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THEME: ENHANCING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE IN A DEVELOPMENTAL STATE.

TOPIC: FROM DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION TO THE DEVELOPMENTAL STATE: CHALLENGES FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

The period immediately after World War II was characterized by, among other events, heightened interest in the then emergent nations of the Third World, including African countries. The decades of the 1950s and 1960s were vintage years at a time of faith and hope, in that there was unprecedented confidence in the developmental power of administrative and other tools and or techniques that were devised in the Western world. Much more specifically, there was hope that the history of the West, in terms of development and modernization, would be repeated in the Third World in general and African countries in particular.

However, contrary to the post-War era that was dominated by intellectual and development optimism, the 1970s and subsequent years witnessed a wave of disillusionment and despair regarding prospects for development in newly independent African countries. It was precisely during this period that analysts of the development process were in basic agreement that many Third World countries, and their bureaucracies, were sadly lacking in their capacity or ability to meet the demands and challenges of independence. In other words, there was realization that Third World governments and their bureaucracies faced completely new, staggering and unfamiliar responsibilities that they were ill-equipped to address. For this reason, there was broad-based consensus that what was needed, to alleviate the situation, was not only an economic revolution but more importantly an administrative transformation. Put differently, what was needed were revolutionary changes in the apparatus of the state and the civil service in order to enhance their capacity in bringing about socio-economic development via the administrative process.

In this paper, after a brief summary of definitional perspectives, we examine the key features of “development administration” and its agenda. We argue that the
term found its way into the development literature from the mid-1950s onwards and that, however, it wasn’t until the early 1960s that it gained widespread popularity as a distinct approach to the administration of development under extremely challenging and difficult situations, such as those that are found in the majority of Third World countries. In a critical examination of the successes and failures of the development administration movement, we further argue that had political and bureaucratic elites in the majority of less developed countries, including Africa, fully embraced the ideology of development and the pursuit of people-centred or people-driven development, many of the present day challenges of the developmental state would not be as formidable as they are.

Unprecedented and high food prices, fuelled by escalating oil import costs, have unleashed a humanitarian crisis of gigantic proportions which, in many countries of the Third World, have led to violent protests. The majority of African economies are increasingly incapable of creating adequate jobs to absorb large numbers of the unemployed, particularly the youth, some of whom, because of graduate unemployment and other forms of frustration, elect to migrate in search of jobs abroad. Commenting on the dilemma confronting the government in Swaziland, a Times of Swaziland editorial recently summed up the situation facing the country as follows:

“With no guarantee to health care, a poor system of education, no economic growth or investment and heavy reliance on food donations, this country is a disaster waiting to happen.....” (Times of Swaziland, June 3, 2008, 2).

The advent of the developmental state in Japan and other East-Asian countries, such as Taiwan, in the immediate post-World War II era, was characterized by a strong sense of political will and commitment to the goals of development by the governments of these nations. After a critical examination of the challenges facing the developmental state in African countries, we conclude the paper by arguing that the alleviation of the plethora of challenges facing the continent, including poverty, inadequate economic growth, unemployment and political instability, will
be insurmountable without a strong sense of political will and the pursuit of
democratic values, hence reference is made to the democratic developmental state.

**b) Development Administration and the Ideology of Development**

In as much as the post-War era was a period characterized by heightened
confidence in the developmental power of economic and administrative systems
and techniques of Western origin, it was also a time of intellectual optimism.
Besides scholarly interest and curiosity among Western researchers and
academics in so-called ‘traditional’ or transitional societies, Cold War political
considerations came into play in the sense that newly-independent Third-World
countries created a grey area of competition for spheres of influence by the then
super-powers, namely, the USA and USSR. Last but by no means least, Third
World countries, in the aftermath of World War II, presented an ideal environment
for the pursuit of economic interests, including the desire to secure economic
advantages by the developed countries and multi-national corporations (MNCs),
mainly from the West. Development administration emerged against a backdrop
of the realization that governments and their bureaucracies in less developed
countries needed to be recreated, renewed and revitalized in order to bring about
the development that is required in the transformation of societies (Gant, 1979).

In terms of definitional perspectives, the term ‘development administration’ was
discovered in the mid-1950s. However, it was not until the early 1960s that it
gained popularity as a distinct approach towards administering the development
process under extremely difficult situations, such as those circumstances that are
found in the majority of the Third World in general and African countries in
particular. As a term, development administration is the equivalent of
development economics and, to some extent, political development. A number of
authors have contributed to our understanding of the concept of development

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administration, chief among whom are Milton Esman, G.F. Gant, Bernard Schaffer and others.

Esman defines development administration as referring to those activities of government that promote economic growth, strengthen human and organizational capacities, enhance equality in the distribution of opportunities, income and power (Esman, 1969). On the other hand, Gant regards development administration as the management of policies, programmes and projects designed to achieve development goals and objectives. Finally, Schaffer is of the opinion that development administration is concerned with development policies, programmes and projects in those conditions in which there are peculiarly wide and new demands and in which there are peculiarly low capacities and severe obstacles to meeting these demands (Schaffer, 1969). Running through the foregoing definitions is the implicit assumption that development administration is that special kind of administration that is best-suited to the needs and challenges of less developed countries, where there are formidable obstacles in the road to development.

The dominant premise of development administration is that there are significant and fundamental differences between the administrative process in less developed countries and public administration in developed countries. In many respects, the notion of development administration questions the relevance of classical or traditional systems, concepts and methods of public administration to the demands and challenges of development in less developed countries. For instance, there are those who doubt the relevance of the classical Weberian bureaucratic model to the demands of development in less developed countries. The argument is that, having evolved from the experience of Western developed countries, traditional or classical administrative systems, concepts and methods of public administration were not designed to be responsive to the challenges of socio-economic development in the Third World. (Nef and Dwivedi, 1981).
In African countries, administrative systems were established in order to serve and protect the interests of colonial powers and not those of the colonies. Imperial governments, through the administrative apparatus of the colonial state, were concerned with such functions as the maintenance of law and order, the collection of taxes and the provision of limited services, such as few schools and roads, mainly to facilitate the exploitation and underdevelopment of the colonies. Above all, development administration seriously questions the centralized nature of classical or colonial administrative systems and or structures. Definitions of the development process put emphasis on the fact that one of its main objectives is the qualitative and quantitative transformation of people’s lives. This means that people are not only the target of the development process but are also the tools and or instruments by which the goals and objectives of development are accomplished. This means that, as a resource as well as beneficiaries of development, people must be perceived as key stakeholders and active participants in the development process. In view of these and other considerations, it is inconceivable how a highly centralized administrative system can facilitate popular participation in decision-making for development.

The discourse around development administration is in basic agreement that as an approach to the management of management the field (of development administration) has a distinct or clearly defined agenda or areas of concern, such as emphasis on innovation, experimentation, government intervention in the economy and building new capabilities. With regard to innovation, the argument is that the novel nature of the problems and challenges facing less developed countries demands that administrative organizations and institutions be structured in accordance with ecological or environmental factors and or variables. Basically, what this means is that there is a close relationship between administration and its immediate environment.

In fact, it was Fred Riggs who, in the early 1960s, formulated a theoretical framework known as the ‘ecology of public administration’. Rigg’s theory held the
view that public organizations, in order to better serve administrative and development goals, must conform to their socio-economic and political environment. In other words, they must be ‘innovative’ rather than ‘imitative’ of foreign or Western models of administration. In part, Rigg’s theoretical framework recognizes the fact that organizations and public administration in particular do not operate or exist in a vacuum or in isolation but, instead, impact on and, in turn, are affected by the immediate environment around them.

Another ‘item’ in the agenda for development administration is experimentation, the argument around which is that the road to development in less developed countries lies in experimenting and learning from the lessons of experience. In this regard, there is realization of the fact that due to oceans of diversity, there is no best way or path to development, hence each country is bound to take a different route. What this means is that there are many different paths and or destinations in the development challenge, such that the development process is not unilinear in the sense of being characterized by stages through all countries must pass, as argued by the American economic historian W.W. Rostow.

The argument around government intervention in the economy is that governments and their bureaucracies in less developed countries cannot afford to be passive participants in the development process. The dynamics of development administration are such that the role of government is crucial in the design, formulation and administration of development programmes and projects. Proponents of this view argue that government intervention should go beyond the regulation of an economy but should extend into the realm of facilitating or inducing fundamental as well as structural changes. It is in this context that the concept of the ‘administrative state’ emerged.

On the other hand, building new capabilities is anchored on the argument that the problems and challenges of development are often formidable, hence the imperative to find appropriate institutions and organizations that are better able
and placed to address these challenges. To this end, public organizations and institutions must be recreated and restructured to be able to adequately respond to the developmental needs and aspirations of the vast majority of the people. In this regard, development administration is closely associated with and also related to another term, that is, that of ‘administrative development’ which refers to the improvement, expansion and creation of administrative capacity. As Nasir Islam observed:

“Administrative development refers to the ability of administrative structures, institutions and organizations to cope with the formulation and execution of development plans, programmes and projects. Also, it includes the capacity of administrative personnel to perform development responsibilities efficiently.” (Islam, 1979).

Administrative reform, the establishment of new organizations, the restructuring of existing ones and other administrative improvements can all be subsumed under administrative development. These initiatives not only impact significantly on, but also are related to, the wider perspective of development administration. The relationship between administrative reform and development administration lies, inter alia, in the fact that the numerous challenges that are associated with the development process prove extremely difficult to address, especially when a country’s administrative apparatus has not been adequately adapted to the greatly changed demands of the post-independence era. In fact, it was several decades ago that distinguished authors, such as Waterston, observed that development in less developed countries is frustrated, not so much by inadequate financial and other resources, but by numerous inadequacies in the administrative machinery of Third World countries and their bureaucracies (Waterston, 1982).

c) Development Administration : A Critical Evaluation∗

Development administration, as a distinct approach to the management of public affairs under extremely difficult circumstances, such as those that are prevalent in Third World countries, first gained popularity and wide-spread appeal during its heydays in the 1950s and 1960s. During period, there also emerged the Development Administration Group (DAG) of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) which was a think-tank that occasionally conceptualized about development, the administration of public affairs and its challenges in less developed countries. Specifically, the DAG was a group of scholars, intellectuals, researchers and policy-makers who took an active interest in development and its challenges in the Third World. In terms of membership, the DAG was made up of such academic and intellectual heavyweights as Fred Riggs, William Siffin, Milton Esman, Dwight Waldo, Samuel Huntington, Lucian Pye and other notable scholars.

These intellectual pioneers, together with U.S.A. policy-makers, under the eigies of DAG, were mainly involved in technical assistance for public administration. To this end, they exported, to the Third World, a number of planning and administrative techniques, such as planning, programming and budgetary systems (PPBS), zero-based budgeting (ZBB) and other tools and or instruments of decision-making. However, despite earlier enthusiasm and vigour, the development administration movement began to show serious cracks and eventually collapsed in the late 1970s, an era that was characterized by some kind of intellectual depression and general disillusionment. For instance, instead of developing, many less developed countries slipped further down the abyss of poverty and underdevelopment. Earlier emphasis on industrialization and urbanization, as cornerstones of the development process, led to no trickle-down effect. Furthermore, growth in the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita occurred but at the expense of income distribution which remained skewed and or lop-sided. Violence, coups and other forms of unrest dominated the socio-economic and political landscape in the Third World in general and African countries in particular.
The collapse of the development administration edifice can be attributed to a number of reasons, chief among which was the fact that the movement suffered from many of the simplistic assumptions of the theories of development. In other words, the general disillusionment with Western theories of development, represented by the Rostowian thesis and the Harrod Domar model, affected thinking in development administration. The crux of the Rostowian strand of thinking was that development must be viewed in terms of a series of progressive stages through which all countries or societies must pass, such as traditional society, pre-conditions for take-off, self-sustaining growth, drive to economic maturity, and finally, the age of high mass consumption. Closely related to the Rostowian stages of growth theory is the Harrod Domar model which argued that the more economies save and invest a certain portion of their GNP, the more rapid they grow in economic terms. The cornerstone of the Harrod Domar model is the capital/output ratio which addresses issues of the amount of capital required to produce a certain level of output by an economy.

Another factor behind the collapse of the development administration movement was its being closely intertwined with the foreign aid/technical assistance nexus and or relationship. It will be recalled that at the height of the Cold War and heightened tensions between the then superpowers, foreign aid was, more often than not, used for military and political rather than developmental purposes. In this regard, aid was regarded as an antidote to the spread of communism. The argument was that poverty breeds violence and the latter, in almost unilinear fashion, leads to revolution and a general embrace of communist ideology. Thus, development administration was inevitably affected by the so-called ‘politics of foreign aid’. There are those who argue that for development administration to have a lasting impact in developing countries, it needed to enjoy the unequivocal support of ruling elites in these countries. However, elites in many less developed countries did not fully embrace the ideology of development, to the extent that
there was and still is inadequate concern with people-centred or people-driven development. (Islam and Georges, 1979)

In other words, the argument is that, in some less developed countries, ruling elites are preoccupied with the relentless pursuit of their own self-interest and, in particular, the preservation of the status-quo or prevailing socio-economic and political order, from which they benefit handsomely. In some cases, elites prey on the impoverished masses and are not responsive to their needs and aspirations. With regard to the fundamental issues and principles of governance these elites, notwithstanding the recent gains of the pro-democracy movement, often have no political mandate to govern and subsequently cling to political power too long and by force.

Moreover, the development administration movement adopted a micro rather than a macro perspective in the analysis of the nature and dynamics of poverty and underdevelopment. Put differently, it failed to analyze and understand poverty and underdevelopment within the wider context of the international economic system of which Third World countries are an integral part. Proponents of this view argue that less developed countries are part and parcel of the global economic order or system, such that as a consequence of imperialist and colonial expansion, these countries were, over time, slowly integrated into the international economic order.

These and other arguments, such as dependency theory, are buttressed by the phenomenon of globalization with all the challenges it poses for less developed countries. Therefore, any analysis of poverty, development and underdevelopment, becomes intellectually bankrupt if it does not take into consideration the integration of Third World economies into the nexus of the international economic order in general and capitalism in particular. It, thus, stands to reason that in order to be intellectually enriching and meaningful
analyses of poverty must be historical rather than ahistorical or impervious to history.

In as much as conceptualization within the development administration movement was influenced, largely, by ideas originating from traditional economic theory, with its emphasis on growth in GNP per capita as a measure of the development process, thinking within the movement was also influenced by the spectacular success and experience of the Marshall Plan. In other words, lessons from Marshall Aid to countries of Western Europe in the immediate post-War period were used to justify the flow of foreign aid and technical assistance to Third World countries. Accordingly, the Marshall Plan was used as a standard ‘model’ for development in that it influenced other aid programmes to the Third World, such as the Truman Doctrine, Point Four and many others.

Unfortunately, no one came to the realization that the socio-economic and political environment in Western Europe after World War II was significantly different from that of less developed countries. For instance, one of the most glaring facts was that Western European countries and their economies were devastated by the War and had not experienced the poverty and underdevelopment to which Third World countries were subjected. Moreover, the socio-economic, political and administrative apparatus that was necessary for reconstruction and development was already in place, hence Western European countries were better positioned to take advantage of foreign aid, granted under the auspices of the Marshall Plan.

Closely related to the foregoing is the view that development administration was not as effective as originally intended because it was dominated by the stereotyped views of Western scholars. The latter, in their conceptualization, did not examine alternative perspectives on the causes of poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World. As an example, inadequate attempts were made to examine Marxist and Neo-Marxist views and or interpretations on the processes of development and underdevelopment. Proponents of this strand of thinking reached the conclusion that Western interpretations of poverty and
underdevelopment are ethnocentric, Eurocentric and often replete with numerous theoretical shortcomings. (Ibid)

The critical observations against development administration, do not, in any way, suggest that the movement had no impact on the conduct of public affairs in less developed countries. One of the contributions of development administration was its success in highlighting the nature, extent and or dimensions of poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World in general and African countries in particular, including the appropriateness of many of the implicit assumptions of Western economic theory for practical conditions in these countries. Aligned to these lessons of experience is the fact that development administration brought to the fore the complexities of the development process and the fact that the latter goes beyond mere economic considerations, such as increases in per capita GNP. Not only did the collapse of the development administration movement dispel the assumption that the history of the West, in terms of development, would be repeated in less developed countries but also shattered the view that the road to development in these countries lay in foreign aid, technical assistance and a revitalized administrative apparatus.

Last but by no means least, development administration, as an approach to the management of change or planned change under extremely difficult or challenging circumstances, sharpened the realization, on the part of governments throughout the world, that development cannot be automatic but, instead, should be deliberately induced or brought about. Those that came up with the notion of ‘administration development’ argued that, closely related to the concept of development administration, the former refers to a systematic attempt to influence the nature and direction of development through the administrative process. This definition immediately brings into the academic or intellectual terrain another equally important concept that has dominated discussion and debate in recent years, that is, the notion of a ‘developmental state’.
It is an undisputable fact that almost all countries in the world face what has been aptly referred to as a generation of rising and insistent expectations, demands as well as challenges that are continuously clamouring for rapid socio-economic and political change. People the world over are demanding significant improvements in the quality of their lives, particularly against a background of a world economic system that is confronted with unprecedented increases in the prices of consumer goods and services that are fuelled by rising oil prices. Accordingly, governments and their civilian bureaucracies, especially in African countries, are expected to translate, into reality, the promises and anticipated fruits of independence. This often involves increasing standards of living and quality of life for the people; redressing socio-economic inequalities and injustices in society; providing and extending employment opportunities to all; fighting hunger, poverty and disease, particularly in this period in the history of humankind when countries, both developed and underdeveloped, are facing unprecedented problems and challenges of HIV/AIDS. It is against a background of these observations that we examine, next, the dynamics of the developmental state and the challenges it poses for African countries.

d) The Developmental State: Theoretical Perspectives

In view of the fact that the concept of the development state is relatively new and is, therefore, a subject of intense debate and or discussion among academics, policy-makers, politicians and members of civil society, there is lack of broad-based agreement on its precise definition and or meaning. However, common understanding has emerged to the effect that Third World countries in general and African countries in particular, will be unable to overcome the monumental challenges of reducing hunger and poverty, inequality and unemployment, as well as deliver goods and services to the vast majority of their people in the absence of a developmental state that is capable of actively and purposefully intervening in the economy (HSRC, 2008).
Arguments in support of the construction of a developmental state are many and varied. For instance, debate around the concept and commitment to building a developmental state in anchored on the assumption that it is through direct state involvement that an economy will become globally competitive, promote investment and subsequently achieve high economic growth. Commenting on some of the arguments in support of the existence of a developmental state in South Africa, that country’s Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) recently observed that:

“... South Africa’s ability to promote sustained human centred development and equitable growth, as well as transform into a knowledge based economy will largely be dependent on the existence of a developmental state that promotes technological and social innovations and takes measures to enhance the human capabilities of its people” (HSRC, 2008, 1).

In terms of origin, the concept of a developmental state is closely associated with Chalmers Johnson, whose analysis of Japan’s rapid and highly successful post-War reconstruction, industrialization and development revealed that the country’s remarkable and historically unparalleled socio-economic renaissance was the culmination of the efforts of state-led developmentalism (Chalmers, 1982). Definitionally, a developmental state can be regarded as one that is committed to influence the nature, direction and pace of economic development by directly intervening in the process, rather than relying on the unco-ordinated influence of market forces to allocate economic resources (Beeson, 2005).

The Japanese development ‘miracle’ was made possible, inter alia, by clarity in the formulation of the country’s socio-economic goals, the focus of which was the reconstruction of industrial capacity – a process that was facilitated by the existence of widespread social consensus about the significance of economic development, around which the energies of the people were rallied. Concomitant with the development state is the need for the existence of a highly efficient, competent and development-oriented bureaucracy committed to the formulation and implementation of a planned process of economic development (Ibid). So
successful was the Japanese development experience in the post-War era that a number of East Asian countries, notably Taiwan and South Korea, adopted the state-sponsored model of development which proved a tremendous success, such that analysts as well as proponents of the development state propagate the view that it stands as an appropriate approach to and significant pillar of economic development not only for emerging economies but also for the rest of the Third World.

Although the phenomenal nature of Japan’s socio-economic transformation and its emulation across the region, with varying degrees of success and to differing extents, by a number of Asian countries is unquestionable, some observers have drawn attention to the impact of external geo-political factors in the success of developmental states, particularly in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea. Highlighting the geo-political factors that worked in favour of the Japanese development experience, Beeson observed that:

“Japan’s place as a potential bulwark against communist expansion in East-Asia in the aftermath of the Second World War meant that it received especially favourable treatment from the US – a country that emerged in the War's aftermath as the hegemonic power of the era. The US’s preoccupation with containing communism and nurturing proto-capitalist democracies meant that Japan was a beneficiary of American aid ...... (Beeson, 2005, 8)

Besides geo-political circumstances that tend to favour the existence and successful performance of a developmental state, lessons of experience have sufficiently demonstrated that there are a number of key success factors that constitute prerequisites, without which such a state would be impossible to create. Undoubtedly, one of the most important preconditions for an effective developmental state is state capacity or the ability of a government not only to formulate but also, and much more significantly, implement development policies, programs and projects. Closely related to state capacity to formulate and implement developmental policies, is the existence of an efficient and or competent
civ\l\nian bureaucracy, including an effective relationship between the state and a
vibrant domestic business class that will be the cornerstone on developmental
initiatives (Ibid). Herein lies the significance of administrative reforms, designed to
create capacity within the state bureaucracy in order to enhance its role in the
development process. There is, therefore, no doubt that the existence of a
development-oriented bureaucracy is one of the basic requirements of success for
a developmental state, including the availability of public servants who are not
only sufficiently trained, educated, skilled as well as appropriately experienced but
are the embodiment of relevant attitudes towards the development process.

As pointed out above, another key feature of the developmental state, which was
an important component in Japan’s phenomenally successful post-War socio-
economic renaissance, was that of an effective partnership between the state and
business. Highlighting the significance of such a partnership in development, Beeson observed that:

"Not only were contacts between ‘the state’ and big business in Japan
regular and institutionalized in corporatist-style arrangements that
allowed precisely the sort of interaction, monitoring and feedback that
(is) considered crucial for effective development, but such relationships
were further cemented when former public servants joined private
sector companies upon retirement" (Beeson, 2005, 12).

The rise and fall of the development administration movement in the Third World
in general and African countries in particular during the decades of the 1970s and
1980s, with its focus on the management of development as distinguished from
the administration of law and order, raises a number of fundamental questions.
One of these (questions) centres on the prospects for the existence of the
developmental state in African countries, given the monumental challenges facing
the continent and its people. To what extent can the socio-economic development
experience of Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and other East Asian states, be used as
a framework on which to anchor the development of African countries in general
and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular? This and other questions are of vital
importance, given the existence of what has been referred to as ‘failed states’ that characterize a significant geographical area of Sub-Saharan Africa where the development process has, for the past several decades, proved to be elusive.

e) The Developmental State: Challenges for African Countries

One of the preconditions for the establishment of an effective developmental state is a deeply-rooted tradition and or culture of national social cohesion as well as identity, capable of acting as a powerful force of unity and legitimacy around which the energies of individuals and groups can be mobilized in pursuit of common national development goals, programmes and projects. A culture of national social cohesion or unity is not widespread in Sub-Saharan African countries, a part of the continent that is dominated by socio-political disunity that continues to undermine efforts at nation-building. In this regard, questions emerge as to the nature of the socio-economic and political environment in Sub-Saharan Africa and the extent to which such a milieu impacts on the prospects for a developmental state.

It is generally accepted that the African continent is assailed by forces of change and disunity which make it an exceedingly volatile place. As Legum once observed:

“
Africa is in an historical period analogous to the 17th through the 19th centuries in Europe. A time of volatile instability and political change. The process of nation-building is more complex and potentially more disruptive than elsewhere” (Legum, 1979, 13).

In Africa in general and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, not only is nation-building, defined as the creation of a socio-political community in which the nation-state is the dominant political institution that commands the allegiance of everyone in a given geographical area, difficult but also institutional breakdown, disorder and political experimentation have been dominant characteristics of the political process since independence (Ibid).
The observation, therefore, is that prospects for the existence of the developmental state in the majority of African countries are not the brightest, particularly given the nature of the socio-economic and political environment in many parts of the continent. For instance, it is generally accepted that Africa has a greater degree of ethnic, cultural and linguistic pluralism than any other part of the world, to the extent that the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and Burundi, with Hutus against Tutsis, is testimony to the challenges that the continent faces with regard to socio-cultural diversity. No one can dispute the fact that, in the majority of cases, African countries are composed of a few to several thousand people who speak different languages or dialects, a situation that facilitates the existence of communities that have different sets of values, religious beliefs and kinship institutions. Consequently, because different tribal and or ethnic groups benefit differently from the economy and in terms of political power, this causes friction, animosity and disunity among them (Blunt, 1983).

One of the most formidable challenges facing many African countries and one which stands in the path of the evolution of the developmental state is corruption – a phenomenon that has assumed global pandemic proportions and relentlessly decimates societies and nations, both developed and underdeveloped. As we have observed elsewhere, in many African countries, corruption is so widespread that it is not only corroding the socio-economic and political fabric of society but is also rendering governments increasingly unable to command the respect and confidence of the population as a whole. With regard to the effects of corruption, we have further noted that fraud and the general mismanagement of scarce public resources and their consequences are such that these practices divert limited resources away from their intended purposes, such as the financing of much-needed development programmes and projects, without which poverty and underdevelopment cannot be alleviated (Dlamini, 2007).

Undoubtedly, corruption is not only incompatible with the ethos and fundamental
principles of leadership, accountability, transparency and good governance but also the basic requirements of the developmental state. As a result, there are those who hold the view that the state in many African countries has deteriorated to such an extent that it finds it exceedingly difficult to govern. The weakness of the state apparatus is evidenced not only by an unprecedented leadership crisis but also by a crisis of legitimacy which, in some countries, has led to the emergence of dictatorships, the foundation of whose governments is rule by force as well as intimidation on a phenomenal scale. In addition, weaknesses in the machinery of the state are exemplified by the ease with which armed bandits instill fear among the population, indiscriminately killing and maiming innocent civilians, including women and children and, by so doing, undermining state or national security. These and other circumstances are not, at all, conducive to the establishment and evolution of the developmental state in Africa.

It has already been shown how the developmental state in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea facilitated these countries’ rapid, highly successful post-War reconstruction, industrialization and development process, including a favourable geo-political environment brought about by the politics of the Cold War in international socio-economic and political relations. In other words, the emergence of the USA into a position of hegemonic influence in international relations and its ability to use the Cold War as a powerful weapon to halt the spread of communism in South East Asia made it possible for Japan and South Korea to be major beneficiaries of American foreign aid. However, the geo-political factors and conditions that favoured the growth and evolution of the developmental state in South East Asian countries, including Japan in the post-War era, do not exist in the case of African countries in general and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular.

Put differently, the demise of the Cold War and the end of heightened tensions between the former super powers has put an end to the blatant use of foreign aid as a powerful weapon in halting the spread of communism, such that African
countries are no longer as favoured as they would have been as recipients of aid
and technical assistance from Western developed countries. Herein lies one of the
most formidable challenges to the evolution and existence of the developmental
state in Africa, namely, the availability of sufficient foreign aid and technical
assistance resources with which to drive and implement development programmes
and projects.

Escalating food and fuel prices, ever-increasing interest rates, including a
slowdown in economic growth – these and other economic phenomena impact
significantly and negatively on African consumers, such that in the Southern
African Development Community (SADC) region, fears have emerged of a recession
later this year. A recession, regarded as a moderate and temporary decline in
economic activity that occurs during a period of otherwise increasing prosperity, is
a frightening prospect, especially for the vast majority of the African population
that remains trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty, underdevelopment,
unemployment and disease. The mining industry is the backbone of the economy
and accounts for a significant proportion of foreign exchange earnings in a
number of Sub-Saharan countries, such as Botswana, Democratic Republic of the
Congo (DRC), South Africa, Zambia and others. However, the continued increase
in oil prices world-wide will have a negative impact on production in the mining
sector in these countries, thus leading to redundancies and significant declines in
mining revenues that will affect the capacity of governments to drive and sustain
the developmental state.

Not only are rocketing fuel prices an important factor behind runaway inflation in
general and the ever-increasing cost of food in particular, which hits hardest the
poor and unemployed, in the mining and manufacturing industries, such
economic phenomena are bound to introduce uncertainty and will, undoubtedly,
impact negatively on profitability, let alone discourage further investment in the
medium to the long term. Commenting on how high global oil prices are raising
costs of production and exerting pressure on the sustenance of Zambia’s copper
mines, despite international demand for metals, Nathan Chishimba, President of the Chamber of Mines of Zambia (CMZ), made the following observation:

“This oil price rise is obviously a source of concern for the mining industry worldwide, including Zambia, because oil prices pervade the entire economy, with very important ramifications for the cost of factor inputs and the cost of logistics, let alone daily operations” (City Press Business, 27/07/08, 9).

Unlike the developmental states in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and other South East Asian countries that were able to drive the socio-economic development of their countries during a period that was relatively free from the ravages of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, development in African countries is undertaken against a backdrop of the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS. According to the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAids) 2008 Report on the Global Aids Epidemic, 33 million people are currently living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, with 25 million people having died of HIV-related causes since the advent of the pandemic more than two decades ago.

The Report also points out that Sub-Saharan Africa continues to bear the brunt of the pandemic, with an estimated 1.9 million people newly infected in this part of the continent in 2007 bringing to 22 million the number of people living with HIV (The Star, 30 July 2008). There is, therefore, truth in the view that HIV/AIDS pauses one of the most monumental challenges facing the establishment of the developmental state in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is because not only does the pandemic decimate the most productive, educated, skilled, trained and experienced people in the 20 – 50 years age-group but also diverts a substantial proportion of much-needed financial and other resources towards the health sector and away from other equally important development programmes and projects in the fight against the pandemic.

In the discussion of the successes and failures of development administration in the first part of this paper, we observed that one of the contributory factors behind the inability of the movement to achieve the noble goals and objectives for which it
was founded was, inter alia, the unwillingness of African ruling elites to embrace and show a strong sense of political commitment to all that development stands for. Some of the obstacles and challenges that stood in the path of development administration several decades ago, such as corruption, fraud, mismanagement and other forms of unethical behavior among politicians and public officials also undermine efforts at the establishment of developmental states in the majority of countries in the African continent.

Having crept through and permeated all levels of government, business, civil society and the socio-economic and political fabric of communities, there is no doubt that corruption poses a serious threat to human development, good governance and democracy, including the poor and the national economy as a whole. No one articulates these sentiments better than Fraser-Moleketi, South African Minister of Public Service and Administration who, during the 3rd Anti-Corruption Summit held in Johannesburg in August, 2008, made the following observations:

“…..The political cost of corruption is that it undermines democracy, weakens the development states and undermines responsibility. Corruption erodes the common good and the people’s contract….. alienates citizens from the very officials they have elected and also people from each other (City Press, 10 08 2008, 4).”

During the 2001 Conference on Racism and Xenophobia, held in Durban, South Africa, Western countries acknowledged the fact that slavery and the slave trade were appalling tragedies in the history of humanity. Furthermore, Western developed countries were unanimous in the view that they had a moral obligation to take appropriate and effective measures to reverse the consequences of slavery and colonialism, to the extent that the Conference Declaration included a clause which expressed profound regret for the human suffering caused by both slavery and colonialism (The Star, 10 07 2001). Although the problems and challenges facing contemporary African countries cannot all be blamed on colonialism, particularly since the post-colonial leadership is obliged to take part of the responsibility for poverty and underdevelopment, no one can dispute the fact that
the imposition of colonial rule was not without socio-economic and political consequences for African countries, such that the ramifications of colonialism, including neo-colonialism and other forces such as globalization, are felt in a significant way even today.

Undoubtedly, the so-called ‘Scramble for Africa’ represented colonial expansion at its most rampant and or ruthless. Not only did the balkanization of the African continent undermine and or weaken pre-colonial political structures and systems of governance but also colonialism and the capitalist penetration of African territories that it facilitated was such that land, labour and crops were subjected to the vicissitudes and or dictates of the cash economy. In fact, there is truth in the view that colonialism inaugurated the first real pattern of large-scale labour migration and population displacement in the world, such that the demand for labour was enormous even by colonial standards. In Southern Africa, labour migration is a growth industry as well as a characteristic feature of economic life in the sub-continent, since it occurs not only between rural and urban areas but also amongst states in this Southern part of the African continent.

What is obvious is that had it not been for colonialism, neo-colonialism, labour migration and other phenomena, both past and present, the socio-economic and political development of African countries would have been radically different. It is, therefore, safe to conclude that the challenges that African countries confront in the creation of the developmental state would not be as formidable as they are had the continent not been subjected to these phenomena. The thrust of the argument is that the African continent in general and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, as a consequence of colonialism and other forces that either preceeded or followed it, was subjected to a socio-economic and political experience that is unlike anything that either the developed countries or the so-called emerging economies underwent in their period of industrialization and or development. It would, thus, be fallacious to expect the developmental state to be established
without taking into due consideration the impact of these factors and the challenges they pause for African countries.

f) Conclusion

In this paper, we provided a basis for a discussion of the challenges that stand in the way of the establishment and evolution of the development state in Africa by examining the meaning and definition of development administration. Having been coined in the 1950s, we argued that the term ‘development administration’ was premised on the view that there are fundamental as well as significant differences between public administration in the developed market economies and the management of change and development in the countries of the Third World. It was further pointed out that, having gained popularity in the 1960s and as a radically different approach towards the administration of the development process under extremely difficult circumstances, such as those that obtain in the majority of the Third World in general and African countries in particular, development administration had a specific agenda and or areas of focus, such as innovation, experimentation, government intervention in the economy and building new capacities.

However, despite an era of optimism and a sense of hope regarding the socio-economic and political prospects for the Third World that greeted the emergence of the development administration movement, the latter and its edifice began to crumble during the early 1980s, a period that was characterized by what Samuel Huntington referred to as ‘political decay’ and the disintegration of the institutions as well as organizations of development and governance (Huntington, 1985). We proceeded to analyse the factors and considerations that precipitated the collapse of development administration arguing, inter alia, that some of the failures of the movement in effecting the desired changes in African countries in particular could be attributed to the inability of ruling elites to adequately embrace the ideology of development. In addition, it was pointed out that academics, researchers and policy-makers, mainly from the West, in conceptualizing about poverty and
underdevelopment and its causes in the Third World, failed to analyze poverty and underdevelopment within the context of an international economic system into which less developed countries were integrated over centuries.

We also observed that, influenced by their Eurocentric and ethnocentric biases, Western scholars, in their writings about the dynamics of poverty and underdevelopment, did not examine alternative views and approaches, such as Marxist and Neo-marxist interpretations, an analysis of which would have enriched intellectual discourse. The discussion of the definition, nature and evolution of the concept of the developmental state showed that African countries will be unable to overcome the multifaceted challenges of reducing poverty, inequality, disease, unemployment as well as improved service delivery without the existence of a developmental state with sufficient capacity to actively and purposefully intervene in the economy.

In addition, it was noted that although the establishment of developmental states in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and other emerging economies in East Asia offers useful lessons of experience for the Third World in general and African countries in particular, the environment within which the developmental state evolved in Japan in the immediate post-War era was significantly different from the situation facing less developed countries today. For instance, the current global oil and food crises, unlike in yesteryears, have fuelled unprecedented levels of socio-economic and political discontentment in many countries, notably Egypt, Mauritania, Senegal, Cameroon and, much more recently, South Africa.

In this regard, one of the observations of the paper is that in as much as development administration was confronted with formidable obstacles and challenges, the establishment of the developmental state in the African context will not be an easy task. Given the significance of strengthening and deepening democracy and democratic organizations and institutions in the African continent, what is needed is not only a developmental state but also, and much more
importantly, democratic developmental states. In other words, in the African context, what is needed is for states to be more inclusive, accountable and transparent, and to engender stable representative governance, including broad-based and grassroots participation in the development and governance processes.

Unfortunately, in a number of African countries, the rule of law, the age-old independence of the judiciary, including the fundamental principles that underpin the separation of powers are, from time to time, subjected to pressure. In the majority of African countries, constitutions embody entrenched provisions that guarantee the separation of powers between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, thus ensuring that this separation provides the requisite checks and balances in order to maintain a proper constitutional order. However, relentless pressure and intimidation of the judiciary and other organs of state has the effect of not only undermining the pillars and institutions of democracy but also pose as challenges to the establishment of democratic developmental states in the African continent.

Another area of public policy that needs to be accorded the highest priority by African governments in their endeavour of create the developmental state is that of gender equality and the role of women in the development process. What should be acknowledged is that the majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have taken gigantic strides in promoting women’s rights, including the formulation of gender policies and facilitating the passage of gender-sensitive legislation. However, despite the modest achievements African countries have achieved in addressing women’s rights and ensuring that women are brought closer to the arena of decision-making and participation in development programmes and projects, it is disheartening to note that poverty, underdevelopment and disease hit hardest women and children and that women remain the poorest of the poor. In fact, numerous surveys have come out with startling findings to the effect that the face of poverty and disease, including HIV/AIDS, is increasingly female and that poverty worldwide is escalating at a faster rate than among males.
Moreover, it has been observed that besides having to grapple with a deep-rooted culture of domestic violence and widespread sexual assaults, new forms of abuse, such as human trafficking of women and girls, have emerged. Women in leadership positions at all levels, in both the public and private sectors, remain unreasonably low in most African countries (The Star, 11/08.2008). In conclusion, what has emerged from the paper is that although the Japanese and East-Asian experience with regard to the establishment of the developmental state provides useful lessons for Sub-Saharan Africa, in the absence of political will and strong commitment to the goals of development, the challenges in the path of the evolution of democratic developmental states, capable of deepening and strengthening democracy and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) will be insurmountable.
References


