

The 1988 Civil Service Reform and Governmental Performance in Nigeria

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The weakness in Nigeria's 1988 civil service program lies in the fact that the reform geared towards development only tackled the structural problems and left the program aspect of the government untouched. This article critically examines and questions the premise on which the reform was based and concludes that the move will not lead to appreciable improvements in the government. The reform measure has duly consolidated vast powers on the President in the determination of needs and the allocation and mobilization of resources.

Introduction

Nigeria's Civil Service Reform of 1988, which in the words of President Ibrahim Babangida in his Budget speech of 1988 was tailored to introduce some "fundamental changes" into the structure and workings of the Nigerian civil service, is distinct in several significant ways. It marked, for instance, the fall of the hitherto very strong and "permanent" Permanent Secretaries. Protected by the security of tenure associated with the politically neutral British inherited civil service structure, this top layer of administrators was able to amass a sizeable amount of political clout through the years. They were also able to establish themselves as the principal actors in the public decision-making system (Egwurube 1989).

A second area of significant change is that these reforms transformed a sacrosanct cabinet executive level of governmental organization in Nigeria to a presidential one (Murray 1985; Adamolekun 1986).

Thirdly, the reform acknowledges the open political nature and roles of the top echelon of public administrators. It named them as Director Generals instead of Permanent Secretaries. It also provided that they should be politically liable for their actions and/or inactions. Consequently, their tenure of office coincides with the tenure of the political regime which appoints them.

Fourthly, the roles of the Public Service Commission, which for long has had the power to recruit, discipline and promote civil servants has drastically reduced to a supporting and monitoring unit. Each ministry or department is now empowered to handle its personnel matters.

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Finally, the 1988 Civil Service Reform is innovative to the extent that it has established appropriate institutional devices to deal with the problems of accountability within the civil service. These used to be two of the principal black spots in the balance sheet of the Nigerian public service.

Presumably, this reform is a translation of the manifest desire by President Babangida, the first Nigerian military ruler to take on the title of President, to have a well structured administrative machinery whose loyalty to the regime could be proven beyond reasonable doubt. Similarly, it appears that the President wanted a top layer of administrators on whom he could rely on to provide supportive services in the implementation of decisions taken by the government. This desire was openly expressed in the President's Budget speech of 1986, two years before the reform, when he warned that his government "cannot afford to allow the machinery of policy implementation to jog along at its leisurely pace."

In trying to restructure the civil service in this direction, the President appears to have been inspired by one of the recommendations of the Political Bureau. The Bureau was a group of 17 Nigerians created in January 9, 1986 to gather, collate and synthesize contributions by Nigerians on a new post-military political system. This Bureau had recommended the reorientation of a civil servant in such a way that he perceives himself *essentially as an employee involved in the implementation of government programs* for promoting the welfare of the people.

The reform thus attempts to establish a functional, responsible and accountable policy implementation and counselling body in the civil service so that appreciable improvements can be registered in the way government assumes its developmental roles. A number of pertinent questions however, accompany the reform. The most important is the premise upon which the reform is predicated. It seems that government assumes that the principal obstacle to how well it does its developmental role is the nature of the administrative apparatus it has. Certainly, this premise is not totally misplaced. This is because most of the processes that surround governmental resource allocation are done within the ambit of the civil service. Should the civil service be ill-equipped to handle its responsibilities, there is no doubt that the effectiveness of government, as the principal provider of services, would suffer corresponding damage.

However, the assumption that the output performance of government emanates directly from the workings of the civil service is faulty in many significant ways. This is an assumption which has guided several civil service reforms including the 1988 reform. Several factors external to the civil service structure and which constitute the ecology of the civil service in Nigeria, are more important explanatory variables for the weak performance of government. These factors had been well-documented by the Udoji report (1974) which includes family, local and ethnic loyalties, corruption, bad *esprit de corps* among public servants, reluctance of superiors to delegate responsibili-

ties to their subordinates, elitism, lack of discipline especially in relation to punctuality, etc. (Public Service Review Commission 1974).

The main thrust of this essay is to critically examine the 1988 Civil Service Reform in Nigeria. This also indicates areas where this reform only superficially touches on the problems of poor governmental performance. Poor governmental performance is defined herein as the inability of government, being the principal agency as well as agent of socioeconomic change, to register appreciable and measurable improvements in the quality of life of most Nigerians.¹ The principal argument here is that the 1988 Civil Service Reform as so constituted is ill-equipped to react to the principal factors influencing the weak performance of the government in Nigeria, factors which are located both within and outside the civil service structure. This argument is discussed in five major sections.

In the first section, the character and essence of administrative reforms are examined. In the second section, an examination is made of the civil service reforms in Nigeria before 1988 and the major problems these attempted to solve. The third section looks at the salient features of the 1988 Civil Service Reform and attempts to identify briefly the genesis of this reform. Section four dwells on a number of provisions of the reform in relation to the need to establish some appreciable degree of efficiency and effectiveness in the workings of government. This is followed in section five by a critical appraisal of the reform, its objectives and an identification of possible problems of implementation.

On Administrative Reforms

The term administrative reform still remains relatively polemical. This is because of the lack of agreement on whether administrative reforms refer to deliberate changes which are made to occur in the *internal* structure of public bureaucracies, or whether these are "organizational, instrumental or program related changes of government and the public sector to meet environmental demands and requirements" (Siedentopf 1982:xi).

The polemics notwithstanding, many agree that administrative reform is different from self-adjustments which many organizations voluntarily make to maintain negative entropy. Administrative reform entails transformations in the structure and workings of organization so as to enable itself to adapt to the changing demands in the external environment. It is this proposition which makes a number of authors to describe administrative reform as externally induced, artificial transformation of organizations. This may be captured in Gerald Caiden's (1968) definition that:

Administrative reform is the artificial inducement of administrative transformation against resistance. It is artificial because it is man-made, deliberately planned. It is not natural, accidental or automatic. It is undertaken in the belief that the end results will always be better than the status quo and so worth the effort to overcome resistance.

Generally, administrative reform, as a purposeful change designed to transform some dimensions of the workings of the public sector, has implicitly as well as explicitly attempted to improve on the overall performance of government. There is thus a direct linkage between reform and increased governmental performance and productivity. Reform is thus usually embarked upon on the assumption that it is possible and feasible to reach an optimal, or at least satisfactory level of performance. The public sector is deliberately revamped, restructured and redirected in a predetermined direction such that it is better organized to resolve environmental demands and meet public expectations. Reforms in the public service usually have the following characteristics:

(1) They are, usually the end product of some organizational analysis by commissioned experts who attempt to examine the gaps between the theory and practice of public sector management, and between the real and intended public sector performance levels and to suggest areas of modification.

(2) They are usually imposed since there is no "administrative plebiscite" designed to determine their acceptability by those whose values, attitudes and behaviors are the principal target of reforms -- the civil servants.

(3) Reforms are usually accompanied by a substantial transformation of the power structure within the public sector. This partly explains why individuals resist them.

Reforms of public bureaucracies can have one of several sources. The first source emanates from changes in the role of particular governments or governmental institutions. Where a government increasingly defines itself as the principal agency of national political and socioeconomic change and development, its public administrative machinery is restructured and transformed accordingly to handle several of the functions (i.e., project identification, project planning, project implementation, project monitoring and evaluation) that accompany this role. Correspondingly, a government that wishes to underplay its role as the central actor in the process of socioeconomic and political change logically restructures its administrative apparatus.

The second source of reform of public bureaucracies emanates from the inability of governmental organizations and institutions to assume their normal responsibilities as well as newer responsibilities that result from modifications of the management tasks of government. It is on the basis of this weakness that Jon Quah defines reforms as deliberate attempts to change the structure and procedures of public bureaucracies "in order to promote organizational effectiveness and attain national development goals" (Quah 1976:56).

The third factor influencing administrative reform emanates from modifications in the political and cultural contexts within which public bureaucracies function. For

example, the type of political regime in place (i.e., military or civilian), the institutional basis of such regimes (i.e., presidential, parliamentary, monarchial, etc.), the ideological orientations of such regimes and changes in the level of political awareness of the public, all individually or collectively, determine the direction in which public bureaucracies are periodically transformed.

Whether each of these three sources constitutes the principal *raison d'être* of reforms depends on the political history of a particular country, as well as its principal needs when reform measures are initiated. However, these reform measures generally attempt to remove a number of bottlenecks that stand in the way of how the public sector successfully manages public problems.

Reforms, as attempts to improve on the effectiveness of public bureaucracies, have been categorized into two sub-types. The first are structure-related reforms. As identified by Heinrich Siedentopf, these consist of "organizational transformation, novel structural additions such as planning units, new decision-making techniques and information systems, as well as measures to improve organizational and staff arrangements" (Siedentopf 1982:xii). The second are program-related reforms which "deal both with the delivery of public services and the content of such services provided by public agencies" (Siedentopf 1982:xii). For appreciable improvements to be registered in the performance level of government, we submit that reforms must be both structural as well as program-oriented.

The assessment here is that the 1988 Civil Service Reform, while directing its attention to some structural defects in the organization and workings of the civil service, does not have any single program dimension. Consequently, it cannot lead to any appreciable improvements in how government provides services and manages public problems, a theme which is developed in a latter part of this essay.

Civil Service Reforms in Nigeria Before 1988

Most civil service reforms in post-colonial Nigeria have wished to establish a coherent and well-organized public administrative machinery capable of responding to the changing socioeconomic and political circumstances of the Nigerian state. In general, most civil service reforms in Nigeria share the following global characteristics:

First, most of the reforms have been nationally rather than regionally conceived and planned, the federal structure of Nigeria notwithstanding.

Secondly, most of the reforms assumed that government is the principal agent of socioeconomic and political change and have thus directed their attention towards improving the ability of the governmental bureaucracy, the principal instrument of governmental action, to handle this responsibility.

The changes that have been brought to bear, through reforms on the structure and workings of governmental bureaucracy have been in several directions. An examination of most of the nationally conceived civil service reforms in Nigeria, from the Harragin Reforms of 1946 to the 1988 Civil Service Reform indicates five general areas to which these reforms have directed their attention. The areas are those of employee motivation, the organizational structure of the civil service, leadership in the civil service, administrative management practices and accountability.

Employee Motivation

The first area to which a number of civil service reforms in Nigeria have focused their attention is that of employee motivation and satisfaction. This has manifested itself in attempts to react to the problems of material rewards accruing to the civil servants through periodic reviews of existing civil service wages and remunerations. Several civil service reforms in Nigeria have been specifically conceived to react to this element. These include the Mbanefo Reform of 1959, the Morgan Reform of 1964, the Adebo Reform of 1971 and the Udoji Reform of 1974.

The Mbanefo Commission of 1959 was restricted to salaries and wages of public servants as well as a review of the terms and conditions of service of public officers. This Commission considered among other things, the effect of the cost of living on the salaries of public servants as well as the desirability of establishing parity between the salary structure of regional and federal public servants. The Morgan Commission which followed suit attempted to examine the wage structure of junior civil servants but however, recommended the establishment of a monitoring machinery within government to periodically review wages and recommend appropriate adjustments.

The Adebo Commission was similarly established to review existing wages and salaries of public servants and to determine areas where parity could be struck between these and salaries of the private sector. This Commission recommended a twenty-grade salary structure in addition to a number of structural modifications in the workings of the civil service. In the area of wage review, perhaps the most "notorious" reform, was the Udoji Reform of 1974. Even though this Reform addressed several important structural and managerial areas of change in the Nigerian civil service, its provisions for wage increase were given major attention by commentators and analysts. This is correctly brought out by Peter N. Ejiofor (1975) who stated that with the "euphoria" generated by the drastic salary review contained in the Udoji Reform:

Few Nigerians have had the time to appreciate the Commission's far reaching recommendation on the public service including the unified structure, the institutionalization of a result-oriented system, a code of ethics for public servants, and the compression of the 600 cadres of the public service into 17 grade levels, into which all positions in the public service can be placed (Ejiofor 1975:45).

How far were these wage reviews able to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the civil service? Using the Adebo Wage Reviews of 1970 and the Udoji "bonanza" of 1974 as examples, it would appear that the concrete measurable result of wage reforms on the real performance of the civil service was disappointing. Neither the Adebo Salary review nor the Udoji awards increased the productivity of labor in the public service because of several reasons. First, the capacity of the public sector to meet the bill that derived from increased salaries was not given when these awards were made. Some form of "resource gap" was thus instituted such that state governments had to sacrifice expenditures on other development-oriented projects and programs and even depended heavily on federal financial assistance, to meet their heavier recurrent expenditure obligations. Aluko (1972) notes that the direct result of such drastic wage review was corresponding cuts in services. Secondly, and most important, the general rise in pay levels instituted by these reforms only marginally increased the real income and purchasing power of civil servants since they were accompanied by massive inflation.

The Organizational Structure of the Civil Service

A second major area to which most civil service reforms in Nigeria have directed their attention is on the perceived defects in the structure and organization of the civil service. Civil service reforms which reacted to this element include the Harragin Commission of 1946, the Gorsuch Commission of 1955, the News Report of 1959, the Adebo Commission of 1971 and the Udoji Reform of 1974.

Whereas the Harragin Report of 1946 established a two-service structured civil service - the Senior and Junior Civil Services, the Gorsuch Commission of 1955 felt that one of the major defects of the civil service structure was the lack of a middle grade between the two services. The Gorsuch Commission therefore recommended a three-tiered structure to replace the preexisting two-tiered structure. However, the most far-reaching attempt to examine the defects in the structure of the civil service and to recommend appropriate responses to these defects, was the Udoji Reform of 1974.

This Reform attempted among others, to react to the tensions between administrators and professionals within the preexisting civil service structure. To replace the class-based civil service inherited from the British, the Udoji Reform introduced a unified grade structure where all jobs of substantially equal difficulty and complexity were placed on the same grade and the same salary scale. Similarly, the Udoji Reform attempted to abolish dual hierarchies in governmental ministries by recommending a complete integration of all senior management posts within ministries into one single pyramid split into divisions and sections. Similarly, the Reform recommended the abolition of the designation "Permanent Secretary" for the top bureaucrat in governmental ministries and its replacement with the nomenclature of Chief Executive and Director General.

The actual effects of the Udoji Reform especially on the performance of government, were mixed. On the one hand, by reducing the complexity of the administrative machinery, the Reform facilitated intra-bureaucratic relations and thus reduced the amount of resource time among others -- consumed by several intra-bureaucratic bottlenecks. However, it does not appear that most of the structurally-oriented civil service reforms, with particular reference to the Udoji Reform, improved appreciably the performance level of government. This is because most of the structural "innovations" contained in the reforms were not program-oriented. For example, ministries continued to be organized in loose functional categories rather than in well-defined program lines. The result of this was that there were, irrespective of these reforms, overlapping jurisdictions and duplication of functions between several ministries, which continued to be organized on the logic of vertical command, without appropriate mechanisms for horizontal inter-ministerial communication flow and linkages.

Leadership in the Civil Service

A third major focus of most civil service reforms in Nigeria before 1988 is the area of leadership within the civil service, with specific reference to the officially recognized locus of authority in respective governmental ministries. This problem area thus revolves around relationships between the political and administrative classes, and the major roles of the top echelon of the civil service. The News Report of 1959 dealt with a dimension of this problem by attempting to propose the roles and functions of Permanent Secretaries, the topmost layer of the bureaucratic structure. Similarly, the Adebo Commission, acting outside its terms of reference, attempted to examine the same theme -- role of Permanent Secretaries -- and to propose modifications on this. The Udoji Commission in 1974 also touched on this issue and proposed the redesignation of Permanent Secretaries as Director Generals with directors heading departments in ministries as line managers.

A number of problems have accompanied attempts to modify the leadership structure of the civil service. The most important is the hostility of members of the top echelon of the civil service against the transformations proposed in the leadership structure, since they wished to remain as key leverage points in the civil service. Similarly, it would also appear that attention focused solely on the roles of the top echelon of the civil service, rather than on the lack of esprit de corps between the political and administrative heads of ministries, the sources of which have been examined by several authors (Adamolekun 1986).

Administrative Management Practices in the Civil Service

A fourth area towards which preceding civil service reforms in Nigeria have directed their attention is on the types of management practices imbibed by the civil servants. The most far-reaching attempts to transform the management practices

within the civil service were contained in the Udoji Reform of 1974. These attempts had several elements.

First was the recommendation that the Nigerian public service needed to be professionalized. The idea of professionalization was a management improvement strategy.

Secondly, there was the provision that newer and more result-oriented management techniques needed to be applied in the workings of the civil service. The techniques proposed included Management by Objectives (MBO), Project Management and Program and Performance Budgeting.

Thirdly, the Udoji Reform recommended the establishment of an extra-Ministerial Research and Policy Analysis Unit in the Cabinet office to advise as well as provide information to the Head of Government on options open in the solution of particular socioeconomic problems.

Finally, the Commission recommended newer techniques for evaluating and appraising civil servants based on how they have performed pre-determined tasks.

Even though the Udoji Commission attempted to revamp the managerial approach adopted within the Nigerian Civil Service, not much real improvements were registered in this area. Several reasons accounted for this. First, the administrative culture within the civil service could not be changed overnight to facilitate the application of the proposed new management techniques. Secondly, there was the shortage of skilled personnel within the service to apply some of the proposed techniques.

Accountability

One of the main problems of the Nigerian civil service is that of corruption and financial mismanagement. Resources entrusted to public officers have, more often than not, been used for their private gains to the detriment of public goods and services.² Unfortunately, not many of the preceding reforms have focused their attention on this area. Only the Udoji Reform of 1974 attempted to address itself to a dimension of this problem area. This, it did by proposing the establishment of a Code of Ethics so as to achieve what it qualified as a "positive conception of public service" (Public Service Review Commission 1974:6). However, even though this same Udoji Reform identified corruption as one of the factors in the ecology of the Nigerian public service which paralyzed its workings, it hardly recommended appropriate mechanisms to deal with this. In reality, and this appears paradoxical, in its section on financial management, the Udoji Main Report even declared that checking on the civil service was "excessive" and that financial control was too "tight" (Public Service Review Commission 1974:58). What this means is that even though some previous civil service reforms in Nigeria have identified the problem of accountability as one of the most intractable in the service, concrete solutions against this problem were

hardly offered. The 1988 Civil Service Reform constitutes concrete institutional devices in the bid to instill better accountability in the civil service.

Salient Features of the 1988 Civil Service Reform

The 1988 Civil Service Reform has been variously qualified as a "coup" against Permanent Secretaries, "fundamental" and even "revolutionary." This was so to the extent that the former Head of Service, Adamu Fika, had to resign because of the "far-reaching" modifications that were brought to bear on the civil service, which his "establishment" background could not digest. These "far-reaching" modifications include the following:

(1) In each ministry, the Minister, rather than the Permanent Secretary as was the case before, is now both the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. An Accounting Officer is defined as the individual responsible and accountable for administration, personnel and finances of the ministry. A unified executive is thus established at the ministerial level.

(2) The political nature of the post of Permanent Secretary is officially recognized such that holders of this post, now renamed Director Generals, are politically (as well as administratively) accountable for their actions and inactions. Their tenure is at the pleasure of the President, or Head of Government. It coincides with that of the Government that appoints them and officers so appointed have the option of accepting or rejecting the offer.

(3) Each ministry is professionalized to the extent that all officers whether specialists or generalists, are required to make their careers entirely in one department or ministry. Careers in the public service have thus become more vertical than horizontal since inter-ministerial and inter-departmental transfers have been discontinued.

(4) The organizational structure of each ministry has been rationalized such that three departments, Personnel Management, Finance and Supplies, and Planning, Research, and Statistics run through all the ministries. In order to make for effective coordination and reduce the administrative overhead cost that accompanies the functioning of the civil service, it has been provided that no ministry should have more than eight operation departments.

(5) A number of structural changes have been effected on ministries such that the Ministries of Finance and National Planning have been merged to form the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. Similarly, the Central Bank which used to be under the Ministry of Finance has been made autonomous. The Budget Department of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has been transferred to the Presidency.

(6) Ministries and extra-ministerial departments have been given the power to make appointments to salary Grade Levels 11 and above. This role was hitherto performed by the Public Service Commission.³

The declared objective of these transformations was the desire of the Babangida Regime to establish a productive and functional civil service, well-equipped to support the application of decisions made by the political class in the solution of public problems. This objective is however not self executing. In other words, it is not because government has so wished that the 1988 reform automatically improves on its ability and capacity to assign priorities, muster resources and execute projects in an effective manner. To determine whether the 1988 Reform constitutes a positive development in the attempt to improve on the preparedness of government, it is necessary to examine some of its provisions in relation to those problem areas in the workings of the civil service which we have identified in the early part of this section.

The 1988 Civil Service Reform and Problems of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Governmental Performance

Described by President Babangida as a fundamental change, one would normally expect the 1988 Civil Service Reform to address itself to a sizeable proportion of the obstacles that stand in the way of the effective workings of the civil service. This is all the more logical since the civil service appears to have been retained as the principal instrument through which government assigns priorities, mobilizes resources, determines needs, and allocates resources. In other words, one would have expected it, as a fundamental policy package, to react to the problems of employee morale and satisfaction (especially under a situation of serious economic crises) of the structure and organization of the civil service, of leadership in the service, of administrative and management practices, and of accountability.

Not all of these problem areas are addressed by the Reform. The Reform is for example silent on the question of wages and salaries, perhaps because government, through the elongated (and thus in principle, improved) salary structure which it established months before the Reform, felt it had solved the problem of employee satisfaction. Similarly, the Reform is silent on the question of administrative and management practices. Nothing thus appears to have been conceived to improve on how public officials allocate resources between competing ends.

Notwithstanding these, the 1988 Reform attempts to solve the problem of leadership in governmental organization, with particular reference to role relationships between the political and administrative classes, the structure of governmental ministries, and accountability.

In relation to role relationships, the 1988 Reform provides that the Minister is the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer in each ministry. According to Olu Falae, Secretary to the Federal Military Government:

The Minister is the number one officer while the Director general is the second... It is the Minister who assigns the jobs. And under the new system, he can assign jobs to any of the Directors too. Both the Directors and the Director general are answerable to the Minister (Falae 1988:17).

Even though the Minister is required to delegate his substantial powers to the Director General, the identity of the locus of authority in each ministry is henceforth very clear.

As far as ministerial structural changes are concerned, we have already addressed this in the preceding section. We will therefore focus our attention more on the provisions which relate to accountability, since it is here that most of the fundamental changes have been made.

The first is the provision that each ministry/extra ministerial department shall establish and maintain an internal audit unit, which in principle can raise an alarm if there is any irregular payment, even by the Minister as Chief Executive.

The second is the provision that the office of the Auditor General of the Federation would be strengthened to enable it to function in a more effective manner. The Auditor General now has the power to sanction and to impose surcharge on any officer who is guilty of financial impropriety, as stipulated in the established guidelines which govern administrative offenses and their sanctions. Similarly, the Auditor General now has access to sites where ongoing projects are being implemented so as to audit and monitor contract performance. He can send queries even to Ministers who are duty bound to respond.

A third provision which is an innovation is the establishment of the Audit Alarm Committee which is empowered to investigate cases of financial impropriety and to determine appropriate sanctions. This committee is composed of three members - the Auditor General of the Federation as Chairman, the Accountant General of the Federation, and a representative from the Presidency as members.

The final provision, the area of accountability, which is equally innovative is the listing of possible areas of financial irregularity and their appropriate sanctions. This listing is attached as an Appendix to this essay.

These provisions indicate the attempt to instill sanity into the way public servants use available public resources. We can however ask two major questions in this respect. First, to what extent can these provisions be applied in reality? Can the Auditor General, a bureaucrat, "query" a strong Minister over the way the latter uses resources attached to his ministry? The second is how far these provisions, as well as the other dimensions of the 1988 Reform address the question of governmental performance? We believe that they only marginally address this question because they have not touched on decision-making procedures of government, or on what should be the role(s) or objective(s) of government which are being pursued. In other

words, the content of the 1988 Reform does not appear oriented towards increased performance of government as we argue in the next section.

Intentions and Realities of the 1988 Reform

The 1988 Civil Service Reform is not program and performance-oriented because it is structural-oriented, limited to the internal arrangements of the civil service rather than to the relationship between this and the global society which it is supposed to serve. In other words, it appears that the 1988 Reform gives more emphasis on the need to improve organizational and staff arrangements within the civil service, rather than how the public service can deliver better services. The task of the civil service and the goals of government are not stated to that extent, so it is difficult to evaluate the success or failure of the Reform.

The success of the Reform, even in relation to the organizational and staff arrangements, appear compromised because of hostility within the civil service against the direction of the Reform. This is so especially from the Permanent Secretary cadre. When the cadre knew the direction towards which the Reform would take, they held several meetings so as to be able to collectively react to the President's *coup de grace*. Some of them have adopted a wait-and-see attitude since the Reform took off, a factor that negatively affects the performance level of government.

We thus have a situation where attempts are made to reform the public service with two major constraints. First, those who are supposed to apply the Reform, the top bureaucrats are hostile towards its direction. Secondly, the Reform is not accompanied by an exact definition especially in operational terms, of the results being pursued.

As constituted, the 1988 Civil Service Reform only superficially touches on the question of the poor governmental performance because it does not attack the root causes of this which include the following:

- (1) Bureaucratic inertia in the face of the more pressing need to react to several socioeconomic crises that have accompanied contemporary Nigerian modernization.
- (2) The lack of a straightforward definition of the development needs being pursued and their operational indicators.
- (3) The absence of a precise definition of the actual role of the public bureaucracy in the attempts to initiate, manage, and direct national development. Can this bureaucracy assume responsibility in all the sectors of national development?
- (4) The lack of an appropriate distribution of governmental responsibilities among the different levels of government, including local government institutions even if in principle they are better placed to consider and react to local interests, but are being

marginalized in the scheme of things. With too much emphasis placed on the capacity of the federal center, "public service delivery at the point of contact with local clients" is slow, inefficient and ineffective (Siedentopf 1982:xiv). The amplitude of this problem is better appreciated when one observes that over 80 per cent of the population constitutes "local clients."

In relation to this last factor, one can even make a number of interesting hypotheses on the actual direction of the 1988 Reform. A more detailed examination of the Reform indicates that only one institution, the Presidency, has benefited from it. The position of the Presidency in the architecture of public resource management has been improved in several ways. First, the Presidency now has powers to appoint Permanent Secretaries (Director Generals) whose tenure of office is at the pleasure of the President. Secondly, the Presidency now has more direct hold over certain key ministries and departments, Budget and Central Bank. The Presidency can thus assume more important roles in fiscal supervision and control, a situation that finds translation in the fact that the Presidency has a representative in the Audit Alarm Committee.

Following the 1988 Civil Service Reform, one cannot therefore help but observe an increased concentration of powers in the Presidency. This has led to speculations that the latent objective of the Reform is to increase the hold which the Presidency, under its present incumbent, Ibrahim Babangida, would have over the public decision-making system. This thesis is shared by Yakubu Mohammed, an editor in one of the widely read news magazines in Nigeria that:

Babangida came into office and took the title of President, the First Military Head of State in Nigeria to take such a title. He thus gave notice that he was going to rule Nigeria as an executive President, fashioning the machinery of government in such a way that no part would serve as an impediment to the execution of his programs.... Babangida came with a clear vision. He needed the bureaucracy that would effectively translate his dreams in reality (Mohammed 1988:4).

It would appear that the real result of the 1988 Civil Service Reform gave birth to the type of bureaucracy President Babangida required, a supportive and dependent administrative organization so structured that the Presidency controls its key actors, as well as supervises its key units. It is this perhaps which constitutes the "fundamental change" in the reform.

Conclusion

For civil service reforms to be really functional and performance oriented, they need to be both structure-oriented as well as program-oriented. They need to address themselves both to the organizational arrangements within public bureaucracies, as well as the larger goals that such public bureaucracies are designed to help achieve. The 1988 Reform only addresses the organizational aspect of the Nigerian Civil Service and is silent on the goals or objectives of this service. Rather than improve the capacity of government to respond to the changing needs of the Nigerian

population, the greatest result of this reform is the consolidation of the position and place of the Presidency in the way needs are determined, priorities are assigned, and resources are mobilized and allocated.

Endnotes

¹Others have attempted to give more "technical" definitions of performance in relation to such concepts as efficiency and effectiveness (Balogun 1980).

²Vincent Ostrom and Elinor Ostrom have given very concise definitions of public goods (1987).

³There are 17 Salary Grade Levels in the Nigerian Public Service. Officials on Salary Grade Levels 11 and above constitute the senior management category.

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Appendix A

Guidelines on Audit Queries and Sanctions Codification of Offenses and Sanctions

a) Irregularities resulting in losses to Government due to either fraudulent activities of the functionaries or due to their negligence or incompetence

<i>Offenses</i>	<i>Time limit for reply to Query</i>	<i>Sanctions</i>
1) Inflation of contracts	30 days	If committed by Accounting Officer, make a report to Mr. President. If the offense is committed by any other officer, appropriate surcharge shall be imposed and the officer removed from the schedule.
2) Unauthorized Variation of contracts	30 days	If committed by the Accounting Officer, make a report to Mr. President. If offense is committed by any other officer, appropriate surcharge shall be imposed and the officer removed from the schedule.
3) Inflation of prices of procurements	21 days	Impose appropriate surcharge
4) Payment for jobs not executed —		
a) Mobilization fees	30 days	Recovery from beneficiary and blacklisting of the affected contractor.
b) Payment through false certificate of completion	21 days	Refer case to police for prosecution.
5) Poor quality of work (buildings, tarred roads, etc.)	42 days	Blacklist contractor; demote the official who certified the job.
6) Irregular or wrong payments	21 days	Recovery of the amount involved and removal of the officer from the schedule.

7) Shortages or losses of stores by storekeepers	14 days	Surcharge the affected officer and transfer to another schedule.
8) Shortages or losses of cash Cashier	7 days	Recover the amount involved and transfer to another schedule.
9) Assets paid for but not collected	21 days	Recover the amount involved and blacklist the supplier and transfer of officer to another schedule where collusion has been established.
10) Payment to ghost workers	7 days	Interdict the officer(s) and report matter to police.
11) Overpayment of salaries and allowances to staff	21 days	Recovery of the amount overpaid and warning to the negligent officer.
12) Failure to collect gov't. revenue	21 days	Surcharge the affected officer and transfer him to another schedule.
13) Failure to account for gov't revenue	7 days	Recover amount involved and report to police for prosecution.
14) Non-payment for use of gov't property	30 days	Recover the amount soonest.
15) Premature scrapping of gov't fixed assets and selling same at ridiculously low prices	30 days	Demotion in rank of the affected officer
16) Poor Cash Management	30 days	The affected officer shall be formally warned and/or surcharged.

b) Irregularities not directly or immediately resulting in losses to the Government, but which infringe upon budgetary control and proper financial management.

<i>Offenses</i>	<i>Time limit for reply to Query</i>	<i>Sanctions</i>
1) Splitting of contracts to side-track tenders' procedures	21 days	Demotion in rank of the officer, and transfer to another schedule of work
2) Irregular award of contracts — i.e., Contract awards not in compliance with the normal tender procedure	21 days	Demotion in rank of the officer, and transfer to another schedule of work.

c) Irregularities arising through poor or inefficient management of accounting, and which may result in losses.

<i>Offenses</i>	<i>Time limit for reply to Query</i>	<i>Sanctions</i>
1) Non-recovery of advances	21 days	All losses must be recovered from or surcharged against the defaulting officer if he is a civil servant. Where no losses are involved the defaulting civil servant would be warned.
2) Non-posting of ledger accounts	21 days	All losses should be recovered from or surcharged against the defaulting officer if he is a civil servant. Where no losses are involved the defaulting civil servant would be warned.
3) Cash in transit for too long (over 3 months)	21 days	All losses should be recovered from or surcharged against the defaulting officer if he is a civil servant. Where no losses are involved the defaulting civil servant would be warned.
4) Failure to prepare Bank Reconciliation Statement	14 days	ditto
5) Non-rendering of statement in support of A.I.E. granted	30 days	ditto
6) Non-retiring of Touring Advances	21 days	ditto
7) Non-rendering of monthly or other periodic returns apart from annual accounts	21 days	ditto