

The civil service in modern states : Practices and innovations

Author BOU HOOCH
Responsible for the publication

THE CIVIL SERVICE IN MODERN STATES : PRACTICES AND INNOVATIONS

The civil service in modern states : Practices and innovations (*)

Amar BOUHOUCHE

*Responsable d'équipe de recherche (**)*

It is a well known fact that the civil service in modern states is the backbone of any political system, and the functionaries of the state are supposed to transform laws and policies made by elected officials into tangible results. In order to insure continuity and objectivity in the implementation of state policies, the civil servants are recruited on the basis of "merit" system and competitive examination which intended to be practical in character and related to the duties that would be performed.

It is very interesting, however, to notice that the expansion of the activities of each state from selling stamps in the post office to the production of atomic bombs, has made it very difficult for bureaucrats to render services efficiently and respond rapidly to public needs. State systems of bureaucracy are viewed now-days by citizens and political leaders to be too large, too slow and too inefficient. The question which needs to be raised here is: Why? Is it because of ideological dissention within the political systems or because of profound disagreements over equality, democracy and hence the role of modern governments? Some civil servants tend to think that disagreements among successive government officials in different departments of state, have created conflicting ideas and expectations to the extent that no conceivable cadre of civil servants can meet.

(*) This paper is prepared for the XXII International Congress of Administrative Sciences to be held in Vienna, Austria, from July 13 to 17, 1992.

(**) Les membres de l'équipe de recherche sont :
Dr. Mansour BELRNAB,
Akila DIFALLAH,
Khdidja DJOUA.

In the judgement of other specialists, the fundamental questions which deserve to be raised here are related to the role of modern state and the expansion of government services to citizens which have created a wider array of public actors, both by broadening the concerns of traditionally powerful interests and by responding to and legitimizing new ones. Such expansion of services has resulted in centralized authority and strong influence by top political officials of different governments who became involved in the work of the civil service because they felt the need to attract voters by pursuing popular policies which buy them votes and satisfy as many people as possible.

The New Trends in Policy-Making

What is needed to be understood in our era is the big change in the mentality and actions in the functions of the civil servants in matters of policy-making, implementation and revision. In early years, most governments of the world relied on civil servants and allowed them to have executive responsibilities, to work on the basis that politics is separated from administration and to be selected on the basis of merit system. The aim of governments, at that time, was to get rid of corruption, or spoil system, and eventually create efficiency and credibility in the public sector. In brief, the civil service was considered to be a national asset transferred from one administration to the next in accordance with the wishes of the electorate. Its efficiency and effectiveness was viewed as the instrument of successive governments ⁽¹⁾. But in the seventies and eighties of this twentieth century, the political leaders or elected officials are coming into offices on anti-civil service platforms. For instance, the two former presidents of the United States, Carter and Reagan, "wanted to make bureaucracy more responsive to presidential policy initiatives. Administrators, particularly senior administrators, were thought to be too independent, too able to resist legitimate control by elected officials" ⁽²⁾. The same phenomenon took place in Algeria and Zambia where the leaders of the two nations advocated in the seventies and eighties that the ruling party must be the source of national policy. Mr. Kenneth Kaunda made it clear that the local administration was dominated by civil servants who were not accountable to the local people. In his view, "The party will not only be interested in working out of broad policies and objectives, it will be directly involved in the planning, organization, control and management of the entire administrative machinery of our nation" ⁽³⁾.

As a result of this change in mood and climate, the elected officials seem to have joined their compatriots in criticizing public servants and

accusing them of being too slow to respond to changes quickly and effectively and lost the confidence of the public. naturally, the change from political support to political attack on civil servants will have profound impact on the system of civil service. On March 2, 1978, Mr. Jimmy Carter, the President of the United States at that time, indicated that "The public suspects that there are too many government workers, that they are under-worked, overpaid and insulated from the consequences of incompetence". He recognized that there are some competent civil servants who are trying to do their best, but he asserts the fact that one has "to recognize that the only way to restore public confidence in the vast majority who do work well, is to deal effectively and firmly with those who do not" (4).

Does this mean that the elected officials are determined to fire incompetent civil servants or they want to create new corps of senior executive service which can respond quickly and efficiently to the initiatives of elected officials? The answer to this question is very complicated especially in the new era of interdependence between nations, the democratic process which led to greater political and popular participation, and the unwillingness of taxpayers to pay heavy costs for inefficient bureaucracy. Furthermore, the elected officials seem to be worried about the quality of services and competence in the governments, and that is why most heads of governments are looking for qualified technocrats who could help them to manage their governments effectively. What seems to be evident in this decade is the fact that political leaders are determined to give more power to their political appointees at the expense of senior civil servants. This trend suggests that the civil servants will have to focus on the execution of policies and leave the task of policy making to political appointees. However, the strengthened political control over civil servants has created the fear that may make bureaucracy overly politicized.

Why there is need for change ?

In early years, most governments were motivated to act as a positive force in each nation by rendering important services that the market could not supply to the people, moved quickly to give opportunities to underprivileged citizens, sought to bring about a shift in the distribution of national income, and provided education to the majority of the people (5). Nowadays, the civil service has become a confusing network "which rejects merit, tolerates poor performance, permits abuse of legitimate employee rights, and mires every personal action in red tape, delay

and confusion" (6). This is the view of former president Jimmy Carter who led the campaign against bureaucracy and created confusion over the role of government in modern society. As it is the case in many countries, most governments want to convince the public that reforms in the civil service are needed, and incompetent bureaucrats would be fired immediately. Furthermore, the changes in the field of civil service are needed because the public is disturbed by scandals, evidence of corruption, red tape, abuses of authority and favoritism in public services. These bad practices, revealed by the press and news media, have tarnished the image of governments, and consequently resulted in discrediting political regimes. These negative aspects of the public bureaucracies all over the world have induced political leaders to introduce reforms which could enhance the quality of government services and generate pride and efficiency in the public sector.

What is very bizarre about the bad image of civil servants in the minds of the public is that most citizens tend to think that government services should be as efficient as those provided by the private sector. They fail to understand and realize that: (1) the public funds are derived from taxation in order to be spent on specific projects, (2) the authority to act is based on fixed laws, and (3) all actions have to be justified and verified by public officials and citizens. In brief, the public does not realize that public servants have to keep writing reports to elected officials everyday. Each time there comes a new boss he will change the rules of work and tries to give a new look to his department, and the state laws prevent any civil servant from making changes in the system. It is very hard to get rid of duplicated and unnecessary positions because they were created by the law. Then, one has to understand the facts that if the civil services are costly and there is a waste of energies and many people did not have enough to do, that is largely because many of the jobs were not created out of necessity but rather out of friendship. Unlike the private sector, the aim of the civil servants is to render services to the public and serve their bosses and, therefore, the service is more important than the price or making a profit. If the government's civil services have become the dumping ground for political appointments that is the fault of elected officials and not the civil servants (7).

Perhaps it can be detected from this analysis that there are well known causes which have slowed down the efficiency and the performance of the civil servants even though that varies from one country to another. But the question is how to make the necessary changes and adjustments so that the civil servants can respond effectively to the needs of the public? naturally, criticism of public civil servants by their

compatriots and accusing them of being inefficient and wasting public money will not solve such problem. They should be able to understand the reality and face it, and eventually put pressure on elected officials who set up the rules of the game. If the people want to introduce the real changes and reforms in the civil service, they must turn to the elected officials and ask them to change the rules because the anomalies which emerged from the daily practices have come from:

1. The desire of political leaders to create jobs which led to overloading the systems of government.
2. The rapid expansion of the civil service and the lack of training.
3. The direct involvement of central authorities in the execution of policies to be pursued and their determination to win popular support even though the state has limited means to fulfill their promises.
4. The sharp differences in the vision of elected leaders in the policies to be followed and executed by the civil servants.
5. The inability of elected officials to simplify procedures of work and pave the way for flexibility in administrative work.
6. The allocation of resources for political reasons in order to win political support of highly influential individuals and groups.

The Search for New Methods of Work

After discussing the flaws and anomalies in modern bureaucracy, perhaps it is very easy to understand why the dominant role of bureaucracy in modern states has been declining and it is time to search for new methods of work which could enable state civil servants to handle emerging crises and serious issues which made life very complicated to members of national and international communities. The question which has to be raised here is how to restore confidence in the public sector and attract the best qualified experts to work in the governments and revive the integrity and dignity of the public civil service? Perhaps it is very strange to notice here that the decline in the quality of the civil service and the erosion of public trust in the governments has come at a time when the public is demanding that governments should play positive roles in solving economic problems, helping the poor, giving opportunities to low income students to receive very good education and come up

with initiatives which could reduce tension and bring stability to modern societies. In brief, what is at stake today is not only the declining role of bureaucracy but also the negative image of the public about the programs of governments and the democratic process itself in modern states. In a way, what we are saying is that there is an urgent need to make a comprehensive review of the public service in order to find its place in modern governments.

Naturally the best strategy for reform is to *make administrative procedures more comprehensive*, more efficient and more effective⁽⁸⁾. These are the main tasks of elected officials and civil service leaders. They must work together to change the internal structures and methods of work in order to improve the performance and obtain tangible results. In other words, the civil service must learn from the business sector and introduce flexible measures which facilitate the process of achieving the established goals, without waiting for the permission of the superior officials. This method of work requires, however, the willingness of policy-makers and administrators to pursue the policies of management by results. Furthermore, this method of work requires delegation of authority and decisions to be taken on the spot of work in order to rectify anomalies effectively.

The second method of work is related to *the quality of candidates*, which is the key issue in any attempt to improve the performance of the civil service. What we mean by this is the quality of leadership on the level of the senior executive system. It is evident that in order to improve the quality of the civil service, each government must succeed in attracting talented individuals who are capable of making the right decisions in the right moment. Like in the arena of a football game, the coach can win a game if he has recruited talented players and they can prove their competence on the field and in front of millions of spectators that they are up to the level.

It is very obvious that modern governments are very complex and the demands on the public services are increasing rapidly. This means that future policies of most governments will shift from the old practice of creating jobs in the overcrowded public sector to new policies of self-help and self-reliance. Given the limited resources of any government, the elected officials and employees of any government will have to face the new challenges and make the work force very productive. Only the most qualified and talented top civil servants can help state services to meet the needs imposed by a changing world. In other words, the focus on recruitment of the most qualified civil servants means that the best way to make improvement in the public sector is to reduce the number of recruited

individuals and raise the salaries so that the civil service will be attractive to talented individuals. As a result of giving importance to quality at the expense of quantity, the salaries can be increased without imposing heavy taxes and creating animosity and hostility of the public.

The third method of work which needs to be taken into consideration is *revising job descriptions*. This means that the duties must be redefined and responsibilities to be redistributed according to the real needs of employers and services to be rendered to the public. Perhaps it is evident nowadays that the sector of public service suffers from overstaffing, lack of quality of services, and overspending without producing the goods needed by modern societies. The politicians must realize that they cannot solve the problem of unemployment by overstaffing the public services. There is no doubt that the decline of quality and performance of civil servants is due to the fact that public officials of different governments are influencing, for their interests, the work of the civil service because they have felt the need to attract voters by pursuing popular policies which buy them votes and satisfy as many people as possible.

The fourth method of work which is essential for any progress in the field of the civil service is *developing creativity*. What is meant by this idea is that the policy-makers and administrators in the civil service need to go beyond the routine and bureaucratic work and develop new mechanisms for solving complicated problems. They must work to increase the information available to them and look for new ideas. They ought to deal with the difficult issues and find cures to new crises as soon as they emerge. Like in the case of Japan, which lacked resources, the government of Tokyo decided since 1962 to undertake administrative reforms which changed the face of the Japanese society. Based on the recommendations of the Commission for Administrative Reform, the government of Japan decided to make administrative procedures more comprehensive, more efficient and more effective. When it became evident to the government that the primary goal of the Japanese society is to produce vigorous culture and a prosperous economy in the world arena, it came up with new ideas and a strategy aimed at emphasizing self-help efforts, modifying the role of public administration to give the private sector a freer reign, and making positive contribution to the international community ⁽⁹⁾.

New Environment Requires New Reforms

As we have indicated earlier, technology and innovation are the leading techniques and methods of work which will facilitate the process

of improving the quality of the civil service, because modern governments are faced with the dilemma of increasing demands and declining resources. It is very unlikely that the bad image of public bureaucracies in the eyes of the public will improve or change significantly if elected officials and administrators do not take seriously the idea of innovation in running public services and meeting the expectations of citizens to receive good services without paying extra taxes. Time has come for public servants to face the realities of this decade and prove to the public that reforms and innovation are not limited to new machines and equipments but can be expanded to organizing personnel and structuring tasks. Modern states need to be able to identify and remove obstacles to innovation. They should be able to focus on personnel policies, procurement, budget practices and relationship with the private sector ⁽²⁾ ⁽¹⁰⁾.

The two questions which deserve to be raised here are the following: How can the civil servants of any state develop a new concept of interaction between the administrators and the administred? And how can public services be improved and respond to the changing environment in the new era of interdependence and regional alliances? In order to give tentative answers to these questions we need to be aware of the causes of stress on the civil service and come up with new reforms which enable the civil servants to meet the needs of modern society and face the realities of our time with new priorities, with new techniques and new approaches. It can be said without hesitation that the end of the cold war in the 1990s and the tendency to create regional alliances and new horizons for close cooperation between states, will require changes in existing laws and regulations.

The *first* strategy in reforming the civil service is, undoubtedly, *decentralization*. Perhaps it is evident from the uprising in the nations of the former communist block and the third world that the central and rigid control from above has resulted in social discontent and rebellion against the central authorities who were interested in strengthening their monopoly of power more than understanding and solving the real issues on the local level. This spontaneous change which did not come from the ruling political parties but came from masses who wanted to play positive roles in their development and examine the vital issues and ideas which effect their lives directly, and give them a sense of their collective power.

As everybody knows, the problem of central control is very useful to elected officials who are interested in imposing their point views and keeping everything under control, but it is not good for local officials who

are deprived of their rights to think or have flexibility and initiative they need to execute state policies. Furthermore, the desire to impose political control and avoid mistakes has resulted, very often, in bringing up conflicts and problems to higher levels for decisions which lead to an endless chain of command, stifling any initiative to decide on the local level and implement state politics⁽¹¹⁾. In brief, decentralization is one of the key elements of improving the function of the civil service of any modern state because it offers opportunities to neutralize some of the commonly accepted problems of centralized, hierarchical, bureaucratic structures. By giving more authority and resources to local authorities, the civil servants will have the initiative to make decisions quickly, will respond to the needs of clients rather than to their superiors, will be able to make the necessary adaptation to local conditions and programs, will allow local municipalities to focus on their choices in programs and priorities. It is very clear that decentralization, especially if it is accompanied with the financial aid, will induce local authorities to work very closely with concerned citizens about the development of their communities. It will also reduce central costs and redistribute the wealth in rural areas⁽¹²⁾. What needs to be emphasized here is the fact that the time has come for local officials to induce community leaders to join in and give advice, and even invite them to participate in the process of discussing issues and solutions to the problems facing each community.

The *second* strategy in reform has to be the *system of revenue*. Naturally, this second step in reform is the key for the success of decentralization. As we have indicated earlier, the people do not want a passive government. Instead, they want a government that renders more services and spends less. The main question is: Who is going to pay for the services and the civil servants who are hired to meet the needs of the public? Most governments have realized that it is very difficult for any leader to lay off government workers and perhaps it is more difficult to raise taxes and generate more funds. The former British prime minister, Mrs. Thatcher stated in 1985 that "The government would no longer spend so near to half of The British people's money for civil servants. Less public spending would mean lower taxes"⁽¹³⁾. In January 1992, President George Bush told the Congress that he would need to borrow \$ 399, 1 billion dollars this year to keep the American government running. By the end of next year, 1993, he estimated the government would be \$ 4,4 trillion in debt. According to the official statistics, the federal government spending on highways, space, environment protection, education, housing, mass transit, prisons, courts, forests, natural resources, research, agriculture, commerce, community development and medical care has been increased from \$ 590,920 billion dollars in 1982 to

1,442,477 billion dollars in 1992. That is an increase by 144% in 10 years ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Unfortunately, not all governments have the dollar and ability to borrow from the local market and render services to the people, like in the United States. The question of revenue for services has to be revised, and new regulations must replace the outdated procedures. Financial autonomy and new methods of generating revenues for the institutions of the state are the keystone for the survival of the civil service.

It goes without saying that traditional form of government meant sluggish centralized bureaucracies preoccupied with rules and hierarchy. The problem is that most central governments tend to keep the money in the hands of central agencies and spend the money on non-productive projects, like armaments and equipments wanted by different ministries. This means that the life or death of the local projects in rural areas is in the hand of central authorities. It is obvious that the one who controls the purse controls everybody.

Naturally, the question of funding public services cannot be solved only by modifying the rules of taxation and sharing revenue between central and local authorities. Wealthy people have to contribute and pay fees and tuitions in order to send their children to public schools and universities. Furthermore, successful hospitals, banks and foundations have to contribute to the research projects and institutions of higher education which produce top scholars and educators for their nation.

Without revising the system of revenue, most governments will find it very difficult to have sufficient money to attract qualified civil servants and deal effectively with the new problems like international competitiveness, tax revenues, deteriorating public schools and universities, soaring health care and persistent welfare programs. In short, the people want a better government which does not cost its citizens much, or force them to pay high prices for the services they receive. In a way, they want to make the government run more like business, to fire incompetent, under-worked and overpaid employees so that they will not be obliged to pay higher taxes for the services they receive ⁽¹⁵⁾.

The third strategy of reforms is *recruitment*. What is very bizarre about state functionaries nowadays is that most of the individuals in the civil service in the third world nations are interested in becoming government employees because there is security in employment and the check will be coming at the end of the month regardless of the performance and the tangible results to be achieved. This is the case especially

in developing nations where the state is the leading employer and industries are still very weak. This practice and attitude of civil servants that the state has money to pay them no matter what they do, has to be changed, and most states will have no choice but to modify the system of recruitment and attract top engineers and scientists who can make innovations and produce goods as well as services in the public sector.

This bad image of the public service as a career of last resort and non-productivity and lack of creativity has to be removed from the mind of the public. While it is a fact that bureaucracies do not contribute to national development in the sector where they operate, but nobody would deny or ignore the indispensability of a large public bureaucracy in any modern society. It is impossible to make any social progress and carry out essential public services without a large and reasonably effective civil service ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Methods of recruitment have to be changed if governments are determined to prove to the public that they can compete for excellent employees and they are committed to excellent management. The first criteria of recruitment has to be the real need for top specialists in engineering, science and high quality skills as well as morality. Governments have to get rid of ideas of making contracts with university students who come to work in the civil service as soon as they graduate. This is the case in North African states where schools of public administration are used as institutions to produce faceless mass of bureaucracy. From now on, it will be much better to hold examination for graduate students who have excellent academic records and motivated to produce and accept challenging positions. Furthermore, public agencies should be able to encourage universities to establish internship programs in their curriculums so that interested candidates will be observed and evaluated during the period of training.

As for the agents of execution and clerks, the best method of recruitment is to leave it up to each agency to recruit the applicants who have the skills and can meet its urgent needs. In-service training can be provided if the applicants are not familiar with the procedures of work.

What is alarming in the area of recruitment is that the leading specialists and talented graduate students are not interested in jobs offered by governments because of low salaries and such jobs in the civil service are considered to be routine and do not allow them to use their abilities fully. Furthermore, the talented candidates feel that the civil service offers them a little opportunity to show initiative and creativity. The President of

Harvard University, Derek Bok, noted in his 1988 commencement address that less than 5% of the graduates are interested in government service as a career ⁽¹⁷⁾.

The *fourth* strategy in reforms is *remuneration* which is tied to the question of recruitment. In our days, it is the labor market which determines where talented functionaries go. Governments will find it very difficult in the future to retain experienced and capable civil servants who are needed to carry out complicated tasks and duties in modern states if they do not receive salaries and benefits equal to their colleagues in the private sector. The only way to overcome this problem of pay is to reduce the number of civil servants, and raise the level and pay of administrators. It is evident that in an open market, the one who pays will attract senior executives. As we have seen in the republics of the former Soviet Union, qualified engineers and scientists are heavily sought and recruited by other nations which needed them to produce weapons and upgrade their industrial projects. This means that if governments fail to compete and retain top executives, the inevitable result will be the decline of public services.

What we are saying in a way is that the credibility of the public service is tied to the reputation and performance of qualified individuals. Good salaries of top executives minimize corruption and turnover in the public sector.

The *fifth* strategy of reforms is in the area of *training*. It is a fact that training is essential for making correct decisions in work and helps civil servants to perform well with less supervision. But unfortunately, training either in pre-service or in service has become a routine no more no less. Trainees are supposed to learn new techniques in work which give them a frame of reference for thinking and motivate them to work. But what happened after that is something else. Different departments stick to their familiar rules of work, and what is learned in training schools becomes merely a theory for general knowledge. This means that there is discrepancy between what is learned and what is applied in reality. That is why in-service training is more relevant today because it gives a chance to civil servants to become familiar with the real rules of work and, consequently, be eligible for promotion in the future. The real need today in training is to diagnose and make a real assessment of employee strengths and weaknesses, and then make the necessary arrangement for developing the skills of individuals. The success of this approach of training requires that the programs are well defined and objectives are very clear. Furthermore, training has been used as a method for promotion. This is evident

from the experience of public schools of public administration in the Arab world. In order to be promoted, state employees are sent to training schools so that they can be eligible for promotion after completing successfully the courses of training. This approach does not seem to be sound and it may be considered just another routine in work. The emphasis in training should be on developing skills and techniques in the area of specialization, but promotion is based on the ability of trained employees to prove in work that they are using the acquired knowledge effectively and efficiently, and therefore, deserve to be promoted.

The *sixth* strategy of reforms is in the area of *simplifying procedures of work*. It is obvious today that the scope of work in each government has been wider than ever, and with the transition from industrial domestic economy to a global, post industrial era, the traditional era, the traditional procedures of work in each government have to be changed. They have to deal with new realities and new problems like international competitiveness and cooperation in some cases ⁽¹⁸⁾. The goal of the public sector today is to be oriented toward management by objectives. This means that the laws of the civil service should be broad enough to allow different departments to set their own rules of work. Furthermore, the end of the cold war has opened a new era of cooperation between states. This change should lead to the development of new laws which facilitate the process of mutual aid and sharing information in all fields of knowledge. The ability of governments to simplify the procedures of work will make it easy for the civil servants in any state to respond effectively to the new forces which are shaping this international society. It is obvious that if the civil servants are going to be able to respond both to the growth of public service and the growing demands of services, each state must make the necessary modifications in the procedures and increase the flexibility in the work.

The *seventh* strategy of reforms is in the area of *developing creativity* in the public sector. Since the public is disillusioned with the standard routine of the civil service, perhaps the time has come for the civil servants to try and change the way in which public policy-makers and administered public services are carried out. The focus in the future should be on finding techniques and effective methods of identifying crucial problems, examining practical solutions to them and coming up with clear-cut alternatives to solve the emerging problems. In this way, the public servants will be able to use and exploit the data available to them and to the policy makers and upgrade the performance of the public servants.

In fact, some experts have advocated a new idea of removing scientists and engineers from the sector of services to the productive sector. It is quite clear that engineers and scientists can work and produce and create things like the private sector, but for administrators who work with the people and render services to them, the ability to be creative is very limited. Generally speaking, the administrators can exercise leadership, judgement and skills in their work, but it is very difficult to produce tangible results. The reasons why the class of scientists has not been separated from the administrators is that the specialists do not believe it is useful to create such fragmentation in the sector of the civil service. It is much better to keep one corps of state civil servants, even the public thinks wrongly that state employees contribute a little to the prosperity of modern society.

CONCLUSIONS

The dominant role of bureaucracy has been challenged by inflation, economic crises, greater demands for public services, decline of state revenues, international debts and unemployments. Perhaps, it is unthinkable for the leaders of any government to lay off its employees because there is no money available to pay them. To do that is to incite people to revolt and topple down any government that dares to threaten the jobs of its employees. In the meantime, it will be difficult for any elected official to advocate more taxes in order to generate sufficient revenue for state civil servants and win the election, especially in this era of liberalization and democratization. Furthermore, it is next to impossible for any government in the world to reduce the costs of the civil service by running it like private sector which does not have a parliament to approve its budget or laws to determine how to spend the money, or the desire to make money and profits. If, for one reason or another, governments reduce public services or abandon their help and assistance to the public, that will be the beginning of anarchy, rioting and social unrest.

So, what to do in such circumstances? It is undeniable that the civil servants absorb a large amount of public resources but at the same time have become the focus of society's hopes for a healthy balance between provision of public services and a reasonable burden of public expenditures ⁽¹⁹⁾.

It can be detected easily in this paper that essential changes have to take place in order to get rid of the bad image of public bureaucracy of governments which make the system of the civil service more productive

and innovative. There is an urgent need to pay attention to the key tools of work in the civil service such as knowledge, skills and abilities of trained civil servants. There are also key issues which deserve to be settled in order to introduce better services in public administration. They include: (1) The necessity of modifying and simplifying procedures of work, (2) reducing the hierarchial authority within public organizations of liberation of public employees from repressive hierarchies, (3) the participation of citizens, along with civil servants in building a great society, (4) reducing the political control by elected officials on funds and decisions to meet urgent needs of society, (5) introducing or strengthening the use of computer sciences, (6) putting emphasis on the idea of achieving positive results instead of limiting the role of civil servants to the execution of laws made by top officials who are not necessarily aware of the reality.

But the question which deserves to be asked here is: who can initiate reforms and rectify the anomalies and flaws in the civil service? Neither the public, which receives services, nor the civil servants, who are hired to render services to the masses, have the authority to make new laws and change the world or the activities of any government. Although the civil servants may have some discretion and limited authority to implement rules and render services the way they want, but the supreme authority is in the hands of elected officials either in the executive branch of government or the parliament. The main duty of the civil servants is to serve their bosses or superiors and not to replace them in policy-making. Unfortunately, public officials tend to exercise their authority in a way to prove that they carry out their responsibilities as fully as possible. This means that the solutions of national problems of any state are in the hands of elected officials who become very prudent once they occupy their chairs of responsibility and tend to delegate very little of authority to the civil servants because of the fear of losing control over the operation of public bureaucracy of because of the ferar that their subordinates will make the wrong decisions.

What is at stake, in reality, is the competence of governments and programs endorsed by elected officials. It is true that the public despises bureaucracy, its inefficiency, red tape, and poor quality of services, but the same public is aware of the fact that the role of the state is declining just at the time the state is growing in its power and influence ⁽²⁰⁾.

It can be said without hesitation that the causes of stress on the civil service are well known, but it is up to the elected officials and their administrators to make the necessary changes at the right time before it is

too late, and introduce new methods of work which would enable civil servants to meet the needs of modern society and face the new priorities with new techniques and new approaches. The best way to do that is to make a good analysis of the new changes in this decade and in 1980s, detect the anomalies which emerged and find the cure for them. Furthermore, it is time to take the advantage of the new changes which are taking place in the world after the end of the cold war and revise the procedures of work, especially in this era of regional alliances for international cooperation. The reforms in the civil service must go beyond modified measures of recruitment, training and raising pay for civil servants. Failure to introduce radical changes in the systems of the civil service of any modern government will undermine its ability to recruit and retain the most qualified scientists, computer engineers and senior career executives who manage the essential services of any government. It is very unfortunate to notice that the civil service has become a thicket or a collection of outmoded rules and regulations. The reforms which are needed the most, are the ones which make it easy to fire incompetent or underworked civil servants, and reward those employees who are carrying out their duties efficiently. This is the only way to restore public confidence in the civil service and consequently make bureaucracy responsive to the initiatives of elected officials and the public as well. But the big challenge to the civil service is the cooperation between governments and their employees. The growth in recent years of the political appointees must be curtailed because the political appointees are loyal to their bosses who put them in top positions and not committed to the promotion of the public service. Furthermore, this bad practice of bringing political appointees from outside the rank and file of administration will lead to the departure of top civil servants from governments, and it will be very difficult for any leader to retain the experienced civil servants who are supposed to ensure continuity in any government. At the same time, it is a necessity to put pressure on the civil servants and make them responsive to the needs of the public and to the initiatives of leadership. They must take their full responsibility and propose key decisions to their political leaders and prove their commitment to the public service. The worst thing which could happen and make things worse for the public service is to rely and trust political appointees instead of relying and trusting career specialists. This explains why politicians come and go, but the problems of the civil service do not go with them. They remain there with the civil servants and the newcomers, and this is the dilemma of the public civil service.

Footnotes

- (*) This paper is prepared for the XXII International Congress of Administrative Sciences to be held in Vienna, Austria, from July 13 to 17, 1992.
- (**) Les membres de l'équipe de recherche, sont :
Dr. Mansour BELRNAB, Akila DIFALLAH, Khidja DJOUA.
- 1) John Smith, "The Public Service Ethos" in *Public Administration*, Vol. 69, No 4 (winter) 1991, p. 519.
 - 2) "Civil Servants' Dangerous Discontent" in *Congressional Quarterly's Editorial Research Reports*, Vol. 2, No 10 (September 15, 1989), pp. 510-511.
 - 3) B.C. Chukolo, "Re-organization for Local Administration in Zambia: Analysis for the Local Administration" *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 5, No 1, 1985-1986, p. 73.
 - 4) *Quarterly's Editorial Research Reports*, *op. cit.* p. 511.
 - 5) Luther Gulick, "George Maxwell had a dream: Historical note with a comment on the future: in Frederick C. Mosher, *American Public Administration: Past, Present and Future*. The University of Alabama Press, 1976, p. 264.
 - 6) "Task Force Reports to the National Commission on the Public Service" in *Rebuilding the Public Service*, Washington, D.C. 1983, p. 11.
 - 7) Caroline E. Meyer, "For Businessmen in the Bureaucracy, Life is No Bed of Roses," in Marc Holzer and Ellen D. Rosen, *Current Cases in Public Administration*. New York: Harper and Row, 1981, pp. 239-247.
 - 8) Ku Tashiro, "Japan" in *Public Administration in Developing Democracies*, edited by Donald C. Rowat. New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc. 1988, p. 382.
 - 9) *Ibid.* p. 382.
 - 10) John F.W. Rogers, "Meeting Public Demands: Federal Services in the Year 2000", Washington, D.C., 1988, p. XIV.
 - 11) "Task Force Reports to the National Commission on the Public Service" in *Rebuilding the Public Service*, Washington, D.C. 1989, p. 19.
 - 12) James S. Wunsch, "Institutional Analysis and Decentralization: Developing an Analytical Framework for Effective Third World Administrative Reform", *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 11, No 5 (September-October) 1991, pp. 432-433.
 - 13) Geoffrey K. Fry, "The Thatcher Government, The Financial Management Initiative and The New Civil Service" *Public Administration*, Vol. 66, No 1 (Spring) 1988, p. 3.
 - 14) Mike Flaherty "How the Deficit Grew" in *The Wisconsin State Journal*, Sunday, issue of February 16, 1992, p. 1 and 10.
 - 15) Fox Butterfield, "Exponent of Government as BUssiness is Gaining Bigger Audience" *The New York Times*, February 17, 1992.
 - 16) Melton J. Esmen, "The Comparative Administrative Group of Public Administration: A Mid-Term Appraisal" published by *American Society for Public Administration*, 1966, p. 25.
 - 17) "Task Force Reports to the National Commission on the Public Service" in *Rebuilding the Public Services*, Washington, D.C., 1989, p. 84.
 - 18) Fox Butterfield, "Exponent of Government-as-business is Gaining Bigger Audience" *The New York Times*, February 17, 1992.
 - 19) Michael Lipsky, *Street-level Bureaucracy*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1980, p. 12.
 - 20) Curtis Ventris, "The Challenge of Public Service: Dilemmas, Prospects and Options" *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 51, No 3 (May-June) 1991, p. 278.