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# 2021 LECTURE

## Strength of Diplomacy In Building Contemporary Administrative & Management System in Public & Private Organisations

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### Introduction

Public organizations (the MDAs) have been struggling with meeting their objectives in recent times in Nigeria. We have seen the deterioration of the quality of services rendered by Ministries, Departments and Agencies currently. The poverty of service delivery by the MDAs has left us with frustration- have led many people in the society to demonstrate their protest by going through unconventional routes to other climes where public organizations are delivering public goods. All services in Nigeria have been poorly delivered.

The frustration with poor service delivery, is being compounded by higher 'user-charges', which is further aggravated by increasing budgetary allocation and expenditure in public organizations (MDAs) which have not been matched by increasing Return-On-Investment (ROI). The fact is that outputs of public organizations have not been matched by increasing borrowing, inflation, lower GDP, and lower quality of lives of Nigerians.

The situation have been made worse by Globalization and its Discontent (2002) which had promised availability of goods at lower cost, which is not the case today, and COVID-19 economy. The prescriptions of 'Washington Consensus' have not in the past yielded any 'value-addition and is not likely to do so in the nearest future.

The private sector organizations, those pursuing essentially profits are not left out in the challenges, their profits have been dropping, and the qualities of their goods and services have been affected by the political economic decisions. International travels have been curtailed, all these put together have affected the quality of goods and services offered by both public and private organizations.

To these twin sectors of the Nigerian economy, what options are left in the management and administration of their services to continue to remain in business in the post COVID-19 economy? It would be recalled that consequent upon the poverty of the public sector in the recent past, the 'Washington Consensus' institutions had prescribed the conversion of State-Owned-Enterprises (SOEs) through 'commercialization and privatization', to make them run on commercial line. The actions were intended to ensure that they deliver the much expected value to the consumers and in essence the development of the society. It is regrettable to state that Nigerians are yet to savor the anticipated impact of that policy prescription by both the Organized-Private-Sector (OPS) and from the remaining MDAs/SOEs.

### Section II

In order to situate the problematic of this discourse, it is worthwhile to distinguish between 'Public and Private Organizations. We shall adopt Blau and Scott (1962) classifications which concerned 'formal organizations'. Ones which have been deliberately established for a purpose and have their structure and procedure to some point consciously prescribed. These include government agencies, business firms, trade unions, universities etc.

Blau and Scott suggested classifications according to who is the commonly regarded as the 'prime beneficiary, the group whose benefit is supposed to furnish the main reason for its existence. Thus, they are;

- i) **Private-Business Concern**- where profit is the motivation for the formation of the organization. The beneficiaries are the promoters, owners or managers. In Nigeria they are referred to as the 'Organized-Private-Sector'.
  - ii) **Commonwealth Organization** or MDAs, they are the Government created organizations to drive public policies and deliver benefit to the general public at large. Where the services to be delivered is of permanent nature, the state create the Ministry (when it want the services to be delivered devoid of much bureaucracy on a semi-quasi commercial manner with much more effectiveness, a Department, Commission or Corporation is created for delivery. When the services are of temporary nature such as Federal Government Committee on HIV/AIDS or COVID-19, it forms an 'Agency'.
  - iii) Mutual-Benefit-organizations are not within the focus of this discourse; however, the members are the beneficiaries. They include Faith-Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).
- It should be noted that we are herein concerned with type I and II respectively, where there is dwindling capacity to retain their share of the market and clientele in the face of current economic realities.

### The Objectives

The general objective of this discourse is that in the face of difficult economic environment both public and private organizations could use the grave strength in 'Diplomacy' to retain client's continued patronage of their services/product.

The specific intentions include;

- i) To identify elements of diplomatic practices relevant to the administration/management of public and private organizations.
- ii) To illustrate how the properties of diplomacy could be utilized to sooth the nerves of the clientele of both types of organizations.
- iii) To show that the deployment of diplomatic principles in the administration and management of both organizations would engender smooth service delivery.

### The Problem

The major contention herein is that, in the face of considerable challenges, for both public and private organizations, elements of diplomacy could be deployed in sustaining them in the economy to continue deliver services and retain their clientele.

The Nigerian state is currently servicing external debts with 91 per cent of its earnings, leaving a paltry 9 per cent of income for development. The State then embarks on 'Debt-Inspired-Development-Strategy (DIDS), which affects negatively the quality and quantity of its outputs. The OPS are also negatively affected in all ramifications, (rationalization of Foreign exchange, restrictions in imports etc), these upsets the quantity and quality of outputs from OPS.

The issues are that the public sector organizations outputs are not addressing public problems, yet there are increasing budgetary allocations and debt. The outcome is frustration-aggression in the minds of the populace.

The OPS are having low –quality products, poor customer services and not enough value being offered. It displeases every business owner when customers walk out of their business.

The obvious outcome of all these is that the Nigerian consumer or clientele are seeking alternatives.

It is the major thesis of this discourse that both the public and private organization could build contemporary administrative and management system on the strength of diplomacy.

### MDAs and OPS: Strategic Option

It is the contention of this discourse that both the public and private organizations in Nigeria in recent time, have not been delivering their services much more effectively. The quality of service delivery from the MDAs has been anything but satisfactory, even after a large chunk of it have been commercialized and privatized.

The OPS are not producing at installed capacity of their factories as a result of the political economy decisions and discontent with globalization and now COVID-19 economy. The strategic option open to both public and private organizations seem to be the adoption of the 'strength of Diplomacy' in the administration and management of the outputs of their organizations.

### Section III: The Framework of Diplomacy

It is impossible to deny the importance of Diplomacy in strengthening a nation power, not only in external but also in internal affairs. A well-structured diplomacy, enable a government to keep in touch with the development of other nations and learn from the progress they have made, as long as the rest of the country is in a position to make use of the information so gained (Nascimento e Silva, 1972 p. 1).

A classical writer on the subject Gallieres used the term '*negotiator*' rather than diplomat. Diplomacy he averred also referred to the international procedure of a particular state. He posited that negotiation involved '*tact, care, courtesy or politeness, astuteness and guile*'. It is instructive to note that all these conceptions of diplomacy are applicable to the discourse which is essentially, 'how do we use the power of diplomacy (tact, care, negotiation) procedurally to enhance the administration and the management of either private and public organizations in Nigeria? It is important to have a greater understanding of diplomacy and its contents.

### Conceptions

Diplomacy refers to the established method of influencing the decisions and behavior of foreign governments and people through *dialogue, negotiation* and other measures short of war or violence between states (Silva. 1972).

Signitzer and Coombs on their part averred that public diplomacy is a way in which the Government and the private individuals and groups can directly influence those public opinions and positions, which directly influence the foreign policy decisions of another Government (1992 p.138). Mannheim on the other hand posited that public diplomacy is an explanation and speaking in favor of governmental policy and representing a nation to foreign politics (1994 p.4). Public diplomacy is the face of traditional diplomacy (Ross, 2022 in Leonard 2002 p.1).

Igwe described it as the peaceful conduct of relations between mainly states, and the most important instrument of foreign policy. It is most successful when a state is able to achieve its objectives with minimal of resources and commitments (2005 p.119).

The Report on the Commonwealth seminar held in 1970 submitted that diplomats must have sound skills of negotiation, objective analysis, accurate reporting and establishing confidence (Report, 1970 p103),

Diplomacy normally seeks to develop goodwill towards the state it represents, nurture relations with foreign states and people that will ensure their cooperation. It is the principal substitute for the use of force or under –hand means to statecraft. It is overtly the use of non-violent tactics to an end.

### Types of Diplomacy

a) **Appeasement** – this is making concession to an aggressor to avoid confrontation. During negotiations between the management and union, often concessions are made to arrive at mutually beneficial position. This is often deployed during negotiation between staff union and the management. You must always have 'trade-off' items in your charter of demands as a union. The items you would easily give up without affecting the substance of the negotiation.

b) **Counter insurgency diplomacy**- where the diplomat are employed outside the embassy to obtain information about the state which guide the diplomat to reach agreement with the host state.

c) **Debt-trap-diplomacy**-where economically powerful nations continue to entrap weak nations and cause them to loose independence of actions which may challenge their position through debt-trap.

d) **Economic diplomacy**- where the stronger states use aid to achieve a diplomatic agenda in the aid recipient state.

f) **Gunboat diplomacy**-It involved the display of naked power to intimidate and influence others state into sharing a position with the aggressor state. In private and public organizations, this assumes the form of the use of aggressive advertisement to generate higher demands for one's product or services.

g) **Humanitarian diplomacy**- negotiating with warring factions or terrorist to allow the passage of humanitarian services to the victims-civilian population of the conflict. There are many others

### Elements of Diplomacy: Applicable

The various conceptions of diplomacy generate certain common denominators which included;

i) **Tact** (active listening, empathy, rapport, influence and behavioral change).

ii) It is practiced by accredited officials/envoys/ ambassadors.

iii) It involves negotiations and dialogue which offers both the opportunity for a win-win solution on more complex issues.

iv) Agreement (or a compromise) power is a more useful tool.

v) Treaties (agreement, alliances) help to shape state or organizational policies by advising government/organizational officials.

vi) The other tools are; persuasions. Promise of reward and concession, threat of the use of force, and the use of pressures.

vii) Diplomat helps to develop strategies and tactics that would shape the behavior of foreigners.

It remains for us now to reformulate those tasks of public and private organizations in the light of diplomacy.

## Section IV: Administering Public Organization: Strength of Diplomacy

Earlier in the preceding section of this treatise, we had distinct public organization as commonwealth organizations whose beneficiaries are the general public. We had also inferred that as a result of their persistent failure to deliver services satisfactorily, there is 'Government-Citizen's trust deficit'. This is manifested in incessant strike actions in the economy, failure to observe outcomes of collective bargaining, conditions of work, wages related issues and mis-application of disciplinary procedures. Communication is very important here, to communicate public problems and bring it into public policy agenda before it is processed out as public policy.

These are issues in which tact, knowledge of the labor law by the negotiating team, pursuing a 'win-win' scenario, reducing all the agreements into a single document and exercising the political will to observe the treaty within and without the organization would certainly lead to continuous operations of the organization without disruption. Productivity, no matter how low would continue. The application of diplomatic elements in this context culminates into Human relations strategy which focuses on satisfying individual needs within the establishments thereby avoiding conflict in public organizations. Public and civil servants spend time devising various strategies for implementing public policy in a manner to ensure its affect every social group in the states (Red-tapism).

The diplomats or negotiators in public organizations would listen to and respond to the feedback on the quality of the service they offered to the public with the view of correcting same next time around.

### Diplomacy and Private Organizations

Diplomatic practices within the purview of private organizations would entail;

First of all ensuring a clear communication channels within the organization because a break down in communication could lead to disorganization of production. Maintaining relationship with the clientele/consumers of its product or services in order to retain the client or customer's loyalty is a function of robust engagement. Listening and responding to the queries raised by the consumers of its products with the intend of making amend to continue to sustain the product share of the market.

It is the concern of every business promoter to define the strategies for accomplishing its mission and vision just as the diplomat would device the means to influence the behavior of foreign government in its favor.

### Outcome

The application of diplomacy to the two scenarios revealed that in either case there is need to have human elements with *tact* leading the organizations because everything rises and falls on leadership. There should be an accredited officer operating as an envoy committing the organizations to contractual relationship.

A diplomat had been referred to as a negotiator, thus in both cases the management and the staff should be bonded by the spirit of respect for collective bargaining agreement in order to obtain a smooth industrial relations. The treaty negotiated by the diplomat in public diplomatic relations is represented by the collective bargaining agreement obtained after protracted negotiation between the industrial workers union and the management of the industry. The basic outcome is to achieve functional relationship between two states. In the context of this discourse, the signed agreement between the management and the union on behalf of the staff is the equivalent of diplomatic treaties.

It is therefore crystal clear that the application of the principles of diplomacy in the management and administration of public and private organizations would achieve the following purpose;

- i) The purpose of traditional diplomacy is to strengthen the state, by advancing its interest. Its application to private and public organization would create greater industrial relations and enhance the productivity of the organizations.
- ii) Whereas the diplomatic activity endeavors to maximize a groups' interest without the use of force, its application in the industrial setting allow for smooth industrial relations with minimal risk of industrial conflict.
- iii) Diplomacy habitually seeks to preserve peaceful co-existence between sovereign states through negotiation. Negotiation is the best tool for peaceful industrial relations.
- iv) While diplomacy seeks the establishment and the expansion of cooperation between states, its application in the management and administration of public and private organization would foster understanding and cooperation in every section of the organization. Every incident arising would be amicably negotiated and resolution reached.

### The Challenges

It is very important to state that the social structure of administration is a channel for public policy execution. What they implement comes from the executive branch, hence even after the public and civil servants are imbue with diplomatic skills, the challenge is when the executive do not share in the efficacy of diplomacy as a tool of public management.

The administrative culture of the colonial civil and public service would constitute serious hindrance to change the world view to novel one.

Training is often poorly budgeted for, where they are, the funds are hardly released. This would delay the much needed change from the old to the new ways of administration and management in contemporary Nigeria society.

The occupants of the political realm who decide the nature of administrative and the management level may not understand the urgency of the change hence, may not do anything to facilitate the change from *Northcote-Trevelyan paradigm* to the much desired Diplomacy based administrative and management system.

### Conclusion

We set out with four intensions; to distill from diplomatic practices norms that are applicable in the administration and the management of contemporary public and private organizations. To this intent, we identified about seven (7) normative practices which are germane to both public and private organizations. We then subjected them to applications in organization in both spheres. We then stressed their importance, that when the managers of organizations either public or private organizations are diplomats deploying diplomatic procedures in the management of the organizations, effective industrial relations would be the outcome. Income would rise over time and they would be able to achieve their mission and vision effortlessly. Above all service delivery would improve since human relations issues would be promptly dealt with without allowing it to snowball into strikes.

## Recommendations

- i) There should be mandatory training for public and civil servants on the efficacy of diplomacy as administrative and management tool for service delivery. This is because where diplomacy becomes the doctrine of administration and management, the welfare of the citizens within and outside these organizations takes the front row.
- ii) Where diplomatic values become internalized by the operators of public and private organizations, development rather than frustration – aggression would cease to engender revolutionary pressures in the Nigeria state. Services which add values to the welfare of the citizens would begin to roll out from the MDAs.
- iii) The Nigerian Employers Consultative Association (NECA) should be socialized into the functionality of diplomacy as a tool of organizational management.
- iv) The core value of the civil and public service should begin now to be change in other to create a society where the governmental policy is based on the utilitarian principles of the 'greatest good for the greatest number. Diplomatic peace would be prevalent in both public and private sector of the economy, productivity would grow, values would be generated and everyone would be better-off.

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