

# **PATHOLOGIES IN DE-BUREAUCRATIC PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

De-bureaucratization of public organizations (popularly called deregulation in Nigeria) is a relatively new concept in public administration. However, it is rapidly gathering tremendous interests because it is being considered as a more attractive organization concept than the much criticized bureaucratization. This growing interest is in most, if not indeed all, less developed countries, including Nigeria. Hence the central concern of this paper is identification and objective but critical analysis of the major bureau-pathologies in de-bureaucratic public organization in Nigeria. The rationale for the identification and critical analysis is to show that although de-bureaucratization is being embraced as a more attractive organization concept than bureaucratization, there are also bureau-pathologies inherent in de-bureaucratic organizations.

The major and prevalent bureau-pathologies identified and analyzed are inconsistency and unpredictability, informality and denials, unlimited or un-circumscribed flexibility, personalization, limitation of de-categorization, laziness and goal displacement. These bureau-pathologies should be well handled if de-bureaucratization is to be truly a more attractive organization concept in Nigeria. The paper has proffered extent recommendations to enhance the application of de-bureaucratization in Nigerian public organizations. These include the promotion of adequate level of certainty rather than uncertainty; the reduction of informality in critical or sensitive issues; reduction in the level of flexibility in government operations, advancement of corporate interests over personal interests; compartmentalization of staff instead of de-compartmentalization which can generally promote confusion; and a determined effort to meet deadlines in public organizations in Nigeria.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Since Max Weber's "ideal bureaucracy" was published in 1922 (Shafritz and Hyde, 1978: 21), the criticisms that have been leveled against it have been numerous (see, e.g., Merton, 1952; Thompson, 1961; Blau and Scott, 1963; Simon, 1976; Wunsch and Olowu, 1995; Sherwood, 1996; and Turner, 1999). In fact, criticisms of the public bureaucracy or governmental organization have been expressed in various forms even before Weber's ideal bureaucratic construct. Albrow (1970) in his classic book has done an almost comprehensive analysis of such criticisms, that they do not really need to bother us here.

However, one reason for the criticisms has been crisply stated by Isokun (2004:13), that "there is an aversion on the part of men for law in their relationship even with their own self made laws" Men want freedom from laws. This freedom may be very well illustrated by only one example here. It is a fascinating revelation by Ghana's National Capacity Building Research Group cited in Ayee (2002: 271) that the Central Bank of Ghana had problem recruiting "Directors" into the policy Analysis Division of the Bank, not because of "the low salary so much as the limited freedom of Directors to initiate appropriate research projects to support policy development." Men have aversion for law and barely tolerate it. Another general reason for criticism of bureaucratic organization is that its operation has led to a significant deficiency in the performance of such organizations and employee frustration, instead of enhancing efficiency and effectiveness to the public and promoting employee happiness.

Criticisms against bureaucracy have been expressed under the general rubrics of pathologies or bureau-pathologies or problems or dysfunctions (see, e.g., Thompson, 1961, Hicks and Gullett, 1975; and Oronsaye, 1984). These concepts will be used synonymously in this paper. The alternative call to bureaucratization is de-bureaucratization, which goes by such other names as tendency away from bureaucratization (Brewer, 1970), un-ideal bureaucracy, less bureaucratic, flexible organization, or from Caiden et al. (1995: 86-87) it is a decline of rule-oriented management culture, or what Aihe (1987) called the exercise of discretionary powers/administration. De-bureaucratization has been adopted

by virtually, if not indeed, all public organizations in Nigeria and in many African countries, such as Ghana and Tanzania. But as Brewer (1970: 342) has put it, an observation that is still current today, the de-bureaucratization concept is "a relatively neglected aspect of bureaucratic theory." This neglect is perhaps because de-bureaucratization has been accepted as a welcome development and a radiant departure from the much criticized ideal type bureaucracy. Being the opposite of the much criticized bureaucratic public organizations, the de-bureaucratic public ones are expected to be more flexibly, efficiently and effectively run, and to deliver the required goods and services to the public, while at the same time ensuring the happiness of the employees. The big question, however, is whether de-bureaucratic public organizations do not harbour pathologies?

The purpose of this paper is an attempt to find out whether de-bureaucratic public organizations in Nigeria, which are the welcomed alternatives to the much criticized Weberian ideal types, contain pathologies or bureau-pathologies? If they do, what types are prevalent, their manifestations, effects and how to handle them, so that this alternative type of public organizations may actually perform to the expectation of the Nigerian public and also ensure the happiness of its employees. We expect the paper to also be useful *Mutatis Mutandis* to the public organizations/administration in other African countries.

Section one of the paper is the introductory part, while the next conceptualizes and discusses bureaucratization, de-bureaucratization, and pathologies or bureau-pathologies. Section three examines the prevalence and manifestations of pathologies and their effects, while the last section proffers enhancement strategies or recommendations to reduce pathologies in public organizations in Nigeria.

## **II: CONCEPTUALIZATION**

We are briefly concerned here with circumscribing the concepts of bureaucratic, de-bureaucratic organizations and bureau-pathologies or pathologies.

**Bureaucratic Organization:-** Several definitions of bureaucratic organization exist (see, e.g., Davis, 1949; Merton, 1952:322; Nwabuzor and Muller, 1985: 128; Nnamdi, Offiong and Tonwe, 1997: 146-47). Their definitions are not provided

here because they, by and large, emphasize one aspect or the other of Weber's extensive definition, which is reproduced below. Weber's definition serves our interest to establish bureaucratic organization's contrast to de-bureaucratic organization to be discussed below, also. According to Weber (1977).

The fully developed bureaucratic mechanism compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with non-mechanized modes of production. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs—all these are raised to the optimum point in strict bureaucratic organization...Its specific nature develops the more perfectly the more bureaucracy is "dehumanized", the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business, love, hatred, and all purely personal irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation.

It would be observed that the characteristics of bureaucracy as enunciated above by Weber are rather comprehensive and difficult to meet hence bureaucracy has been accused of so many pathologies. These pathologies do not concern us here, but they include rigidity, stress, impersonality and empire building. Public organization operations or behaviours that conform with laid down bureaucratic mechanisms constitute bureaucratization. If otherwise, they equate de-bureaucratization.

**De-Bureaucratic organization:-** A de-bureaucratic organization is defined by Brewer (1970) as one characterized by a tendency for organizational authority relations to become less bureaucratic. As for Caiden Halley and Maltais (1995: 86-87) their position which captures the essence of de-bureaucratization is that it is the management of a public service less bureaucratically or more flexibly with greater freedom. De-bureaucratization is defined here as a flexible application of, or a tendency away from, the limited rules of an organization, so as to allow for more initiative, adaptability, quick and adequate decisions, their adequate implementation and hence the achievement of satisfactory results

Two unique points to note in this definition are the limited nature of rules and the need for their adequate implementation in de-bureaucratic organizations. Of concern here, however, is how these are to be achieved, so that the tendency away from rules and the opportunity for more initiative, which are central interests of de-bureaucratization, do not give room for what Aibe (1987:7) has styled the exercise "of unbridled discretionary power". Also two groups are expected to enjoy de-bureaucratic organizations: the public and employees as well. As an organization that has better potentials than the bureaucratic one, it is expected to contain less or very limited dislocation or dysfunctions or pathologies. However, an analysis of this assertion is our central concern in this paper, which follows the conceptualization of pathologies below.

**Bureau-Pathologies:-** Some writers (Thompson, 1961: 152-177, Oronsaye, 1984; Ikoiwak, 1986; Turner, 1999) have used pathologies, dysfunctions and bureau-pathologies synonymously and we agree with them. This agreement is informed by the fact that bureau is a neutral noun, meaning office. Also, pathology is a neutral noun, which means the study of abnormalities or deviation from the normal, healthy state (Chambers English Dictionary, 1990). From the above, it can be rightly inferred that bureau-pathologies are discernable in any organization whether bureaucratic or de-bureaucratic.

For the purpose of this paper, the conceptualization of bureau-pathologies is adapted from Merton's (1949) definition. Bureau-pathologies are the tendencies in the organization and behaviour of employees and other

participants, which can frustrate the realization of the goals towards which a de-bureaucratic organization is supposed to be working. This definition seeks to emphasize that employees or members of an organization and other participants (e.g., contractors, suppliers, and clients) can both be sources of pathologies to a public organization, not only "bureaucrats" (i.e., staff officers) as we had been made to understand (see, e.g., Merton, 1949 Thompson, 1961). Pathologies in de-bureaucratic public organizations which manifest in varied forms, as well shall discuss them in section three below, should be viewed with all seriousness for their adverse effects. Therefore, serious efforts should be made to reduce their intensity in order to enhance the realization of the goals of the attractive, alternative, and preferred de-bureaucratic public organizations in Nigeria.

### III: BUREAU-PATHOLOGIES IN DE-BUREAUCRATIC PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGERIA

This paper is essentially an examination of the pathologies that are inherent in de-bureaucratic public organizations. If some of the pathologies discussed in the literature regarding bureaucratic organizations are also found in our discussion of de-bureaucratic ones, what will surely be different in them include the causes, manifestations, ramifications and intensity. The major pathologies in de-bureaucracies are as follows, but are however listed in no particular order:

**Inconsistency and Unpredictability:-**These are similar pathologies of administrative behaviours which are encouraged by de-bureaucratization. The dictionary (e.g., Chambers English Dictionary, 1990) definition of inconsistency, which is helpful, is that it is portrayed by a situation lacking in harmony; it is changeable and hence contradictory. Unpredictability similarly is characterized by a situation in which rules, regulations, structures and professional aspects are not strictly applied to promote certainly in the organization. It is a situation where uncertainty prevails, or is preferred over certainly against the normal preference of many persons "for certainly over uncertainly" (Hicks and Gullett, 1975: 136). Common to them, therefore are a tendency towards arbitrariness and uncertainty in administrative behaviour even in the handling of issues, which present the same conditions at different points in time. Inconsistency however informs unpredictability.

Inconsistency and unpredictability are usually associated with policy or decision making and implementation and especially with the latter. Such inconsistencies and unpredictability hardly result in any positive policy or decision implementation. It is well known that implementation is the problem of Nigerian public administration. As Omamor (2003:26) is reported as saying, we in Nigeria "are never short of policies, what we have been short of is commitment to the implementation process." Herein lies the encouragement of inconsistency and unpredictability. Such inconsistency, Dibia (2000: 272) asserts is "unethical and irresponsible" especially when it applies to two persons or groups in similar situations.

In circumstances of inconsistency and unpredictability, an organization is not taken seriously on the application of its rules. If an organization is known for the above pathologies, when it advertises for admission of students or the recruitment of staff, for example, both qualified and unqualified candidates would apply, hopefully, whereas, indeed, the advertised requirements were expected to enable only qualified candidates to screen themselves in and apply, while the unqualified candidates would screen themselves out and not apply. The purpose of the advertisement would be basically defeated while the image of the organization is of course diminished. The same goes for many other activities of the organization.

One or two illustration could suffice on this matter here. For some time now, Nigerian newspapers at various times have been carrying information about unqualified students who were expelled from Nigeria Universities because

of their fake or deficient admission credentials. All the students concerned had applied and got admitted into the Universities under the pathologies of inconsistency and unpredictability. This writer has a personal experience of unqualified candidates who screened themselves in and applied for admission into the University of Benin, Benin City, in the 1999/2000 academic session against the advertised requirements which their qualifications did not satisfy. They were assisted by the existence of the said pathologies and were admitted and cleared at other stages of the admission process, but got stranded at the registration for courses stage in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration. The matter of their deficiencies was handled by a departmental committee that found the students actually unqualified or deficient in their qualifications. Some of them did not even have any credit at all in the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) examination, while some others had only one or two credit passes. As already stated, similar cases have occurred in other Nigerian Universities as reported in the Nigerian newspapers. For example, Wahab (2001:7) reported that a final year law student of Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma gained admission with only one credit pass in Commerce at the general Certification of Education (GCE).

It is not unlikely that reports of irregular admission from different facilities to the University of Benin administration might have informed the decision of the university in the 2000/2001 academic session to introduce "clearance requirement for all" final year students (UNIBEN News, 2001:8). The clearance is undertaken by a Screening Committee that screens students' initial admission qualification credentials. Happily, the screening policy has continued to subsist even as at the time of writing this article and has considerably reduced, if not completely eliminated the pathologies of inconsistency and unpredictability in admission into the University of Benin. In fact, other Nigerian universities are also pursuing the screening exercise of their students vigorously. It is hoped that the exercise will continue, as the effects of it can only be positive.

Inconsistency and unpredictability in any organization have adverse consequences as have been stated above. Some of them include wastage of resources by both the organization and the public or students. The resources include time, money, materials and intellect. Some other adverse effects are the psychological trauma that candidates or students or staff experience in their interactions with the organization, name bashing of, and sometimes threats to, the organization and its personnel, as well as diminished image and integrity.

**Informality and Denials:-** De-bureaucratization of public organization offers opportunities for denials because of the informality that is encouraged in it. Informality in public organizations relates to a situation in which only verbal instructions or interactions between officials on the one hand or between such officials and the individuals or groups from the society (clients) on the other hand take place. Denials could be at whatever levels of the organization or political system. This is without prejudice to the high level sense of responsibility of the official in public organizations or political system.

Various organization behaviours could lead to denials. A member of an organization or a client could hand a document to an officer informally, i.e., without record or documentation, hoping that it is very safely delivered and would be promptly attended to. To his chagrin, the client might not get a reply. His enquiry about no reply to the delivery of the document might be rebuffed as false, with insistence that he had never interacted with that officer before that day. Such denials might be premised on the fact of misplacement of the document by the officer. He might have totally forgotten about it, or locked it up in the drawer, or torn it, or passed it to his superior officer informally too without remembering. There is no record to aid his memory. To be on a firm ground, the client might be called

names, especially if he has no witness to attest to his delivery of the document to the said officer. On the other hand, the officer might find a colleague come around to informally glorify his integrity, in order to shield him from the accusation of denial.

As already indicated, files could easily get missing in the de-bureaucratic system of informality and any level of officer could deny knowledge of such files on grounds of forgetfulness or because of deliberate falsehood. Very many staff, clients, contractors, suppliers, etc., are living witnesses to the existence of informality and denials in public organizations. They are encouraged by de-bureaucratization.

Informality pervades many aspects of administrative work and behaviours- from instructions, through assignment of some responsibilities, payment of money, receipt of information or document to file processing, etc. Almost invariably, informality in administrative behaviour is directed at serving selfish interests, with some safety value for the originator of the informal interaction. Time constraint rarely informs it. This is an example of what the following reported case of informality by Okunoren (1968:108) clearly illustrates:

The chairman (of a public corporation) wanted some ten clerical officers employed who did not qualify for appointment according to the rules, and in spite of the fact there was no establishment provision to accommodate his wish. To safeguard my position, I minuted to him clearly explaining the establishment position and added that, if he still wanted the instruction carried out, he should give me a written directive. He became annoyed on receipt of the minute, accused me at board level of sabotage and charged me with self-love, observing that I wanted to establish my innocence in the event of an enquiry.

In an ideal bureaucratic setting, informal instructions or directives as issued by the chairman in the above quotation would be ridiculed by subordinate officers and yet their employment would still be secured. Such informal directives could ruin employees' career in de-bureaucracies if they are unable, in the face of enquiry, to establish "innocence" upon the execution of the informal directive issued to them.

**Unlimited or Uncircumscribed Flexibility:-** In de-bureaucratic public organizations, officers or members are encouraged to take initiative or discretion whose limits are not normally defined. While some officers or members of such organizations may be circumspect in the exercise of such initiatives or discretion, others might be very liberal in its application and hence encourage what Utomi (2005:5) calls "abusable discretion". Kiragu (2002:337) terms it as "excesses by... (Government) agencies' management" in the course of the utilization of the "freedoms" granted to such agencies.

The "quota system" or the principle of "Federal Character" as it is properly called in the 1979 and 1999 Nigerian Constitutions could encourage uncircumscribed flexibility in spite of the regulatory functions of the Federal Character Commission. Section 14(3) of both Constitutions states that:

The composition of the government of the Federal or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other societal groups in that government or in any of its agencies (Nigeria, 1979 & 1999).

It would be observed from the above that no limits are placed on the operations of the principle of the Federal Character in the said Constitutions. The principle does not even insist that only the best from the States of the Federation be recommended or taken, or that uniform criteria be adopted. While we agree with Otobo (2002:299) on the additional rationale (to the ones specified in the Constitutions) for the entrenchment of the Federal Character principle in the Constitutions, to wit, to ensure "...that appointments to (Federal) public service institutions fairly reflect the linguistic, ethnic, religions and geographic diversity of the country" and with Ejere and Akpeke (1996:236) that the Federal Character system does not imply that persons should be appointed to posts for which they are not basically qualified, the practice has been largely different. Situations had arisen in which lower officers in experience and even qualifications, had been hurriedly promoted to higher ranks by some State Governments, so that they could qualify to occupy some higher positions in the Federal public service. They have therefore been enabled to supersede their more experienced counterparts from other States, a phenomenon that is bound to offend the sensibilities and at least the performance attitudes of the more qualified and experienced public servants. As Otobo (2002: 299) aptly observed, in practice the Federal Character "has resulted in a confused balancing of the merit principle and quota system with a heavy dose of arbitrariness under military regime. This has had adverse consequences for both morale and performance in the civil service" It must be added that the situation has not fared much better in the civilian regime, unless it were a "democratic" regime, which enhances rule application.

In yet another instance, that is the appointment of Permanent Secretaries in Nigeria, we can cite another effect of uncircumscribed flexibility in de-bureaucratization which in this case has been called politicization. Sections 157 (2) (d) and 188(2)(c) of the 1979 Constitution and sections 17(2)(b) and 208 (b) and (c) of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria respectively have empowered the Head of State or Governor to appoint persons to the posts of Head of Service or Permanent Secretary. Oyovbaire (1980: 282) had thought the such appointments would be made from within the service and the politicization would be operated "with a lack of ridicule and political sensibility". But some appointments had been made from outside the services and there has been a lot of victimization, which have tended to contradict Oyovbaire's, confidence in the matter. For example, in "Kaduna State two appointments had been made to offices as Permanent Secretary from outside the civil service" (Murray, 1981 342). This practice had also taken place in Bendel State (now Delta and Edo States) under Governor Ambrose Alli's regime, 1979 -83.

The answer as to whether unlimited flexibility would promote the desired effectiveness and efficiency as already stated, is obviously in the negative, as it would certainly encourage some square pegs to be fitted into round holes in appointments, promotions, business, etc. In business, it may promote uncertainty in investors which has deleterious effects especially on the economy. Iyoha (2005:24) puts it thus:

Different types of uncertainty may be relevant to the investment decision.... (But) the uncertainty arising from erratic policy reversals is likely to have a significant effect on investment. Trade reforms is a case in point. If economic agents are not persuaded that a trade reform measure is permanent (i.e., stable), they will postpone any action.

Of course, such decision and action might never be made to taken, thus constituting a loss to the economy. The pathology of uncircumscribed or unlimited flexibility occasioned by de-bureaucratization can rightly qualify to be labelled as arbitrary, which could adversely affect the morale and

performance of not only the top but, in fact, most personnel of public organizations in Nigeria.

**Personalization:-** This represents the opposite of the pathology of impersonality levelled against bureaucracy. De-bureaucratization encourages personalization which is depicted by a situation that is intended to cater for, or to be tailored to, the desires of a particular person (Chambers English Dictionary, 1990). In personalization situation, the rules are, of course, marginalized or compromised, so that personal interests could be served. The organization or political system is virtually run like a personal property. The final decisions must suit the personal desires and interests of the leadership. Thus, the leadership can intervene at any time and interfere with rule implementation at any location of the organization or polity in order to cater for personal interests or desires. The lower officials also take a cue from the leadership to operate to meet personal interests and desires especially of their clients or applicants and other participants, including all those who seek one service or the other from the organization or political system.

Consider, for instance, a situation in which a favourite intends to apply for a position in an organization and submits his credentials for pre-advertisement assessment. They are found to be deficient and to assist him, there is, of course, some flexibility with the requirements for employment in order to suit the deficient qualifications of the favourite. And, then, he gets the job. This is an example of personalization. Another form of it borders on what some government officers in Nigeria are reported to be doing. In some cases public officials simply ignore the rule or law and take personal initiatives, which are of course generally negative. For example, there are frequent reports of personalization of administration by the Local, State and Federal governments in the electronic media, which can be found in the radio and television station archives in Nigeria. The print media also report quite a lot of personalization in the administrative behaviours of public officers with the general consequences of impropriety or corruption in their actions. Almost on a daily basis there are reports in the print media on personalization of administration and hence the attendant impropriety or corruption in Nigeria. Some of the personalized behaviours have been so extreme that they have attracted screaming headlines in some print media as for example, "looting of Local Government" (Newswatch, 2001:54) and "How Governors Ruined Nigeria" (Tell, 2005).

The consequences of personalization of administrative behaviour or activity in public organizations in Nigeria are only negative. Even though Nwabuzor (2003:22) notes that some of these "personal choices" which are some characteristics of personalization of public office usage "may be rational at the micro personal level", he also rightly asserts that they are "extremely dysfunctional at the macro level".

The effects of personalization of administrative behaviour or action which arise from de-bureaucratization have been ably summarized by Ake (2002) when he stated that:

... political insecurity arising from the alienation of the state from society impels... (politicians) to monopolize power often in a personal way. Once there is a personal rule at the top, it bends bureaucracy to all the means, which are antithetical to bureaucratic organization.

The way personal rule bends bureaucracy, so it does to de-bureaucracy or de-bureaucratic organization. It should also be added that personalization not only alienates at the political system level but also in individual public organizations in Nigeria. De-bureaucratization encourages personalization of administrative behaviour to satisfy personal interests and needs. It should also be added that personalization of public administration greatly limits competition, as the stage is usually set for the achievements of personal interests. Without competition only very marginal results can be achieved.



**Limitation of De-bureaucratization/De-compartmentalization:-** De-bureaucratization can result in de-categorization or de-compartmentalization with its attendant dysfunction. It is, simply put, a situation in which an employee can belong to, or work in, more than one department simultaneously. Why, it has been queried, for example, following workload available, can one and one-half typists not serve each of two contiguous departments (de-compartmentalization), making total of three instead of having to employ two typists for each of the departments (compartmentalization), making a total of four? (see Hicks and Gullett, 1975: 147). In a de-bureaucratic organization, this would easily happen, with its attendant flexibility.

In de-compartmentalization, in which the third typist is appointed to serve two departments simultaneously, he would be very difficult to manage: he would manage his affairs and the two superiors rather than be managed by them, thus playing on their intelligence (Imhanlahimhin, 1999:54). The situation could also encourage truancy and the typist could magnify his workload and pester the organization for special recognition and remuneration to a point of self frustration. His serving two masters could place him in a position of internal contradiction, ambivalence and divided loyalty. He could easily be suspected of disloyalty and leakage of information by either of the superiors and his training could be difficult by oscillating between two different specializations. Finally, resources could easily be misused.

In the face of the difficulty in exercising effective control which may be associated with overlapping jurisdiction in de-compartmentalization, confusion and indeed low level performance would be experienced or would result. Inadequate documentation may also be an associated problem. All this is akin to the situation obtainable in Taylor's suggested functional foremanship, which has been heavily criticized as operationally problematic (see, e.g., imhanlahimhin, 1999). In the end, as already stated, less would be achieved.

**Laziness:-** De-bureaucratization encourages laziness, that is disinclination to exert oneself to discharge duties or responsibilities within, or on, scheduled dates. Put differently, failure tolerance in the discharge of duties or responsibilities is quite high in de-bureaucratization. It is different from red tape whose attributes include rigidity and routines.

Some of the explanations for laziness in de-bureaucratization are as follow. First is the fact that it permits quite a lot of uncircumscribed flexibility in rule application. The circumspection exercised by bureaucrats in actual rule application would vary with the discretion of each bureaucrat, which could range from minor through medium to large restraints, where the latter equates to great caution in rule application. Second, the attitude to work of public servants in Nigeria is very relaxed unlike in the bureaucratic setting where there tends to be anxiety to conform to obviate sanctions. We are not advocating anxiety for Nigerian public servants. Sanctions are very remote in de-bureaucratic organizations while predominant in the bureaucratic. Therefore public servants can take things in their strides. Third, there is the *esprit de-crops* which predominates in de-bureaucratic organization. It is much higher in such organizations than the bureaucratic. Staff members are so empathic that they are prepared to stick out their necks to ensure or promote the freedom of their colleagues, even if it means fixing up stories on their behalf.

The most prominent attributes of laziness include deadlines that are hardly kept in de-bureaucratic organizations. Therefore, postponements of events are common place. The conduct of interviews, release of interview results, offer of appointments, conduct of examinations, release of examination results, even where there is no manifest serious problems, get postponed without deep remorse. At best there is an accompanying phrase of "regret for Inconvenience caused by postponement". These are

common experiences especially in public organizations, including the universities in Nigeria.

Amongst the major implications of laziness in Nigeria are long lag periods in obtaining responses to inquiries in public sector organizations, delay in attending to the public, and a lack of customer orientation in public services delivery (Otobo, 2002: 306). Other implications include bureaucratic dominance of society because civil or public servants are indeed not "servants" but "master" as we had noted that they take things in their strides. Laziness leads to delays in service delivery, which is in addition to poor delivery to the end users. And, of course, the cost of doing business in Nigeria is therefore on the high side. It must be noted here that those problems may not be attributed to laziness only but it is a serious part of them.

**Goal Displacement:-** De-bureaucratization displaces goals. The inability to achieved the planned goals of an organization with the agreed instruments or rules and or means or resources, which nevertheless have been utilized, amounts to goal displacement at whatever level of the organization or polity. It may amount to what Thompson (1961:16) called an "inversion of ends means". Whereas bureaucratic procedural concern could be said to largely account for goal displacement in bureaucratic organizations, de-bureaucratic behaviour displaces goals in de-bureaucratic organizations because of its rather unguided or arbitrary display of power.

In Nigerian public organizations, the display of power and hence goal displacement has been manifested in many respects, including what Ikpe (2001:282) referred to as "the perennial arbitrary purges since 1975" or de-procedural termination of appointments of employees whether competent or above board or not. This arbitrariness gained entry into the Nigerian public organizations with the 1975 mass retrenchment (dubbed as purge) of public employees. The phenomenon was perpetrated in 1984 by the Buhari regime, in 1991 by the Babangida regime and in 1996 by the Abacha regime. In 2000, some State' public servants (e.g., Edo, Delta, Ondo, etc.) were retired with different years of service arbitrary, ranging from 21 to 31 years of service instead of the normal 35years. In the case of the 1975 mass retrenchment, the greatest weakness levelled against the civil servants was what has been called "role expansion" of the civil service (Joseph, 1991:76) which made the "higher civil servants" to assume political roles in the absence of political chief executives such as ministers. Even after the appointment of ministers, General Grown who was the then Head of State still retained the services of the "political civil servants" because of his high confidence in them, for policy advice and information which he rated over the ministers' (Joseph, 1991:78:79).

If properly executed, the 1975 retirement should have been restricted to the "higher civil servants" who had been politicized, but the role expansion concept was used largely to mass retire civil servants, including the junior ones who did not belong to the said group of higher civil servants involved in role expansion activities. Herein lay some arbitrariness in the exercise and hence goal displacement as the exercise started to breed insecurity and lethargy instead of security and full dedication in the civil servants. It also displaced one of the goals of the civil service which is to have a core of experienced and competent or highly productive or performance work force as the retirement exercises have always cut across the civil service to include all manners of staff, whether competent or not.

A unique difference between goal displacement by bureaucratic means and that by de-bureaucratization is that in the former, the offending or limiting bureaucratic mechanism or behaviours could be formally amended or corrected as appropriate. On the other hand, the goal displacement forced by de-bureaucratization cannot be formally amended. It renders more havoc.

#### IV: RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE DE-BUREAUCRATIZATION IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGERIA

From our conceptualization and discussion of bureaucratization, de-bureaucratization and bureau-pathologies, it can be observed that de-bureaucratic public organizations in Nigeria, which are the new attractive alternatives to the Weberian ideal bureaucratic ones also contain pathologies. But they appear not to have been generally highlighted and discussed in the literature. Therefore, the rapidly expanding call for and application of de-bureaucratization, which is properly called "deregulation" in Nigeria, can only be supported in this paper in the light of its enlightened conception. This implies that de-bureaucratization should be operated as a tendency away from bureaucratic mechanisms, with due regard to the values of modern organization, including regard for order (Caiden, Halley and Maltais, 1995), and the promotion of organizational interests, members' satisfaction, and positive results orientation to the society. It should not be operated for the satisfaction of selfish, patron or political party interests.

No public organization can survive and render satisfactory service and transparent accountability to its publics without adequate bureaucratization. Therefore, de-bureaucratization is synonymous with limited adequate bureaucratization and its proper implementation. It does not connote the non-implementation of the available laws, rules, etc. and, therefore, arbitrary actions and behaviours. Specifically, de-bureaucratization in public organizations in Nigeria could be enhanced through the following:

First, public organizations should, by and large, promote certainty in their operations. This means that much as de-bureaucratization is a welcomed development, the available rules should be properly enforced. Such will reduce arbitrariness and enhance acceptable service delivery equity, fairness and happiness of employees in the organization. Thus, the organization will be taken quite seriously in its dealings and its image will be shored up. Back and forth operations consequent upon inconsistencies will be greatly reduced. Resource wastages (including time, materials and financial) will also considerably be reduced. On this matter, Dibia (2000:272) advises that "law enforcement needs to occur responsibly in Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century"

Second, much as informality in de-bureaucratic public organizations cannot be ruled out, because it is part of the concept, reasonable efforts should be made to considerably reduce it in critical or sensitive areas. These include appointments, promotions and query directives, as well as financial matters, irrespective of the speed needed to accomplish the job. Such sensitive areas must be handled with due process absolutely observed. Since de-bureaucratization encourages *esprit de corps*, no attempt should be made to undercut a colleague or a subordinate staff through informal instructions that, when executed, could result in future embarrassment and put the staff's appointment in jeopardy.

Third, possible excesses of public organizations from uncircumscribed flexibility, which are offshoots of de-bureaucratization, are serious issues, which can be better handled through Oja's (1997) recommendation. He suggested that only the best should be recommended to take up space in the Federal character arrangement or operationalization. It is hoped that the Federal Character Commission in Nigeria will be able to reduce considerably the potential or possible excesses in this matter. An informed recommendation on this matter also has to accommodate the strict application of the limited rules available.

Fourth, public organizations in Nigeria should, even in the face of de-bureaucratization, strive to advance the corporate interests over personal ones, because even legitimate personal interests are also served in the process, but not the other way round. As we pointed out earlier, Nwabuzor (2003) hand noted quite rightly that "personal choices" might be rational at the micro level but dysfunctional

at the macro level. Competitiveness will be enhanced when personalization in public organizations in Nigeria is drastically reduced.

Fifth, de-bureaucratization encourages de-compartmentalization to the peril of the public organization. As Appleby (1978) has correctly stated, public administration or government is different from the private sector, where the end justifies the means. Instead of de-compartmentalization of staff which could possibly bring about outcry, frustration, confusion and counter accusations, it would be better to compartmentalize staff, so that they know their one line of reporting relationships, understand and operate in it properly. If need be, the work load of each staff could be increased with corresponding enhanced benefits, which will assure acceptable service delivery, rather than de-compartmentalize and experience all manners of problems as had been highlighted earlier in this paper.

Sixth, bureaucratic dominance, which, we have noted is associated with the bureau-pathology of laziness can be tackled effectively if deadliness in public organizations are met. Laziness would be reduced, if not indeed eliminated. In democratic settings, bureaucrats or public servants should be dignified servants, not masters. Dignified servants are those who serve loyally and credibly by meeting the wishes and aspirations of the public through several means, including adhering to deadlines, in spite of other tempting problems. In fact, the desire to serve the public better can lead to greater desire to solve problems that can occasion laziness and delays.

In summary, and simply put, the adherence to the above enhancement measures will ensure effective and efficient results delivery to the advantage of the society and the happiness of organization members as there may not be goal displacement, or goal displacement would be greatly minimized.

#### CONCLUSION

The paper set to find out the bureau-pathologies that inhere in, or could be encouraged by, de-bureaucratic public organizations in Nigeria, since such organizations are the welcome alternatives to the much vaunted Weberian ideal type bureaucracies. It was also interested in the types, prevalence, manifestations, and how to handle the bureau-pathologies, in order to promote better public organizations, which of course, are the basic aim of de-bureaucratization.

After brief conceptualization of the crucial concepts of bureaucratization, de-bureaucratization and bureau-pathologies, the paper examined the literature, reflected on experience of the author as a former top administrator and discovered some critical pathologies that could be encouraged by de-bureaucratization of public organizations. The prevalent ones include inconsistency and unpredictability, informality and denials, unlimited or uncircumscribed flexibility, personalization, limitation of de-compartmentalization laziness and goal displacement. Their manifestations, which include basically arbitrariness in rule application, have been discussed in each of the items in section three of the paper. How to handle them in order to run better result-oriented public organizations in Nigeria, in the spirit of de-bureaucratization, occupied section four of the paper. The major recommendations are the promotion of certainly in public organizations, reasonable efforts to eliminate or considerably reduce informality, promotion of corporate interests over personal interests so as to encourage competitiveness, compartmentalization of staff even in the face of a little more cost to public organizations and extra efforts put into work by public officers so as to meet deadlines in Nigeria.

With the above recommendations, there is a lot of hope that de-bureaucratic public organizations in Nigeria would be better run to give the desired services to the people and also enhance the happiness of the employees and other participants. This paper promises to be useful to public organizations/administration in other African countries.

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