SOCIAL STRUCTURE, BUREAUCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION IN KENYA

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In his book, *Inside Bureaucracy*, Anthony Downs[1] suggest that administrative organizations are created in one of four different ways. A bureau (as he prefers to call it) can be formed through the 'routinization of charisma'—this is when a group of men brought together by their devotion to a charismatic leader transforms itself into a bureaucratic structure with the purpose of perpetuating his ideas. A second way may be in response to a need expressed by a particular section of the population in society and the bureaucratic organization is set up with the intent to satisfy that need. A third way is for some bureaucratic organizations to arise out of splits in other similar organizations—for instance two smaller ministries may be created out of a gigantic Ministry of Agriculture. The fourth way is creation through 'entrepreneurship'—this is when a group of men, anxious to promote a particular policy, gains sufficient support to establish and run a bureaucratic organization.

These four types of genesis stress the importance of two factors: firstly the presence of a group of people committed to objectives for which the organization has been set up; secondly the relationship between what the organization is supposed to do and the preceived needs in society. Bureaucratic institutions are organized expressions of human needs and aspirations. Applied to newly independent African countries this proposition gives rise to the important question: To what extent can administrative problems in Africa be explained by the fact that most of its bureaucratic institutions were created by the colonialists and do not reflect post-independence aspirations and needs of the continent? With specific reference to Kenya this is the question that this article seeks to answer. Kenya has, on the one hand, retained, and mainly expanded,

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1. Antony Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy*, (Boston, Little Brown & Co., 1967) p.5

the administrative structures inherited from the British and, on the other, through post-independence policies, for example Africanization and the encouragement of capitalism among Africans, unleashed forces in society which are in conflict with efficient and impartial administration. The subsequent discussion will focus attention on the implication of this state of affairs in relation to the attempts to use the bureaucracy both as a powerful institution of control and for the administration of development.

Bureaucracy, Power and Control

Government bureaucracies in developing countries have generally been viewed as politically powerful in comparison with other institutions in society. Fred Riggs built his 'prismatic' theory of administration to a large extent on this assumption.[2] Writers on African administration have accepted the view.[3] Gertzel,[4] Nellis[5] and Okumu,[6] with specific reference to Kenya, have referred to what they consider an imbalance in the growth of political institutions with the government bureaucracy being more mature than other political institutions. They base their argument on two assumptions:

—that the government bureaucracy has remained the same independent and dominant institution in society that it was before independence;
—that administrative activities overshadow political ones because the ruling party is organisationally weak.

Both the above assumptions seem questionable and do not fully recognise the implications of Africanization and the fact that bureaucratic institutions become 'politicized' particularly in situations where regular political parties are absent or weak.

Marx would no doubt have described the colonial administration in Kenya as a 'classical' type of bureaucracy performing the functions of maintaining *status quo* and the privileges of its masters. To be sure, there was a complication in the presence of a significant number of European settlers as they constituted a rival group of masters to the British government in London. The political history of pre-independence Kenya centres around this problem and colonial

2. Fred W. Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries—The Theory of Prismatic Society* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co, 1964).
3. Cf. e.g. Aristide Zolberg, *Creating Political Order—The Party States of West Africa*, (Chicago, Rand-McNally Co, 1966), pp. 122-127; David B. Abernethy, 'Bureaucracy and Economic Development in Africa', *The African Review*, (Vol. I, No. 1, 1971). A. H. Rweyemamu, 'Managing Planned Development: The Tanzanian Case' *Journal of Modern African Studies*, (Vol. IV, No. 1, 1966); Nelson Kasfir, 'Development Administration in Africa: The Balance Between Politics and Administration' in Norman N. Miller, *Rural Research in Africa* (East Lansing, Michigan State University, 1969), p. 94.
4. Cherry Gertzel, *The Politics of Independent Kenya*, (Nairobi, East African Publishing House,1970), pp. 166-173; cf. also her article, 'The Provincial Administration in Kenya', *The Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, (Vol. IV, No. 3, 1966), pp. 201-215
5. John R. Nellis, 'Is the Kenyan Bureaucracy Developmental? Political Considerations in Development Administration', paper read at the Conference on Comparative Administration, Arusha, 25-28 September, 1971.
6. John J. Okumu, 'The Political Setting', in G. Hyden, R.H. Jackson and J.J. Okumu (eds.), *Development Administration: The Kenyan Experience*, (Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 25-42.

administrators often experienced a conflict of loyalty between the interests of the government in London and those of the white settlers in Kenya.[7] What is important to note here, however, is that the colonial civil service primarily served the interests of its home country in general and its ruling class in particular.[8] The system could be preserved because until the very last years of colonial rule in Kenya the civil service was dominated by Europeans with Asians and Africans playing only secondary and tertiary roles.[9] European civil servants exercised political power in the colonies—but not independently, only as agents of a foreign power. The colonial administration *ruled* the Africans and it *served* the British government. In Kenya, with white settlers and to a certain extent Asian businessmen, it was involved in political rivalry over the control of available resources. This rivalry, however, was confined to that sector of the population which shared with the administrators a concern to control the African majority. It did not undermine the powers of the bureaucrats with the majority; the bureaucracy remained an important means of control as was dramatically illustrated during the Mau Mau up-rising.[10]

The 1963 *Majimbo* Constitution was intended to reduce central government powers and decentralize these to regional authorities. There was, however, no willingness in the KANU Government which was formed in 1963, to follow its basic principles and attempts to re-create a strong centre, under African control, began immediately after independence. This intention was confirmed in the 1964 Republic Constitution.[11] Thus, at the time of independence and immediately after, there were no significant structural changes in the government organization. The fact that structures did not change does not mean however that the civil service in Kenya has operated in a fashion similar to its colonial predecessor, exercising as a cohesive institution, wide powers over the rest of society.

The rapid withdrawal of Europeans in the civil service at the time of independence and the subsequent Africanization process meant that a totally new group of people with aspirations different from their European predecessors and under different pressures from the domestic society were put in charge of the bureaucratic institutions. As I will try to show, the powers of these civil servants in Kenya have not been exclusively based on formal authority derived from senior positions in the organisation, but often on informal, extra-organisational sources. Their fortunes have not only been determined by their

7. For an account of this during the early colonial period in Kenya, see M.P.K. Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement in Kenya*, (Nairobi, Oxford University Press, 1968); the situation in subsequent years is described, e.g. in *So Rough A Wind: The Kenya Memoirs of Sir Michael Blundell*, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964) and Carl G. Rosberg Jr. and John Nottingham, *The Myth of Mau Mau*, (London, Pall Mall, 1966).
8. For an account of the 'ideology' of the colonial administrators, cf. J. Michael Lee, *Colonial Development and Good Government*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967).
9. Boundaries between administrative classes in Kenya as in other East and Central African colonies tended to follow racial lines with the Europeans concentrated in the administrative and professional classes, Asians in the executive and technical, and Africans in the clerical and subordinate classes. A change in this system was not really introduced until after the Lidbury Commission Report in 1954.
10. Cf. Rosberg and Nottingham, *op. cit.*
11. Gertzel, *Politics of Independent Kenya*, pp. 32-72.

professional or managerial skills but also by their links with quasi-political groups. It would be wrong to claim that this phenomenon is unique to Kenya. I do maintain, however, that this problem manifests itself very often in Kenya because the colonial bureaucracy inherited was foreign; it did not reflect the genuine aspirations and needs of the Africans. Thus, Africans have been forced to make the best out of the situation. They have tried to strike a balance between their formal duties as a public servant and their personal aspirations as a member of society, and, more particularly, of the ruling elite. Some civil servants in Kenya have succeeded better than others in these efforts. In order to understand the dimensions of this problem the multiple role of the Kenyan civil servant must be recognised.

In developed industrial countries, societies are stratified and roles specialised; power in organisations usually comes from professional competence or hierarchial authority and these two factors determine promotion in these organisations. In newly independent African countries with their relatively low level of economic development, societies are not so highly stratified and roles not so specialised. People, in general, have not been so strongly socialised into specific roles, i.e. they have not developed strong task orientations. Thus other roles that a person plays often interfere with his official function. At least three extra-organisational roles can be identified which tend to compete directly with the official one that a civil servant plays. These are: a member of the rising middle-class; a father of a large family with definite obligations to relatives; an informal leader or patron of the local community from which he comes.

The importance attached to rising on the social ladder can best be understood if we remember that Kenyan Africans were refused legitimate promotion opportunities during the colonial period. They could not acquire property like the Europeans and the Asians, nor were they able to gain status mainly because they were considered inferior by members of the other racial communities. Thus, when independence came, there was a strong desire to compensate for this. It is important that in the first seven or eight years of the last decade Africanization was almost exclusively pursued in the public sector. Becoming a senior civil servant meant gaining both high salary and high status. African ambitions, therefore, were focused on the public service. Those who were able to take greatest advantage of the new situation fell into two categories: civil servants previously confined to the intermediate levels of the colonial administration who could succeed their European or Asian bosses; and new graduates from universities in East African and overseas. John Okumu is probably not wrong, particularly with reference to the latter of these categories, when he writes that 'they were originally attracted to the civil service not out of missionary zeal but because of the security offered by life appointment with its regular salary and perquisites'.[12] For the more entrepreneurially minded civil servants, life tenure and salary were not enough. In order to put into practice their individualistic and capitalistic ambitions they had to turn to activities outside their official function. Two factors supported this trend: the availability in the early

12. Okumu, *op. cit.* p. 38.

sixties of farms vacated by Europeans and in the latter part of the decade of companies given up by non-citizen Asians; and secondly the fact that together with the political leaders, these civil servants were among the few who could offer security for loans to purchase farms or companies. The recent Ndegwa Commission[13] recognises the significance of the tendency among civil servants in the 1960's to acquire private interests that impinged upon their official duties. It also points out that these civil servants did in fact act contrary to the civil service code of regulations but that nobody had been taken to task for engaging in such practices. This suggests that the middle class role of many civil servants so overshadowed their thinking that when in command of the social structure their role as public servants tended to become secondary.

The Ndegwa Commission Report contains the suggestion that all senior officers should make a complete statement of their private interests.[14] The setting up of a Parliamentary Select Committee in October 1971 to probe into corruption, nepotism and tribalism as well as into how some people had 'acquired five of six businesses in a limited time'[15] could at first be taken as evidence of the public concern with illegal and illegitimate practices in the public and private sectors. The debate in connection with the official approval to set it up, however, suggested that the primary reason for its creation was not so much a concern to curb capitalist inclinations as a worry that members of a few selected tribes in the country were able to acquire advantages at the cost of others.[16] The notion that private interests should be declared, developed in countries where the role of the civil service had, by tradition, been that of serving the monarch and the class in power. Such a principle is not easy to put into practice in a country where the civil servants also constitute the *rising* middle class.

The notion that 'private' and 'public' interests must be kept apart has no roots in Kenyan society. In pre-colonial times, holding a position of public leadership was generally accompanied by the *right* to acquire personal symbols of that position. Kenyan tribes in the old days lived in 'stateless' societies; they were not ruled by chiefs and their official hierarchies. Their leaders were elders chosen from within each clan. As such they were 'men of the people' and their privileges were not resented.

With the arrival of the British, chiefs were appointed and made official leaders in the local communities. Clans from which chiefs were appointed gradually acquired more social recognition than other clans. In the countryside people still frequently refer to certain clans as 'producing leaders'.[16] Clans are ranked socially but the notion of competition between these units on the basis of equality still dominates the mind of most people. Thus, any successful member of the clan has a social obligation to help his less fortunate clansmen. This is the reason why the role as head of an extended family unit takes on such importance in the Kenyan context. A successful man appointed to a top position

13. Republic of Kenya, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry—Public Service Structure and Remuneration Commission*, (Nairobi, Government Printer, 1971), pp. 13-15.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
15. Cf. *Daily Nation* and *East African Standard*, 18 September and 2 October, 1971.
16. *Ibid;* also editorial in *Sunday Nation*, 24 October, 1971.

in the civil service is likely to find himself faced with numerous demands for assistance from even distant relatives. These demands include asssistance to pay school fees, to get employment, to accomodate persons visiting or working in town. When interviewed, civil servants have always stressed the importance of this role; their obligation is to pull others within the recognised family unit up the social ladder.

The boundary between family guardian and patron is often difficult to draw because of the extended family networks. Many civil servants are also asked to bestow benefits on non-relatives who are less privileged. As men with big salaries they are expected to fulfill such an obligation although the extent to which civil servants are engaged in bestowing patronages is not comparable with that of politicians. Informal interviews with civil servants, however, do suggest that it is not insignificant. A sample of twenty civil servants in Kenya claim that, on average, they spend between 15 and 20 percent of their monthly salary on assisting relatives or non-relatives from their home area.[17] In effect this suggests a significant, unofficial redistribution which takes place in Kenya. Reference should also be made to the many officers in the provincial administration who in the 'spirit of Harambee' must donate money to various self-help projects in the area for which they are responsible.

Consideration must also be given to tribal patronage, in other words 'big' tribesmen helping fellow-tribesmen in various situations. In the absence of strong political organisations that bind people together on economic or ideological criteria, tribes often function as 'informal' political parties. I do not imply that every civil servant is foremost a member of such a group. There are many who are able to stand above such formations. It would be wrong, however, to ignore these informal groupings as they do tend to influence both appointments and allocation of material resources. The Public Service Commission often finds itself competing with such groups, anxious to protect the interests of their members.[18] Kenyan civil servants are not 'faceless' individuals lacking a sense of priorities. Most of them have very definite ideas about things and it is only natural in the Kenyan situation that the belief in the welfare of one's own people back home features prominently and is bound to affect a person's views on some issues.

The discussion so far has served to provide counter-evidence to the assumptions that the Kenyan bureaucracy today resembles the independent and dominant colonial administration and that administrative activities overshadow political ones in Kenya. The civil service today is to a significant extent a mirror of the Kenyan society at large; the individualistic ambitions, the social obligations to the extended family and the tribal inclinations are characteristics of civil servants as of any other category in the population. Thus, the govern-

17. This sample is by no means representative, as the information stems from conversations with an informally selected group of civil servants. Their own claim, however, is that many of their colleagues probably spend about the same percentage of their salary on meeting obligations to relatives.
18. Cf. a paper by the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, William M. Wamalwa, 'The Role of the Public Service Commission in New African States' read at the 9th Inter-African Administration Seminar at Gaberones, Botswana, 3-10 October, 1970.

ment bureaucracy lacks social cohesiveness. Many civil servants try to ignore these pressures but it is not an easy task once some 'informal' groups have been formed. It is the beginning of a vicious circle often resulting in political intrigues and the undermining of formal authority in the civil service. Dependent on the outcome of these struggles, some civil servants in junior positions may appear more powerful than their seniors, because they have the support of informal groups inside or outside the organisation. At times, these informal intrigues in the civil service reach serious proportions as implied in the warning issued by the Vice-President and the Minister for Home Affairs when some members of the Kamba and Luo tribes were found guilty of treason in July 1971: 'Civil servants found to be connected with subversion and casting aspersions on the Government of President Kenyatta will be purged and severe measures taken against them including dismissal'.[19]

There are, as suggested above, efforts to keep a certain control over the government bureaucracy and make officers follow a set of centrally defined instructions. Because of imperfect socialisation to the norms laid down in these instructions and the multitude of informal pressures it is difficult to create a civil service institution that resembles its colonial predecessor. Power in society cuts across the boundaries of formal institutions and thus it is misleading to suggest that the provincial administration for example and the civil service as a whole constitute more powerful units than other institutions in society. Although some people with formal authority such as the provincial commissioners are very powerful, not everyone is. The reason why provincial commissioners are so powerful is because they have been handpicked by the President and in exercising their authority can fall back upon their special relationship to Mzee Kenyatta. This, however, may not apply to a person who has been confirmed in a senior position through the Public Service Commission and who lacks support from influential, informal groups.

To use the example of the provincial commissioners to prove the powers of the bureaucracy in Kenya is deceptive, as their source of influence and power is as much informal as it is formal. Due to the prevalence of informal relationships in the civil service, the boundary between what is political and what is administrative is very fluid; horizontal relationships among officers cutting across vertical lines of authority often cause struggles of power between those who want to increase central control and those who want to undermine it in the organizations. That KANU is weak is no proof that the civil service is powerful. Such a conclusion can only be reached if informal sources of power in organisations are ignored. In drawing attention to the latter we call for a re-examination of what constitutes power in the civil service, particularly bearing in mind the role of class and tribe as sources of power.

Bureaucracy and Development Administration

'Development administration' is a concept under dispute. It would become too lengthy to engage in a discussion about its proper meaning here. For the

19. *Daily Nation*, 5 July, 1971.

purpose of this article we will accept Schaffer's view that it is *not* the same as the Weberian model of a rational-legal type of administration.[20] The latter is too 'mechanistic' and compartmentalised; administrators are limited in their perspectives and they are experts only on how to maintain their organisation. Thus, emphasis in such administrative organisations is on repetition rather than on innovation. The main reason for accepting this particular view of what the concept refers to is that the Ndegwa Commission in its report calls for a new style of administration along lines which are similar to Schaffer's view. In order to meet the challenge of the seventies, the report argues, the government must become more dynamic in terms of identifying and solving specific kinds of problems, including and sustaining social and economic change as well as efficient management of the services for which it is responsible. It continues:

> This means that it must be highly change-orientated; it must reward initiative and experimentation; it must have a high concern for cost-effectiveness and a routine habit of evaluating all ongoing programmes; it must be prepared to compromise between unified central control and the need for flexibility, variety and a degree of autonomy in field organisations charged with implementing policy; it must be extremely strong on action, time sequences, logistics and clearly defined goals; and at the same time it must retain a clear consciousness of its role as the servant, not the master of the public, if its efforts to induce change are not to be self-defeating. This implies that at all cost it must ensure a powerful upward flow of information and frank critical analysis from its staff in the field. We recognise that these ideals are not easy to interpret or implement but we must stress that they clearly distinguish a 'development administration' from both the old-fashioned concept of administration as the passive executor of party policies, and also the more modern concept of a managerial and problem-solving administration in an industrial state.[21]

The Commission wants, at the same time, both planned, concerted action and flexibility in application of rules in order to allow for individual initiative; both strengthened management control and an improved service orientation towards the public. It calls for a service which has a sense of commitment to definite goals, which can organize itself to achieve these but which can also raise itself above rules when necessary in order to achieve adaptation to new situations. What are the problems of changing to such a style of administration in Kenya given the present situation? This is the question on which discussion will be focused in the remainder of the article.

The fundamental assumption made earlier is that problems of administration in Kenya arise because the inherited bureaucratic structures of government are 'foreign' in the post-independence context. They do not reflect the genuine aspirations of the Africans who have taken over after the British left. The years after independence have been characterised by struggles between various groups of Africans who have tried to gain control over these institutions and use them to promote their own interests. Tendencies towards, what Eisenstadt calls

20. Bernard B. Schaffer, 'The Deadlock in Development Administration' in Colin Leys (ed.), *Politics and Change in Developing Countries*, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 172-211.
21. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, p. 3.

'de-bureaucratization'[22] or in other words the control over administrative resources by outside groups and subsequent goal displacements, have frequently manifested themselves. Since it is very unlikely that structures in the Kenyan government can be reorganised to satisfy these, often parochial, interest groups, the present problem in Kenyan administration must be how to make officers more committed to their organisations. This point has been emphasied for example by Robert Chambers[23] with specific reference to rural development administration. He calls for the 'primacy of procedures' in increasing the effectiveness of administration.

The main point Chambers makes is that the present style of administration is not bureaucratic enough; there are too many interferences in the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge. By devising appropriate rules to which people can be committed, the fulfilment of goals through relevant means will be facilitated. Rules, however, will not operate functionally in a vacuum. They alone will not cause a major improvement in organisational performance. Rules and procedures will only start making sense when related to a wider societal objective, otherwise political intrigues will prevail or rules may be elevated to ends in themselves which is another danger in bureaucratic administration.[24] Other supporting factors are therefore necessary such as the development of a stronger 'task orientation' among civil servants and the presence of public interests groups demanding greater efficiency.

A stronger desire to perform a task better will not develop unless individuals are given tasks which they can grasp and of which they can be proud. This is something that can be encouraged at two different levels. At the level of the individual it will come about more naturally when he realises that knowledge is not only a way of gaining promotion and of dominating other people but also of mastering the physical environment. This may be a slow process in a predominantly rural society, but as more and more people are exposed to rational thinking and technical considerations, changes are bound to come.

At the organisational level increased task orientation can be encouraged by designing more carefully the organisation to fit its employees. Organisational structures must be such that they allow those performing various roles a sense of achievement and satisfaction. The Ndegwa Commission recommends a series of sophisticated management tools that have worked successfully in Western countries.[25] Whether these are the most appropriate is difficult to say. The Commission itself does not give any convincing reasons why they should be.

A growing task orientation may also be encouraged by stronger pressures from interest groups other than the informal groupings referred to above.

22. Cf. S.N. Eisenstadt, 'Bureaucracy, Bureaucratization and De-bureaucratization', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, (Vol. IV, No. 3, 1959), pp. 302-320.
23. Robert Chambers, 'Planning for Rural Areas in East Africa: Experience and Prescriptions' paper read at the Conference on Comparative Administration, Arusha, 25-28 September, 1971.
24. For a discussion of the 'dysfunctional' effects or rules and procedure, cf. Robert Merton, 'Bureaucratic Structure and Bureaucratic Personality', *Social Forces*, (Vol. XVIII, No. 3, 1940), pp. 560-568; cf. also Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, (London, K. Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1960)
25. Cf. *Report of the Commission of Inquiry*, Chs 10, 13 and 15.

Today political groups based on tribe or any other parochial interests seem to be the most influential pressure groups. A number of nation-wide organisations such as the Kenya National Farmers' Union and the Kenya Chamber of Commerce are, however, influential and do keep civil servants aware of their need to work hard and make decisions in the interest of efficiency. One may add that donor agencies and buyers of Kenyan agricultural products overseas also tend to press ministries towards greater efficiency. Demands generated by market forces and often expressed by economic interest groups tend to overpower parochial groups in certain situations. The Ministry of Agriculture, for instance, works under strong demands for efficiency and my interviews with civil servants suggest that such a situation leaves the officers with more room to make use of their professional skills. Thus, outside interests, when demanding higher productivity and distribution, not only on the basis of the principle of tribal equality, help to instil a more instrumental attitude in the civil service. Organisational goals become more important and discipline within the ministry increases. At the same time, civil servants are repeatedly made aware of their position as servants of the public at large and not only of certain sectors of it. In such a situation the civil servant may also get satisfaction from knowing that his personal contribution has facilitated efficient goal attainment. The problem is that as groups and organisations come under African leadership there is a danger of these being considered in tribal terms and as favouring sectoral rather than national interests. This will then re-inforce the tendencies towards parochial politics being forced upon these administrative institutions. Unless rationality in the organisations can be defined regardless of tribal interests it will be extremely difficult to promote a 'development administration' requiring concerted action, effective management control and a commitment to serve the public at large.

At present everyone pulls his own strings in order to get things done or matters settled in the civil service. There is often inconsistency in treatment, because both politicians and members of the public have come to realise that the quickest way of achieving results is often by contacting friends in the relevant ministry who can arrange that the matter is given preferential treatment. The extent to which this system has developed at the level of local administration has been illustrated by Holmquist in his study of the self-help movement in the Kisii District.[26] Interviews with civil servants as well as incidents informally reported to the author of the article, suggest that the practice also operates at higher levels in the government hierarchy. It is difficult to agree with Nellis[27] when he claims that the main problem in Kenyan administration is excessive devotion to and reliance on highly structured routine procedures. This is a false impression that can easily be formed of a ministry if one has no personal connections in it. The average Kenyan civil servant hardly resembles Merton's 'dysfunctional' bureaucratic personality.[28] The individual, who in one instance may fall back

26. Frank Holmquist, 'Implementing Rural Development Projects', in Hyden-Jackson-Okumu. *op. cit.*, pp. 201-232.
27. Cf. Nellis, *op. cit.*
28. Merton, *op. cit.*

on a particular procedure and refuse to deal with a matter because it happens to be outside his particular province, but react quite differently if his client comes from his area is not a phenomenon peculiar to Kenya. The tendency to show favouritism towards particular clients is likely to be strong in an environment where informal relationships are strong. The average civil servant, therefore, is not likely to reveal in his behaviour excessive impersonalisation and devotion to rules and procedures. A person who uses rules as the occasion suits has little regard for whether his action is rational in terms of the overall objectives of the organisation. When rules have been imperfectly internalised due to too strong informal or extra-organisational pressures, systematic and consistent treatment of cases is very unlikely.

By giving primacy to procedures it may be possible to achieve stronger commitment to organisational goals and plans in the government bureaucracy. But unless they are supported by other developments referred to earlier such measures may be of little value. Rules can be used both in a constructive and destructive manner in an organisation.[29] If rules have not been sufficiently internalised they can be used by certain people to limit the influence of others; this tendency is manifest in Kenya today. If rules or procedures have been excessively internalised they may easily become ends in themselves; this is what Merton warns against. Over-devotion to rules may be a source of strain, but it may also serve as a source of innovation. This is particularly the case where power and authority do not only emanate from holding a hierarchical position but also from possessing knowledge which is indispensable to the advancement of the organisation. Experience from both the East and the West[30] suggests that a highly 'mechanistic' type of organisation is often a prerequisite for the emergence of a system of administration in which rules play their proper role as means to an end but if necessary can be ignored in the interest of achieving the overall objective.

Conclusions

Bureaucratic organisations have generally been successfully created and maintained when they have had the support of a group of committed leaders and they meet a specific need in society. The main argument of this article has been that due to special historical circumstances, bureaucratic institutions in newly independent Africa generally lack these supporting elements. They were inherited from the British who had set them up to serve purposes other than those pursued by the independent African governments. With specific reference to Kenya, I have tried to show the effects of this historical coincidence: that roles played are often in conflict with prescribed rules and that competitive

29. Cf. Michel Crozier, *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964); Peter M. Blau, *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1963); and Nelson Kasfir, 'Towards the Construction of Theories of Administrative Behaviour in Developing Countries', paper read at the Conference on Comparative Administration, Arusha, 25-28 September, 1971.
30. For a comparison of the West, USSR and China, see Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley, University of California Press, enlarged edition, 1970).

'political' relations often overshadow hierarchical 'administrative' relations. By accepting this I have questioned the notion that civil servants in Kenya are powerful vis-à-vis others because they are members of formal organisations, and secondly, the possibility of transforming the present civil service into a 'development administration' without a series of accompanying measures.

The situation in Kenya is not one of despair, provided one accepts that development can take place without a bureaucracy or in spite of such an institution. This has been done in various parts and through self-help efforts people have achieved impressive results.[31] Such developments suggest that when people are allowed to form organisations of their own, which meet a specific need and have a committed leadership, the emerging bureaucratic organisations are often free from the type of political intrigue that characterise much of the decision-making process in the 'established' government institutions. Such organisations may suffer other weaknesses but these are usually 'technical' problems as opposed to the 'political' and more difficult problems which arise when members are not fully committed to the organisational objectives and are under strong pressures from informal, often parochial, groups.

31. While such efforts used to be confined to building social amenities in the rural areas, more recently they have been directed towards building e.g. institutes of technology for education of engineers.