

African Bureaucracy and Cost of Governance: Road Map for Resolving the High Cost of Governance in Africa

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Abstract: Cost of governance in Africa has been a serious challenge to development and concern to scholars alike. Cost of governance is making it difficult for governments to implement development plans and projects. Mismanagement and waste appear to be the order of things as high recurrent expenditure, corruption; budget deficit and fiscal indiscipline continue to plague public finance. All these have led to underdevelopment in all facets of human endeavor coupled with the world economic recession that has threatened global economic management. It is against this background the paper within the framework of public interest theory examines the interface between African bureaucracies and cost of governance and its attendant effect on Africa's development. This study was carried out using qualitative desktop method in deriving data for addressing the issues raised. Over 25 literature were consulted and analysed in order to establish the nexus between African bureaucracy and cost of governance. Subsequently, relevant sources of this research were fairly and professionally scrutinised, understood and tested with the available literature for the purpose of the research. Inter alia, it included scan-reading, comprehensive and critical reading and writing down ideas. Authoritative scholarly sources were reviewed, during a desktop study. The purpose was to identify the relevant publications and apply them in the research. This paper utilizes the qualitative research design to gain an insight into the nature and character of African bureaucracy and cost of governance. It is also

exploratory because the paper attempts to establish the nexus between African bureaucracy and cost of governance as well as its implications on development in Africa. This article, which is theoretical in nature, drew its arguments mostly from secondary data, which included, textbooks, journal publications and internet sources. The paper argues that, bureaucracy still holds the keys to financial transparency, probity and accountability. It can do this however, if it embraces ethical rebirth, the rule of law and Constitutionalism, international best practices in management of resources and good governance, among other remedial steps. The paper concludes that bureaucracy in Africa should help manage the resources of the state in a manner that much money is conserved for developmental purposes. Ironically, the civil bureaucracies have become huge drain on the scarce resources of the State through a number of avenues; some are official while others illicit.

Keywords: Accountability, administration, civil service, efficiency, prudent

1. Introduction

Civil bureaucracy is established to help government through its designated institutions to carry out its duties and responsibilities and by implication fulfil its obligation to the people. Bureaucracy as a model for handling government administrative system has gained worldwide acceptance which explains why it

has been the norm in government establishment all over the world. One of the reasons why bureaucracy has attracted acknowledgement across political systems is its assumed role in bringing about efficiency in administration (Akhakpe, 2014:213). Government resources; be they human and material are always in short supply relative to the demand for them. Therefore, they have to be managed judiciously to ensure that they are distributed fairly and equitably among the people.

If these goals are ever to be achieved, a mechanism should be put in place to ensure that these resources are properly managed to the benefit of all. In pursuance of this goal, bureaucracy has certain elements that will enable it meet this target. Some of these elements are impersonality and the legal-rational model (Igbokwe-Ibeto, Ajulor and Afegbua, 2012:105). With these and other features in place, bureaucracy can achieve good governance with less cost to the State and the people. However, this can only take place, if these values are deeply engraved in the ideology, career structure and mind-sets of staff in civil bureaucracy (Akhakpe, 2014:213). Members of the bureaucracy can only do these if they rise above the schism in the society and uphold at all times, the sacred “principles/philosophies of a dispassionate institution”. But in Africa, it would seem that the bureaucracy has not been able to manage State resources to achieve all round development in the polity.

The bureaucratic arena refers to all state organizations engaged in formulating and implementing policy as well as in regulating and delivering services (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2012:104). While issues of 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 fails to do so. This set of issues has been of concern since the advent of centralized administration, but they have taken on particular significance to academics and practitioners alike since the work of Max Weber some hundred years ago. In recent years, there has been increasing evidence, from case studies and cross-country empirical analysis, that bureaucratic performance is important for development performance (Akhakpe, 2014, Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2012).

Governance issues in the bureaucratic arena take on special significance given the massive pressures that have been placed on public agencies in recent years to become leaner, more efficient and bring services closer to the people. In developing countries, there have been pressures to dramatically reduce the role of the state in relation to the market and cut the size of

the civil service (the numbers of employees and wage bill). Lack of economic and social progress in most African countries has also led to many calls for improving the managerial efficiency of bureaucracies. However, bureaucracy should not only be studied in the context of policy implementation alone, but also in terms of governance. The rules that determine procedures in the bureaucracy, whether formal or informal, are especially important for public perceptions of how the state operates. As we know, many contacts that citizens have with government are with first-level bureaucrats responsible for processing requests for services and assistance.

From one country to another in the continent of Africa, cost of governance has gone increasingly high making it difficult for governments to implement development plans and programmes. Mismanagement and waste are the order of things as high recurrent expenditure, corruption; budget deficit and fiscal indiscipline continue to plague public finance. All these have hindered development in all facets of life. Matters are made worst by the world economic recession that has threatened global economic management. All these call for a new thinking on how to maintain some form of development by cutting down on waste and enthrone accountability and transparency in governance. Therefore, this article seeks to identify the relationship between bureaucracy and cost of governance, examine factors that affect the role of the bureaucracy in managing the scarce resources of the state, discuss problems that attend such efforts, and to find solution to constraints facing bureaucratic roles in this regard.

To analyse the issues raised, the chapter is structured into four sections. The first, aside from introduction and methodology, explores the conceptual and theoretical terrain of bureaucracy and governance. The second examines the nexus between bureaucracy and cost of governance in Africa. The third provides an overview of the reasons for the high cost of governance in Africa, while the fourth looks at the road map for resolving the challenges of high cost of governance in Africa and then conclusion.

2. Methodology

This paper utilizes the qualitative descriptive approach to gain an insight into the nature and character of African bureaucracy and cost of governance. It is also exploratory because the paper attempts the nexus between African bureaucracy and cost of governance as well as its implications on development in Africa. This article, which is

theoretical in nature, drew its arguments mostly from secondary data, which included, textbooks, journal publications and internet sources. Subsequently, relevant sources of this research were fairly and professionally scrutinised, understood and tested with the available literature for the purpose of the research. Inter alia, it included scan-reading, comprehensive and critical reading and writing down ideas. Authoritative scholarly sources were reviewed, during a desktop study. The purpose was to identify the relevant publications and apply them in the research.

3. Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis

Bureaucracy belongs to the tribe of disputed concepts in social and management sciences. This is because the term 'Bureaucracy' has been confronted with a lot of misgivings, wrong interpretations and apprehensions. The sociologists are value-neutral towards bureaucracy and as such it must be studied objectively as a form of complex organization. The term bureaucracy is derived from the French word 'bureau' which means 'office' literally bureaucracy means that power is in the hand of officials. Sociologists use the term to designate a certain type of structure, a particular organization of rationally coordinated unequal, and reject the term which equates bureaucracy with "red tape", inefficiency and the likes (Aluko & Adesopo, 2004:14). Most social scientists define bureaucracy in a more neutral way as the formal organization of administrative tasks. In defining bureaucracy as the formal organization of administrative officials, social scientists have tried to avoid prejudgments. Bureaucracy is not necessarily rigid, insensitive or power striving. However, the idea of bureaucracy, as it is used in social science theory does carry special connotations. Bureaucracy is the most visible branch of the executive arm of government which is charged with the responsibility of giving effects to government policies and programmes and the provision of goods and services to the people (Akhakpe, 2001:84).

Cost of governance as a concept is not new in government quarters. From the medieval times, governments have always focused on keeping government finances under laid down procedures and rules. In theory, there are rules, regulations and procedures that have to be followed to achieve government policies and programmes within stated limits. At the centre of this process is the need to ensure that public funds or tax payers' money is judiciously used in line with global best practices which include transparency and accountability, respect for the rule of law and constitutionalism.

Several views have been put forward to explain what cost of governance is. However, before going further, it is imperative to first understand the meaning of governance. Governance as a concept has attracted several definitions. African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) sees governance as a mechanism for development in line with Sen's formulation of development as freedom which requires public institutions and processes to promote, guarantee and secure the five distinct types of freedom which include: political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantee, and protective security (Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, 2012). Cost of governance may refer to the political and administrative cost of running government machineries. It could also mean the administrative cum political expenditures incurred in the course of carrying out the responsibilities of governments. Adewole and Osabuohien (2007:139) divided cost of governance into two—recurrent administrative expenses and capital administrative expenses. They then define cost of governance as "cost associated with the running of government. Furthermore, Fluvian (2006:42) defines cost of governance as any expenditure in maintaining government administrative structures". This definition appears to capture a broader view of the concept as it covers all expenses incurred in the course of running governments.

Igbokwe-Ibeto et al. (2012:107) and Drucker (2007:88) attempts to bring this point to bold relief when they aver that cost of governance is "government budget allocated to both capital and recurrent expenditures or maintaining government administrative structures which appears to be very enormous in Africa..". Two issues can be drawn from this view of cost of governance. The first situate it within the conventional budget governments put forward annually to guide it and members of the public on what to expect and channel their expectations and activities accordingly. The second is that it hinted at the worrisome aspect of government running cost under democratic rule in much of Africa. Also, since independence, public servants in Africa have resisted reform programmes that are antithetical to their corporate interests (Akhakpe, 2014:225). This means that the high cost of running bureaucracies through these parastatals and agencies would continue even as more of them are being established to deal with emerging development in the polity.

Another area of concern is the increasing number of political bureaucracies at the national, regional, state, municipals and local government councils. Keeping

these bureaucracies lean remains a major challenge as the fledgling democracies in the continent as they approach the consolidation stages. Can African countries support or finance the rather expensive liberal democracy that is the vogue in much of Africa? Answer to this question may not readily be in the affirmative as politics remain materially driven. Unless changes are embraced, the pursuit of good governance by public officeholders may not put an end to prolificacy in public sector management in Africa.

The rising cost of governance in most African countries especially Nigeria is very worrisome particularly when viewed against the backdrop of several dehumanizing conditions in the continent such as chronic poverty, diseases, and hunger, infrastructural deficit, security concerns, unemployment, drug abuses, among others. This has led concerned citizens and government officials to focus on how to reduce government recurrent expenditure and to build enough capital for development purposes. But before going into the ways of addressing these concerns, it is pertinent to discuss why the cost of governance has been on the rise in Africa.

There are several theoretical frameworks on which the subject matter of the paper could be discussed and analysed. These include political culture, public interest theory, nature of society, theory of the two publics, legal-rational and comprehensive theories. While other theories may be relevant in their right, the paper is anchored on an eclectic approach of legal-rational, comprehensive, the nature of society and public interest theories. This is because of the advantages the present in analysing the issues raised in the study.

Rationalism enables us to direct our search light on critical analysis of thinking, reason and reasoning processes. An action is rational if it is agreeable to reason. Comprehensiveness examines all available alternatives (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2012:108). The purpose is to achieve maximum result at the minimum cost. Public interest theory viewed public bureaucracy as a body of individuals whose desire it is to serve the (governance) public by doing what is right. The nature of the society interrogates the interface between political culture, bureaucracy and development. Politics is grounded in the nature of society in which it takes place. Indeed, politics-administration dichotomy has generated much debate among scholars with those against gaining upper hand. Dudley in (Osaghae, 2011) made one of the elaborate attempts at explaining the political behaviour and institutional patterns of societies in terms of Weberian postulations on individuals and collective values embedded in their bureaucracy.

Is ideal bureaucracy desirable in development? If yes, how? If not, why? Laski in (Akhakpe, 2014) emphasized the fact that since the work is professionalized; nepotism is guarded against and the conditions of work operate in favour of economic morality and against corruption. Scholars such as Akhakpe (2014) have argued that rules in bureaucracy act as substitutes for orders, since they comprise an explicit body of standing obligations.

According to Igbokwe-Ibeto et al. (2012:6-7), bureaucracies have the virtue of securing cooperation between the numbers of people without those people necessarily feeling cooperative. No matter what they feel about each other, or about their tasks, sheer discharge of their stated functions ensures that the total bureaucracy is working (Moore, 1962). At the other hand, Wilmot in (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2012) argued that on the positive side, bureaucracy is economical.

Like other social structures and pattern of routine such as habits, norms and culture it regulates behaviour, lays the basis for reciprocal expectations, and reduces arbitrariness, unpredictability and potential disorder. The criterion of expertise, as a basis for recruitment makes the ideal of the "right man for the right job" possible. This together with the division and specialization of labour, hierarchical control and accountability from above theoretically increases the probability of performing the set objectives of complex, large-scale tasks. The assurance of a fixed salary and the existence of public, rational criteria for assessing performance and conduct, allow the ideal bureaucrat to concentrate on the specific task he has been assigned and for which he is qualified" (Wilmot in Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2012:6).

However, in spite of the positive sides of bureaucracy as stated above, there still exist some negative sides from the standpoint of modern management. With the exception of Max Weber, other sociologists and philosophers such as Karl Marx have been very critical of bureaucracies. Karl Marx believed that bureaucracies were used by the dominant capitalist class to control the working class. From the Marxists' point of view, bureaucracies are characterized by strict hierarchy and discipline, veneration of authority, incompetent officials, lack of initiative or imagination, fear of responsibility and a process of self-aggrandizement. For the Marxists therefore, bureaucracy only exists to benefit the capitalists and helps to subdue the working class and in the process the workers become alienated (Amuwo, 1998).

The rigidity in roles occasioned by strict adherence to rules and regulations often creates a situation where

officials perform their job without any emotional attachment. This rigidity problem also makes bureaucracy non-adaptive. According to Maduabum (2008), the delays in obtaining official rulings for unusual situations, lead to stereotyped conditions referred to as 'bureaucratic mentality' and 'red tape'.

According to Laski in (Aluko & Adesopo, 2004:16), the concentration of power in the hands of bureaucrats can jeopardize the liberties of individual citizens. The bureaucracies become the exclusive preserve of oligarchies of specialists. It becomes uneasy and sometimes difficult to control the expert, with his specialized knowledge, skill and data. Because the bureaucrats are often called upon to justify or rationalize their actions, some of them fear to take some necessary initiatives, risks and experiments thereby introducing timidity and conservatism into the system.

One of the theories that explain cost of governance is public interest theory. According to Iyoha, Gberevbie, Iruonagbe and Egharevba (2015:252), government is viewed to be made up of individuals whose desire it is to serve the public by doing what is "right." In this context, the government becomes an instrument that will or should improve the welfare of society. Those who seek to achieve financial efficiency or prudence in government organization look up to the bureaucracy and its principle of efficiency in administration to realize their goal. They draw their inspiration from Weber's characteristic that states that the bureaucratic administrative organ is from a technical point of view, well capable of achieving the highest degree of efficiency (Lane, 1987:106). The basis for this assertion is founded on empirical generalization about the comparative findings from various administrative forms on this question of efficiency. Again, this claim is based on Weber's ideal type bureaucracy that for Igbokwe-Ibeto et al. (2012:108:) has the following properties: "impersonal authority structure, hierarchy of offices in a career system of specified spheres of competency, free selection based on achievements in accordance with specific rules, remuneration in terms of money in accordance with clear rules; discipline and control in the conduct of the office". This formal feature of bureaucracy does not say anything about bureaucratic behaviour that could prove the deciding of how efficient it can be.

In African (public sector) bureaucracies, there are factors and forces that impinge on the effort at achieving efficiency goals of the bureaucracy. Also, the human relation school has done much to debunk the basic mechanism that is implied in the Weberian model of control to the accomplishment of organizational goals. According to Argyris in

(Akhakpe, 2014:220) there is always the tendency for conflict and tension between what the organization wants to achieve and the needs of the individual. Because there is this clash of intentions and expectations, the informal behaviour tends to predominate. In other words, since the social structure called bureaucracy fails to answer to the needs and demands of the people in developing countries, its rules are sometimes disregarded for more informal ways of achieving the individual ends. These informal behavioural patterns are important if the civil bureaucracy is to operate effectively in Africa, rather than adhering to the formal characteristics of the Weberian system (Lane, 1987). It is on this basis that the rational patterns of civil bureaucracy in Africa should be understood.

Studies in public finance literature have established that cost of governance is associated with current expenditure, which is "the expenditure allocated to the maintenance of civil bureaucracy itself and not for the benefit of the economy and the society as a whole" (Chigozie, 2013:43). However, according to Nurudeen and Usman (2010:4); Adeolu and Evans in (Iyoha et al., 2015:255), increase in government expenditure on socio-economic and physical infrastructure enhances economic growth. Also, where a rising proportion of government budget, at whatever level, is used to support the administrative cost of civil bureaucracy, poverty and penury are bound to be pervasive as economic growth slows down or even stagnates (Adeolu & Evans in Iyoha et al., 2015:255). Therefore, those in public service being rational, should be able to provide answers to a growing number of questions such as: what is the right cost of governance, does current output correlate with level of spending, could more be achieved with current spending and could the same output be achieved with less spending? What then is the relationship between civil bureaucracy and cost of governance? This forms the subject of analysis in the next section.

4. The Nexus Between Bureaucracy and Cost of Governance in Africa

The bureaucracy in Africa for reasons adduced in the above analysis is struggling to conform to the Weberian prescriptions for efficiency because there is a disjuncture between what it aims to achieve and what the exegetical conditions required or impose on it in Africa. Any attempt to ignore Africa's historical reality could make civil bureaucracy a form without substance in Africa. The emergence and operations of bureaucracy in Africa impose a burden on it that

makes it difficult to play roles like its homologue in Europe.

Even Max Weber himself was quick to warn that the bureaucratic model he articulated was not a descriptive reality and that several or different conditions may actually affect and eventually dilute its efficacy. This has been the case in Africa more or less. While bureaucrats may have sworn to conform with the spirit and later of the institution, it is in the process side that bureaucracy has had its greatest challenge. Bureaucratic behaviour in many situations tends to assume responsibilities and refuse to experiment with new ideas and ways of doing things. This sometimes, leads to civil bureaucracies that are mal-adapted to the needs of the people they are to serve.

Failure to adapt to the needs of the government of the day and the people could increase the cost of governance. Proper search activities are not carried out before they are valued and executed. This may be an unintended consequence of the administrative processes. Bureaucrats can be sincerely wrong unless they remain focus and patriotic in carrying out their activities and actions. Any self-assessment by bureaucrats is not: likely to come up with negative verdicts, for they cannot willingly admit to any wrong doing in what its members consider as patriotic duties to the State. This can be found in Asiodu (1979:82) assessment of the civil service between the civil war years and the immediate post war years in Nigeria which he said brought out some of the sterling qualities of the higher civil servants. They were able among other patriotic acts to manage the war era economy without borrowing money from within or abroad. But it does appear that they have

faltered in the post-civil war years and under civilian rule to modernize the economy in line with global best practices in public management.

Therefore, it is expected that assessors of the civil service at any given point in time should separate the myth from the realities in their analysis of the civil service. While there could be genuine misunderstandings arising from calculated misrepresentation, as is the case with politics, efforts should be made to contextualize their activities and actions over time. The question that remained to be answered is, has the bureaucracy particularly the higher civil service helped to ensure that government policies and programmes are faithfully carried out in an efficient manner to conserve cost in line with resources appropriated and circumstances prevailing in Africa? To this concern, the study directs its focus in the section that follows.

Table I below shows evidences that the recurrent expenditure has been rising in Africa especially since 2008 while capital expenditure has been sacrificed. According to Iyoha et al. (2015:155), the increasing recurrent expenditure in African bureaucracies could be one of reasons why education, health, governance structure, the economy, political institutions etc. have all “broken down”. It would appear this was the case with the privatization of government owned enterprises in Africa. Hence the need to investigate the interface between the cost of governance in Africa and its implications on development, using certain indices such as the human development index, unemployment rate and the ever-persistent conflict, violence and crime in some parts of Africa.

Selected African Countries: Human Development Index (HDI) Trends 2009-2018

S/N	Country	HDI Rank	Annual HDI Growth Percent									
			2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
1.	South Africa	113	0.633	0.642	0.649	0.657	0.664	0.675	0.685	0.692	0.696	0.699
2.	Tanzania	154	0.486	0.493	0.499	0.506	0.507	0.515	0.528	0.533	0.538	0.538
3.	Zimbabwe	156	0.45	0.467	0.478	0.505	0.516	0.525	0.529	0.532	0.535	0.535
4.	Nigeria	157	0.49	0.484	0.494	0.512	0.519	0.524	0.527	0.53	0.532	0.532
5.	Rwanda	158	0.47	0.485	0.493	0.5	0.503	0.509	0.51	0.52	0.524	0.524
6.	Lesotho	159	0.489	0.493	0.498	0.505	0.505	0.509	0.511	0.516	0.52	0.520
7.	Madagascar	161	0.503	0.504	0.504	0.507	0.509	0.512	0.514	0.517	0.519	0.519
8.	Uganda	162	0.477	0.486	0.49	0.492	0.496	0.5	0.505	0.508	0.516	0.516
9.	Benin	163	0.468	0.473	0.479	0.489	0.5	0.505	0.508	0.512	0.515	0.515
10.	Senegal	164	0.449	0.456	0.467	0.476	0.481	0.486	0.492	0.499	0.505	0.505
11.	Togo	165	0.449	0.456	0.463	0.466	0.472	0.481	0.495	0.5	0.503	0.503
12.	Sudan	167	0.468	0.47	0.474	0.485	0.475	0.492	0.497	0.499	0.502	0.502
13.	Cote d'voire	170	0.437	0.442	0.445	0.454	0.462	0.465	0.478	0.486	0.492	0.492
14.	Malawi	171	0.431	0.441	0.45	0.455	0.461	0.468	0.47	0.474	0.477	0.477
15.	Ethiopia	173	0.401	0.412	0.423	0.43	0.438	0.445	0.451	0.457	0.463	0.463
16.	Gambia	174	0.438	0.441	0.44	0.445	0.453	0.454	0.457	0.457	0.46	0.460

Source: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2019)

The picture depicted in table I above indicates that aside South Africa, other African countries has not improved in its human development Index. For instance, out of the 16 African countries surveyed, only South Africa falls within medium HDI, the remaining 15 falls within low HDI (UNDP, 2018). Unemployment is one of the major challenges facing Africa today even though several efforts have been made by governments at various levels to proffer solutions. It is a paradox that a continent that boast of numerous human and natural resources still has unemployment rate that continues to rise annually (Aganga in Iyoha et al., 2015:256). This is pathetic situation. South Africa has unemployment rate of 25.2 percent, while on the average,

Ghana and Nigeria have 22percent and 38percent respectively (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The fundamental question is: why is there so much unemployment, poverty, preventable diseases, penury, hunger and starvation in the midst of plenty in Africa? The answers are legion and include the following: neglect of the agricultural sector, corruption, infrastructural decay, unfavorable government reforms, impunity, and systemic problems in education among others (Igbokwe-Ibeto & Okoye, 2014:50; Asaju, Arome & Anyio, 2014:16).

5. Reasons for the High Cost of Governance in Africa

High cost of governance in Africa is a major concern to development experts in the continent. It would appear the future of the continent is mortgaged due to heavy debt burden. This phenomenon has diverted scarce resources to areas where they are not needed, thereby putting African developmental agenda at risk. There are deliberate and inadvertent reasons surrounding this development. Some of these factors are discussed in this section.

Spiraling Cost of Administering States: Developing state in Africa has a unique character with regard to fiscal management. At independence in many of African countries, the emergent states and its elites took it upon themselves to fast-track processes of development and social change. Statist approach to development was therefore embraced leading to the rapid expansion in national and regional bureaucracies.

Subsequently, local or municipal governments came on board to increase the number of bureaucracies which invariably increased the cost of governance. Every organization created at the different levels of

government to kick-start or jump-start development and social change, place burdens on the lean finances of the state and government. While the people of the newly independent African states crave for socio-economic and political transformations, they in most cases did not have the funds to meet the expectations of the people. Some had to resort to domestic and external borrowing to meet their obligations. Also, bureaucracies had to be set up and are still being set up to meet the needs of the people for socio-economic development.

Natural Disasters: In some African countries, natural disasters are common phenomena. These include: flood, food crisis, desertification, earthquake, oil spills, hurricane, and communicable diseases, among many others (Igbokwe-Ibeto, 2019). When these happen, government is forced to set up relief agencies to deal with the situation in the interest of mankind and the preservation of its legitimacy to govern. This swelled the number of bureaucracies and the cost of running government inevitably increased.

Duplication of Bureaucracies: Also, there is the tendency for bureaucracies to duplicate or multiply itself in order to expand their scope. Studies have shown that once a bureaucracy is created, it almost always divides itself into smaller units, thereby multiplying its numbers. This is popularly referred to as the Parkinson disease (Akhakpe, 2014:227). It derived its name from Northcote Parkinson. It posits that bureaucracy increases by division and creation of new departments and agencies from existing ones in order to decentralize responsibilities but also to increase bureaucracy's influence and money that accrues to it.

Pressure from Centrifugal Forces: Most countries in Africa are currently under pressure from centrifugal forces to meet the hunger for new states or regions by ethnic nationalities. No thanks to the poor developmental role of the state and mal-distribution of power and resources. As a result of these developments, the agitation for states and local or municipal governments by ethnic nationalities has been an ever-present factor that somehow the African governments have to deal with. The hunger and taste for new state or regions and local governments will persist for a long time to come, perhaps until such a time efficiency and effectiveness become the norm in public management.

Duplication of Functions: Another source of the high cost of governance in Africa is the setting up of parallel organisations that do almost the same thing with the existing ones. Sometimes these institutions

or organizations are set up not really to add value to governance but to feather the nests of the “strong man” in power. One of such organizations in recent times is the presidency. It has risen to become a very powerful organization within the executive branch of government, consuming huge chunk of State funds. Yet, there are no new roles they are performing that hitherto existing departments, ministries and agencies have not or cannot perform. Every financial year, huge sum of money is appropriated to them, with little or no checks on how they spend these monies. This has become a huge drain on the nation’s finances especially in a situation where other key sectors of the economy and society are in dire need of funds.

Security Threat: Yet, another area where government has been spending much money is security. While security matters have become issue of concern to all governments across the globe, African states have been under serious threat in recent years resulting in diversion of huge amount of resources to tackle emerging security threats from within and outside their shores. In Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, for example, national security concern has heightened in the past ten years with the Boko Haram radical Islamic (terrorist) group killings, maiming and destroying life and properties worth billions of dollars. Also, in the South Africa, there has been high rate of crime, rape, drugs and substance abuse, while Somalia and South Sudan has been in civil war for years, kidnapping and militancy, pipeline vandalization and oil theft is a common phenomenon in Africa (Igbokwe-Ibeto, Ewuim & Agbodike, 2015:190). Government at the national, regional and state levels has had to spend millions of dollars to fight these threats to national security. Organisations have been setup, personnel recruited to fight or manage these socio-economic and political menaces. All these have increased the cost of governance in these countries.

Perception of Public Organisations as Alien Institution: Furthermore, the state and other public organisations are still seen by people as alien institutions many years after independence. Allegiance to these institutions remain passive or non-committal because they have not been transformed into truly public organisations that cater for all irrespective of age, sex, religion and ethnic origin. This was the case of colonial institutions. With independence, not much has changed. As it was in the colonial era, so it is today, government business is seen as no man’s business. Therefore, to steal from it or behave irresponsibly towards it and its institutions is considered amoral rather than immoral

(Igbokwe-Ibeto et al., 2012:108). This has been an age long concern to successive governments, be they military or civilian. Indeed, Ukpabi Asika in (Osaghae, 2002:140) expresses this concern thus:

*We must reject for all times the conception of the state as a foreign institution standing outside the community and whose money, property and goals are not the direct responsibility and concern of the community. The community is the government and the government the community. It is no longer *olu oyibo* (meaning white man’s job). The government business is truly and properly *olu anyi* (community business).*

One of the consequences of this development is that both the elite and members of the political communities do not feel they have proprietary rights over the state and by implication; public service therefore, is not matched by accountability. It is interesting to note that majority of Africans who appear to be concerned about the state of affairs in public finance of their country would seem to be doing so based on their personal interest rather than that of the common good. Also, the review of wages and salaries of public servants is a source of increased cost of governance in Africa. The government is always under pressure from labour to review its salary structure due to inflationary trend in Africa that is always on the rise. Therefore, as cost of living increases, workers are inclined to demand for review of their salaries which in turn increases government wage bills.

This has encouraged and promoted the equally ruinous perception of the government in its allocative and distributive functions. In the words of Osaghae (2002:142):

Government is presented and approached by the vast majority of the citizens as a benevolent father Christmas who distribute the ‘national cake’. This perception which was also encouraged by the anti-colonial nationalists distorts and stultifies the development of the necessary social and political correlates of public finance.

Corruption: The political culture of public finance is no doubt in crisis as can be gleaned from the mind burling revelations of embezzlement of public funds by individuals and groups in the prescient and corridors of power in Africa. The state resources are easily carted away by state elite making the state a big bazaar. Corruption remains top priority for those in powers or close to the power that be. A continent where trillion of dollars cannot be accounted for is definitely a rogue continent. Africa has record of monies stolen from the state treasury. For those in

power and would be rulers, the materialist perception of the state is still high. Little wonder therefore, the cost of governance is high because these plundered funds are explained away as recurrent expenditure. Limousine cars are bought at prices costlier than the same car used by the British Prime Minister.

Political Culture: The cost of running adopted liberal democracy is prohibitive. It has in no small measure inflated the cost of governance in Africa. According to Akhakpe (2014:226) most African legislators earn more than the American President who rules over the richest country in the world, shows how profligate African politics and democracy are. Ironically, this is a system borrowed from the West. It would seem, Africa as a people are quick in appropriating the form not the content of structures and institutions. System adaptation and pattern maintenance are keys to institutional survival and good governance.

The above point is further buttressed by the African Baptist Convention that notes the expensive nature of the African democratic structure which makes cost of governance prohibitive. Corroborating the point made earlier, it observes that many people are into politics because of the financial benefits it holds. People therefore; go into politics not because they have the spirit of service but due to the money being paid to the elected officials of the State. For this group of clergymen, one area that has increased the cost of governance is in the number of political aides and special assistants to elected officials. In the words of the Baptist Convention (2013).

We have too many special advisers, senior special assistants and personal assistants. By the time we calculate the salaries, allowances and costs of logistics being given to these appointees many of whom are not doing anything in the real sense of it, one can see that a lot of money is being spent on running of government alone and at the expense of the essence of governance.

When these expenses are added to the jumbo pay and allowances of members of the national, state or regional assemblies, the total cost of running government is rather imagine than described. To make matters worse, the behaviour and attitudes of political officeholders complicate the already poor system being run. They treat issues of the State or government with contempt and disdain believing that nobody cares, not even the law can protect the State from criminal minded socio-economic and political elites.

Ghost Workers Syndrome: In Africa, the state remains the largest employer of labour. Since the

private sector is not expanding enough, governments at all levels are forced to employ the teeming crowd of unemployed youths, thereby increasing its wage bills. Besides, the phenomenon of ghost workers remains high in the public service. The government labour force cannot numerically be ascertained, due to poor record keeping and unpatriotic act of some bureaucrats and politicians who conspire to inflate the number of public servants entitled to salaries and wages.

6. Road Map for Resolving the Challenges of High Cost of Governance in Africa

Can Africa as a people come out from this “quagmire” or “*cul de-sac*”? Some prescriptions can be made to manage if not cure these ailments. The economy should get to a threshold where it can absolve majority of the unemployed in the society. In pursuance of this goal, the economy must be diversified to move away from import dependence. Solid minerals are lying fallow in parts of Africa waiting to be explored and developed for both domestic and foreign consumption. This will reduce the vulnerability of the economy to shocks in the global market. As has been observed, government at all levels should as a matter of priority “promote aggressive, rapid industrialization and modernization of agriculture, both to deliver value to Africans and to create jobs for the army of the unemployed. A corollary to this is that governments would need to address the infrastructural deficit in the continent especially health, transportation and energy sectors through massive investment in these sectors.

The development in these areas will get the youths engaged, reduce inequality and bring about better distribution of resources in the countries of Africa. Some of the youths’ restiveness being experienced in Africa is products of joblessness, faulty distribution of State resources and bad governance. Government should encourage small and medium scale enterprises which would serve as the bedrock of industrialization in Africa.

However, a bigger problem that needs to be addressed is the question of attitude and behaviour of public servants themselves who connive with unscrupulous elements to perpetrate these acts. The level of patriotism among Africans is still very low. Not even the rebranding efforts of some African government have changed the unpatriotic acts of Africans who steal public funds to boost their ego and or meet their insatiable taste for rabid consumerism. Past efforts in this regard did not yield many dividends and there is no reason to believe that

the situation will be different now. Perhaps, the reason for this assertion is because government officials in Africa do not say what they mean or mean what they say.

The huge cost of running the present democratic system can be reduced only if the political elite decide to do so as part of their own contributions to nation-building and national development by saving for rainy days. They must be committed to building capital for development. The power elite should allow the rule of law and constitutionalism mediate their actions and activities. Politics of impunity which has led almost to the return to the state of nature in Africa should be discarded for more consensual and cooperative practices in all areas of the national life.

Civil society organizations that played major roles in bringing back civilian governance in Africa appears to be in stupor. The social space should be strengthened as a basis for critically assessing and constructively criticizing government, political leaders and the power elite in and outside government (Otite, 2007:201). Their present state of immobilism should give way for more proactive intervention in fiscal governance among other issues in the body politic.

Also, it is important we embrace once again institutionalism. Governments all over the world operate as a system of rules, regulations and laws that should be adhered to and allowed to mediate the actions and activities of public officeholders. Without rules or laws, we might return to the discredited traditional and charismatic authority systems where legitimacy to rule is based on might and irrationalities.

7. Conclusion

This article has examined the nexus between bureaucracy and cost of governance as well as its implication on Africa's development. Also, public interest theory was used to explore the intellectual cobweb sounding the issues raised. The article argues that bureaucracy in Africa should help manage the resources of the state in a manner that much money is conserved for developmental purposes. Ironically, the civil bureaucracies have become huge drain on the scarce resources of the State through a number of avenues; some are official while others illicit. These developments have increased the cost of governance in the continent. Some of the consequences of this trend are: the failure of government at all levels to discharge its fiduciary responsibilities to its citizens

in the areas of job creation, infrastructural development, education, health, and housing, among others. Bureaucracy still holds the keys to financial transparency, probity and accountability. It can do this however, if it embraces ethical rebirth, the rule of law and constitutionalism, international best practices in management of resources and good governance, among other remedial steps. Ultimately, the power elite should go to the roundtable to agree on fundamental issues confronting their country's political economy irrespective of their ethnic, religious and sectional backgrounds.

Finally, whether bureaucracy is desirable or not, it had come to stay as it is from all indications an inevitable feature of modern societies. What cannot be avoided or discarded must be accommodated. As such modern societies must come to terms with it. At best, bureaucracies can be modified to reflect the peculiarity and the uniqueness of the African culture and society. Thus, bureaucracies can be modified to accommodate the influx of change in ideas, culture and values, and adapt to new situations or changing circumstances. Our final thesis is that it may be impossible to dismantle bureaucracy; however, it is important to reform it to conform to the realities of the 21st century, and until the African bureaucracy is transformed to be people-oriented, transparent and accountable to the people; cost of governance in Africa will remain an obstacle to Africa's development.

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