

Leadership Re-Orientation and Engendering Human and Environmental Sustainability in Nigeria

NANJI R. UMOH

Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences,

University of Jos, Nigeria.

E-mail: nanjiumoh@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The quest for positive transformation at all levels of human existence whether individual, corporate, societal or national is endless. This quest also reflects the needs of the public who are the customers of the government, the scarce resources available to satisfy these needs and the role of the leadership in determining what ends to pursue to ensure service delivery and customer satisfaction for posterity sake. Doing this entails the evaluation of the desired outcomes in the light of the situations at hand, the formulation of relevant policies based on available alternatives, human and material resources and a commitment to human and environmental sustainability. These bring to the fore, issues relating to the administrative behaviour of policy makers with regard to their actions or inactions as determined by the value systems or premises and idiosyncrasies they choose to uphold. The theoretical base of the paper is derived from aspects of Herbert Simon's decision making theory and Robert Dahl's Three Problems in the Science of Public Administration to give an insight to influences on administrative behaviour that affect the attainment of the Meta-Values which Christopher Hodgkinson believes should constitute the Philosophy of Public Administration. The paper relies on secondary data sources and its general objective is to reiterate the value of transformational political leadership in national development. Specifically, it analyzes relevant sections of the speeches of Barack Obama at his re-election in America and Bukola Saraki at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria in an attempt to proffer reasons for the apparent disconnect between political leadership, governance and transformation while developing templates for charting the way forward in Nigeria. Furthermore, it is expected that the paper will contribute to knowledge and provide guidelines for designing target-oriented strategies for adoption and application as palliatives in the light of the prevalent lapses in governance.

Keywords: *Transformation, Leadership Styles, Administrative Behaviour, Value Systems, Human and Environmental Sustainability.*

INTRODUCTION

The desire of every human is to have his basic needs met and more especially those of subsistence which are crucial to his existence and survival. Incidentally, the responsibility of providing an enabling environment for these desires to be met and for them to thrive rests with the government. The public is viewed within the ambits of public administration as the customers or clientele of the government essentially as

much of what is done by the government is expected to show commitment to the management of available resources, target-oriented service delivery and customer satisfaction and maintenance. This is because the overall goal of governmental activities is to ensure national growth, development and transformation.

Within the global context, the qualifications necessary for a country to be rated as positively transformed or developed and vice versa are mostly determined by the quality of the indices of development evident within the country. Further indicators of the levels of socio-economic growth and transformation include the ratings of nations, based on predetermined indices, in the United Nations Human Development Index (UNHDI) and the extent to which the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) have been attained. In the light of this, the role of government in ensuring the formulation and proper implementation of purpose-specific policies cannot be over-emphasized.

Public Administration is basically an instrument of social change and economic development. It is concerned with the pursuit of publicly defined societal values. In developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America that are anxious to achieve modernization of society and realize welfare goals, the states have the enormous tasks of ensuring that these goals are achieved. The accomplishment of these goals requires honest and competent public administrators (Polinaidu, 2004) who should be able to churn out good policies for the good of the public and by extension, the country.

Public administrators are first and foremost, decision makers. However, in developing countries like Nigeria, their abilities to develop, formulate and implement strategic policies are usually very dependent on the value systems they uphold as a result of their economic, social and political affiliations and which in most cases are brought to bear on their administrative behaviour and by extension, the policies which emanate from them.

FRAMEWORKS OF ANALYSES

Herbert Simon's Decision Making Theory

In his book, 'Administrative Behaviour' published in 1947, he advocated the behavioural approach to public administration to make it a more scientific discipline with focus on decision making (Laxmikanth, 2005). To quote Simon, 'if any theory is involved, it is that decision-making is the heart of administration and the vocabulary of administrative theory must be derived from the logic and psychology of human choice'.

He defines decision making as, 'the optimal rational choice between alternative courses of action'. He upholds that decision making pervades entire entities and levels of organizations and is an all-embracing activity that subsumes all the administrative functions. For him, all decisions are based on two premises- the factual and the value premises. Facts are statements of reality with premises that can be proved, observed and measured for validity while values are expressions of preference with premises that can be subjectively asserted as valid. He stated that decisions lead to the selection of final goals and so are reflective of value judgements while the implementation of the goals reflects the factual judgements (Polinaidu, 2004).

Decision making is essential to the policy process and entails defining the objectives of public policies and choosing the appropriate means for achieving the ends. Administrative behaviour therefore centres on decision making which is the hub around which every other aspect of administration revolves (Polinaidu, 2004).

Robert Dahl's Three Problems in the Science of Public Administration

Dahl in his 1947 publication titled, 'The Science of Public Administration: Three Problems', argued that the evolution of a science of public administration or universal principles of administration was encumbered by three problems thus:

- The impossibility of excluding normative considerations from the problems of public administration;
- The need to study certain aspects of human behaviour limits the potentialities of a science of public administration. He criticised the existing tendency to treat organizations in formal technical terms and to regard human beings that constitute organizations, as more or less material;
- The unscientific nature of principles of administration which are based on a few examples drawn from limited natural and historical settings.

Dahl also emphasized the effects of the environment on administrative behaviour. He believed that public administration cannot escape the effects of national psychology and the social, political and cultural environment in which it develops (Laxmikanth, 2005).

Christopher Hodgkinson's Philosophy of Administration

Generally, the philosophy of public administration derives from the premise of solving societal problems through efficient service delivery. Dimock defines philosophy as more than the science of administration and a body of beliefs and practices aimed at achieving better performance, for individuals as well as for institutions (Hota, 1984).

Hodgkinson (1978) dealt comprehensively with the philosophy of administration in his book, 'Towards a Philosophy of Administration'. He sees philosophy as a cure for the pathology of administration. His view is that administration pervades human life and behaviour and affects the quality of life. He further posits that administration and politics are not so distinct and water-tight in practice as to make administration totally value-free. He describes four meta-values namely maintenance, growth, effectiveness and efficiency which should form the administrator's philosophical base (Hota, 1984).

From the foregoing, it can be gleaned that:

- Herbert Simon sees management as decision makers in organizations (in this case, the decision maker is the leader and his think-tank and the organization is the country) whose administrative behaviour are affected by their value systems;
- Robert Dahl sees the administrator as one who cannot be strait-jacketed in terms of his actions but whose administrative behaviour can be affected by normative considerations having national psychological, social, political and cultural colourations;

- Christopher Hodgkinson sees the administrator as one whose decisions, actions or inactions should be guided by the desire to achieve the four meta-values (maintenance, growth, effectiveness and efficiency) that constitute the philosophy of and cure for pathologies in public administration.

Barack Obama's Re-Election Speech of 7th November, 2012

It evidences:

- Deep-seated patriotism:
'...America's never been about what can be done for us. It's about what can be done by us together...What makes America exceptional are the bonds that hold together the most diverse nation on earth. The belief that our destiny is shared; that this country only works when we accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations. The freedom which so many Americans have fought for and died for come with responsibilities as well as rights. And among those are love and charity and duty and patriotism. That's what makes America great... That's the country I'm so proud to lead as your president'.
- An understanding of the importance of unity and togetherness among the followership as paramount to progress:
'...It moves forward because of you. It moves forward because you reaffirmed the spirit that has triumphed over war and depression, the spirit that has lifted this country from the depths of despair to the great heights of hope, the belief that while each of us will pursue our own individual dreams, we are an American family and we rise or fall together as one nation and as one people. ... in this election, you, the American people, reminded us that while our road has been hard, while our journey has been long, we have picked ourselves up, we have fought our way back, and we know in our hearts that for the United States of America the best is yet to come'.
- Focus on topical issues plaguing the average American and ensuring that politics is largely issue based:
'... Reducing our deficit. Reforming our tax code. Fixing our immigration system. Freeing ourselves from foreign oil'.
- A desire to rise above party and other affiliations, eschew bitterness and victimisation in order to build a stronger and more formidable nation. Obama was able to congratulate his foremost opponents, Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan on their fighting spirit:
'...I just spoke with Gov. Romney and I congratulated him and Paul Ryan on a hard-fought campaign. We may have battled fiercely, but it's only because we love this country deeply and we care so strongly about its future..... the Romney family has chosen to give back to America through public service and that is the legacy that we honor and applaud tonight....I also look forward to sitting down with Gov. Romney to talk about where we can work together to move this country forward'.

- At the thick of the campaigns, the two contestants, Obama and Romney represented distinct parties and a lot of politics and mudslinging must have come into play. He did not deny that politics is a contest of egos or the domain of special interests but these notwithstanding, one party is not upheld as better than the other. Ironically, the lower house, the House of Representatives has a republican majority while Obama is a democrat. Above all this, there is a commitment to rising above partisanship and sectional interests for the progress of the country:

‘...That’s why we do this. That’s what politics can be. That’s why elections matter. It’s not small, it’s big. It’s important. Democracy in a nation of 300 million can be noisy and messy and complicated. We have our own opinions. Each of us has deeply held beliefs. And when we go through tough times, when we make big decisions as a country, it necessarily stirs passions, stirs up controversy. That won’t change after tonight, and it shouldn’t. These arguments we have are a mark of our liberty’.

- A desire to put the country first when making considerations and decisions on the way forward with emphasis on consensus building and harnessing human and material resources:

‘By itself, the recognition that we have common hopes and dreams won’t end all the gridlock or solve all our problems or substitute for the painstaking work of building consensus and making the difficult compromises needed to move this country forward. But that common bond is where we must begin...I am looking forward to reaching out and working with leaders of both parties to meet the challenges we can only solve together’.

- A commitment to human and environmental maintenance and sustainability in that plans are made with opportunities and the future in perspective:

‘...despite all our differences, most of us share certain hopes for America’s future. We want our kids to grow up in a country where they have access to the best schools and the best teachers; a country that lives up to its legacy as the global leader in technology and discovery and innovation, with all the good jobs and new businesses that follow. We want our children to live in an America that isn’t burdened by debt, that isn’t weakened by inequality, that isn’t threatened by the destructive power of a warming planet. We want to pass on a country that’s safe and respected and admired around the world, a nation that is defended by the strongest military on earth and the best troops this — this world has ever known. But also a country that moves with confidence.....to shape a peace that is built on the promise of freedom and dignity for every human being. We believe in a generous America, in a compassionate America, in a tolerant America, open to the dreams of an immigrant’s daughter who studies in our schools and pledges to our flag. To the young boy on the south side of Chicago who sees a life beyond the nearest street corner. To the furniture worker’s child.....who wants

to become a doctor or a scientist, an engineer or an entrepreneur, a diplomat or even a president — that's the future we hope for. That's the vision we share. That's where we need to go — forward. That's where we need to go'.

- A determination to keep hope alive by confronting issues head-on rather than allow them consume the nation and bring about despair and loss of confidence in the leadership:

'...I've never been more hopeful about our future. I have never been more hopeful about America. And I ask you to sustain that hope. I'm not talking about blind optimism, the kind of hope that just ignores the enormity of the tasks ahead or the roadblocks that stand in our path. I'm not talking about the wishful idealism that allows us to just sit on the sidelines or shirk from a fight. I have always believed that hope is that stubborn thing inside us that insists, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us so long as we have the courage to keep reaching, to keep working, to keep fighting'.

- An understanding that the followership is the invaluable support base that must be carried along by ensuring that the gaps between the government and the people are bridged. The government must be accessible, beyond partisanship and sectional group interests:

'...I believe we can seize this future together because we are not as divided as our politics suggests. We're not as cynical as the pundits believe. We are greater than the sum of our individual ambitions, and we remain more than a collection of red states and blue states. We are and forever will be the United States of America'.

America is viewed as the world's greatest democracy and that is not to say that there are no flaws in her democratic and electoral systems. The 2012 presidential elections were criticised for several reasons like voter intimidation (Press TV, 2012), archaic machines, faulty electoral laws and processes, partisanship of some electoral officers and intimidation of international election observers in seven states, etc. (CNN Reports, 2012). Evidently, no country is without issues that threaten stability but the ability of the leadership to rise above these threats and be driven by values that matter is what visionary and transformational leadership is about. Obama's speech is resplendent of the values he holds dear. It is easy to see a leader who is taking responsibility for the actions of leadership. He knows that a lot depends on what he does with the office he occupies and ensuring that the confidence reposed in abilities of the leadership by the followership is not taken for granted.

Bukola Saraki's Speech on Leadership and National Transformation

He begins from the definitions of leadership given by Presidents Eisenhower and Truman respectively as the 'ability to decide what is to be done and then to get others to want to do it' and that, 'a leader is a man who has the ability to get other people to do what they don't want to do and like it'. From this premise, he highlighted:

- The effective exercise of leadership and transformational management functions as encouraging followership 'in the form of setting a vision, developing an agenda and mobilizing resources'. There must be a viable support base in the citizenry to serve as a launch pad for both transformational leadership and development to be engendered;
- That the definitions above provide a leadership value that enables national transformation. He further stresses that the minimum requirements for development include the leader being equipped with man management ability and his visions being in tandem with the interests and desires of the followers;
- That the art of leadership for national transformation thrives on a culture of responsible followership and vice versa. In essence, the enjoyment and expression of basic rights within an accountable and merit driven system is possible when transformative leadership provides an enabling environment for good governance to thrive;
- That leadership in Nigeria is unable to achieve much '...due to lack of mentorship, sectarian psychology, successional inconsistency and selfishness...' Our leadership must be transformational and nationalistic in focus;
- The fact that leadership skills/styles are environmentally socio-politically, culturally and economically determined. The quality of leadership and the socio-political environment often determine the nature of national development. Some arguments abound that our socio-political environment, not only makes the emergence of national leadership difficult, but also complicates the process of national development;
- That transformational leadership must take on the form of a state of mind; to envision, conceive, conceptualize and boldly tackle challenges within the context of knowledge, instinct, institutions and impersonality;
- The need for a political culture that accepts defeat tolerates and respects losing and manages victory with humility. An unhealthy and protracted tussle for leadership chokes out the transformative value of leadership.
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In his discourse, he deliberately avoided references to local experiences 'in order not to evoke parochial sensitivity'. This clearly reflects the kind of political environment that our leaders must determine to rise against for meaningful development and national transformation to take place. He also noted categorically that the views expressed were personal and should not be attributed to any official position, office held or being held.

NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Most developing nations like Nigeria are in dire need of transformation but with the intervening variables that dot the landscape of these countries, undergoing transformation has remained a herculean task. In Nigeria, these variables include socio-economic and political factors like administrative and political corruption, illiteracy and political apathy of the electorate, human rights abuses, insecurity, ethno-religious and political conflicts, poverty, corruption, the presence of human institutions (godfathers, cliques, etc.) that are sometimes at parallel with the state institutions, non-issue based

politics, partisanship, intra- and inter-party politics, sycophancy, need for electoral reforms, lack of patriotism, etc.

These recurrent decimals have been the focus of many discourses and literature on national transformation. They constitute the national psychology, political, social and cultural normative considerations from which generations of Nigeria's leadership have been derived overtime. Sadly, the presence of these variables as tangible threats to harnessing available resources, human and environmental sustainability, growth, efficiency and national development in Nigeria has not significantly engendered the moral, value and institutional reorientation required by the leadership and its followers.

Transformation implies a change from an old to a new order usually with concerted and committed efforts. For national transformation to thrive, the seed of transformational leadership must be sown, must take root downwards, must be nurtured and must be allowed to blossom. Transformational leadership does not happen at the snap of the fingers neither can it be wished into existence.

Gbenga Omolayole, a member of the National Transformation Group, speaking on Channels TV noted that Nigeria is in need of national transformation that should involve looking inwards and starting from the transformation of our minds and commitments to enhance visionary leadership and good governance. His views echo those of Obafemi (2011) who noted that strategic imperatives for national transformation should in summary entail a moral reorientation both of the leadership and of the polity- a procedure that will encompass and engender sincerity in leadership, tackling and re-directing our value systems; having a blueprint that vividly captures the desired futuristic state in qualitative and quantitative terms; planning towards the implementation and achievement of the desired state to ensure delivery; the proper monitoring and evaluation of performance to determine levels of progress; success and returns on invested resources in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, desired benefits, impacts and outcomes; and checking and dealing with the underlying causative and contributory factors of corruption. Going by these, the strategies for visionary leadership and transformation in Nigeria should be lacking in ambiguity, straight to the point and as easily applicable and adaptable as possible.

The views expressed by Bukola Saraki capture the challenges of transformational leadership in Nigeria and this might be more so because he is first a Nigerian and second, has held and still holds leadership positions. It is hoped that there will be gradual shift from the present paradigms to paradigms of greater value and content that go beyond even those captured by Obama in the American spirit. Nigeria is a nation blessed with abundant human and material resources. Jeffrey Hawkins, the Consular General of the US Embassy in Lagos noted that Nigeria is a major supplier of oil to the US and a major focus in US politics and African relations. This holds true for her relations with other nations in the international scene but the resources have not been effectively harnessed as a result of the negativity that has characterised the environmental influences on our leadership over the years.

Qualitative political leadership is the power base from which national transformation grows. Emphasis should not only be on the kinds of policies that our leaders churn out but on the factors that they need to take into consideration in ensuring that what actions they take are reflective of a commitment to national transformation. Leadership is not necessarily the responsibility of a lone individual but the group has an overall head that must be capable of carrying out effective 'steering' and catalytic roles. Suleiman (2011) captures it aptly when he states that, 'it takes a performer to be a transformer'. In essence, leadership must be viewed as a call to service and the satisfaction of the followership.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The content of such leadership as drawn from the discourses of Herbert Simon, Robert Dahl and Christopher Hodgkinson and the speeches of Barack Obama and Bukola Saraki should therefore be reflective of:

- The leader as first and foremost a decision-maker. He should play the piper and dictate the tune. He must be firm in the conduct of the decision-making function and should have a significant control over administrative and political processes;
- Commitment and that choices made in terms of decision transcend the compromise of ethical values. As a leader, his psyche is important. What normative considerations he makes or allows to affect his value judgements must derive from the premise of a national psychology and social, political and cultural inclinations that evidence equity and the absence of bias;
- A renewal of the mind, patriotism and being everybody's president. He must be driven by the zeal to excel and should actually be 'on top of situations'. His actions should not belie loyalty to cliques, sacred cows, factions, ethnic or religious bias, partisanship, etc. He should have a good knowledge and understanding of the nation's diversity and must ably harness them in the direction of national development;
- Focus on national development through institutional transformation and the adoption of more purpose-specific means to ends. Leadership should work with technocrats irrespective of their political affiliations to draw up best practices gleaned from our indigenous experiences for application in the country as has been done in countries like Malaysia, India, China, Singapore, etc.;
- Revamping sectors must be done a step at a time. Leadership should never bite more than it can chew. It is more honourable for a leader to be noted for particular landmark developmental successes in his time than for the followership to be unclear about what was actually accomplished within an era;
- Service to the followership. The leadership should not be distant from the people it has been called upon to serve. There should be wide consultations especially on matters that directly affect the general well-being of the populace. Governance should be about the people, futuristic planning and a strong commitment to forward movement;
- Issues with wide impact capacity like insecurity, human rights abuses, etc. must be tackled head-on and with the resources at the disposal of the government.

The government must not come across as weak, incapacitated or unable to protect its citizens;

- Communication, coordination, feedback, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that are functional and keep the relevant institutions and the leadership abreast with the positive and negative impacts of implemented policies;
- Value reorientations that make our politics more issue based than individual, personality or party based. This will enable a break away from the stranglehold of human institutions and encourage the leadership carry out its responsibilities without fear or favour. It will further engender a reorientation of the value systems of the followership and develop in them the right mindset as the support base of the leadership.

CONCLUSION

All views analysed within the paper stem from virtually the same premise. They envision the positive outcomes of value reorientations and stress the need for the right actions to be taken for specific ends to be realised. These ends however defined, are within the ambits of administration, encompassed in the meta-values as developed by Christopher Hodgkinson. Categorically, the role of committed transformational leadership in the attainment of these meta-values cannot be over-emphasized especially with the decision making and value reorienting mechanisms at their disposal. In fact, the achievement of these meta-values evidences effective public administration and extensively determines the ratings of nations in terms of development within the comity of nations.

Leadership entails vision, focus and the execution of change. The focus on the leader is largely because of the position he occupies and the place of the executive in Nigerian politics and decision-making. A lot of what goes on in Nigeria is dependent on the leadership's actions or inactions. In the same vein, it behoves on the leader to carry out appropriate supervision to ensure that his foot soldiers are in tow with his developmental policies and programs.

Adei, as quoted by Saraki (2012) stated that, 'transformational leadership is the cause, everything else is the effect'. A transformational leader is one who is able to identify problem areas, clearly define goals and objectives, design a definite course of action, harness the necessary tools and relevant human and material resources, offer uncomplicated non-complex direction, make unbiased decisions, provide supervision and ensure good supportive followership by adequately taking the interests of the actual majority into consideration.

Case studies abound among the developing nations like Singapore where the former leader, Lee Kuan Yew, successfully regenerated the communication and transportation sectors in a bid to 'turn the third world island to a first world oasis'; and Malaysia where transformational leadership based on the National Key Results Areas (NKRAs) has successfully brought about improvements in crime reduction, fights against corruption, students outcomes, living standards of low-income households, rural basic infrastructure, urban public transport, etc. the followership were never left in doubt as

to who the beneficiaries of the policies were and they were able to play their part as the support base.

Saraki (2012) notes that, 'effective leadership needs the right mix of wisdom, practical intelligence and creativity to come up with ideas and dispositions that galvanise the followership to keep faith with the story, which is also the vision'. The leadership must be patriotic, focused and able to think outside the box if efficiency and effectiveness are to be achieved. They must have the right value system, effectively evaluate available alternatives and subject normative considerations that exist to those of the nation as suggested by Henri Fayol in his fourteen principles of administration in respect of organizations. These will definitely result in national transformation, human and environmental sustainability.

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