Democratic Deficit: The Dark Side of Weberian Bureaucracy in Nigeria

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Abstract

This article examines the Max Weber's theory of bureaucracy and its application to the Nigerian public institutions. Through this perspective, the paper identifies the discontents and problems associated with Weberian model of bureaucracy in Nigeria, and argued that these dark sides is associated with lack of democracy in the decision making processes of public organisations. In this regards, there was no room for democratic input in decision making processes, and employees were bound to carry out a policy once it had been hierarchical imposed. The paper however envisions that strengthening democratic values in the management of public service will help to tackle the moribund challenges associated with weak institutional mechanisms, corruption, wastefulness and inefficiency, and usher capacity building and strong institutional framework that will enhance the ability of Nigerian public institutions to achieve its developmental goals and handle the problems associated with modern governance of large scale, diversity, and technical complexities in a sustainable way.

1. Introduction

Bureaucracy is as old as civilization, although the intensity with which it has appeared before men's eyes has varied greatly over the epochs. The roots of bureaucracy are indeed as old as our civilization, or even older, for they are buried on the border between the primitive communistic tribe and civilized society. It is there that we find the remotest and yet the very distant ancestry of the massive, elaborate bureaucratic machines of our age. The emergence of clans and tribes in primitive community divides old society into the leaders and the led, the organizers and the organized, into the managers and the managed. This advent of primitive division of labour increases man's power over nature and his capacity to satisfy his needs, then emerge the first germs of bureaucracy which become also the very earliest prelude to a class society. The primitive division of labour that began with the process of production gave rise to the first hierarchy of functions. It was there that the first glimpse of the gulf between mental work, bush farmer, cattle rearer and manual labour appeared in the course of civilization, which later paved way for emergence of Egyptian priest, Byzantine Empire, Roman empire and the modern capitalist bureaucrat.

The emergence and growth of modern bureaucracy in the management of social organisations has been subject of considerable academic discourse over the last two hundred years among social scientists (Post, 1996). Following the early writings of Friedrich Engel and Karl Marx on the discursive frame of capitalist society and advent of bureaucracy on 19th century European societies, Max Weber's seminal work has been credited for providing thorough analysis of bureaucracy. Weber examined bureaucracy to a great degree and derived an idealistic view that was both organized and rationalised far better than the previous systems of administration. Having studied the system of organisation in the medieval society, Weber argued that modern bureaucracy differs from previous forms, though bureaucracy for Weber was not unique to modern societies *per se* – Ancient Egypt and Rome both possessed sophisticated bureaucracies. Max Weber saw bureaucracy as the most rational and effective mode of organizing the activities of large numbers of people because it ensured decision-making according to general rules rather than the whims of officials, cultivated trained 'experts', and reduced the possibilities of corruption and nepotism (Weber, 1946).

However, critical examination of Weber's central theme of Herrschaft (the authoritative power to command) reveals a remarkable similarity in the arguments made against Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy by Robert Michels (1911). Robert Michels in his *Iron law of Oligarchy* extended Weber's theory of bureaucracy to the study of the mass working class parties and unions of the early twentieth century, and argued that the growth and usurpation of power by a layer of full-time officials are inevitable features of mass working class parties and unions under capitalism and of any post-capitalist social order. Michels' analysis revealed authoritarianism (hierarchical domination of bureaucratic organisations) and lack of democracy as obvious weakness in Weber's model of Bureaucracy, and reality implicit in the management of organisation in Stalinist Russia. Despite this salient contribution to the discourse of bureaucratisation, Michels' analysis is relevant to the management of political party and trade unions but not large public institutions like the Civil Service. This paper however examines the peculiar problems of bureaucracy in Nigeria—inefficiency, red-tapism, waste and corruption, lack of accountability, poor productivity, and lack of control, redundancy and over-bloated staff structure, and argued that democratic deficit[1] implicit in Michels' criticism of Max Weber's bureaucracy, is the underlying factor that gave rise to the general dys functioning of bureaucracy across the world.

This paper is organised into six sections. Max Weber's conception of Bureaucracy will be reviewed in section two below. Section three and four are devoted to the criticisms of Max Weber's bureaucracy, and the problems of bureaucracy in Nigeria respectively. Section five addresses the dark side of Weberian bureaucracy. I conclude in section six.

Max Weber's Conception of Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy is derived from the two words 'bureau' (refer not only to a writing desk, but to an office where officials worked) and '*kratia* or *krato' which* means 'power' or 'rule'. Bureaucracy thus basically means office power or office rule, the rule of the officialdom. The term bureaucracy came into use in the early 18th century in Western Europe as a workplace where officials worked. Bureaucracy was first popularised in academic discourse following the seminal writing of Friedrich Hegel's book Philosophy of Right (1821). Hegel argued that Bureaucracy is a form of public administration that serves as a link between the state and the civil society[2]. Hegel noted that:

> There is a distinction between the monarch's decisions and their execution and application, or in general between his decisions and the continued execution or maintenance of past decisions, existing laws, regulations, organisations for the securing of common ends, and so forth. This task of ... subsuming the particular under the universal is comprised in the executive power, which also includes the powers of the judiciary and the police. The latter have a more immediate bearing on the particular concerns of civil society and they make the universal interest authoritative over its particular aims. Particular interests which are common to everyone fall within civil society and lie outside the absolutely universal interest of the state proper. The administration of these is in the hands of Corporations, commercial and professional as well as municipal, and their officials, directors, managers, and the like. It is the business of these officials to manage the private property and interests of these particular spheres and, from that point of view, their authority rests on the confidence of their commonalties and professional equals. On the other hand, however, these circles of particular interests must be subordinated to the higher interests of the state, and hence the filling of positions of responsibility in Corporations, etc., will generally be effected by a mixture of popular election by those interested with appointment and ratification by higher authority. The maintenance of the state's universal

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[1] Democratic Deficit occurs when there is lack of democratic accountability and control over the decision-making process in organisation. It also occurs when there is no room for democratic discussion in the decision-making process of any organisation.

[2] See Hegel's (1821) 'The Philosophy of Rights'. (Translated by Dyde, S.W. [2003] available at http://socserv.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/hegel/right.pdf. pp. 251-289

interest, and of legality, in this sphere of particular rights, and the work of bringing these rights back to the universal, require to be superintended by holders of the executive power, by (a) the executive civil servants and (b) the higher advisory officials (who are organised into committees). These converge in their supreme heads who are in direct contact with the monarch[3].

To Hegel, Civil society comprises the professional groups and private corporations that represent various particular interests while state represent the general interest, and that in between the two, bureaucracy is the medium through which the interest of the particular and that of general can be facilitated (Mouzelis 1967:15). However, Hegelian analysis of bureaucracy received a devastating critique from Karl Marx who argued that Hegel's analysis failed to link bureaucracy to the class relations and power structure of the society. Though Marx did not single out bureaucracy but he commented on the subject in course of reviewing Hegel's works. Marxian analysis of bureaucracy stems from his theory of class, capitalism and communism. Marx argued that the 'dichotomy and opposition between the particular interest of the corporations and the common interest of the state as Hegel affirmed is meaningless, as the state does not represent the general interest but the particular interest of the dominant class, itself a part of the civil society'[4]. Marx posited that Hegel comes into contradiction with himself when he 'proceeds from the separation of the state and civil society, the separation of the particular interests and the absolutely universal; and indeed the claim that bureaucracy is founded on this separation'[5]. Marx argued that:

> The bureaucracy is merely the formalism of a content which lies outside the bureaucracy itself. The Corporations are the materialism of the bureaucracy, and the bureaucracy is the spiritualism of the Corporations. The Corporation is the bureaucracy of civil society, and the bureaucracy is the Corporation of the state. In actuality, the bureaucracy as civil society of the state is opposed to the state of civil society, the Corporations. Where the bureaucracy is to become a new principle, where the universal interest of the state begins to become explicitly a singular and thereby a real interest, it struggles against the Corporations as every consequence struggles against the existence of its premises. On the other hand once the real life of the state awakens and civil society frees itself from the Corporations out of its inherent rational impulse, the bureaucracy seeks to restore them; for as soon as the state of civil society falls so too does the civil society of the state. The spiritualism vanishes with its opposite materialism. The consequence struggles for the existence of its premises as soon as a new principle struggles not against the existence of the premises but against the principle of their existence. The same mind that creates the Corporation in society creates the bureaucracy in the state. Thus as soon as the corporation mind is attacked so too is the mind of the bureaucracy; and whereas the bureaucracy earlier fought the existence of the Corporations in order to create room for its own existence, now it seeks vigorously to sustain the existence of the Corporations in order to save the Corporation mind, which is its own mind. The bureaucracy is the state formalism of civil society. It is the state's consciousness, the state's will, the state's power, as a Corporation. Being the state's consciousness, will, and power as a Corporation, the bureaucracy is thus a particular, closed society within the state. The bureaucracy wills the Corporation as an imaginary power. To be sure, the individual Corporation also has this will for its particular interest in opposition to the bureaucracy, but it wills the bureaucracy against the other Corporation, against the other particular interest. The bureaucracy as the completed Corporation therefore wins the day over the Corporation which is like incomplete bureaucracy. It reduces the Corporation to an

appearance, or wishes to do so, but wishes this appearance to I exist and to believe in its own existence. The Corporation is civil society's attempt to become state; but the bureaucracy is the state which has really made itself into civil society[6].

To Marx, 'the existence of bureaucracy is linked with the division of society into classes, and constitutes a very specific and particular social group. In other words, bureaucracy is the state itself, which is an instrument by which one dominant class exercises it domination over other social classes. In this regard, the future and the interests of bureaucracy are closely linked to those of dominant class and the state. The justification and existence of bureaucracy was needed to consolidate and perpetuate class division and domination between the exploiters and exploited in the society' (Mouzelis 1967:15). Therefore, Marx believes that bureaucracy is the instrument of the capitalist class, and with the proletarian revolution and classless society, the state and its bureaucracy will wither away and become redundant.

However, Marx analysis of Bureaucracy was faulted by Max Weber who posited that bureaucracy is an inescapable feature of the modern society. To Weber, the objective reason for the advance of bureaucratic organization has always been its purely technical superiority over any other form of organization (Weber, 1946). Weber studied work organisations in Ancient Egypt and Rome in comparison with the emergence of large scale organisations that came in the wake of the development of capitalism in Germany at the turn of the 20th century, and concluded that modern bureaucracy differs from previous forms, and worked so much better than traditional ones. Weber posited that all these new large-scale organizations were similar as each possesses a bureaucracy. Max Weber was concerned about how large scale organisations can be effectively and efficiently managed, and affirmed that bureaucracy is an impersonal decision-making process which avoid personal bias (ibid).

Weber's purpose, however, was to define the essential features of new organizations and to indicate why these organizations worked so much better than traditional ones on the basis of tripartite classification of authority structure. Weber argues that human civilization evolved from primitive and mystical to the rational and complex stages and relationships, and such societal evolutions is facilitated by three types of authority that he identifies as traditional, charismatic and legal-rational Authority[7] (Fry, 1989). According to Weber, previous form of bureaucracy in traditional societies such as Ancient Egypt and Rome were founded on the basis of charismatic and traditional forms of authority. Thus, argued that modern bureaucracy is a particular type of administrative structure developed through rational-legal authority.
Weber was posed to locate the authority structure in a bureaucratic organisation, and claimed that authority is needed to advance and achieve the objective of an organization. He was of the opinion that most bureaucratic organisations such as church and state, of armies, political parties, economic enterprises, organizations to promote all kinds of causes, private associations, clubs, and many others were developed along the line of rational-legal authority: where belief in the legitimacy of the pattern of normative rules and authority of officials was subject to published rules and codes of practice (Stillman 2000: 51). Therefore, bureaucracy is the most efficient and rational form of managing organization, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally that most rational known

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[6] Marx, op.cit in note 4

[7] Traditional authority which predominates in pre-modern societies is based on belief in the sanctity of tradition, hereditary and customs. It is not codified in impersonal rules but inheres in particular persons who may either inherit it or be invested with it by a higher authority. Charismatic authority, finally, rests on the appeal of leaders who claim allegiance because of their perceived extraordinary characteristics of an individual virtuosity, whether ethical, heroic, or religious. Legal-rational authority is empowered by a formalistic belief in the content of the law (legal) or natural law (rationality). Obedience is not given to a specific individual leader - whether traditional or charismatic - but a set of uniform principles, and laid-down rules and regulations

means of carrying out imperative control over human beings (Weber 1946: 337). Weber emphasized that bureaucratic organizations were an attempt to subdue human affairs to the rule of reason-to make it possible to conduct the business of the organization 'according to calculable rules'. For people who developed modern organizations, the purpose was to find rational solutions to the new problems of size. Weber examined bureaucracy to a great degree and derived an idealistic view that at its best. A few basic purposes of ideal bureaucracy according to Weber are as follows: division of labour, hierarchal order and authority, written documents, well-trained staff and experts, full working capacity of the officials, and application of impersonal rules (Hummel, 1998: 307). Carl Friedrich while reviewing Weber's work incorporates Weber's bureaucratic characteristics into his own formulation as follows:

1. There is a high degree of Division of Labour and Specialisation.
2. There is a well defined Hierarchy of Authority.
3. It follows the principle of Rationality, Objectively and Consistency.
4. There are Formal and Impersonal relations among the member of the organisation.
5. Interpersonal relations are based on positions and not on personalities.
6. There are well defined Rules and Regulations. There rules cover all the duties and rights of the employees. These rules must be strictly followed.
7. There are well defined Methods for all types of work.
8. Selection and Promotion is based on Technical qualifications.
9. Only Bureaucratic or legal power is given importance[8].

However, Weber was of the opinion that not every formal association will possess all of the characteristics of the ideal bureaucracy. The ideal bureaucracy is developed as a yardstick to determine and compare whether a particular organisation is bureaucratised or not (Hall 1963: 33). These ingredients of bureaucracy may not, always, help organizations to reach its ideal work or the most efficient performance. Weber therefore, argues that organisations can attain these features of ideal bureaucracy, especially if authority is highly centralized. The ideal-type of bureaucracy, according to Weber, possesses rationally discussible grounds for every administrative act whose control based on knowledge, clearly defined spheres of competence, and operates according to intellectually analyzable rules (Fry 1989: 32). Therefore, Weberian bureaucracy is rational because of its precision, speed, consistency, availability of records, continuity, possibility of secrecy, unity, rigorous coordination, and minimization of interpersonal friction, personal costs, and material costs (ibid).

Max Weber was credited for providing the thorough and systematic social scientific analysis of bureaucracy as his idea became spread easily and moves into the vacuum left by the disappearance of administration based on traditional or charismatic authority, and finally became the model for the organisation of civil service, management theories and public administration that cut across all the facet of contemporary societies and private organisations. However, Weber was cynical and cautious that the advantages of bureaucracy in the management of industrial organisations could also turn out to be its shortcomings. He averred that bureaucracy put us in an 'iron cage', which limits individual human freedom and potential instead of a 'technological utopia' that should set us free (Weber, 1946: 432). Weber posited that there will be an evolution of an iron cage, which will be a technically ordered, rigid and dehumanized society when bureaucracies concentrate large amounts of power in a small number of people and are generally unregulated (Kendall et al. 2000: 190). To Weber, bureaucracy tends to generate oligarchy (where few officials are the political and economic power) because those who control these organizations control the quality of our lives as well undermine human freedom and democracy in the long run, and therefore constitute an *inescapable fate* (Weber 1979:1403)

Following the review of bureaucracy, Weber's work has received thorough criticisms from scholars especially in social sciences who have axe to grind with his ideal bureaucracy when juxtaposed with grim

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[8] See Carl Friedrich's 1949 paper on some observations on Weber's Analysis of Bureaucracy. Pp. 29

reality of the contemporary working of the bureaucratic organisations. Some of these criticisms will be espoused in the section below.

Critiques of Max Weber's Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy in practice has not always been about the ethereal, intellectual concepts propounded by academics. The fundamental weakness of Weberian bureaucracy is that it ignores democratic practice in the management of organisations. This lack of democracy stems from hierarchical domination of bureaucratic organisation that is often fraught with abuse of power by bureaucrats. Bureaucracy therefore establishes itself not only as the apparatus regulating the functioning of the State, but also as the power imposing its political will on society. Instead of being a mechanism for effective service delivery, hierarchical domination has made bureaucracy as a tool which reinforces the structures of control in society (Gale & Hummel 2003: 416).

Further critique of Weberian bureaucracy was offered by Peter Blau and Marshall Meyer who posited that 'since perfect bureaucratization is never fully realized, no existing organization precisely fits the 'ideal type'… [which] does not provide understanding of concrete bureaucratic structure' (Blau and Meyer 1987:25). In other words, it does not seem right for organizations to follow an ideal guide which may never be reached or may not work efficiently when it is applied. Blau and Meyer (1987) further assert that 'empirical studies have shown that this approach is misleading'[9] such that the word 'ideal' did not imply or mean 'the best' or 'what we should strive for'. Furthermore, Barnard (1966) observed that Weberian bureaucracy is unaware about the role of informal organization in affecting the efficiency of organization's performance. Weber focuses mainly on the formal elements of bureaucracy such as specialization, rules, hierarchy, and others. On the other hand, the informal elements including human relationships, leadership, communication networks, motivation, and others were not given the attention that they deserve in the functions of the public and private organizations as well (Barnard 1966: 115).

Other criticisms of Weberian Bureaucracy was best elaborated by Warren Bennis (1968) as: bureaucracy does not adequately allow for personal growth and the development of mature personality; bureaucracy develops conformity and 'group-think'; its systems of control and authority are hopelessly outdated; bureaucracy does not possess nor prescribe adequate means of resolving differences and conflicts between ranks and most particularly between functional groups in the organization; communication and innovative ideas are frustrated or distorted due to hierarchical divisions; the full human resources of bureaucracy are not being utilised due to mistrust and fear to reprisals; and bureaucracy cannot assimilate the influx of new technologists or scientists entering the organization.

Apart from Michel Cozier (1964) who argued that bureaucratic institutions need to be understood in terms of the cultural context in which they operate, many critics failed to acknowledge that the problems and deficiencies of Bureaucracy assume different aspects and vary from country to country. What counts as the deficiencies of bureaucracy in Nigeria may not necessarily serve as the same problem in Europe and America. It is my contention here that analysis of bureaucracy and its attendant problems must be limited to specific context and society that is crucial to the explication of the action that will be required to transform that context. Therefore, this paper will devote its attention to the peculiarity of bureaucratic problems in Nigeria in the section below.

Problems of Bureaucracy in Nigeria

The discontents of bureaucracy are examined in view of the prevailing/ existing social context of the country. In the Nigerian context, Public Bureaucracies[10] are fraught with numerous problems and

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[9] Blau and Meyer, 1987, pp. 27

[10] In Nigerian, public bureaucracies comprises: Civil services in the Federal, State and Local governments, Parastatal and public enterprise bureaucracies; security forces bureaucracy; higher education bureaucracy; bureaucracies in government agencies and commissions, public media bureaucracy; judicial service bureaucracy; and political party bureaucracy that Anise (1986) and Aluko and Adesopo (2004) reported

deficiencies. As Okotoni (2001) reported, politicisation and over-politicisation of civil service and public institutions is one of the discontents of bureaucracy in Nigeria. The increasing pace of politicisation in the appointment, recruitment and promotion of personnel on the basis of ethnic, religious, political and class consideration as Aluko and Adesopo (2004:19) reported, represent a dangerous centrifugal factor that will undermine the effective function of public institutions in Nigeria. Strong institutions cannot emerge from present day public bureaucracies where top echelons of these bureaucracies are handpicked on the basis of ethnicity, religion and class. Successive military and civilian regimes in Nigeria are notorious in politicisation of several offices in the civil services such as offices of the Permanent secretaries and Head of civil services couple along with the impositions of so-called technocrats from outside to man several Parastatal and public enterprises.

The recent suspension of Ms Aruma Oteh as the Director General of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is the recent case in point. Ms Aruma Oteh who was regarded as a technocrat from African Development Bank was handpicked and imposed as Director General of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in 2009. Ms Aruma Oteh sidelined and ignored all the public service rule by breaking the law on the appointment of some senior staff of SEC from outside (especially the staffing of three officials of Access Bank), engage in financial recklessness in office, award of contract without regard to tender board and due process, and alleged misappropriation of N3billion on the controversial Project 50 programme. The unfortunate part of Oteh case was that the corrupt Nigerian ruling class under the leadership of President Goodluck Jonathan politicised the issue and gave her a clean bill of health, and reinstated her amidst criticisms and protest from the House of Representatives and staff of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)

Another problem with the public bureaucracy in Nigeria is the high level of corruption (Okotoni 2003: 225; Expo 1979). Corruption is a major problem limiting public bureaucracies in Nigeria. Corrupt practices occur in nearly all ministries, departments, and agencies where virtually all members of the upper and lower levels of the bureaucracy are involved. Graft and corruption include bribery, extortion, and nepotism, and are characterized by the subordination of public interests to private aims and violations of the norms of duty and welfare, accompanied by secrecy, betrayal, deception and a callous disregard for any consequences suffered by the public. The public considers graft and corruption to be widespread and persistent in Nigerian public institutions.

Finally, Nigerian bureaucracies are fraught with the following problems and discontents: lack of measurable objectives; inadequate evaluations; mismanagement of time; inadequate facilities; disorganization; personnel mismanagement; and over centralization. These internal weaknesses led many 'public organizations to: define their output as money disbursed rather than service delivered, produce many low-return observable outputs (glossy reports and 'frameworks) and few high-return less observable activities like ex - post evaluation, engage in obfuscation, spin control, and official amnesia exhibiting little learning from the past, and putting enormous demands on scarce administrative and technical skills' (Easterly, 2002: 223)[11]. This however culminates in marring of government's laudable policies vis-a-vis poor implementation strategies (i.e. bureaucratic procedures) adopted by the civil service, effecting unworkable solutions, putting obstacles in the way of policies formulated by the political officials (Okotoni, 1996).

Democratic Deficit: The Dark Side of Weberian Bureaucracy
The peculiarity of the bureaucratic problems in Nigeria shares certain similarities with the general criticism of the bureaucracy which scholars have addressed above. The problematic nature of Nigerian bureaucracy may be different but still share striking resemblance of bureaucratic problems faced

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[11] Wiliam Easterly (2002) The cartel of good Intentions: The problem of Bureaucracy in Foreign aid. Journal of Policy Reform, Vol. 5(4): 223-250

elsewhere. In this regard, specific local problems of bureaucracy can be traced to the fundamental weakness of Weberian ideal bureaucracy itself—lack of democratic practice in the management of public institutions. Hierarchical domination of organisational structure, authoritative power to command, imposition of political appointees, inefficient administration and bad-decision making by incompetent officials and other bane of bureaucratic problems are as a result of lack of democratic practice in public organisations which are stems largely from the Max Weber's theory of ideal bureaucracy.

When Weber developed his model of bureaucracy, he developed it in the direction of market mechanisms, and entrepreneurial management to improve efficiency and service delivery (see Kamensky, 1996). Weber was aware of the dichotomy between the capitalism and Bureaucracy, and the English accusation of bureaucracy as 'French disease' (Thompson 1980:2) that would stifle capitalism, or perhaps substituting itself for market decision making). In capitalism, invisible hand of market forces allocates resources and provide for coordination, while decision-making in capitalist firms and organisations are made through top-down approach from the bosses to the subordinates. But in bureaucratic organisations, resources allocations and coordination are performed by the visible hand of hierarchies. Capitalist enterprises usually involves precision, speed, clarity in communication, reduction of friction, reduction of personnel costs -- these are the technical advantages of bureaucracy, according to Max Weber. The development of hierarchical domination and authoritative power to command suggest that Weber ignore democracy[12] in the management of organisations in order to appease capitalist market economy which demands that the official business of the administration be discharged precisely, unambiguously, continuously, and with as much speed as possible (Weber 1946: 215).

This Weber's capitulation was applauded by the European states that were later used in the effective colonialisation of Africa, Asia and Latin America. The emergence of Weberian style of Bureaucracy came to Nigeria as a result of her colonial legacy and the development of capitalism. Civil/Public service was created with the specific purpose: the survival of capitalism in colonial Nigeria, and the stability of colonial capitalist state structure. The establishment of the Nigerian Civil Service on March 1862 by the British government pave way for hierarchical positions of Governor, Chief Magistrate, Colonial Secretary and Senior Military Officers, Offices of Private Secretary to the Governor, Auditor for Public Accounts, Chief Clerk, and Collector of Customs. These public bureaucracies was established as the essential ingredient, livewire, and sine-quo-non for the consolidation of pre-colonial state structure in Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria[13]. By 1906, the British Government had extended its authority over most of Nigeria, and began to establish its instruments of Law and Order such as Departments of Judiciary, Police, Prisons, Public Works Department and the Departments of Customs, Ports and Telegraph. The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates into a single entity called Nigeria in 1914 helped put in place a centralised administration and unified structure of civil service in the country till the eve of decolonisation. The expanded package of imitative postcolonial reform has been dogged by the same weakness of Weber's ideal model and its creation in Nigeria even till contemporary times.

Post-colonial problems of bureaucracy emanated when the ruling class in power ignored merit system of recruitment and imposition of authoritarian practices by the politicians who are Ministers (on ministries) and Chairmen (on agencies and parastatal), who in turn want to unilaterally decide which policies to be implemented or not without input from the civil/public workers. Most political head of ministries sit in policy judgment, and operate as czar of the ministry under them. Even if they made a mistake, they gallows with it but the top echelon of the ministries are sanctioned. Therefore, there is no form of democracy in Nigerian bureaucracies as opinions of the civil/public servant are ignored by the ministerial head. This disconnection between professionals and politicians becomes more profound when governance by the political appointee (Minister and Chairmen of board and parastatal) limits democratic process in

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[12] Democracy here means consultation, general consensus, and discussion which may take some time.
[13] See more on Origin of Civil Service in Nigeria available at http://www.ohcsf.gov.ng/

decision making in which professionals expertise and opinions are denied in course of determining right action through their professional training. The politicians and civil/public servants are at loggerhead. The appointed Minister want to jettisoned certain administrative rules and procedures in carrying out certain policies that will favour the ruling elite and its constituency or induce corruption but professionals and civil servants want all policies to be formulated and implemented according to bureaucratic rules, procedures, and getting things. This lack of centralised democratic practice undermines Nigerian public institutions and raise suspicion between the public employees and politicians. This is sequel to the recent submission of Nigerian Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Mrs Ama Pepple (a former Head of civil service) who expressed concern over mutual suspicion and apprehension between public servants and their political leaders in the administration of government affairs in the Country. Pepple regretted that the political leaders and civil servants do not see their roles as partners but competitors in nation-building[14].

Conclusion

This paper has examined the theoretical underpinnings of Max Weber's ideal bureaucracy and analyzes the negative features associated with the perspective such as inefficiency, red-tapism, waste and corruption, lack of accountability, poor productivity, and lack of control. However, in the Nigeria context, public institutions such as civil service have been enmeshed in myriads of problems: weak governance structure, red-tapism, weak accountability, low professional standards, waste, and are always viewed as a cesspool of corruption, under-performance, a bastion of bureaucracy and a graveyard of so many failed policies of government. These problems of public bureaucracies in Nigeria are localised aspect of the general dysfunctions or negative features of theoretical bureaucracy discussed above, both are nevertheless linked with the fundamental weakness of Max Weber theory of bureaucracy itself—lack of democracy in the decision-making and management of organisations.

Employees or workers are not allowed or given free hand to analyse, review and critique where problems lie and how to make these institutions result-oriented with speed, accuracy and transparency. This shortcoming and gap associated with Weber's bureaucracy (which is regarded as *democratic deficit*) illustrates how hierarchical domination of authority structure breed negative dysfunctions that undermine the effective working of the public organisations.

With this development, it is obvious that introducing democratic practices into the management of public organisations will help to build institutional capability that will improve institutional structures and processes, enhance the ability of Nigerian public institutions to perform specific activities so as to achieve its goals in a sustainable way, and provide strong institutions that adhere to rule of law, peoples' aspirations, and societal expectations.

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[14] See More on Ama Pepple (2012)'s Vanguard Newspaper report that Politicians, Civil Servants engage in Mutual Assured Suspicion which is available at http://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/07/politicians-civil-servants-engage-in-mutual-assured-suspicion-pepple-housing-minister/ Date Visted July 27, 2012.

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