sources, viz, before and after coming in contact with power. To quote him:

"Either there was something wrong (with the leaders) before they got to power or wrong with them when they got there."¹⁴

In fact, a constant and systematic analysis of antecedents to, and patterns of, leadership behaviour is a worth-while intellectual pursuit. In the interim, attention ought to focus on how to control the damage caused or likely to be caused by executive derangement. As is the practice in the U.S. Army, it is suggested that persons seeking public office be made to undergo psychological evaluations carried out by professionally competent individuals. It is recognized that "medical clearances" have in the past been manipulated by repressive regimes to frustrate the leadership ambitions of their opponents. Yet, if we take into

account the testimonies of leading scientists such as Ake and Lambo, it would appear that the long-suffering peoples of Africa are entitled to an occasional peep into the inner recesses of their leaders' minds.

Recruitment into the Career Service

One can easily appreciate the reasons why political recruitment has faced serious problems. Unlike recruitment into the career service, entry into the profession of politics is not governed by rules. But if one expects these rules to serve the cause of merit in the career service itself one is likely to be disappointed. There is an overwhelming evidence of depravity in the selection of regular public servants. Cronyism and god-fatherism have vitiated efforts at making public service recruitment genuinely competitive. Thus, it is not unknown for vacancies to be filled before they are advertised, or for selection interviews to be orchestrated in favour of well-connected candidates. Personnel managers are frequently harassed by telephone, or with call cards from powerful citizens wishing to place their proteges, village brethren, and distant relations in lucrative jobs. "Technical know-how" has thus succumbed to "technical know-who".¹⁵

Some offices of government are particularly notorious for attracting unsolicited applications and undue pressure. They include the customs service, immigration (including passport issuing and control) offices, tax, licensing and revenue

collection agencies, the police force, and any other organisation in which power (or official favour) could be readily traded for cash. This is probably why theology graduates would rather become customs inspectors or police superintendents than preach to lost souls about what to do to ward off eternal damnation.

A worrying development, particularly in Nigeria, is the illegal tendency to sub-let the coercive and revenue extraction power of government to persons not on government employment register or payroll. Various referred to as "kelebes", "crossers" or "camp boys", these buccaneers serve as intermediaries between government officials (notably, border posts/law enforcement personnel) and favour-seeking members of the public. The camp boys' job description is clear, though unwritten - i.e. to collect up-front gratifications which would be shared with the officials concerned but could not be directly traced to them (the officials). The new system is the reverse side of "ghost" recruitment but with the same devastating impact on ethics and accountability.

Bright Spots in Recruitment

So far, the story there is to tell about personnel recruitment has been thoroughly depressing. Yet, it will be wrong to go away with the impression that governance in Africa is one sprawling racket controlled entirely by rent-seekers. Most of the examples cited in this paper have come from Nigeria, but even in that country, integrity in public office is still highly

appreciated. Nothing illustrates this better than the response of Audu Ogbeh to criticisms of his recent appointment as a member of the Constitutional Commission. Ogbeh who, by all known accounts, has a brilliant and stainless record as Federal Minister of Communications in the Shagari Administration, fired back at his critics who regarded his new appointment as nepotism, adding confidently that:

"I did my job as Minister and the records are there with you (the Nigerian Press)...I have no apologies or regrets to any Nigerian living or dead for the ways I did my job..."¹⁶

The initially lukewarm attitude of Nigerians to General Abacha's Government changed to a relatively favourable one as soon as the cabinet line-up was announced, and individuals with high reputation were seen to have been placed in challenging positions. It should be recalled that the Gowon regime which ruled Nigeria between 1966 and 1975 was itself fortunate to be able to recruit from the cream of the political and technocratic class - e.g. Obafemi Awolowo, Anthony Enahoro, Okoi Arikpo, Yahaya Gusau, Adebayo Adedeji, C. O. Lawson, Nelson Ayida, Phillip Asiodu, Ahmed Joda, the late Yusuf Gobir, and others too numerous to mention. These were indeed among the persons that destiny placed in the vantage position of saving Nigeria from total disintegration during the civil war. Unfortunately, elements within the Gowon Administration became arrogant and their negative conception of power subsequently brought about the downfall of the regime.

With regard to the African continent in general, it is possible to point with pride to a number of world-class statesmen (among them Nwalimu Julius Nyerere, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Jomo Kenyatta and Ahmadu Bello, all belonging to the first generation; and Presidents Yoweri Museveni, N. Soglo, Frederick Chiluba, and Meles Zenawi, to the new). Presidents Masire of Botswana, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and Dauda Jawara of The Gambia stride both generations.

Several public officers have left their marks as achievement-oriented and democratically inclined regional or provincial governors, national assembly presidents, city mayors, and chief executives of ministries and parastatal organisations. The career service has produced notable personalities such as A. L. Adu, Robert Gardner and E.A. Sai (Ghana), J. O. Udoji, S. O. Adebo, Ali Akilu, Adebayo Adedeji, and Mrs. E. Y. Emmanuel (Nigeria), Robert Ouko, Phillip Ndegwa, W. N. Wamalwa (Kenya), Edward Barlow (Uganda), Bernard Mulokozi (Tanzania), Madame Simone Testa (Seychelles), and Mrs. N. Kesselly (Liberia).

No, the argument is not that Africa is incapable of operating a modern apparatus of statecraft. Rather, the position taken in this paper is that if sustained efforts are made by the new generation of leaders to emulate the positive achievements of their predecessors, governance will cease to be a problematic issue. Training has an important role to play in sensitizing the various actors to their obligations under the new arrangement. The next section examines the scope for action in this area.

IV. Capacity Building for Political Pluralism and Good Governance: Scope and Limitations

Any programme designed to enhance the overall capacity to manage the process of transition to democracy and good government in Africa must start by addressing the basic problems, viz: the apparent inability to accommodate and manage dissent, acknowledge the sovereignty and meet the basic needs of the electors, as well as make the executive arm of government accountable, responsive and results-oriented. These problems must define the objectives of capacity building for political pluralism and good government. And when the objectives of training become clear, we can proceed to identify the range of programmes needed to meet those objectives.

Objectives of Training

Proceeding from the analysis in the previous sections, the main objectives of training for political pluralism and good government should be to:

- (i) enhance the capacity of political actors (politicians, pro-democracy movements, NGOs, etc.) to accommodate dissent, and to build national consensus around major issues;
- (ii) develop in programme participants an awareness of the sovereign rights of the people and how to safeguard and promote those rights;

- (iii) focus the programme participants' attention on factors impinging on the image, credibility and performance of public institutions, as well as on measures designed to promote the accountability, responsiveness, and overall effectiveness (or relevance) of these institutions.

The "political anxiety" which, according to Ake, accounts for the destructive, uncompromising, and mutually exclusive behaviour of the political actors, may itself be a symptom of a deeper malaise - the inability to make one's position understood by, and/or acceptable to, others, as well as the frustration which goes with this. Where "tribe and tongue" differ, it is easier to look inwards than to reach out. Yet, everyone seeking to lead a culturally diverse society must recognise and accept the challenge. This includes learning about the ways of life of different communities, and, if possible, their languages. It would have been a different story in Nigeria today if Obafemi Awolowo had been able to communicate directly to the Hausas in the north, and the Ibos in the east - rather than through interpreters or in a foreign language (English). Many of those aspiring to leadership positions know very little about the potential electors besides those within their own immediate language zone. To southern Nigerian politicians, the "Muslim North" is one solid fortress which none but the northerners can penetrate. To the northerners, the south is peopled by animists and "infidels". These are some of the old politico-cultural stereotypes which training programmes in governance can, and should, try to change.

Even the pro-democracy groups will be well-advised to re-think their strategies, and convert themselves from regional pressure groups into genuinely national popular fronts for the advancement of democracy and good government.

Equally essential is the need to inculcate in aspiring and incumbent rulers the idea that power belongs to the people. This entails respecting the voters' collective will and judgement, and designing policies and programmes which respond to the people's yearnings.

Revitalizing the institutions in the executive arm of government is another objective that should be vigorously pursued. Training programmes therefore need to be designed to enhance the accountability, responsiveness, and productivity of agencies such as the civil service, local government, decentralized "field units", and parastatal bodies.

Programme Focus and Reach

In pursuance of the objectives of training in governance, it is necessary to design a whole range of programmes targeted at incumbent and aspiring rulers, pro-democracy groups, the public at large, and public officials serving in the executive branch of government. Among the programmes which need to be seriously considered are:

- (i) Senior Policy Seminars on the Imperatives of Democracy and Good Government (for Policy makers, Policy Advisers and Senior Government officials).

- (ii) Senior Policy Seminars on Ethics, Accountability (focusing mainly on the scope and limits of power and targeted to the same group as under (i) above);
- (iii) Senior Policy Seminars on Democracy and National Integration (for incumbent and aspiring rulers, pro-democracy groups, and focusing on the prerequisites for leadership in multi-cultural societies, and ways of building strategic national alliances/coalitions);
- (iv) Workshops or Conferences on Civic Responsibility for Democratic Governance (for civic and opinion leaders, adult education specialists, the media, and civic education agencies);
- (v) Workshops on Electoral Administration (as currently designed and implemented by AAPAM);
- (vi) Workshops on Electoral Strategic Planning (for aspiring rulers, and rulers who are up for re-election, and designed to equip participants with the tools of policy analysis, issue mapping, policy drafting, electoral campaign planning and management, voter registration, electoral administration, publicity management, fund-raising etc.
- (vii) Senior Policy Seminars on Public Personnel Management Reform (focusing on the reform of recruitment, promotion, discipline in government, and the strengthening of mechanisms for the storage, retrieval and use of personnel data);

- (viii) Workshops on Productivity and Accountability in the Public Service (Public officials and their clients); and
- (ix) Study Tours and Exchange programmes (intra-country and inter-Africa).

Programme Implementation

It goes without saying that the training institutions' capacity to design, finance, and conduct the training programmes should be strengthened. If necessary, each institution should establish a separate Programme on Training for Good Government. The programme should be endowed with adequate human, financial and material resources, and should be free to experiment with new training methodologies.

V. Recruitment and Training for Political Pluralism and Good Government: a Summation

That Africa is currently passing through a difficult phase is beyond doubt. Most of the examples of political distortions and administrative lapses in this paper have been drawn from Nigeria, and, to that extent, may not reflect the objective conditions prevailing in each African country. This notwithstanding, the status of governance in Nigeria, in many significant respects, mirrors the goings-on in the various African countries. For example, "majimboism" in Kenya poses the same threat to the polity as ethnicity does to Nigerian national integration. This is apart from the plainly destructive impact of the exploitation of tribal

or clan differences in places like Somalia, Liberia, Angola, and Burundi. The Nigerian public service might be faced with a credibility crisis, but then which African country is spared from the scourge of corruption?

As argued in this paper, facing up to the crisis of governance requires that close attention be paid to the modes of political and public service recruitment. The background and calibre of persons holding public offices or aspiring to same need to be of concern to those wishing to improve the quality of governance within the continent. In effect, therefore, the search for good government ought to start with the search for talent. Not only must we strive to look for achievers and men and women of integrity, but must spare no effort to exorcise the "demons" thwarting the developmental aspirations of each political system. The time is ripe to dust up the personnel records of public officers, and weed out the prodigal, the corrupt and the psychotic. Those of them who show signs of repentance and/or are likely to respond to psychiatric treatment should be given another opportunity to serve the people - but only at the lowest rung of the social ladder where they will appreciate the value of hard work, integrity, and personal responsibility. "Serving penance" should therefore become an institutionalized method of re-shaping warped minds.

In addition to this unconventional method of training, efforts should be made to enhance the general capacity to operate and sustain a system of government having as its objective the

promotion of the rights and welfare of the people. Good government is not an unreasonable expectation in the African context. The first generation of leaders and a number of those currently in office have made it (good government) a pillar of their administration.

Finally, we may wish to examine the prospects for the future. For some time to come, power will continue to change hands among those with the financial wherewithal and/or military, coercive force. It will be an accident if the power-oriented rulers and aspiring rulers (including the so-called dissident groups)¹⁷ have any specific plan to improve the life and well-being of the people, who, having lost out in the battle to make their voices heard, are content to extract token material benefits and concessions from the ruling group. This situation is likely to persist until something happens to make the subjects demand that they be treated as citizens with full rights - including the rights to be consulted on who governs, and on the purpose for which power/authority is exercised at any point in time. Then, at that crucial stage, disputes over where power ought to reside will no longer be settled exclusively by money or military strength, but by ideas as to where society should be headed. Perhaps, at that time, it will be reasonable to expect a man or a woman from a humble background (but with a passionate devotion to justice, fairness, the sanctity of the human individual, and the cause of excellence) to emerge with answers to Africa's developmental questions.¹⁸ Then, and only then, will human resource management be accorded the importance it

deserves. Pluralism, by itself, will not ensure that rational recruitment practices are adopted. It is when the external socio-economic and political environment compels state agencies to become production- and productivity-oriented that the policy makers and managers will begin to pay attention to the background of who gets appointed to which position, as well as to the substantive contribution which each employee makes to the success of the risk-prone business of governance. It is gratifying to note that some leaders have anticipated the doomsday and are not waiting to be forced by a hostile environment to put the right people in the right place. They are the sign-posts to Africa's bright future.