Ethnics of Public Administration
PHI 312

University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre
Open and Distance Learning Course Series Development

General Editor: Prof. Bayo Okunade

Vice-Chancellor's Message

The Distance Learning Centre is building on a solid tradition of over two decades of service in the provision of External Studies Programme and now Distance Learning Education in Nigeria and beyond. The Distance Learning mode to which we are committed is providing access to many deserving Nigerians in having access to higher education especially those who by the nature of their engagement do not have the luxury of full time education. Recently, it is contributing in no small measure to providing places for teeming Nigerian youths who for one reason or the other could not get admission into the conventional universities.

These course materials have been written by writers specially trained in ODL course delivery. The writers have made great efforts to provide up to date information, knowledge and skills in the different disciplines and ensure that the materials are user-friendly.

In addition to provision of course materials in print and e-format, a lot of Information Technology input has also gone into the deployment of course materials. Most of them can be downloaded from the DLC website and are available in audio format which you can also download into your mobile phones, IPod, MP3 among other devices to allow you listen to the audio study sessions. Some of the study session materials have been scripted and are being broadcast on the university's Diamond Radio FM 101.1, while others have been delivered and captured in audio-visual format in a classroom environment for use by our students. Detailed information on availability and access is available on the website. We will continue in our efforts to provide and review course materials for our courses.

However, for you to take advantage of these formats, you will need to improve on your I.T. skills and develop requisite distance learning Culture. It is well known that, for efficient and effective provision of Distance learning education, availability of appropriate and relevant course materials is a *sine qua non*. So also, is the availability of multiple plat form for the convenience of our students. It is in fulfilment of this, that series of course materials are being written to enable our students study at their own pace and convenience.

It is our hope that you will put these course materials to the best use.

Prof. Abel Idowu Olayinka

Vice-Chancellor

Foreword

As part of its vision of providing   education for "Liberty and Development" for Nigerians and the International Community, the University of Ibadan, Distance Learning Centre has recently embarked on a vigorous repositioning agenda which aimed at embracing a holistic and all encompassing approach to the delivery of its Open Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. Thus we are committed to global best practices in distance learning provision. Apart from providing an efficient administrative and academic support for our students, we are committed to providing educational resource materials for the use of our students. We are convinced that, without an up-to-date, learner-friendly and distance learning compliant course materials, there cannot be any basis to lay claim to being a provider of distance learning education. Indeed, availability of appropriate course materials in multiple formats is the hub of any distance learning provision worldwide.

In view of the above, we are vigorously pursuing as a matter of priority, the provision of credible, learner-friendly and interactive course materials for all our courses. We commissioned the authoring of, and review of course materials to teams of experts and their outputs were subjected to rigorous peer review to ensure standard. The approach not only emphasizes cognitive knowledge, but also skills and humane values which are at the core of education, even in an ICT age.

The development of the materials which is on-going also had input from experienced editors and illustrators who have ensured that they are accurate, current and learner-friendly. They are specially written with distance learners in mind. This is very important because, distance learning involves non-residential students who can often feel isolated from the community of learners.

It is important to note that, for a distance learner to excel there is the need to source and read relevant materials apart from this course material. Therefore, adequate supplementary reading materials as well as other information sources are suggested in the course materials.

Apart from the responsibility for you to read this course material with others, you are also advised to seek assistance from your course facilitators especially academic advisors during your study even before the interactive session which is by design for revision. Your academic advisors will assist you using convenient technology including Google Hang Out, You Tube, Talk Fusion, etc. but you have to take advantage of these. It is also going to be of immense advantage if you complete assignments as at when due so as to have necessary feedbacks as a guide.

The implication of the above is that, a distance learner has a responsibility to develop requisite distance learning culture which includes diligent and disciplined self-study, seeking available administrative and academic support and acquisition of basic information technology skills. This is why you are encouraged to develop your computer
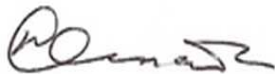
skills by availing yourself the opportunity of training that the Centre's provide and put these into use.

In conclusion, it is envisaged that the course materials would also be useful for the regular students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria who are faced with a dearth of high quality textbooks. We are therefore, delighted to present these titles to both our distance learning students and the university's regular students. We are confident that the materials will be an invaluable resource to all.

We would like to thank all our authors, reviewers and production staff for the high quality of work.

Best wishes.

Professor Bayo Okunade

Director

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Study Session 1: The Idea of Moral and Political Philosophy

Introduction

In this study session, our aim is to situate the entire course within the framework of philosophy, especially its moral and political dimension. This is important because public administration is a bit of both. Further, all we will be discussing in the lectures will involve looking at the ethical and the political implications of administration and public policy.

In this first study, we will define and characterise ethics and political philosophy as part of a larger philosophical concern about how human beings can live the good life and organise their societies to do so.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 1

At the end of this Study Session, you should be able to:

1.1 Explain the larger concern of moral standards in the society

1.2 Explain moral and political philosophy

1.3 Explain what ethics is all about

1.1 Moral Standards in the Society

Let us begin with two significant thought experiments.

First: Imagine a society where all individuals have the right to behave the way they like.

- I can play my fuji/reggae/hiphop/rap/jazz music as loud as I want;
- You can drive your brand new car on any side of the road you like;
- Your friends can decide to go to work at any time;
- There is no rule guiding marriages;
- There are no regulations for behaviour; no police, army or any form of law enforcement; we are all laws unto ourselves.

What do you think?

Second: Imagine that I don't obey any law except that which is conducive for me to obey.

One can almost predict what your reaction to these similar conditions would be. I suspect that you are likely going to be afraid, for instance. This is because you can certainly imagine the kind of life you would be forced to live within such a society.

Even using the term "society" for such a situation is conceptually wrong because society implies a level of orderliness and cooperation that cannot be achieved in these two conditions. Another person may just shrug off the thought of anything like that happening.

Figure 1.1: Lawless Society

Source: https://encrypted-tbn3.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:

How possible is it to take away all rules and regulations and institutions and structures guiding society? Asking such a question is significant because it shows that most of us have taken these institutions and rules and laws and norms for granted. And this prevents us from understanding their significance as well as any inquiry into why they matter.

1.1.1 Axiology

Given what we have said about the philosophic enterprise, it will soon become obvious that moral and political philosophy is the most philosophical of all the branches of philosophy. Both are dimensions of philosophy called axiology. Axiology is taken from two Greek words: *axios* which translates as "worthy" and *logos* meaning "theory" or "study".

Axiology, in loose translation, means the study of whatever is worthy or valuable. It is the theory of values. **Bunnin and Yu** define it as "The general study of value and valuation, including the meaning, characteristics, and classification of value, the nature of evaluation, and the character of value judgments" (2004: 65).

Another commentator defines it as "the study of the ultimately worthwhile things (and of course of the ultimately counter-worthwhile things) as well as the analysis of worthwhileness (or counter-worthwhileness) in general." In other words, axiology is concerned with the investigation of why we do what we do.

1.1.2 Decision Making

The various decisions we make in life all revolve around values. These values are so intangible that we hardly give them deep thought. Yet, they are so imperative in the way we view ourselves, our environment and the various things that surround us.

Values enable us to generate knowledge about our everyday world as well as enhance our perception of our environment. Our values refer to the worth or importance that a person attaches to anything.

For instance, the decision to choose "Philosophy and Public Affairs", for some of us, arises from the value we have placed on the course and what we think it can achieve for us later in the future.

EXAMPLE

Another instance concerns the need to choose a marriage partner. Deciding to marry A rather than B has a value consideration underlying it. This decision would go beyond the *factual* observation that A is robust, tall, and fair and weighs 65 kilogram's to a subjective and intangible value consideration that A is beautiful or handsome, smart, kind, intelligent and homely.

Making decisions arise from our uniqueness as individuals. What makes us individuals is our capacity to: (a) View the world from our own unique perspective
(b) Ascribe importance to what we believe is important about the world.

These two issues above, allow us to pay attention to some aspects of life and neglect others. It should be obvious, for instance, how this insight can enable us to come to terms with the decision making involved in public administration and public policy. Thus,

> *The possibility of bad decisions is rooted in our strength and vulnerability as decision makers. The strength lies in our ability to focus on a situation or problem, to interpret what is happening, to come to a conclusion and to translate the decision into action.*
>
> *This decision making process reflects a host of abilities: the ability to see a pattern; to see how the parts fit together to make a whole; the ability to have insight into fruitful ways of getting things done; to see the potential of the situation, which may or may not be apparent on the surface; to understand "why" even when the understanding is only a hunch; and, the ability to marshal our ideas, talents, will, and sense of purpose into action* (http://www.valueinsights.com/axiology3.html).

The philosophical study of value and what is worthy has three sub-levels:
- Moral values
- Political values
- Aesthetic values

Moral values involve issues of right and wrong, good and bad in human conduct
Political values involve issues of how to organize the human society to ensure the good life; and, Aesthetic values have to do with the idea of beauty and art.

- The various decisions we make in life all revolve around…….
  A. Decision making
  B. Values
  C. Emotions
□ Answer is B(Values)

1.2 Moral and Political Philosophy

Moral and political philosophy is such an inquiry. Both are dimensions of what we can call the philosophical enterprise. From earlier studies, especially at the 100 level, you were made to understand essentially that philosophy is the love of wisdom. As the love of wisdom, philosophy provides deep insight into the human condition.

These insights that philosophy provides a guide to actions in a world filled with ups and downs. The wisdom that philosophy searches for is a comprehensive set of beliefs and ideas that acts as a general vision or perspective about the universe, a person's place in the universe, and the possible goals and objectives a person may productively pursue in the universe.

Essentially therefore, philosophy seeks to promote human understanding. Philosophy helps human beings to understand the universe and the human condition, and in turn that understanding is brought to bear on human actions.

In other words, an action becomes a meaningful one to the extent that it results from an adequate understanding of the human condition and it leads to an action that enables man to cope with the uncertainties of the universe and live a meaningful life. *The survival of the human person is therefore directly tied to the idea of human understanding.*

Political philosophy is fundamentally concerned with the problem of how humans can achieve the organization of the society to enable development, progress and the good life.

This general concern can be subdivided into two.

- First, political philosophy "is a concern to identify the sorts of political institutions that we should have, at least given the background sort of culture or society that we enjoy" (Goodin et al, 2007: xvii).
- Second, political philosophy, by implication, is also deeply involved with the kind of power arrangement that could serve as the basis for organizing the political institutions of any society.

An institution can be political in two senses:
The first is the narrow sense in which any institution concerned with the political process—voting, parliamentary or presidential system, choosing the executive, interpreting the constitution, and so on—is political.
The second sense has to do with the political nature of such substantive institutions—cultural, economic and social—that may be affected or influenced by the political process; "any institution that can be affected by those who assume power under the political process" (ibid).

Box 1.1: General definition of Political Philosophy

Generally, political philosophy is concerned with the philosophical analysis of any and all political matters and political life. It is the application of philosophical thinking to ideas, issues and matters about the society and the state (Raphael, 1990: 7)

Politics and its concern with power and the allocation of scarce resources has a way of throwing up philosophical questions and inquiry which we hear about and see every day. For instance, most of us wonder why we should continue paying our taxes when PHCN is barely functioning and can hardly provide qualitative electricity.

The following questions are posed by these:
Why should I serve a government I had no hand in electing?
Why must my interest be sacrificed to the public interest?
What makes a government a good government?
Can I disobey what I consider to be a bad law?
What happens if the law of the state is in conflict with the law of my conscience?
What is the essence of a state?
Who is a citizen?
Do we need a state in order to successfully organise our lives?
Is democracy better than an enlightened dictatorship?

Thus, according to **Michael Freeden**,

> Political philosophy is situated in a highly intriguing relationship to politics. On the one hand, its focus on the normative, on forms of the good life, on what is morally proper, and on the right kind of decisions, has placed it at the centre of what most contemporary academics regard as political theory: a guide, a corrective, and a justification for enlightened and civilised forms of organised social life and political institutions (2004: 4).

1.3 Ethics

Moral philosophy or ethics has as its fundamental agenda, the normative thinking about how citizens as moral agents ought to behave. It is a concern with the rightness or wrongness, goodness or badness of human action.

In the human society and in our day to day interaction, we speak of a good or a bad person, a morally right or morally reprehensible action, a just or unjust practice, a bad or a good government, a right or wrong decision or course of action.

If the government refuses to reconstruct a bad road network that is important for making the citizens' lives convenient, we say it is a bad government that refuses to listen to the agitation of the people. If a person kidnaps a 4-year old child and asks for a 50 million naira ransom, we feel outraged and call such a person a criminal.

Moral philosophy in this sense is concerned with finding fundamental answers to questions like:

- How do I live a good life?
- What ought I to do (as a moral agent faced with a moral dilemma)?
- How should a person live?
- How should he act?

These moral questions are significant for two reasons:

First, the ideas of good and bad, right and wrong, moral and immoral are issues that are generated within the context of the human society. In this sense, the human society is a war zone consisting of different individuals with their different values, ideas, preferences, desires, and so on.

In such a situation, there is the need for a value framework or standard that would serve as a regulator of human conduct or behaviour.

Second, these moral questions are also generated by the moral dilemma that an individual faces almost daily in his or her interactions with other values and interests in the society.

A moral dilemma, according to **Bunnin and Yu**, involves a situation

> *In which one person is morally pulled in opposite directions. In these situations, different apparently sound reasons support different courses of action that cannot be jointly undertaken. The moral agent has reason to do A and has reason to do B, but he cannot do both A and B. Although it is not this person's fault for getting into the dilemma, whatever direction is chosen will inevitably be morally wrong in some respect and result in a sense of guilt or remorse (2004: 445).*

Case Study 1.1: Example of a moral dilemma

Imagine this situation. You are living in a society where truth telling and promise keeping are virtues that are priced above lying and promise breaking. One day, you went to your neigbour to ask for a cutlass to trim your overgrown front yard. He gave you the cutlass on the understanding that he had the intention of cutting his own courtyard very soon.

You then made a promise that you will return the cutlass to him anytime he asked for it. The following day, you came back from work only to hear violent noises from the house of the neighbour. You heard his and his wife's strident voices locked in a serious fight. The man shouted saying "I'll surely kill you today" several times.

Then the man bursts out of his house in furious rage and came to your house and asked for his cutlass. How should you have acted in such a situation? What should you have done? Your dilemma is that, on the one hand, you have a standing promise to return the man's cutlass anytime he asked for it. On the other hand, you are faced with a situation of being an accomplice to murder if you give him the cutlass.

1.3.1 Relationship between Moral and Political Philosophy

Moral and political philosophy are related in the sense that if we agree that certain political institutions will solve the problem of how best to organise our human society, then this implies that when we eventually put these institutions in place, "then, other things being equal, agents should not act so as to undermine them" (**Goodin** et al, 2007: xvii).

There have even been arguments that see political philosophy as a subset of moral philosophy. Thus, if political philosophy attempts to answer the question of how we can organise the human society in such a way that will enable us to live the good life, then it becomes a part of the general moral issue of how we ought to live the good life as moral agents in the society.

In other words, part of the moral values we uphold in the human society are those values that enable us to relate well with others in the political community as well as ensure the flourishing of the state and its institutions. For **Freeden**,

> *A central task of political philosophers as moral philosophers has been to provide yardsticks for public conduct, so essential in areas such as the distribution of scarce goods, or the wielding of power by political leaders and decision-makers. Societies rightly rely on political philosophers to point out ways of improving social institutions, for political ethics pertains to the instilling of virtuous public practices (2004: 5).*

Moral philosophy, in this sense, therefore, serves to generate and validate moral principles which become the foundation of public life and practice.

Summary of Study Session 1

In this Study Session, you have learnt that:

1) Axiology is taken from two Greek words: *axios* which translates as "worthy" and *logos* meaning "theory" or "study". Axiology, in loose translation, means the study of whatever is worthy or valuable. It is the theory of values.
2) Values enable us to generate knowledge about our everyday world as well as enhance our perception of our environment. Our values refer to the worth or importance that a person attaches to anything.
3) Making decisions arise from our uniqueness as individuals. What makes us individuals is our capacity to: (a) view the world from our own unique perspective
             (b) ascribe importance to what we believe is important about the world
4) Philosophy helps human beings to understand the universe and the human condition, and in turn that understanding is brought to bear on human actions.
5) Political philosophy is fundamentally concerned with the problem of how humans can achieve the organisation of the society to enable development, progress and the good life
6) Moral philosophy or ethics has as its fundamental agenda, the normative thinking about how citizens as moral agents ought to behave. It is a concern with the rightness or wrongness, goodness or badness of human action.
7) Part of the moral values we uphold in the human society are those values that enable us to relate well with others in the political community as well as ensure the flourishing of the state and its institutions

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 1

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 1.1

1. Explain what you understand by Axiology
2. What are values? Mention and explain the philosophical study of value

SAQ 1.2

1. Explain Political Philosophy
2. In what sense can we say an institution is political?

SAQ 1.3

1. Give the significance of moral questions
2. What is a moral dilemma?

Study Session 2: The Nature and Meaning of Morality and Ethics

Introduction

This second study session will further shed light into the nature of ethics which we have identified as being concerned with the question of living the good life within the human society. This becomes necessary so as to delineate the theoretical context within which we can begin to relate ethics to public administration— our second major concern in this course.

In other words, we should be able to distinguish the precise manner in which we want to pursue the relationship between these two human endeavours.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 2

The students, at the end of this lecture, should be able to do the following:

2.1 Explain Morality and Ethics

2.2 Differentiate between Morality and Ethics

2.3 Highlight the various dimensions or branches of ethics

2.1 Morality and Ethics

Whether or not you have taken a course in philosophy or in ethics before, most of us are familiar with ethical or moral terms. Terms like good, bad/evil, right, wrong, just, unjust, moral and immoral often come up in our attempt to judge the behaviour or action of other people, the state, the state institutions, or even ourselves.

These terms become useful, in other words, when we consider what a person or institutions or government ought or should do and what they shouldn't do. It would seem to most of us that the difference between right and wrong, good and bad, moral and immoral, just and unjust can be compared, without any problem, to the difference between black and white. An action is either good or bad; a decision is either right or wrong, a situation is either just or unjust.

According to **David Copp**,

As we go about our lives, we face many decisions. Some of the decisions seem to concern only ourselves and people with whom we are intimate, such as decisions about behaviour within the family.

Other decisions concern our responsibilities in our jobs. Some concern our relationship to the state or the law, such as decisions about whether to abide by the tax code or whether to join the armed forces.

People who have governmental roles sometimes make decisions about controversial social issues, such as the morality of capital punishment or the justice of the tax system. All of us who live in democratic societies need to make decisions about such issues if we intend to vote responsibly.

Moral philosophy addresses the many abstract ethical and philosophical issues that arise when we attempt to make such decisions in a reflective and responsible way (2006: 3-4).

Figure 2.1: David Copp

Source: https://encrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:

Given the concern of moral philosophy with the way we act, behave or go about making crucial and critical decisions, especially about how we relate with others or how we live the good life in the human society, it becomes crucial to understand what ethics fundamentally is.

If the difference between good and bad or right or wrong is not as easily determined as the difference between black and white, then what are the things, factors or variables to consider in making decisions that will, for instance, touch the lives of millions of people in a state? The decision a person takes at any point in time may be determined by self-interest, law, customs, traditions, etc.

2.2 Differences between Morality and Ethics

In this kind of consideration that we have outlined for moral philosophy above, it becomes useful to see the relationship between ethics and morality. In most literature on moral philosophy, ethics and morality are often used interchangeably.

For instance, **Panza** and **Potthast** argue that arguments separating between ethics and morality won't achieve anything because "in the end, both ethics and morality are actually about the same: What you *ought* to be doing with your life. If it's true that an act is immoral, then you ought not to do it. The situation doesn't change if the act is unethical instead. It's still something you ought not to do" (2010: 11).

> *"But wait!" you may say. "Ethics and morality can't be the same thing. Something can be unethical but still moral." Some people think, for instance, that Robin Hood's stealing to feed the poor was unethical but still moral.*
>
> *That thought may be true — we're not saying that words don't get used in that way. But in the end, what do you really want to know about Robin Hood? You want to know whether he ought to have been doing what he did.*
>
> *Ditto with something that seems immoral but may still be ethical, like selling goods at hugely inflated prices. If ethics and morality say different things, you need to find out what the relationship between you and your customers should be and how you should act, feel, and think toward them based on that relationship* (ibid).

This is a compelling argument. However, there are also some who insist that there is actually a fundamental difference between these terms. For the purpose of this study, we will assume that there is such a difference. Eventually, as we will see, the debate amounts to the same thing.

Every child that is born into the world is born into a particular culture and a particular society with specific norms, values, practices, rules and beliefs. We get socialised into these practices, rules and norms as we grow up and gradually become a member of the moral community.

A *moral community* refers to the community of moral agents who possess the capacity to differentiate between good and bad, right and wrong, and so on. Imbeciles, morons, infants and the insane, for instance, can't be considered to be part of that moral community because of their inability to make sound moral judgments. Thus, morality, from the above, signifies the accepted standard of human conduct and behaviour which have evolved in society for a long time.

According to **Thomas Nagel,** "Morality identifies certain norms that apply to everyone in a certain group and that should be recognised as valid for everyone by each member of the group although their separate individual aims and desires may differ and lead them into conflict with one another (2006: 380).

This implies that morality becomes a "common point of view" or a common reference point for conduct and acceptable action about what we ought to do in the society as different from what each person desires to do. In this sense, **Bernard Gert** refers to morality as

> *an informal public system applying to all rational persons, governing behaviour that affects others, having the lessening of evil or harm as its goal, and including what are commonly known as the moral rules, moral ideals, and moral virtues.*

> *To say that it is a public system means that all those to whom it applies must understand it and that it must not be irrational for them to use it in deciding what to do and in judging others to whom the system applies…. To say that morality is informal means that there is no decision procedure or authority that can settle all its controversial questions…. Although there is overwhelming agreement on most moral matters, certain controversial questions must be settled in an ad hoc fashion or not settled at all* (1999: 586).

Ethics refers to the philosophical study of morality. This characterisation casts ethics as a kind of overarching evaluative framework that allows for the interrogation and possible justification of our moral beliefs, values, ideas and standards. It is this description that makes ethics a viable branch of philosophy.

The ethical ambition is therefore to understand the motivation, reason and justification that make us act or behave the way we do, or to make sense of "the networks of rules and 'norms' that sustain our lives. The ambition is often one of finding system in the apparent jumble of principles and goals that we respect, or say we do" (Blackburn, 2001: 6).

Case Study 2.1: Relationship between Ethics and Morality

Consider this scenario: A child grew up with the injunction that it is always good to obey one's parents in all things. As a child, s/he had no option because the cane is always available to force compliance. Imagine, however, that the child eventually became a youth of 21. And the issue of choosing a career came up.

The father wanted the guy to study medicine; s/he wanted theatre arts. The father insisted; s/he was forced to conceive the question: Why must I always obey my father? With this question, s/he stepped into an *ethical landscape* that goes beyond the requirement of the moral requirements of the family, the community, and the society s/he grew up in. In this sense, ethics becomes disturbing!

The etymological origins of ethics and morality, however, give us a basis for collapsing the two concepts into a framework that will enable us to confront the idea of public administration later in other lectures. Ethics is derived from the Greek word *ethikos*, the literal meaning of which is something concerned with *ethos* or character.

Morality, on its own, comes from the Latin *moralis* or something concerned with *mores* or character, manner, custom, habit.

Taken in this sense, **Blackburn** says we are all ethical animals (i.e. *homo ethikos*):

> *Human beings are ethical animals. I do not mean that we naturally behave particularly well, or that we are endlessly telling each other what to do. But we grade and evaluate, and compare and admire, and claim and justify. We do not just 'prefer' this or that, in isolation. We prefer that our preferences are shared; we turn them into demands on each other. Events endlessly adjust our sense of responsibility, our guilt and shame, and our sense of our own worth and that of others. We hope for lives whose story leaves us looking admirable; we like our weaknesses to be hidden and deniable* (ibid: 4).

In other words, we are all in one way or the other concerned with the kind of person we turn out to be or the kind of character we build, and the kind of moral principle we decide to follow. Ethics therefore attempts to answer the fundamental questions:
- How should a person live?
- How should a person act?
- How should I act in relation to others in the society?
- How should I relate with the institutions that we have built to organise our human interaction?

2. 3 Branches of Ethics

Ethics can be subdivided into three categories, namely:
1) Normative ethics
2) Meta-ethics
3) Applied/practical ethics

1. **Normative ethics-**this branch of philosophy is concerned with the issues of what ends rational human beings ought to pursue and what moral principles ought to guide our choice of actions and behaviour. Ethicists in this context are concerned with questions like: What kinds of actions are right or wrong? What kind of person should one be? What are the moral virtues? What, in general, has moral value? What kinds of things make a person's life go well? What does justice require? Most generally, how should we live our lives? Normative ethics is usually divided into two parts.

i. Teleological ethics—from the Greek word *telos* or end—(or consequentialism) consists of theories that claim generally that actions are right or wrong not because of any intrinsic values they have in themselves, but because of the consequences they bring about. For instance, saving a drowning child is not right in itself; it is only right because it brings about a good end.

> **Box 2.1: Consequentialist Theories**
> Two consequentialist theories are:
> a) Ethical egoism (actions are right because they bring about good ends for the person initiating the action)
> b) Ethical altruism (actions are right because they bring about good ends to others).

ii. Deontological ethics— from the Greek word *deon* meaning duty—(or non-consequentialism) involve the theories that insist that morally right or wrong actions are not determined with reference solely to the consequences of those actions but also by analysis of their intrinsic nature. An action is right or wrong because of the value that action has in itself independent of whatever consequence it produces. Thus, stealing is intrinsically wrong even if one steals to feed a hungry family of 15.

2. **Metaethics-** this branch of philosophy is often contrasted to normative ethics. Its concern is not with the ethical method and principle which ought to guide the action and behaviour of the moral agent. Rather, its field is the whole of ethics and not with substantive ethical questions of how we ought to live our lives.

    Metaethics studies the nature of ethics as a field of philosophical inquiry, the conceptual analysis of our ethical terms like good, bad, right, wrong, just, unjust, moral and immoral or amoral, and the nature of moral judgments.

    Metaethics asks such questions like:

    Are there moral truths? Do we simply have a variety of feelings and attitudes about moral issues, with there being nothing in virtue of which one side of a disagreement is correct and the other incorrect? Are there moral "properties"?

    For example, is there a property or characteristic that a kind of action can have of *being wrong* in the way that there is a property a kind of action can have of *being unpopular*? If so, is wrongness analogous to unpopularity, in that it is a relation between an action and the attitudes of a group of persons? Or is wrongness a more "objective" property?

    When a person makes a moral claim, is she expressing a belief or is she merely expressing a feeling or an attitude, such as approval or disapproval? Is it possible to have moral knowledge? What is the relation between morality and rationality? Would it be rational to commit oneself to morality? (Copp, 2006: 6).

3. **Applied (or practical) ethics-** this is a broader category that deals with the application of ethical theories, principles, rules and reasons to the moral issues arising from our practical day to day problems, concerns and endeavours.

    This concern with the application of ethical theories and principles to resolving practical problems of human existence has led to branches of applied ethics such as business ethics, environmental ethics, bioethics, legal ethics, medical ethics, journalistic ethics, media ethics, nursing ethics, as well as the application of ethical analysis to the problem of corruption, poverty, hunger, whistle-blowing, abortion, euthanasia, pornography, genetic engineering, cloning, commercialisation of human organs, physician-assisted suicide, capital punishment, war, terrorism, animals, and so on.

    Our concern in this course falls into this category of ethics we call applied or practical ethics, and especially to the sub-set of concerns dealing with the way professionals in agriculture, media, journalism, nursing, medicine, law, biology, business and public administrators and civil servants handle their professional commitments in an ethically conducive manner. This will be the topic of the next lecture.

Summary of Study Session 2

In this Study Session, you have learnt that:

1. Terms like good, bad/evil, right, wrong, just, unjust, moral and immoral often come up in our attempt to judge the behaviour or action of other people, the state, the state institutions, or even ourselves.

2. A *moral community* refers to the community of moral agents who possess the capacity to differentiate between good and bad, right and wrong, and so on. Imbeciles, morons, infants and the insane, for instance, can't be considered to be part of that moral community because of their inability to make sound moral judgments

3. Morality refers to an informal public system applying to all rational persons, governing behaviour that affects others, having the lessening of evil or harm as its goal, and including what are commonly known as the moral rules, moral ideals, and moral virtues

4. Ethics refers to the philosophical study of morality.

5. Ethics can be subdivided into three categories, namely:

Normative ethics

Meta-ethics

Applied/practical ethics

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 2

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 2.1

Give examples of words used in judging the behaviour of others

SAQ 2.2

Explain Moral Community

State Thomas Nagels view of Morality

SAQ 2.3

Mention the three branches of ethics and explain one.

Study Session 3: Professional Ethics

Introduction

The main objective of this study session will be to highlight the meaning and content of professional ethics as a sub-set of applied or practical ethics. This will give us the final basis from which we can situate our concern with public administration as an institution which requires ethical analysis.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 3

The students, after this lecture, will be able to

3.1 Explain professions and ethics

3.2 Highlight differences between Common Morality and Role Morality

3.3 Outline characteristics that distinguish Profession

3.4 Explain Virtue Ethics as an ethical principle

3.1 Definition of Professional Ethics

It is not too difficult, as we have seen in the earlier lectures, to see immediately how ethics and morality relate to our day to day interaction with ourselves, with others, with nature and with our institutions.

What may not be obvious is why there is a need for another ethical standard for professionals (doctors, lawyers, engineers, nurses, drivers, physicists, lecturers, clerics, newscasters, journalists, and civil servants), different from the common moral framework that guide every other person in the society.

Professional ethics is defined as the personal and corporate rules that govern behavior within the context of a particular profession. An example of professional ethics is the American Bar Association's set of ethical rules that govern an attorney's moral obligations.

The sub-set of ethics that we are calling **professional ethics** makes the claim that professionals by the fact of their professional endeavours can't be evaluated solely by the common morality that guides everybody in the society. Why is this so?

- Professional Ethics governs……
    - A. Morality
    - B. Attitude
    - C. Behaviour
☐ Answer is C- Behaviour

3.2 Common Morality versus Role Morality

Common morality refers to the code of conduct that has been accepted by almost everybody as the normative standard of behaviour and conduct in the society. Role morality, on the other hand, is a step removed from this common moral standard governing everybody's conduct. To begin, let's differentiate between what has been called common morality and professional/role morality.

When you say someone is a professional, that appellation comes with some sort of respect and classification. In other words, the use of the term professional already implies that such a person is not just an ordinary person; s/he has what others don't have.

Professional or role morality takes this assumption further by arguing that such professionals ought also to be assessed by a different moral framework *in addition* to the common moral standard already existing.

Let us start by distinguishing a job from a profession. At a superficial level, we can be allowed to argue that a work is just a work whatever its nature. This may be so to the extent that one of the essences of working is to earn a salary. However, at a deeper level, work is not just work, especially considering the effect work has on people and the society at large.

At the level of a job, we may say it exists just for the sake of fulfilling the need for a livelihood. However, this description radically changes when we consider that the society or the public sometimes requires something much more than making a living from a job. We can for instance consider the difference between a vulcanizer and a doctor.

What would you say is the fundamental difference? One difference could be that what the society requires from a doctor is much critical than what it requires from a vulcanizer.

The expectations of the public or of the society from a doctor and other professionals derive from the additional knowledge or training that has gone into the preparation to enter into such a profession.

Again, consider a vulcanizer and an engineer. On the average, to become a vulcanizer takes little or no serious technical training. To become an engineer requires, however, a long spell of serious academic and technical knowledge. The effect of a badly trained engineer on people's lives could be more disastrous than that of a badly trained vulcanizer or plumber.

- What is role morality?
☐ Role morality is a step removed from common moral standard governing everybody's conduct.

▪ The high expectation of people from professionals is as a result of…….
   A. Risk
   B. Training
   C. Behaviour
☐ Answer is C, Training

3.3 Characteristics of Profession

Defining a profession therefore requires delineating those characteristics that differentiates a profession from a trade or a job or a mere vocation to earn a living. The following characteristics also translate into what is required for professionalization. Thus, a job, vocation or trade can become a profession and assume more status by undergoing some of the professionalising features that makes a profession different from the rest.

These characteristics include:

1) Professions require theoretical knowledge usually from the University of Training Institutes
2) Professions require extensive and specialised training
3) Professions are differentiated by their commitment to public service
4) Professions have a great latitude to exercise their skill and competence in rendering service to the society
5) Professions also have a huge monopoly in carrying out their operation
6) Professions have an accompanying status that differentiate their members
7) Professions are guided by professional bodies
8) Professions are further guided in their operations by codes of ethical conduct

Given these features that distinguish the professional from an ordinary worker, especially the level of knowledge required to make a professional as well as the level of expectation from the society, it stands to reason that professionals would be assessed by a different and a bit higher ethical standard than that which the ordinary person observes.

▪ Professions require extensive and specialised training. True or False
☐ True

In other words, since the society and the public pay the professionals for their high level of knowledge which confers on them a higher power, then they require more scrutiny to ensure that they do not get carried away with knowledge and power that they possess. The standard for assessment would still contain some of the same ethical content that governs common morality:

> *By and large, ethical responsibilities at work are a lot like ethical responsibilities in the rest of life. After all, deception, coercion, and harm are just as wrong in the workplace as they are in your home or community. When people enter the workplace, they don't step into a magical portal where anything goes.*
> *In fact, in the professional workplace, some jobs require even more of you from an ethical standpoint. What these additional responsibilities are depends on your*

job or profession.... In addition to living up to standards in your personal life, professional ethics may require you to go above and beyond the call of duty.

So as a professional, your job may require you to follow more specific and difficult ethical standards. The takeaway point here is clear: Don't make the mistake of thinking professionals can live outside of ethics. Professional work can actually be a lot more ethically demanding than the rest of life (Panza and Potthast, 2010: 269-270).

3.4 Virtue Ethics

Virtue ethics suggests itself in this context as an ethical principle that speaks to the significance of what the society requires from the professional. According to virtue ethics, *right action derives from the virtue of the moral agent*. Thus, a moral agent is supposed to cultivate those virtues—fortitude, courage, generosity, elegance, prudence, temperance, piety, justice, wisdom (both theoretical and practical), love and a sense of duty which the society expects will lead to a better performance of the professional duty.

Virtue ethics asserts that the central question of ethics—how should I live?—ought to be reconstructed as: What kind of person should I be? The professional, within this ethical context, depicts the professional as a type of character that is admirable in the society. Thus, in virtue ethics, there is a crucial connection between character and function which in the long run affects the way a professional relates with the society.

This understanding of the relationship between professional ethics and virtue ethics is significant given the conflicts that attend the responsibilities of the professional. The most common and difficult to resolve is the conflict between making a livelihood and serving the public. The other side of the conflict is the conflict between the professional requirement and the public interest.

Take a common case: An ordinary person becomes a professional not because of any love for the public or the society but because s/he wants to find a good means of livelihood. Imagine therefore a situation where such a professional is offered monetary bribes or gifts to alter professional judgment.

Altering professional judgment would be contrary to the professional code of conduct and the ideals of the professional bodies, but would enhance the professional's existential status. Another instance involves a situation where a company or an organisation asked the professional to go against his or her professional judgment. This conflict is what gives rise to the dilemma of whistle-blowing:

> *Imagine that John is a lawyer working for a large car company. He comes across documents that show that a model sold by the company fails far more crash tests than is allowable under federal law.*
>
> *Furthermore, John takes the documents to his supervisor, who dismissively tells him not to worry about it and tucks the documents under his desk. After seeing this, John goes to his supervisor's boss, but she also declines to take any action. If you were John, what do you think your ethical responsibilities are? If the danger to the public is serious enough and the company really is acting illegally, John's*

duties as a professional may require him to disclose the information outside the company's chain of command. His duty to the public and his profession can outweigh his duty to his employer (Panza and Potthast, 2010: 274).

The term whistleblowing can be defined as raising a concern about a wrong doing within an organisation. The concern must be a genuine concern about a crime, criminal offence, miscarriage of justice, dangers to health and safety and of the environment – And the cover up of any of these.

We can also have a situation where professional judgment contradicts societal interests. An engineer may want to short-circuit a contract to build a community bridge in order to enhance personal interest and this would obviously endanger the society.

- ▪ Virtue Ethics give a connection between…….. and ……..
    - A. Morality and behaviour
    - B. Character and function
    - C. Ethics and profession
- ☐ Answer is B, Character and function

Each profession however comes with its own unique responsibilities and ethical concerns. This is apart from those responsibilities they sometimes share in common. For example, doctors and engineers share the responsibility not to cause harm. Our concern in this course, and in the next study session, is the profession of public administration.

Summary of Study Session 3

1. Professional ethics is defined as the personal and corporate rules that govern behavior within the context of a particular profession. An example of professional ethics is the American Bar Association's set of ethical rules that govern an attorney's moral obligations.
2. Common morality refers to the code of conduct that has been accepted by almost everybody as the normative standard of behaviour and conduct in the society. Role morality, on the other hand, is a step removed from this common moral standard governing everybody's conduct.
3. Characteristics distinguishing profession are:

    Professions also have a huge monopoly in carrying out their operation

    Professions have an accompanying status that differentiates their members

    Professions are guided by professional bodies

    Professions are further guided in their operations by codes of ethical conduct

4. In virtue ethics we have a crucial connection between character and function which in the long run affects the way a professional relates with the society

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 3

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 3.1

Define Professional Ethics and give examples

SAQ 3.2

Distinguish between Job and Profession

SAQ 3.3

Give 5 characteristics of Profession

SAQ 3.4

What do you understand by Virtue Ethics?

Study Session 4: The Nature of Public Administration and Public Policy

Introduction

After examining the ethical dimension of this course, we will begin to analyse other dimensions. We will start in this lecture by understanding the meaning, nature and scope of public administration and public policy.

Learning Outcomes

The student, through this lecture, should be able to:

4.1 Explain the Evolution and Nature of public administration

4.2 Highlight the characteristics and give definitions of public administration

4.1 Evolution of Administration and Management

The coming together of human beings to form the human society is a significant step forward in the evolution of the human race. According to **Aristotle**, man is by nature a social and egregious being. This means that humans naturally flock together and achieve their best when they come together in what came to be called the society.
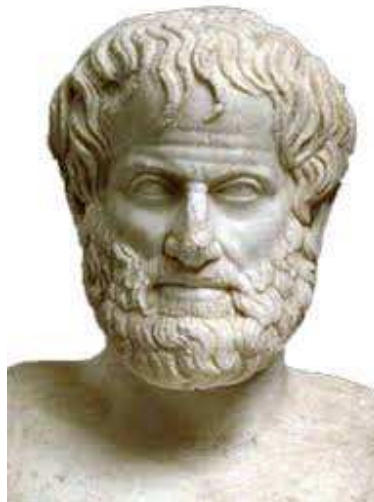
Figure 4.1: Aristotle

Source: https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn

Living in the society also gives credence to the organising capacity of humans. This immediately tells us that the history of the evolution of the human species overlaps the history of management since there is no human collectivity—tribe, village, clan, city states, kingdom, empires, nation-states—that does not engage in some of form of management practice however primitive.

Social organisations therefore imply the necessity of management or administration that prevents the human society from degenerating into anarchy.

The second point to make about the evolution of administration or management is that capacity is a function of history and context in which it evolves. Simply put, an administrative framework is a child of its time and place. The history of administration therefore reflects a continuity of the administrative process from its primitive origins to its modern sophistication. Thus,

> *People have been shaping and reshaping organisations for many centuries. Looking back through world history, we can trace the stories of people working together in formal organisations such as the Greek and Roman armies, the Roman Catholic Church, the East India Company, and the Hudson Bay Company. People have also long been writing about how to make organisations efficient and effective –since long before terms such as "management" came into common usage* (http://polaris.umuc.edu/~tgrodsky/admn601/managethought.html [Dec 5, 2009. 5.41pm]).

The discovery of writing, for instance, plays a very significant role in the transition of administrative practice from primitivism to sophistication. This led to the ease of record keeping which further increased the capacity and scope of administration as well as its sophistication.

The evolution and development of the modern state around the 14th century could be regarded as the most significant event in the transformation of public administration. The state and the machinery of government have been developing over time due to the expectations of the people about the capacity of the state to take care of many aspects of their lives.

The activities of governments can be subsumed under four categories, they include:
1) Transfer of resources within the state territory from one part or region to another
2) The provision of subsidies in the form of tax expenditure but with strings attached
3) Promulgation of rules and regulations that guide how the people conduct their lives and businesses
4) The Provision of essential public services like water, education, housing, and road network, electricity, health, defence, social welfare, and so on.

- The evolution and development of the modern state took place around…….
  A. 12th Century
  B. 14th Century
  C. 15th Century

☐ Answer is B, 15th Century

However, while the evolution of administrative thinking and practice has witnessed tremendous development, we can't say the same for the attempt to find a conceptual mould for the many manifestation of administrative practice. It has been said that the field of public administration in particular suffers an identity problem.

Any good definition would have to first identify what administration is, and then go on to tell us in what sense that administrative practice is *public*. We will confront the first part of the definitional problem in this study and dedicate the next study to unraveling the sense in which public administration is public.

4.2 Characteristics and Definition of Public Administration

We could begin defining and characterising public administration by considering it as the theoretical analysis of the activity of public servants. Some commentators broadened this simplistic definition by noting that:

> *A typical contemporary text condenses the various meanings of public administration into just three: first, the activity of public servants; second, the structure of executive government; and third, the systematic study of the first two* (Greenwood and Wilson 1989).

We are naturally most concerned with the third of these meanings, but the nature of the field of study cannot be adequately comprehended without an appreciation of the continuous and close proximity of the *practice* of public administration, both as the day-to-day doings of countless public officials and the patterning and re-patterning of a wide variety of state institutions (Pollitt, 1996: 1203).

Given this opening gamble, how do we begin to understand the meaning and nature of public administration? Is "public administration" to be taken as a simple conjunction of "public" and "administration"? Or, is "public administration" unanalysable, considering its connection to context and history?

Andy Smith contends that any attempt at defining public administration must first differentiate between the important questions of how public authorities are organised and how they seek to act within societies through making and implementing public policy (2007: 757). We will begin unravelling its meaning by examining several definitions and characterisation given below

1) "Public administration is a detailed and systematic execution of public law" (Woodrow Wilson);
2) "Public administration is the organization and management of men and materials to achieve the purpose of government" (Waldo, D);
3) 'We conceive of public administration as the key output linkage of the state towards civil society. However, the interface between public administration and civil society is a two-way street, including public policy implementation as well as policy demands from private actors towards policy-makers" (J. Pierre);
4) "Public administration may be interpreted as a social system existing and functioning in accordance with its own order but, on the other hand, it also depends on environmental conditions in a complex and changing society" (K. Konig);

5) Administration is 'the review, in an area of public life, of law, its enforcement and revision; and decision-making on cases in that area submitted to the public service" (Desmond Keeling).

6) "Public administration consists of all those operations having for their purpose the fulfilment or enforcement of public policy" (L. D. White);

7) "Public administration comprises all activities of persons or groups in governments or their agencies, whether these organisations are international, regional or local in their scope, to fulfil the purpose of these governments or agencies" (J. S. Hodgson);

8) "When 'Administration' is qualified by the word 'Public', it simply means the practice of administration in a particular segment of society; that of the public sector. Public administration is therefore governmental administration and operates in the particular sphere of government. It is the machinery for implementing government policy (Adedeji Adebayo);

9) "Public administration is the fulfilment or enforcement of public policy as declared by the competent authorities. It deals with the problems and powers, the organisation and techniques of management involved in carrying out the laws and policies formulated by the policy-making agencies of government" (M. E. Dimock).

4.2.1 Understanding Public Administration through Analysis

Another explanatory framework, suggested by **Mark Rutgers**, is that to achieve the understanding of what public administration means through the analysis of how it was constituted "in the crossfire of three dichotomies with ancient ancestries, they include the delineation between:

- Public and private sphere
- State and society,
- Politics and administration (2003: 15)

Figure 4.2: Mark Rutgers

Source: https://encrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:

Public-private dichotomy: The significance of this distinction is that it enables us to mark the crucial difference between general and private administration and public administration. The bigger problem it raises is to what extent we can draw the difference between public and private administration.

Is it a difference in degree or kind? In what sense can we say public administration is "public"? Is the difference a matter of "profit" versus "non-profit", effectiveness versus efficiency?

State-society dichotomy: This dichotomy serves the purpose of positioning public administration in between the authority to make decisions and policies and the people or citizens to be administered. In this sense, the public servant could be seen as the machinery of the state that sees to the implementation of laws and policies in order to conserve and change society (ibid: 20).

This distinction also highlights the extent to which public administration and its conceptual baggage are dependent on the concept of the state. The dichotomy however also subtly highlights the hidden tension and problems that exist between the state and the society with public administration serving as the reflecting mirror.

The state, for instance, has evolved over time as what **Hobbes** called a leviathan having total authority over the subjects in the society. This gives rise to a relationship between the two defined by dynamic and constant changes and tensions.

Politics-administration dichotomy: This is often considered to be the founding dichotomy in the study of public administration. Its chief significance lies in the wall it erects between administrative and political phenomena, and between administrative and political functionaries. The dichotomy was meant originally to replace the concept of the separation of powers which was felt to be inadequate in dealing with administrative reality and phenomena (ibid: 19).

Figure 4.3: Woodrow Wilson
Source: data: image/jpeg;base64,/9j/4AAQSkZJRgABAQAAAQABAAD/2wCE

Woodrow Wilson's strident warning about separating between politics and administration also serves to consolidate this distinction. For Wilson, if there is no separation between politics and

administration, then the scientific study of administration envisaged by a pioneer like **Frederick Taylor** becomes impossible.

The question however is to what extent the dichotomy can serve as a tenable explanatory variable given that in theory and practice, it seems difficult and almost impossible to separate between politics and administration. One of the persistent attempts at delineating public administration has insisted on the significance of the "public" in public administration.

- According to……..the state has evolved to become a leviathan having total authority over the subjects in the society
  A. Aristotle
  B. Hobbes
  C. Taylor
  ☐ Answer is B, Hobbes

4.2.2 Similarities and differences from the Private quality of Private Administration

Let's consider various opinions on the public quality of public administration as well as its similarities and differences from the private quality of private administration

1) "While the similarities between governmental and non-governmental organisations are greater than is generally supposed, some differences nevertheless exist. Most often, these are differences in degree rather than kind" (Herbert Simon);
2) "Public and private management: are they fundamentally alike in all unimportant respects?" (Graham Allison);
3) "Experience has shown that a wide range of essential services can be provided better by government than by any private business arrangement thus far invented, or, as in the case of basic research, will be undersupplied because of public goods aspects, if left to competitive markets. We do not need to reinvent government.
Governmental organizations are needed, as they have always been needed, to enforce the rules of the game (including the rules of market contracting), to facilitate coordination of private organizations, and to perform services that are unlikely to be performed effectively by the private sector" (Herbert Simon);
4) "The government is not GB Ltd. It does not have a strategic 'core' business... It comprises a whole range of activities, many of which have no connection with each other... Nor is there normally the test of profitability or the concept of profit control. There is no systematic way, other than the general philosophy of the party in power, whereby the benefits from resources for, say defence, health or motorways can be compared and evaluated" (Sir John Hunt);
5) "...the capacity to distinguish clearly between politics and administration; between public and private; and between national and international, is fundamental to territorial, representative democracy. If voters are deprived of that capacity, political accountability is bound to fade away" (T. Jorgensen);
6) "It makes a big difference whether President Carter kisses the Empress Farah Dibah in private or in public" (van Gunsteren); (Pollitt, 2003: 2-4).

Christopher Pollitt identifies certain distinctive characteristics of public administration which lends credence to the public quality of its mode of operation:

Figure 4.4: Christopher Pollitt

Source: data:image/jpeg;base64,/9j/4AAQSkZJRgABAQAAAQABAAD/2wCE

Environmental factors:
1. Not a market environment—revenue comes from budgetary appropriations, not sales of goods and services
2. Presence of elaborate formal legal constraints
3. Presence of intensive political influences

Organization/environmental transactions
4. Public organizations produce "public goods", and tend to deal with situations where there are significant "externalities" (effects on others who are not directly producers or consumers of the service in question).
5. Public services are often monopolistic and/or coercive.
6. Public services tend to have a very broad impact, and often carry a high symbolic significance.
7. Public managers are subject to more intense public scrutiny.
8. Public managers are expected to have higher degrees of fairness, honesty, openness and accountability.

Organizational roles, structures and processes
9. A high level of ambiguity, intangibility or immeasurable quality of goals. Also greater multiplicity of goals and a higher incidence of conflict of tension between goals.
10. General manager roles involve more political, expository activities and crisis management.
11. Less decision-making autonomy and less authority over subordinates.
12. More red tape—more complex organizational structures and procedural requirements.

13. Strategic decision-making is more vulnerable to interruptions and interventions by external groups.
14. Fewer extrinsic incentives (for example high pay and benefit packages) and a weaker link between performance and rewards.
15. Different, more community-oriented work-related values (the "public service ethos") but also lower work satisfaction.
16. Greater caution and reluctance to innovate

Summary of Study Session 4

1) Living in the society also gives credence to the organising capacity of humans. This immediately tells us that the history of the evolution of the human species overlaps the history of management since there is no human collectivity—tribe, village, clan, city states, kingdom, empires, nation-states—that does not engage in some of form of management practice however primitive.

2) An administrative framework is a child of its time and place. The history of administration therefore reflects a continuity of the administrative process from its primitive origins to its modern sophistication.

3) Public administration is considered as the theoretical analysis of the activity of public servants.

4) The state, for instance, has evolved over time as what **Hobbes** called a leviathan having total authority over the subjects in the society. This gives rise to a relationship between the two defined by dynamic and constant changes and tensions.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 4

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 4.1
According to **Aristotle**, man is by nature a social and egregious being. Explain

Highlight the categories under which governments activities are subsumed

SAQ 4.2
Give four definitions of Public Administration according to Authors
State the three dichotomies given by Mark Rutgers, and explain one.

Study Session 5: The Role of Public Policy in Public Administration

Introduction

From the previous study session, you have learnt about the evolution of public administration, characteristics, etc. This study will dwell on the idea of public policy and the new public management paradigm.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 5

The student, through this lecture, should be able to:

5.1 Explain the Idea of Public Policy

5.2 Enumerate the Features of a Public Servant

5.3 Explain New Public Management Paradigm

5.1 What Do Governments Do? The Idea of Public Policy

Earlier in the study, we made the point, arising from some of the definitions of public administration, that it comprises all the activities in the public sector directed at implementing and enforcing government's policy. You surely are aware of the three arms of government involved in the policy-making process of the state.

Box 5.1: Three Arms of Government

We talk of the legislature as the law-making arm, the judiciary as the law interpreting arm, and the executive as the implementing arm for the policies of the state. However, it takes much more than the President, the legislature and the judge to ensure that the policies of government are implemented.

When a government implements series of policies, the point at which the people confront these policies is not at the level of the legislature or the President. Rather, the people meet the state itself in those who embody its authority: the police officers, the public health inspectors, the teachers, agricultural extension agents, tax officers, immigration officials, fire department officials, and so on (Shively, 1997: 285).

The health officer, for instance, enforces the government's health regulation; the Inland Revenue officials prevent smart citizens from evading tax; the immigration officer ascertains that the

wrong people don't come into the country; the teacher carries out the educational policy of the state; and so on.

Thus, public administration reveals the state in action and in interaction. In **Oszlak's** words, public bureaucracies constitute a material embodiment of the state; the executing arm for implementing the state's policies (2005: 483).

- The legislature is to law making while judiciary is to……..
- ☐ Interpreting Law

It is through the instrumentality of the public administrative institutions, activities and officials that the state affects the coordination of the society. "Obviously, without an agenda," Oslak argues, "the state—and its bureaucracy—would become meaningless.

It would imply that its role is needless, that society can handle community problems on its own and can be self-administered..." (ibid: 485). This need for an agenda gave form and content to a policy framework within the expansion of the state and the society.

5.1.1 Public Policy

The *Dictionary of Politics and Government* defines **public policy** as political plans affecting the general good of all the people. In other words, within the context of a state setting an agenda affecting the society,

Public policies are simply the sequence of stands or positions taken by governmental and bureaucratic institutions (i.e., legislature, the presidency, central government agencies, public enterprises) acting in the name of the state regarding the issues included in the public agenda. The particular choices made for solving those issues end up generating a social dynamics featured by conflicts and confrontations among actors holding different and often contradictory views (ibid: 487).

What we call public policy evolved from a state' position and view on certain significant issues of concern to the entire citizenry. This position would in a large extent be determined by the scarce resources available to the state.

Thus, public policy, in this sense, would refer to what government choose to do and do not do; or with governmental action or inaction. For **Mark Considine**, public policy is defined as "an action which employs government authority to commit resources in support of a preferred value" (cited in Boston et al, 2010: 1).

- Public Policy involves setting an Agenda to influence the society. True or False
- ☐ True

We should note at this point, to back up the preceding analysis, that the terms "polity", "policy" and "police" derive from the same etymological root: the French *policie* translated as "government or civil organisation"; and the Greek *politeia* meaning "civil organisation or the state".

The three concepts therefore imply the effort by the state to gain control over its constituents through a course of action and a form of enforcing that action plan. Furthermore, policy and politics also share a conceptual duality.

If policy refers to a plan of action "defined either by reference to those who have conceived it...or by reference to the area to which it applies", politics within a broad sense represents "the plans of action conceived by men with a view to organizing or directing other men". Thus, according to Raymond Aron,

> "Politics" thus reaches its completion in the search for a regime, that is to say, for the method by which the rules of organization and direction are determined. One may speak of the political regime of large corporations (their regime being authoritarian in the sense that those who direct do not need either to consult those to whom they give orders or to seek their approval).

> But the regime of the city-state is important above all else, at least in the eyes of the Greeks, because there the leaders presided over not a partial activity (work) but the activity constituting the existence of the free man, that is to say, politics (1978: 23).

If public policy is therefore about government action and inaction, then it involves politics or the resolution of the conflict that is generated with regards to resources, values and rights.

5.1.2 Analysis of Public Policy

The analysis of public policy could either be *empirical* or *normative*.

Empirical- the empirical dimension is concerned with the environment within which the policy evolved, the issues that gave rise to it and the ends it is meant to serve. Empirical analysis is therefore concerned with "the issues of what governments do in practice and how this varies over time and between jurisdictions" (Boston et al, 2010: 1).

Normative- at the normative level, public policy concerns what government ought to and ought not to do. This will be our major issue in study session seven.

The analysis of the policy cycle involves the empirical understanding of the dynamics of policy right from the stage of defining the problem, identifying and assessing the available alternatives, decision making, implementation, evaluation down even to the termination of the policy option where necessary. **Brendan O'Leary** expands more on this:

> Public policy specialists examine who has the power to put policy proposals on the agenda, for example, voters, interest groups, ethnic groups? professional organizations, dominant classes, political parties, mass media (this is the field of policy formulation); how policies are made (the study of decision making) and executed by elected and unelected officials (the study of implementation); and whether public policies are effective and desirable (the field of evaluation) (1996: 1089-90).

Let's consider each of these stages of analysing public policy briefly:

- **Agenda setting:** this stage of policy analysis is basically concerned with why governments give attention and importance to certain issues and neglect some others. Furthermore, the point extends to the question of why, among those issues which are considered to be important, some are more imperative and are quickly placed on the agenda than others. Which germane issue in Nigeria today do you consider imperative enough to enter the agenda of the Nigerian policy analysis?

- **Policy formulation and adoption**: "Policy formulation focuses on the drafting and consideration of proposals by an attentive policy community while policy adoption refers to the passage of the proposal through the formal institutions that have the authority to adopt the policy" (Young, 2011: 788).

- **Decision making**: At this level, an informed decision is made on which policy options or alternative will yield the maximum results. This is important because policy options usually involve choosing among conflicting values to achieve a possible end.

- **Implementation**: after making the appropriate choice among the formulated policies, the government then goes forward to execute what has been chosen as the policy. At this level, an authoritative policy is converted into a functioning programme that will benefit the people. It is at this stage that we can say that public policies ensure the creation of public administrative activities and institutions.

- **Policy evaluation**: Evaluation refers to the systematic assessment of the policy's impact or capacity to achieve the intended and unintended ends and values. Internal evaluation motivates those working with the policy to identify and resolve problems; external evaluation brings an outside perspective to the assessment of the policy.
- At the normative level, public policy concerns what government ought to and ought not to do. True or False.
- ☐ True

These stages above, when broken down translates into several steps in the policy analysis and decision making processes. These include:

1) Define the problem at hand
2) Assemble some evidence about the problem, its causes, and its effects
3) Construct a set of alternative ways to address the problem
4) Select the criteria for judging the relative merits of each alternative
5) Project the likely outcomes of each alternative, given the chosen criteria

6) Note the trade-offs associated with pursuing each alternative
7) Decide what alternative seems most appropriate, given the selected criteria,
8) Projected outcomes, and expected trade-offs
9) Present the findings of the analysis and the conclusions drawn from it (Mintrom, 2010: 38-39).

5.2 Tasks/Features distinguishing a public servant

A public servant is different from his/her private counterpart, is therefore distinguished by a different set of tasks and purposes. These would include:

1) **Managing in a socio-political system:** This task requires the public manager to understand the political terrain in which s/he is working as well as the process that brings him/her in contact with elected and appointed representatives
2) **Working with public pressure and protest**: This implies that public protest and pressure are critical ingredients in public administration and the democratic process
3) **A sense of accountability:** This is one of the requirements of the democratic structure of the public administration. A public servant must openly promote public accountability
4) **Understanding public behaviour:** Since the public manager is brought face to face with end-users who are not only customers but also tax-payers, voters and citizens, the dynamics of the relationship becomes all the more complex and multi-dimensional
5) **The management of rationing:** The public manager is forced to ration the available services on a first come, first serve basis. Making more of the product is usually not an option for the public manager
6) **The management of influence:** This function speaks to the need of public managers to manage partnership and cooperative endeavours rather than getting involved in competition with other public or private organisations
7) **Assessing a multi-dimensional performance**: the performance rating of the public manager, unlike the private manager, can't be reduced to the simple and single measure of "profit", "efficiency" or "customer satisfaction". Rather, the criteria for assessing performance are often multiple and often conflicting
8) **Understanding a wider responsibility to a changing society**

The assumption from the beginning of our inquiry into the meaning, nature and scope of public administration is that, given the public-private distinction, public administration is and ought to be separated from private administration, and that the public manager is saddled with more delicate responsibilities which does not, for instance, offer room for discretion.
Recent events in administrative thinking reject this view. And the rejection is based fundamentally on the fact that the public sector which the government handles has not been effective and efficient in the production of the public goods which is supposed to be its special domain.
Nigerians would definitely understand this point: bad roads, epileptic electricity, high incidence of robberies and corrupt practices, corruption, skyrocketing prices of food stuffs, unaffordable housing and so on. What then is to be done to challenge public administration to become more

efficient and effective in satisfying the citizens as customers and justifying the tax-payers' money?

5.3 New Public Management Paradigm

The New Public Management paradigm's suggestion is simple: Abandon the supposed difference between the public and the private! The public sector can only move and produce worthwhile public goods if it copies the strategy of the private sector. For instance, public managers should be allowed to really manage, rather than be bureaucratically and politically constrained.

The criticism of traditional bureaucracy goes thus:

> *The kind of government that developed during the industrial era, with their sluggish, centralised bureaucracies, their preoccupation with rules and regulations, and their hierarchical chains of command, no longer work very well. They accomplished great things in their time, but somewhere along the line they got away from us.*
>
> *They became bloated, wasteful and ineffective. And when the world began to change, they failed to change with it. Hierarchical, centralised bureaucracies designed in the 1930s to 1940s simply do not function well in the rapidly changing, information-rich, knowledge-intensive society and economy of the 1990s (Osborne and Gaebler, cited in Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004: 61).*

What the NPM (New Public Management) intends is to do away with the time-honoured Weberian bureaucratic framework for the public service. **Max Weber** proposed what he called *ideal-type legal-rational bureaucracy* that would be able to complete the work of the modern state.

Figure 5.1: Max Weber
Source: data: image/jpeg;base64,/9j/4AAQSkZJRgABAQAAAQABAAD/2wCE

To be able to serve as the engine room of administrative control, these bureaucratic organisations must be characterised by
1) Fixed spheres of competence
2) A defined hierarchy of offices
3) A clear distinction between the public and private roles (and property) of the officials
4) Specialization and expertise as the basis for action
5) Fill-time, career appointments for officials
6) Management by the application of a developing set of rules, knowledge of which was the special technical competence of the officials concerned.

In contrast, the NPM initiated another set of administrative concerns and rules which are meant to induct the three Es
- Economy
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency

To achieve the goal of an effective, efficient and responsive government that will ensure that the citizens live the good life through the provision of public goods, the NPM argues that the state must be replaced by the entrepreneurial spirit of the market. This would involve taking several steps, which are stated below:
- Restructuring and reducing the public sector, particularly through privatisation;
- Reorganising and slimming down the central public services;
- Introducing competition into the remaining public services, especially through internal markets and the contracting of the provision of the public sector to the private sector;
- Improving efficiency and obtaining value for money through performance management and auditing.

The public service that would result from such a paradigmatic transformation would be one that would ensure a separation of strategic policy from operational management; promote a concern for results rather than process and procedure; promote an orientation that confronts the needs of the citizens rather than the interests of the organisation or of bureaucrats; carry out a withdrawal of the public sector from a direct provision of public goods in favour of a steering or enabling role; and facilitate a transition to an entrepreneurial management culture (Olaopa, 2009: 29).

Summary of Study Session 5

1) It is through the instrumentality of the public administrative institutions, activities and officials that the state affects the coordination of the society.
2) The *Dictionary of Politics and Government* defines **public policy** as political plans affecting the general good of all the people. In other words, within the context of a state setting an agenda affecting the society
3) We should note at this point, to back up the preceding analysis, that the terms "polity", "policy" and "police" derive from the same etymological root: the French *policie* translated as "government or civil organisation"; and the Greek *politeia* meaning "civil organisation or the state".

4) The features distinguishing a public servant include sense of accountability, management of influence, rationing, working public pressure, etc.

5) The New Public Management paradigm's suggestion is: Abandon the supposed difference between the public and the private! The public sector can only move and produce worthwhile public goods if it copies the strategy of the private sector. For instance, public managers should be allowed to really manage, rather than be bureaucratically and politically constrained.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 5

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module

SAQ 5.1

List the arms of government and state there functions

Define Public Policy according to Mark Considine

SAQ 5.2

Outline the tasks distinguishing a Public servant

SAQ 5.3

Explain New Paradigm Management

Study Session 6: Who and what is the Public?

Introduction

In the preceding lectures, the idea of the public has surfaced so many times. This is especially so with regard to the idea of public administration and public policy. This lecture will consider what the concept of the public represents within the discourse of public administration.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 6

The students should be able to:

6.1 Explain conceptual context of the public

6.2 Enumerate role of the public in public administration and public policy

6.1 Concept of Public

In this study, our concern will be to examine critically the concept of the public that we have taken for granted in "public administration," "public policy" or even "public servant", the "public opinion," the "public space", "public good," "public interest," and the "public sphere". What is the content of the public as we have it in these concepts? This is a term we love to use, sometimes, as a point of reference for our decision or to legitimise some issues.

For instance, we hear statements like: "The Nigerian public can't be fooled!" "Smoking in public spaces is prohibited," "politics belongs in the public sphere," "the public servant must be honest and morally upright," "I am taking you to the court of public opinion," "my children can't go to any public school," "the US public is divided over going to war with Iraq," "all academics are part of the reading public," "the public watched in horror as terrorists slaughter the journalist," "lack of a definite education policy is not in the public interest", and so on.

All these uses of the term should alert us to the many interpretations and hence problems that the concept can raise for anyone who is not aware of the underlying conceptual traps. We will proceed to unravel what it means for anything to be public, or precisely, the meaning of public or public space or public sphere.

According to the *Dictionary of Politics and Government*, public has the following definition:

(a) Referring to all the people in general

(b) Referring to the government or the state

(c) Taking place in front of many people, as opposed to in private.

It would soon become obvious that this dictionary rendition does not adequately outline the two senses implicit in the concept of public or public sphere. This dictionary sense of public derives from the Latin *populus* or *publicus* denoting a mass population of individuals connected by some civic affairs.

- ■ The word Public is used to legitimise terms. True or False
- ☐ True

6.1.1 Publicness

The idea of publicness has two possible and interrelated renditions suggested by its root in the German *Offentlichkeit,* they include:

- The first possible meaning implies that the public is a **spatial denominato**r- "the social sites or arenas where meanings are articulated, distributed, and negotiated". In this sense, we talk of the public space, public realm or public sphere as the marketplace of ideas, information and discourses.
- On the other hand, publicness also denotes the collective body of people constituted in and by this process of articulating, distributing and negotiating meanings: *the public*. For **Thomas Murphy III**, therefore, *offentlichkeit* "is meant to imply not merely the intellectual exchange present in the notion of a 'marketplace of ideas' but also the embodied process of forming otherwise private people into a public via various means of communication (2005: 1964).

Taken as a spatial denominator, space could be private, public, sacred or common. The simplest to categorise of the three is the *sacred* space. This would denote a space that is reserved for the use of gods and divinities. For instance, holy derives from the Greek *hieros*: the space of the gods or the embodiments of their presence (Henaff and Strong, 2001: 3).

Such a space does not owe its existence to human action and it can't be owned by humans. At the other end of the spectrum is the idea of *common* space which equally doesn't admit any criteria of ownership or human action. The fundamental difference is that the common doesn't belong to the gods; rather, it is open to everybody the same way. According to **Henaff and Strong,**

> *What makes it common is that all can go there to extract from it what is there.*
> *Thus the sea, pastures, forests are (or can be) common space. This is not a space*
> *to which one goes to speak with others. Such a space is a location for the*
> *manifestation of the quality that [the Greek called] deinos (wondrous, terrible) in*
> *humans.*
> *It is not, however, a public realm, and its boundaries are not per se contestable.*
> *What makes it deinos is that it can be made human. What is often missed in the*
> *appreciation of common space is that it has the quality of being given to*

humans…. As opposed to sacred space, however, it does not belong to or manifest anyone. Furthermore, common space is not public space, for it is not a human construct. (ibid: 4).

On the other hand, a space is *private* if it's my own space. Such a space is owned by someone and is recognised as belonging to that person by every other person. We get the idea involved from our use of "restricted," "personal," and "secluded". The individual not only own the space, but s/he also specifies the criteria that admits or excludes anyone else.

Figure 6.1: An example of a Private Space

Source: https://encrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:

Thus we speak of a private room, a private meeting, and private parts. Private is to be understood as distinguished from public as much by virtue of ownership as by virtue of the standards that have to be met in order to enter…. To say that a place is under the control of an individual is to say that individual is recognized as having the right to establish criteria by which access is allowed or denied (ibid: 3).

The situation is reversed when it comes to public space. A **public space** is a site created by humans for human use. This space has its own criteria by which entrance is controlled, but the criteria are always under question. In other words, unlike the private realm, these criteria are not within the purview of a single person; there is no single person who has the right to enact or enforce the criteria.

Figure 6.2: Public Space
Source: data:image/jpeg;base64,/9j/4AAQSkZJRgABAQAAAQABAAD/2wCE

However, again unlike the private space, the public realm is not owned in any sense by anybody. It is a space that is open to all those who meet the criteria. This space, according to **Henaff** and **Strong**, manifests three qualities presented in the box below:

Box 6.1 Three Qualities of Space
(a) It is open in the sense of determining clearly where a person is
(b) Public space is a human construct, an artifact, the result of the attempt by human beings to shape the place and thus the nature of their interactions
(c) It is theatrical, in that it is a place which is seen and shows oneself to others" (ibid: 5. Emphasis in original).

It is this quality of theatricality that leads us away from the idea of public as a site or an arena to its implication as a democratic context for the articulation of meanings. To say that the public space has the quality of being a theatre implies fundamentally that it is a space where those inhabiting it *can see and be seen.*

- When a space is owned by someone and is recognised as belonging to that person by every other person. It is said to be……..
☐ Private

Human actions in the public are performed in the presence of others. Thus, we talk of *being in the public eye*. The action in the public realm elicits a reaction or a response from others which may be positive or negative: a public figure acts in front of others who constitute the public and justifies the actions or decisions when required to do so (ibid: 9).

It is in this context that the German *offentlichkeit* becomes relevant, especially the idea of publicity it implies. Publicity translates into the fact that whatever goes on in the public space possesses the inherent feature of democratic openness that ensures that whatever anyone says or does is open to discussion by everyone who has fulfilled the criteria for being in the public.

6.2 The Role of Public in Public Administration and Policy

The one thing that the public, as a political concept, shares is an interest in the maintenance of the state. This statement comes with a serious assumption. This is that the state the people wish to protect and maintain is actually worth maintaining.

Such a state would have a government that we can call responsible and is responsive to the yearning and aspirations of the citizens. In contemporary time, it is a democratic state that carries the burden of such responsibility. Thus, maintaining the state gives us the meaning of public affairs, or *res publica*. According to **Hannay,**

> In Latin the term *res* included the sense of 'property', so that *res publica* would have the sense of things that everyone had some investment in and some power over. The idea of the state, not just as a body politic, but also, or perhaps rather included in it, as a shared property in which all have an interest and also an ear, if not always a voice, is just what our own concept of a commonwealth is intended to capture. In Roman times possession and use of res in general was part of the people's freedom and a source of civic satisfaction, while loss of it in times of dictatorship could lead to a revolt of the masses and their seizure of power (2005: 11).

There is therefore a sense in which we can categorise public officials or civil servants as people who are in the public eye because of their responsibility as the custodian of the duties of the state.

In a study of the evolution of the concept of the public sphere in Ming and Qing China, Wakeman argues that there existed three different domains of political action and reaction. These domains include:

Guan (translated as "an official, a mandarin; public"), "the arena of 'official' or bureaucratic engagement, and thereby the most regulated of the three domains".

The next domain is *Gong* (translated as "public; open to all"), "the licit realm of 'public weal' affairs".

The final domain is called *Si* (translated as "private, personal, selfish, partial, unfair; secret, contraband, underhand, illicit; the private procreational parts"), "connotes self-interest illicitly invading the public domain" (Wakeman, 1998: 167).

In this sense, the bureaucrat is concerned with bringing to light the public interest which refers to "some policy or goal in which every member of a society shares equally, regardless of wealth, position, status or power".

Thus, to the extent that the public servants are concerned with operationalizing the policies of the government meant to create the good life for the citizens of a state, to that extent, we can say that they are in the public eye, and therefore subject to democratic interrogations.

The "public services" in this regard refer to "services directed to serving the needs of the citizens" (Giddens, 2007: 51). The "public" in this sense would imply the "public" in "public administration", "public official" or "public sector".

The public would therefore carry the following denotations:

- Public, as we have noted earlier, represents a realm that is *open*, and hence, in democratic terms, accountable. Anyone operating in this realm is therefore subject to the questioning of those who see their actions and reactions.
- Public as used in "*public spirited*" signifies that, as the Chinese distinctions imply, a service given without any intrusion of private and illicit or selfish considerations. In this sense, the public is considered to be a realm that is qualitatively and ethically superior to the private realm dominated by mean commercial pursuits.
- Public is also a synonym for "*(largely) state-provided*". It is in this sense that we talk of public services, public sector and public administration. This substitution is dangerous in the sense that it seems to conflate "public" with the "state" when in actual fact, their operation may be at times antagonistic. For instance, t is not all the time that a public official serves the public interest (ibid: 52).

Summary of Study Session 6

1) The main objective of this lecture is to clarify the idea of the public which has hitherto feature in our discussion of public administration, and often taken for granted in terms like "public officials", "public sector", "public services", "public opinion", "public space", "public sphere", "public realm", and so on.
2) We started with the dictionary definition which derives from the Latin meaning of publicus and populus meaning the people. This implies significantly that talks about the public represent the actions and reactions of the people.
3) We further considered the implication of public-ness (derived from the German offentlichkeit) which enables us to bifurcate "public" into (a) a site or arena in which meanings are articulated and negotiated and (b) the people who are involved in this process of articulation, distribution or negotiation.
4) We then identify three characteristics of the public space: its openness, its being a human creation, and its theatricality (or capacity to bring those operating in it to the visibility of others). This capacity of the public space to make people seen and be seen not only separate the public from the sacred, common and private spaces, it also reveals the connection between the public and democracy.
5) This is because to be in the public eye implies that those in the public act and justify their actions to those who can see them. We took this democratic implication of public and applied it to the meaning of public administration and public officials and public services.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 6

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module

SAQ 6.1

What is Public?

Explain Public and Private Space

SAQ 6.2

Wakeman argues that there existed three different domains of political action and reaction. Explain

Study Session 7: Political Corruption in Public Administration

Introduction

Having considered the public administration and public policy as well as the implication of "public" in both of them, it would be proper to also put in context the fundamental problem—the problem of political corruption—bedevilling public administration all over the world, and especially in Nigeria.

This study session will therefore set the stage for the consideration of the ethical framework that ought to guide the roles and functions of the public officials in the public eye.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 7

At the end of the lecture, the student should be able to:

7.1 Define Corruption

7.2 Explain Political Corruption

7.3 Enumerate the Role of Religious sensitivity in corruption

7.4 Explain Corruption Complex

7.1 Corruption

Most of us will agree that corruption is one of the most fundamental problems that Nigeria has to contend with before it can achieve all round development. The problem of corruption is so endemic that it would seem there is no facet of our existence—private, public and national—that it has not infiltrated.

Box 7.1: Factors that Induce Corruptive Tendencies

Corruption confronts us when we meet the policeman on the highway, when we attempt to get any important document attested, when we want our child to enter the university, when we require the service of a neigbour, when our car enters a deep gully and requires pulling out, when we need to pass a crucial examination, when we want to travel, when we need a job, when we need a wife or a husband, when we need promotion, when we require the essential services provided by the government, on and on and on.

Corruption is particularly worrisome because it interferes in the working of the public sector and logically therefore in the achievement of a development status in Africa that would be enabling, especially for the citizens. Corruption, for instance, ensures the abuse and misuse of scarce resources that eventually affects the economic profile of a state. According to **Hope** and **Chikulo,**

> The entrenchment of corruption in Africa points to the fact that something has gone wrong in the governance of the individual nation-states. Institutions, which are designed for the regulation of the relationships between citizens and the state, are used instead for the personal enrichment of public officials (politicians and bureaucrats) and other corrupt private agents (individuals, groups, businesses) (2000: 1).

According to **Transparency International**, corruption especially in the third world has achieved the status as the most daunting development challenge "which undermines good government, fundamentally distorts public policy, leads to misallocation of resources, harms the private sector and public sector development, and particularly hurts the poor" (TI cited in Hope and Chikulo, ibid).

The orthodox explanation for corruption in Africa derives from the analysis of the African state as a **neopatrimonial entity** which ensures that state resources and political positions are awarded to people on the basis of political affiliation and personalised logic.

Figure 7.1: Corruption in the Society
Source: https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn

According to **Chabal** and **Deloz**, "what all African states share is a generalised system of patrimonialism and acute degree of apparent disorder, as evidenced by high level of governmental and administrative inefficiency, a lack of institutionalisation, a general disregard

for the rules of the formal political and economic sectors, and a universal resort to personalised and vertical solutions to societal problems."

The political order, arranged according to the patrimonial logic has a high tolerance for, and even legitimises, a patron-client relationship and network which rewards the individuals and public officials in line with an accepted value orientation in the society. Corruption therefore serves two instrumental functions within the (neo-) patrimonial context in Africa, they include:

1) On the one hand, petty corruption ensures the survival of low ranking civil servants and their families and is therefore generally condoned.
2) On the other, paying below-subsistence civil service wages is a powerful means for a ruling group to retain the allegiance of its individual members – "providing both an inescapable economic incentive (access to rents/bribes) and a disciplinary threat (dismissal for corruption)" (Cilliers, 2004).

Of course, the impact of this patrimonial logic is immediately obvious on the working of the civil and public service. The state and the civil service meet at the juncture of the concept of national development. Indeed, the reason for the existence the state administrative apparatus is to ensure that national development in all ramifications remains the broad objective of government. However, according to **Taylor**, with the intervention of corruption as a socio-economic and political factor,

> *National development and a broad-based productive economy are far less a concern (in fact, might stimulate opposition) to elites within such systems than the continuation of the gainful utilisation of resources for the individual advantage of the ruler and his clientelistic network.*
> *At the same time, the bureaucracy has developed its own set of interest (personal survival) and logic as prebendary organisations that further distort their role away from the ideal-type rational bureaucratic model inherent in the Western representation of development agencies and more toward a loose set of skeleton institutions lacking in most capacities other than to act as predators upon the population or gatekeepers to resources...* (Taylor, 2005: 4-5).

- ■ Corruption ensures the abuse and misuse of scarce resources that eventually affects the economic profile of a state. True or False
- ☐ True

7.2 Political Corruption

Political corruption specifically involves political office holders taking undue advantage of their positions to defraud the state of its scarce resources. This act of political corruption goes to undermine whatever socio-economic, bureaucratic and political advantages the state may possess.

In other words, when political leaders and public office holders behave unethically within the framework of their positions, the development of the state is critically undermined. We can go on to define political corruption as:

> *...the illegal, unethical, and unauthorized exploitation of one's political or official position for personal gain or advantage. The word "political" in political corruption is intended to refer to public affairs: the official goods, affairs, fortunes, agencies, resources, and institutions of the state--which is a human community with organized, public institutions.*
>
> *Political corruption is thus an act of corruption perpetrated against the state or its agencies by a person holding an official position in pursuit of his own private or personal profit. "Political" thus means official, public (nonprivate), or governmental.*
>
> *This means that a corrupt act committed against a private or nongovernmental organization will not be political corruption, even though it is indeed an act of corruption, the committal of which will justify the censure or conviction of the culprit.*
>
> *The victim of political corruption is invariably the fortunes, resources, and interests of the state or the body politic: thus, to say that political corruption serves the ends of the state is a contradiction in terms. It serves the personal ends of individuals or groups of individuals who involve themselves in it* (Gyekye, 1997: 193).

When a public office holder exploits his or her position to achieve personal benefits, we say that an act of corruption has taken place. This act manifests variously as graft, fraud, embezzlement, nepotism, favouritism, misappropriation of public funds, kickbacks/bribes and so on.

7.2.1 Factors that enable the Growth of Corruption

Since it is analytically reasonable to see corruption as a consequence that needs to be explained rather than a cause that serves as an explanatory variable, it is useful to examine the various factors that enable the growth of corrupt practices on the continent.

Political analysts have pointed at a myriad of reasons ranging from

1) Political—bad leadership
2) Patronage
3) Patron-client relationship and networks
4) Unequal access to public resources
5) Abuse and misuse of office and political positions, administrative logjam,
6) Economic—poverty
7) Discrepancy between economic expectations and available resources
8) Social—the extended family system

9) Lack of distinction between public and private properties
10) The cultural contexts of socio-economic and political organisations

There is a sense in analysing the phenomenon of political corruption as "a political event" made possible by the character of the political system and the nature of governance in a particular political community. In Africa particularly, the state is regarded as an alien institution, different from you and me, and predatory.

Corrupt acts manifest as one of the following EXCEPT

A. Nepotism
B. Embezzlement
C. Policy insurance
☐ Answer is C (Policy Insurance)

7.3 Role of Religious Sensitivity in Corruption

The "moral" duty of every smart and clever person is to ensure that the government is outsmarted in every possible way without getting caught. There is even a religious dimension to the process of stealing from the state.

The persistent inability of most states in Africa to deliver the developmental and democratic goods of good governance to their citizens precipitates an existential crisis of immense proportion. We can explain this crisis as **the crisis of suffering and social anomie**.

Poverty has become so endemic that citizens have been reduced to levels of indignity and inhumanity. An average worker in Nigeria can't afford a good car even if s/he works for 20 years, except s/he takes a cooperative loan; a minimum wage of 18000 naira became a national issue; personal savings is a foregone conclusion. In the midst of this widespread poverty is also a thriving "achievement/status market" which almost all Nigerians want to be part of.

Within this wide margin that separates expectations from goals, Nigerians, for instance, have inserted an economic rationality backed by a religious sensibility that allows them to make their suffering sufferable. Deriving from:
(a) The trauma that attended the postcolonial failed promises and unfulfilled expectations of the masses about the existential possibilities of the Nigerian state
(b) the consequent perception of the Nigerian state as an exploitative and exploitable treasure trove of affluence and advancement plunderable by guile and force, this religious framework represents a divine-assist in self-empowerment for a *visible* material transformation—in the present, in the now, in the seen—that is no longer hinged around, or hindered by, the state's empty promises and fruitless expectations.

Put in other words, the religious ontology is motivated by the instrumental desire, *by any means*, to carve a visible material status that is not less than the miraculous in an agonising world, and against a callous, irresponsive state. It thus casts attention to the heavens (but not necessarily to God) for cosmic assistance while assiduously exploring the worldly means for achieving material promotion and reproduction.

In fact, this religious ontology operates with the strong *epistemic* supposition of divine conviction to prosper and flourish in the face of protracted suffering and anomie. In other words, *heaven helps those who persistently help themselves.*

- ■ Religious Ontology is motivated by……..
- □ Instrumental Desire

7.4 Corruption Complex in Nigeria

A corruption complex is thus created within which most Nigerians make sense of their social existence. **Grondona** characterises the corrupt situation as giving birth to "the real world of furtive immorality and generalized hypocrisy" where mediocrity defines the work ethic as against the unrealistic world "of the highest standards" we often pay lip service to, where legality and morality are merely utopian (2000: 48).

Corruption therefore takes firm root in Nigeria, due to the following reasons:
- Because of the weak or non-existing punitive measures to discourage corrupt practices;
- The social pressure that society, and especially the extended family form, sets for the individual in terms of income capacity, status profile, material achievements, etc.

In spite of the widespread incidence of political corruption in Nigeria, it is still the case that the corruption complex remains an undercurrent which people are not willing to advertise. No one defends corruption; no one has the courage to do so. In other words, there is a real reluctance to exalt corruption to the level of moral acceptability.

This is one reason why political corruption is a *moral* problem. Political corruption can't be regarded as political culture, according to **Gyekye,** for several reasons:
- First, political corruption is not a purposively created cultural product having a value for the people of a society as a whole, and hence the attempts by successive governments to eradicate it by means of the law.
- Second, political corruption cannot be undertaken publicly; an act of political corruption is always a furtive act, a clandestine operation. No one boasts of being politically corrupt. This feature of political corruption is entirely different from a genuine product of a culture.
- Third, political corruptions is not a culturally determined practice or norm, for not all the people—not even all public officials—who grow up in a culture come to internalize it, subsequently valuing and involving themselves in it.
- Finally—and this is purely a point of logic: if the concept of a culture of political corruption were a coherent concept, it would mean that the phenomenon of political corruption is a culturally *sanctioned* practice (1997: 198).

The implication of this rejection of a supposed culture of political corruption is that although the corrupt act serves some form of existential function—it enables them to make of their lives in an instrumental manner—corruption is still something that people see as an illegitimate and unethical behaviour.

■ Political corruption can't be regarded as Political Culture. True or False?
□ True

7.4.1 Political Corruption as a Moral Issue

As a moral issue, political corruption involves the moral choice of the public official involved. Or, to put it better, political corruption "stems from the moral incapacity to make the appropriate or desirable moral choice required by a situation in favour of the common welfare" (ibid: 200). Political corruption therefore fundamentally concerns the nature of who we are as human beings. This realisation certainly reiterates virtue ethics' emphasis on character as the fundamental variable in the public official's moral arsenal.

Box 7.2: Who is Politically Corrupt?

A politically corrupt official is a person whose moral status is fundamentally flawed. Indeed, we can say that s/he is one with the acute awareness of what is the right thing to do, but who goes on to do the wrong, vicious thing. The fundamental implication of this thinking is that even if the socio-economic inequality is removed from the Nigerian society, political corruption would still be prevalent.

The next study session is therefore appropriately concerned with the role of ethics in dealing with the moral character of public officials. The significance of the study calls attention to the need for what we can call a *morality adjustment programme* founded on the renewal of the ethical paradigm of public administration.

This morality adjustment programme affects the way and manner in which an official relates with the structure and institutions of government, with other officials and with the citizens who constitute the substantive public that is the focus of public administration.

Summary of Study Session 7

1) The objective of this lecture has been to analyse the incidence of political corruption as a fundamental variable in the operation of public administration.
2) We defined political corruption as the unethical and illegitimate exploitation of political office, positions and status by political and public officials for personal gains and benefits.
3) We also argue that the prevalence of political corruption has many explanatory variables—bad leadership, inadequate governance framework, societal expectations, extended family network, patronage network and relationship, etc. However, underlying the corrupt mentality is a moral flaw consisting of the moral incapacity to make the right choices with regard to common welfare and other human beings.
4) In spite of the socio-economic and political components involved in the analysis of political corruption, in the long run, alleviating the corruption complex, especially in Nigeria, requires what we have called a morality adjustment programme as an overhauling of the ethical paradigm by which the public administrative system is undertaken.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 7

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module

SAQ 7.1

What is Corruption?

Give examples of factors that induce corruptive tendencies

SAQ 7.2

Show your understanding of Political Corruption

Highlight factors that enable the growth of Corruption

SAQ 7.3

What is the role of a religious sensibility in the proliferation of corruption in Nigeria?

SAQ 7.4

How would you describe the "corruption complex" in Nigeria?

Study Session 8: Ethics, Public Administration and Public Policy

Introduction

This study session will attempt to bring to the fore the relationship between ethics and the activities of the public administrators. In other words, we will be examining to what extent it is possible to have an ethical framework for assessing public administration and public policy.

In what sense do ethics affect the activities and officials in public administration? How do ethics matter in the crafting of public policy? If ethics matter, what sense of ethics are we talking about? And finally, how do ethics influence the framework of public administration and public policy? We will attempt to answer these questions in this study.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 8

At the end of the lecture, the student should be able to:

8.1 Explain Nigeria as a Failing State

8.2 Explain the relationship between Human nature and Ethics

8.3 Explain the Three faces of professional ethics

8.4 Discuss Ethical Principles

8.1 Nigeria as a Falling State

Most political scholars are fascinated by the characterisation of the Nigerian state as a failing political community. A state is failing if its government finds it increasingly difficult to meet the basic expectations of its citizens in terms of infrastructural facilities—good road network, hospitals, good health care, affordable housing, qualitative education, and so on.

In other words, such a state has failed to ensure that the foundation of social existence is laid to ensure all round development that will impact the lives of the citizens and give them the good life which **Aristotle** said is the fundamental reason for the existence of political communities in the first place.

What are the foundations of social life? These foundations refer to those conditions that human beings require to live a conducive life in the society in which they find themselves. These conditions are basically three, they include:

(a) The adaptation to external human and physical environment

(b) Provision of human bio-social needs

(c) The establishment of the requirements necessary for social cooperation.

The first condition requires that human beings adjust to whatever physical environment they find themselves in order to ensure their own survival. Such an interaction with the environment would involve the people achieving shelter, clothing and feeding.

- ■ A state has failed when the government cannot meet the needs of the citizens as regards the following EXCEPT.
  - A. Infrastructure
  - B. Employment
  - C. Child bearing
- ☐ Answer is C (Child bearing)

For example, difficult environmental conditions dominated by mountains or ice or thick forest or oceans or sand. Apart from this, there is also the complementary need to adjust to the human environment. This requires that the individuals in a particular society be protected through adequate care and support especially those who are weak and vulnerable like the aged, the sick and the young ones.

The second condition for a conducive social life involves the provisions of such **bio-social** needs at three levels:

Box 8.1: Three levels of Bio-social Needs
1. The first level includes: the need for food, clothing and housing.
2. The second level includes cultural needs like the need for social and cultural identity i.e. the idea of who and what we are.
3. The third level of needs include the psychic needs like the need for self-dignity, sexual expression, and so on.

Finally, the last condition for social life has to do with the orderly coordination of the affairs of society in such a way as to make social cooperation possible.

It should not be difficult for you as a Nigerian to see that these conditions are lacking in the Nigerian society. It is also not difficult for us to know that the social institutions in Nigeria are collapsing. To be sure, just think of the attitude of government workers and ordinary citizens like you and me to government work. What happens, for instance, if you are employed in the local government? Will you not be joyous? For Oladipo, when we talk of national development,

> *[Our] focus should be on the extent to which the institutions of a given society enhance the capacity of the people, as individuals and as a social collective, to secure the condition for the persistence of social life...* (2008: 82).

In a sense therefore, the conflict between the state and society resulting from the state's inability to provide the foundation of social life and the absence of enabling institutions that would condition the way public officials attend to government work.

8.2 Human Nature and Ethics

Let's begin our consideration of a way out by looking at the idea of human nature. When people talk about human nature, they mean a kind of biological blueprint that explains the kind of person you are and why you behave the way you behave.

For instance, most of us make statements like "human beings are selfish by nature", "that's his nature; don't blame him," "she really couldn't do anything about it; that's her character," and so on. When we talk like this, we meant either that our actions couldn't have been different from the way we acted, or that we were predisposed to act the way we acted.

For **Panza and Potthast**,

> Human nature is an inborn structure that defines the human being. That structure affects and shapes not only what's possible for humans but also what or how human beings are more or less likely to react to the situations in which they find themselves (2010: 37).

We can easily see how this thinking fits into the Nigerian public service situation. The endemic corruption has reached a level that it is fast becoming a second nature to us, and were believing it is.

In other words, most Nigerians and non-Nigerians have nudged themselves into believing that it is absolutely "normal" and "rational" to be corrupt. Or, to put it in a more sanitized form, it is in keeping with human nature to help oneself in difficult situations even when it seems unethical. After all, human beings are, again by nature, coded to act selfishly.

Thus, if I undermine an official rule to enrich myself or get a relative without qualification to get a job over other qualified candidates, there's no big deal to it. Does this line of thinking resonate with you? Have you reasoned this way before? Or maybe you have come in contact with someone who thinks this way?

This manner of looking at the issue may seem convincing. After all, who can blame a dog for barking or a cock for crowing? Isn't that their nature? If I consider myself first over others because I'm predisposed biologically to behave that way, why should I be blamed? If human nature is the way we have presented it, then it precludes any talk about how humans ought to behave differently from the way they currently behave.

Thus, human nature rejects any ethical consideration; or, precisely, it precludes a way of behaving that point at an alternative. Let's make this point clearly. There's a link between human nature and ethics.

Box 8.2 Link between Human Nature and Ethics

The link is simple: If your biological nature predisposes you to acting selfishly (human nature), then you ought to act selfishly (ethics). However, the critical point is that ethics makes the claim about what a person ought to do even if it contradicts what their nature predisposes them to do!

In other words, the first point says ethics suggests that you *ought to do* something. This basic claim says you ought to put yourself on a path that you presently may not be on. The claim suggests that it's up to you — that it's possible and that you're free to choose either way.

In fact, it's your ability to choose that makes holding you responsible possible. Good people make good choices, bad people make bad ones. Seeing this point, it's not surprising that a popular statement in ethics claims that if you ought to do something, it must be the case that you can do it.

Because ethics is by definition the field that deals with what you ought to do, the consequence is that you should be capable of making choices in the first place. Basically, if ethics says you ought to do/be/follow *anything,* it's implied that you should be capable of choosing the ethical life or rejecting it (ibid: 39-40).

Again, let's illustrate with a theoretical example. Imagine that as a public official, someone—probably your boss—suggests to you that you come to work every day walking on your head. Of course, you'll think s/he was joking! Imagine further that the following day when you appeared at work, walking with your legs, your boss gave you a query.

What would you do? You'll probably be shocked and complain about the boss asking you to do the impossible. Your point would be that you are being held responsible for something you can't possibly do. Like a dog being asked not to bark...or being blamed for barking! On the other hand, imagine that the rule at work says you must resume work by 8 o'clock in the morning.

- ■ Human Nature explains the reason why you behave the way you behave. True or False
- ☐ True

How would you react if you were given a query for coming late thrice a week? You can't possibly complain that that's something that is impossible for you to accomplish. Thus, to be able to make ethical choices, your understanding of human nature must be such as to make it possible for you to be free to make these ethical choices. If you are not free to make choices, then you aren't subject to moral responsibilities. Ethics itself becomes impossible.

The pertinent question to ask therefore is this: Given the crisis of public administration, especially in Nigeria, what demands does ethics and moral thinking make on public servants? This question is all the more insistent given the fact that the bureaucracy in Africa is almost a

law unto itself, and sometimes works according to rules and regulations that are contrary to the interest of the state and of the citizens.

How then do we ensure that the space of *si*—the realm of selfish considerations—doesn't encroach into the realm of *guan* (the bureaucratic public)? This is the way **Emile Durkheim** puts it:

> *If we live amorally for a good part of the day, how can we keep the springs of morality from going slack in us? . . . If we follow no rule except that of clear self-interest, in the occupations that takes up nearly the whole of our time, how should we acquire a taste for any disinterestedness, or selflessness or sacrifice?* (2010: 6).

These questions play a significant role in reconstructing the administrative framework within which administrators work, and reconnecting managers back into the Aristotelian context that defines the imperative of the state in bettering the lives of the citizens.

We make the claim earlier in lecture three that the society expects much from someone who has taken the critical steps out of a job or a trade into a profession. The process of professionalisation gives the professional a status far beyond what the society requires from a non-professional.

These expectations also require that the professionals would go beyond the ethical boundary guiding the non-professional. The power, knowledge and status of professionals demand that their activities be ethically scrutinised to ensure that they respect their responsibilities to the society.

To begin, let's ensure that we understand the sense of ethics, or precisely, professional ethics that we are talking about when we talk about the ethical framework that guide professionals and in this context, public administrators.

8.3 The three faces of professional ethics

David Luban identifies three dimensions that we can break the generic term "professional ethics" into. The first category is called the **code of conduct or employee ethics.** This ethical code is for the professional "in the trenches" of the professions.

In other words, this code of conduct concerns the behaviour of professionals with regard to their professions, and "has to do almost entirely with sex, lies and money. Unethical practitioners are those who become embroiled in financial conflicts of interest, who lie and cheat, or who sleep with their vulnerable patients and clients" (Luban, 2005: 583).

In this sense, the code "sets out the procedures to be used in specific ethical situations, such as conflicts of interest or the acceptance of gifts, and delineate the procedures to determine whether a violation of the code of ethics occurred and, if so, what remedies should be imposed" (Wikipedia). For Luban,

When professionals argue about ethics, they usually differ over which ways of dealing with sex, lies, and money cross the line and which do not. Is it unethical for lawyers to collect large contingency fees on easy cases?

For professors to date graduate students? These are questions that professionals debate at their conventions, and write ethics code to settle.... understood in these terms, professional ethics is a subject of vast practical importance but of little, if any, philosophical interest because, although professionals differ about particular cases, no one disagrees with the principles forbidding professionals from lying, cheating, and using their clients for their own profit and pleasure (Luban, 2005: 583-584).

The second category of professional ethics is what we can call **code of practice**. This is the concern with ethics at the level of the leadership of the profession, and especially their concern with the ideals and values—service, craft, dignity—that guide the particular profession.

The leadership is worried, at this level, about professionalism against the encroachment of commercialism. Thus, the code of practice or of professional responsibility is meant to regulate the profession and it provides the framework to discuss "difficult issues, difficult decisions that will often need to be made, and provide a clear account of what behaviour is considered 'ethical' or 'correct' or 'right' in the circumstances" (Wikipedia).

In the professionalism debate, the basic moral issue concerns the erosion of time-honored norms and ideals by market forces and vulgarly market-oriented practitioners. Personal injury lawyers hire football players to shill for them on late-night television...; cosmetic surgeons display before-and-after photos of nose jobs in buses and subway cars. Not only does tabloid advertising debase the profession, it goes hand in hand with competition—and competition drives down not only price but quality, leading to impersonal, assembly-line service (Luban, 2005: 584).

The last category of professional ethics is the **philosophical subject of professional ethics**. In this context, the philosopher is interested in the sense in which the professions generate moral dilemmas and how the dilemmas can be resolved through the application of a moral theory.
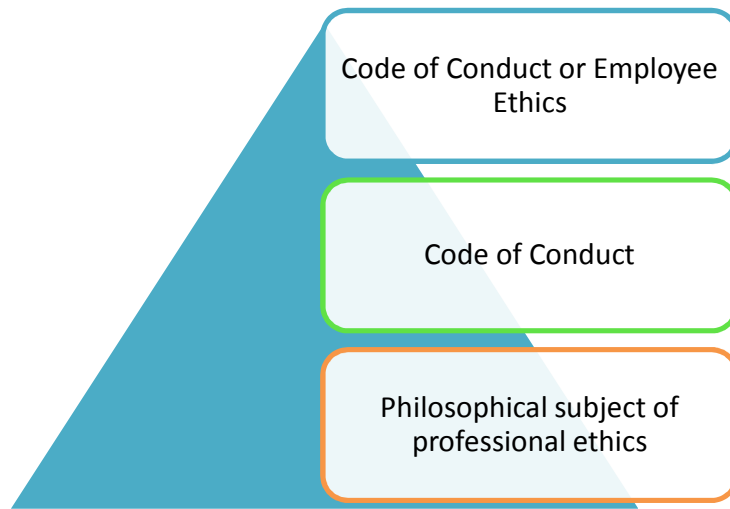
Figure 8.1: Three Faces of Professional Ethics

Source: SchulPortals Inc. ©

8.3.1 Two sides of the same coin: Ethics and Administration

How then does morality or ethics matter to the field of public administration? There are so many problems with outlining the framework of ethics for the public managers. On the one hand, there is the widespread scepticism about the capacity of public officials to work within such a constraining context of ethics.

On the other hand, there is also the theoretical issue of whether there is a unique ethics of public administration and, if there is, what its elements are. In spite of these queries, the first fact to note is that, as hinted at earlier, ethics is concerned with human action.

Ethics in this context is concerned with fabricating systematic sets of normative prescriptions about human conduct and everyday morality. The second point to make is that the objective of applying any ethical consideration to the field of public administration or management is to get the administrator or the manager to act and do things right. Thus,

> *Ethics is the other side of the management coin—its purpose is to prepare managers to do the right thing. If there are problems in getting managers to do things right, it should be no surprise that managers also have problems determining what is right. Unfortunately, the public often sees public managers as not competent in either regard. Thus, the purpose of ethics is to help managers determine what is right, and act accordingly* (Sheeran, 1993: x).

This understanding provides the rationale for the consideration of ethical assessment by public managers. We made the point earlier that the public officials constitute the visible dimension of government that ordinary citizens can and do relate with.

Since the fundamental function of government—from the Latin implication of *gubernare*, "to steer"—is to steer or direct courses of action for the common good of the people, then the public officials must have a good understanding of what to do in the appropriate circumstance.

In other words, they must be conversant with what they ought and ought not to do; the right way and manner to behave and not to behave; what is *appropriate and ethical* especially in decision making (ibid: xi). These normative considerations are significant in public administration and public policy.

■ At what stage of Professional Ethics is the leadership worried about professionalism
A. Professional Ethics
B. Code of Ethics
C. Code of Practice
☐ Answer is C (Code of Practice)b

8.3.2 Approaches in Accessing Public Managers

How can ethics enable us assess the actions of the public managers? There are three approaches to judging whether an action is right or wrong. They include:

- Deontological Approach
- Ethical Approach
- Virtue Ethics Approach

The **deontological approach** claims that there are absolute, universal and objective criteria or principles for assessing the morality of human actions. These principles are the laws we give ourselves as rational beings: I'll never turn away someone in need; I'll not steal no matter how urgent my needs are; it isn't good to break one's promise; so, I'll not break mine no matter what; and so on.

Principles are different from rules which are imposed on you externally. According to **Immanuel Kant**, the eighteenth century German philosopher, *what gives a person's action an ethical character is when such a person acts not from ones natural inclination, but from the inclination of duty.*

Box 8.2 Acting from Inclination of Nature
Acting from the inclination of nature implies that you do what your biological nature predispose you to do: eat when you're hungry; react when angry; have sex when you feel like it; protect yourself from danger; take revenge against someone who hurts you; etc.

However, to act from duty implies that rather than giving in to your natural inclination, you stepped back a bit and allow your rationality to kick in.

In other words, "When your own rationality provides the source of a motivation to act, you're doing something for the simple reason that it's the right thing to do" (Panza and Potthast, 2010: 147).

In this context, therefore, a public manager is acting rightly or ethically when s/he is helping others out of a sense of duty rather than because it would boost his or her image with the boss. The principles that serve as the basis of ethical actions, for **Kant**, must be:

(a) Universal and applicable to everyone
(b) Formal and generally applicable to all actions
(c) One that people give to themselves.

The **ethical approach** rejects acting based on the considerations of the consequences of one's actions. Rather, for **Kant**, it is the nature of the principle behind a person's action that makes the action good or bad, not the consequence of the action. However, from the teleological approach to ethical action, the latter is just what makes an action either good or bad.

If an action possesses the tendency to produce bad consequences, then the consequentialist forbids it. Imagine having a terrorist who holds the key to defusing a bomb with the capacity to destroy millions of lives in one city the bomb is targeted at. You've tried everything from persuasion to threat to get the terrorist to divulge the information; s/he has refused. You then considered your last option—torture—and you succeeded.

The bomb is defused, and millions of lives are saved. What do you think? Of course, you imagine that the action is right! However, imagine further that you tortured the terrorist simply for the fun of it (like the American soldiers did at the Abu Gharib prison in Iraq). That would make the action a wrong one because of the consequent and needless pain inflicted on the terrorist.

The third approach to assessing the morality of human action is the **virtue ethics approach**. In this regard, it is neither principles nor consequences that make an action ethically correct; rather, it is the character of the person acting. The objective of virtue ethics is to make of a person an excellent person with the right character to make ethical decisions and act properly.

Thus, the essential thing is one's commitment to being a good and virtuous person. Becoming such a good person involves ingraining certain virtues or reliable habits—love, courage, temperance, charity, honesty, loyalty, generosity, etc.—into the conception of who you are. You understand this point about character ethics because you also react negatively to a person with a vicious character. The virtues that form your character then predispose you to acting in a particular kind of way:

> Take honesty as an example. Honesty, as a character trait, aims in part at the production of certain types of actions. People with the trait of honesty tend to reliably tell the truth. When people lack the trait of honesty, you can't count on them to be truthful. That's because honesty isn't engrained in who they are (ibid: 97).

Further imagine a public official as a virtuous person manifesting relevant virtues in the pursuit of his or her duties to the public. To such an official, goodness becomes an everyday practice, enabled by what the virtue ethicist calls **phronesis or practical wisdom.**

Practical wisdom helps you figure out what to do in any particular situation. Since moral situations are particularly unique, possessing rules and principles would you not be helpful. One requires rather a creative capacity derived from the virtues to confront the situation in its uniqueness. Phronesis is not cleverness; it is a mixture of reason and virtues.

It is obvious from the analysis of the three approaches above that there is no way we can arrive at an argument that would make any of them the best for the public official to adopt. The three are required in helping the public servant act ethically in promoting what Aristotle calls **eudaimonia or well-being of the citizens.**

This concept of eudaimonia outlines for us what a public policy ought to achieve. However, it is one out of many ethical ends that philosophers have argued a public policy ought to aim for. The others include a good society, justice, the common good or the public interest, the greatest good for the greatest number of people or even the kingdom of God on earth.

While all these may constitute conflicting value basis for choosing a policy and while it may also be difficult to arrive at the best approach from which such a judgment might be made, it is also interesting that having many ethical approaches to assist in choosing the right policy has its own advantages. According to **Boston** et al,

> First, being able to justify policies on multiple ethical grounds has significant potential benefits: not merely does it strengthen the moral case for governmental action and increase the likely level of public support, but it also helps to ensure policies are appropriately crafted to take into account the full range of relevant ethical values. Second, the means and the ends of public policy are closely coupled. They both have ethical dimensions, and these need to be considered simultaneously rather than sequentially (2010: 7).

8.3.3 Issues demanding Ethical Appraisal from Public Officials

Apart from the critical issue of the purpose of public policy and how they should be designed to achieve the purpose, there are also other crucial issues demanding ethical appraisal from the public officials. These include:

- What norms and values should guide the behaviour of those involved in the policy process?
- What procedures should be adopted in the event of conflicts of interest?
- How should the need for secrecy – which is essential for frank and confidential discussions – be balanced against the desirability of openness and public participation?
- To what extent is it legitimate for officials to challenge the priorities and policies of the government?
- What are the boundaries of free and frank advice or loyal and obedient service?

- Is it appropriate for officials to advocate for particular social, cultural, economic, or environmental outcomes within the performance of their public duties?

8.4 Ethical Principles

Mintrom sets out five ethical principles, they include:

- Competence
- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Concern

As the ethical framework that offers "a sound basis from which to explore how a focus on ethics can promote good practice among policy analysts" (Mintrom, 2010: 43).

1) **Integrity-** directed by an internal moral compass, ensures that the government worker pursues the right course of action and seeks "to achieve consistency in their intention and action across contexts" (ibid). Citizens must be assured that policy analysts and public managers are doing their jobs with integrity.

2) **Competence**- derives from the possession of knowledge and skills to carry out certain administrative functions especially with regard to policy making. If an official claims s/he has competence in a particular field, then the virtue of integrity demands that s/he should actually do it. This value ought to push policy analysts and public officials to put in their utmost best.

3) **Responsibility**- involves "acknowledging the part you play in contributing to expected or observed outcomes" (ibid: 44). This implies that you are willing to be accountable for the good and the poor outcomes without shirking the latter. The field of public administration calls for a high sense of responsibility in serving the public.

4) **Respect-** evolves from recognising the humanity and dignity in other people as well as their right to be who they want to be, in spite of our opinions to the contrary. It simply means you obey the golden rule: treat others as you want to be treated. Since policy analysts and public workers are engaged all the time with others, respect becomes a significant attribute to have.

5) **Concern**- this follows from "caring about, showing an interest in, and being involved in the lives of others. When people devote their lives to working with and advancing the interests of the poor, they demonstrate exceptional levels of concern for others" (ibid: 46). Public administration and policy analysis are by their very nature a reflection of one's concern to make a difference in the lives of the people of the community.

■ According to Aristotle Eudaimonia also means…….
☐ Well-being of the citizens

8.4.1 Moral Competence in Public life

David Bromell however argues that in an attempt to function adequately in public life, the public servant is confronted with the challenge of manoeuvring through the public values versus democratic values divide. In his or her role of policy analyst, policy adviser and policy advocate, the public servant threads a thin line between information, interest and ideology.

To succeed, s/he must maintain the roles and exercise moral judgment within the context of realpolitik. This requires the cultivation of what has been called "moral competence in public life". This requires that the public servant

> *...live creatively with the tensions within and between the three functions of analysis, advice giving, and advocacy, maintaining appropriate distinctions and exercising sound judgement – and to do so within inevitably imperfect democratic institutions and processes.*

> *Public sector policy making occurs within a real-world context of conflict over facts and values, information and power, means and ends, and where multiple, complex, and complicated 'public service bargains'...are operative* (Bromwell, 2010: 62).

This challenge involves on the one hand, recognising the context of operation and the multiple values defining each context. The value statements defining each context are categorised into "goal values" (what we want to achieve) and "conduct values" (how we want to achieve them):

- **Democratic values** (serving the common good rather than sectional interests, promoting public accountability, supporting elected representatives, always observing the law);
- **Professional values** (promotion by merit, continuous improvement, impartiality, effectiveness, creativity, loyalty to professional colleagues, putting the client's interests first);
- **General ethical values** (integrity, honesty, equity, probity);
- **People values** (reasonableness, civility, respect for difference, kindness) (Pollitt, 2003: 135).

On the other hand, the challenge involves achieving moral competence in official capacities. This requires that the public official exercise "personal reflective judgment" in accordance with what the public context requires in a particular situation rather than what the official approves or doesn't approve. There are six components to the moral competence, they include:

1. Civility – the duty to act only on the basis of principles that citizens could reasonably accept (cf. Rawls 1999).

2. Fidelity to the public good – and the dual responsibility this implies to the 'appointing officer' and to broader considerations of the public good (that is, able to reconcile partial and general perspectives).

3. Respect for citizens as responsible agents – balancing concern for citizens' well-being with respect for citizens' individual and collective abilities to set goals, develop commitments, pursue values, and succeed in realising them.

4. Proficiency in democratic architecture – skilled in exercising deliberative judgement about the interplay between ends and means and in facilitating citizen participation in decision making.

5. Prudence – the practical wisdom to make sound moral judgements in concrete situations, including tolerance of moral ambiguity and the ability to learn from recurrent perplexities and tensions.

6. Double reflection – the ability to discern what a course of action might mean to another person when at variance with one's own understanding, and to contemplate with equanimity the contestability of one's own worldview.

Finally, our analysis of the relationship between ethics and public administration gives the impression that ethics is an end-all framework that solves all administrative problems. This is far from being the case. **John Uhr** warns that we must be careful about expecting too much from ethics, especially in public policy. According to him, our analysis of the public service and its ethical framework must be situated within another more realistic set of expectations.

> *...based on an artificial but I think productive distinction between 'ethics' and 'morality'. For policy purposes, I define 'ethics' in terms of right relationships among policy actors and 'morality' in terms of deeper value commitments that we each make as individuals, separate and distinct from our public roles* (Uhr, 2010: 79).

Asking that we know the limit of ethics in public policy is not the same thing as saying that we no longer seek to place public policy on strong ethical foundations. Rather, it implies that we guide against placing the practice of public policy on a foundation of ethical absolutes, ensure that government does not take ethical framework as the official "one-size-fits-all" paradigm, and lastly, that what Uhr calls "stealth ethics" shouldn't be used as a means to bypass the democratic procedures that guide policy choices.

Summary of Study Session 8

1) This lecture is dedicated to outlining the relationship that exists between ethics and public administration and the task involved in public policy making. We, among other things, examine three approaches by which we might judge the action of a public servant as being either ethically valuable or not.

2) And we concluded that principle-based ethics, consequence-based ethics and character-based ethics are all equally significant in judging the actions of the public officials as well as in arriving at a good policy decision.

3) We next examine series of values categorised as goals values and conduct values which are important in enabling the public servant to acquire what we called moral competence

in public life to be able to manoeuvre his or her way in the stormy context of public and political situations and achieve as many ends as possible for the betterment of the citizens.

4) We concluded that in spite of the significance and import of ethics as the foundation of public administration and public policy, we must be careful not to get into a situation where our expectations would neglect the limits of ethics and therefore take us as policy analysts and public managers into a point where ethics becomes the only framework that explains everything.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 8

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module

SAQ 8.1

What are the three basic conditions for foundation of social life?

SAQ 8.2

Explain the link between human nature and ethics

SAQ 8.3

How can ethics enable us assess the actions of the public managers?

SAQ 8.4

What does "moral competence in public life" imply?

Study Session 9: The Ethics of Human Resource Management

Introduction

This study session will outline briefly the significance and role of ethics in the field of public administration called human resource management. This will amount to an examination of a narrow dimension of the broad analysis of the relationship of ethics with public administration.

The question that is pertinent in this study is: How can ethics aid the recruitment of a morally worthy character into the public sector? If ethics is relevant as we've agued in previous lectures, then it becomes important that we examine the recruitment policy and rules to ensure that ethics has a role to play in setting the stage for moral competence in public life.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 9

The student should be able to do the following at the end of this lecture

a. Understand the meaning of HRM;
b. Describe the role of HRM in the overall public administration function; and
c. Analyse the significance of ethics in this administrative framework.

Pre-Test

1. In what sense is HRM relevant to the public manager?
2. How does HRM and ethics interact?
3. In what sense can we see HR manager as ethical agents?

9.1 Significance of a Public Servant in Public Administration

The public servant constitutes a significant factor in public administration for several reasons. In the first place, we argued earlier that the public servant constitutes the government for most citizens. S/he is the face of government that is most visible to the people. S/he stands as the intermediary between the state and the society.

Apart from this role, the public servant is also the instrument that brings about the goal of a productivity paradigm in the public sector. In other words, the efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector to achieve the provision of an enabling service delivery to the citizens depends on

the skills, knowledge and moral character of the public servant. The public servant ensures the performance of the public sector.

However, there are so many factors involved in raising the performance profile of the public sector and of the public servant. The performance of the public sector has become a very crucial phenomenon, especially with regard to the underperformance of Africa's public services.

Any country in today's globalised world that desires to create a better socio-economic landscape within which its citizens can have the good life must, of a necessity, answer the question of how to capacitate its CSIs.

In other words, it must follow what someone has called the "demands and rhythms of twenty-first century markets. Today's markets rapidly follow innovations, while staid institutions and static business models quickly become obsolete. Technology disrupts one thing after another."

Thus, for **Amy Rosen,**

> *To succeed in this new, dynamic environment, a workforce must be comprised of individuals who have both the academic foundation and the creative mind set necessary to spark innovations. These employees must be able to recognize opportunities amid obstacles, set and achieve goals, and refine the skills necessary to solve real-world problems.*
>
> *Furthermore, with all new jobs over the last 30 years generated by start-ups, individuals joining the workforce for the first time are likely to be employed by small businesses that will depend on them to perform multiple functions. In short, a better economy is one that prospers through the innovations of entrepreneurial citizens* (2011: 34).

9.2 Human Resource Management

Human resource management, as a strategic arm of any organisation, is the most challenged of all the other aspects of the public sector. Its nature and meaning has to be rearticulated to take cognisance of the happenings of the twenty first century determined by the issues of competition, globalisation, technology and a new work framework.

Let's begin through the examination of the meaning of human resource management. Several definitions become important here as a means of understanding what it entails:

- "Human resource management (HRM), also called personnel management, consists of the activities undertaken by an enterprise to ensure the effective utilization of employees towards the attainment of individual, group, and organizational goals" (Kleiman, 2006: 357).
- HRM is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic development of a highly committed and capable workforce using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques.

- HRM is a strategic approach to the management of human resources that involves all management decisions and actions that affect the relationship between the organisation and employees.
- HRM is a strategic, coherent and comprehensive approach to the management and development of the organisation's human resources in which every aspect of that process is wholly integrated within the overall management of the organisation.

9.2.1 Human Resource Management as People Management

HRM is usually considered to be the people-dimension of administration or management. This is because it involves those practices that enable the organisation to deal appropriately and effectively with people throughout the various stages of the employment cycle, from the pre-hire, staffing to the post-hire stage.

As people management, it focuses on creating and sustaining "a committed, loyal and capable workforce required to delivering significant competitive benefits for the organization" (Pinnington et al, 2007: 3).

It seems reasonable that to achieve the goal of effectiveness and efficiency in the management of resources, the human resource issues involved in the running of the public service require serious attention. This derives from the understanding that

> The breath of competencies required in the public sector is different from that required in the private sector. Specifically, public servants require more than technical skills; they require a broad spectrum of knowledge, skills, abilities, plus firm grounding in public-sector values and ethics.

> Second, the kind of learning that applies to public servants—that is adult learning—is distinct from youth learning. Adult learning builds upon a lifetime of experiences (CAPAM, 2005: 5-6).

The idea of human resource management emanates from the understanding that the achievement of excellence in any organisation requires a qualitative workforce that would enter into a strategic relationship with the available ideas, processes and operational tools to jumpstart organisational growth.

This element of human capital becomes the significant asset in any attempt to harness the organisational potentials of the public service especially in its quest for an effective and efficient service delivery that impacts the citizens.

We can make the additional point that the human capital element seems more crucial to the public sector than the private sector because "in the absence of increased budgets for equipment and resources, public organisations have but one resource left with which to accomplish their expanded and diverse new missions: people" (Valle, 2006: 73).

9.2.2 Challenges in Public Organizations

Most public organisations have always been faced with the dearth of proper and adequate funding to carry out the task of governance. This is as a result of stiff competition which the public sector organisations have to put up with alongside other government departments for the allocation of funds (Olaopa, 2009a: 215). It therefore implies that the little resources at their disposal require a critical mass of capable personnel who can innovate with existing resources and inadequate technologies.

Compared with the private sector, the public sector organisations are confronted with several challenges that call on their ingenuity to mobilize strong human resource strategies to combat encroaching disintegration.

9.3 Human Resource Management and Employees

HRM derives from the theoretical assumptions that employees are individuals who have personals goals and aspirations but equally want to contribute productively to the progress of the organisation. The further assumption is that the only hindrance to employees' performance is lack of knowledge, insufficient training and failures of process (Wikipedia Online).

Flowing from this, HRM derives from the presumption that a particular type of management dedicated to managing the twists and turns of employees can eventually lead to the release of the latter's potentials and empower them to work effectively for the goals and objectives of the organisation.

Applying HR functions and practices to the development of excellence and competence in the public service further requires, according to **Kleiman**, a productive synergy between the HR professional and the line manager. He notes that the HR professionals are typically responsible for the establishment of HR policies and procedures, the development of HR methods, monitoring and evaluation of HR practices, and advising managers on HR and HR-related matters.

9.3.1 Functions of Line Managers in Human Resource Management

On the other hand, the line managers are saddled with the function of directing the employees' daily tasks. In other words, they provide the HR professionals with the necessary inputs for developing effective practices while they concentrate on implementing these practices.
They therefore see to:
1) The interview of applicants
2) Provision of orientation and training
3) Provision and communication of job performance ratings
4) Recommendation of salary increases
5) Implementation of disciplinary procedures
6) Investigations of accidents; and so on (Leiman, 2006: 358).

Thus, **Ulrich and Smallwood** argue that

> *HR departments, practices, and professionals matter.... There is evidence of the value of HR all around us. We know that investment in HR practices will increase employee commitment, and increased employee commitment is a lead indicator of customer commitment, which is a lead indicator of profitability. We know that firms that invest in some HR practices are more likely to have financial returns than firms that do not invest in these HR practices.*
>
> *We know that HR practices shape an organisation's culture, identity, reputation, and brand. We also know that investments in HR deliver more than they cost through break-even analyses* (2005: 224).

9.3.2 Relationship between Human Resource and Professionalism

The above assessment therefore creates an obvious but fundamental link between human resource management and the idea and ideals of professionalism forged by the modernising imperative of the public service. No public service can hope to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century global world without a strong commitment to HRM and an even stronger commitment to the professionalisation of its HR functions.

Inventing a high performing public service, therefore, involves a constant relationship between the processes of recruiting, professionalisation and reprofessionalisation. In this context, professionalism involves the pursuit of both excellence and competence that achieves a practical link between 'knowledge and theory, on the one hand, and public purpose, on the other' (Mosher, 1976: cited in Olaopa, 2009b: 57).

Box 9.1 Who is a Professional?
A professional is someone who possesses core knowledge of, and deep familiarity with, the specific expertise that enables him or her to move with ease among the concepts of his or her profession.

This implies that the idea of professionalism—improving employee knowledge and skill—does not only concern the issue of 'advancing those bodies of knowledge and the technique of their application as a corporate concern.' More importantly, it involves a continual process of training and reprofessionalisation.

If such a reprofessionalisation scheme must achieve what **John Hayes** calls the goal of 'high commitment' or 'high involvement'—the employment of HR practices to achieve productivity and performance (2010: 358)—then it must start with a reform of recruitment practices that ensures the enlisting of only those who love what they are doing and are ready to commit to constant training and education.

It is this approach that differentiates the hard model of HRM from the soft model. The *hard* HRM strategy is one based on imposing control in an attempt to increase efficiency. For Hayes, this is achieved by 'enforcing compliance through the application of specific rules and procedures' (2010: 360).

On the other hand, *soft* HRM strategy requires eliciting commitment through the assumption that people work best and contribute most to the progress and efficiency when they are committed to the organisation (ibid.). Increasing the commitment of the workforce implies a process of capacity development which responds to the need for skilled and knowledgeable manpower that would ensure a consistent high performance management in any public service.

Ethics and moral considerations surface in HRM issues given the scepticism following the distinction between hard and soft HRM. The fear is that this distinction has been made solely to enable the public managers attend to the profit motive behind human resource management without also giving thought to other considerations like social justice and the human development of the workers.

Put in other words, the argument is that in thinking about corporate profitability, the organisation can't afford to emphasise socio-economic issues only to the exclusion of normative concerns. The fundamental moral question at play here has to do with the issue of care and concern as it arises within the context of HRM and the employment of people.

The ethicist therefore asks: what is the most ethically responsible way to manage people at work without dehumanising them in favour of profit and competitive advantage?

David Guest, for instance, gives four ethical issues that challenge the two interrelated assumptions behind HR practice, namely,

(a) People are a key source of competitive advantage for organizations, and

 (b) Effective management of HR should result in demonstrably superior performance.

According to him, there are four issues that challenge these assumptions:

- The first is that while HRM claims to be primarily concerned with the management of people, in practice it largely ignores them. In an attempt to demonstrate the link between effective strategic management of HR and performance, there was a neglect of the "black box" in which workers were located as well as the negative consequences attending the deployment and utilization of workers.
  Thus, while it may be possible to demonstrate the link between strategic management and performance, how it became possible is never researched.

- The second is that HRM is a subtle way of exploiting people.

- The third issue is that research on HRM and performance is far more provisional than some of its proponents and followers claim. This concerns the temptation to fabricate the evidence for a positive link between HRM and performance when in actual fact, the link is unproven.

- The fourth issues are the challenges and problems that are created when attempting to apply an integrated HR system. "It is often argued that a distinctive feature of HRM is its focus on the system of HR practices rather than on a particular practice. It implies that it is no longer enough to do selection or training or communication very well.

A whole system or set of HR practices has to be implemented effectively. This raises two issues. The first is what is meant by good HRM. The second is where any practitioner should start" (Guest, 2007: 59-60).

Other ethical issues involved in HRM practice include the following:

- The tension between the concern for productivity and the need for social legitimacy (i.e. the context which allows employers and employees to reflect on the ethicality of their actions in the eyes of others);
- Ideas about what constitutes ethical behaviour in the workplace. Ethical behaviour here involves four key elements:

I. Respect for individual employees' dignity and personal integrity,
II. Protecting their physical and mental integrity,
III. Providing access to 'decent work', and
IV. Moderating the detrimental effects of power imbalances between buyers and sellers of labour.

- The commodification of employees—or the economic framework that sees workers only as a means to an end, in the pursuit of profit;
- The idea of making an employer a moral professional with a set of virtues that enables living and acting properly in an organisational context;
- The problem of developing ethical leadership by the organisation that ensures the development of the capabilities of the employee;
- Given that personnel managers are working within an institutional context determined by a particular goal i.e. profit and productivity, how is it possible for such managers to introduce ethical considerations that would enable them make moral choices exclusively on their own terms?
- How does a manager act ethically when confronted with a "necessary evil"; for instance, the need to downsize and restructure to ensure stability and performance?

This last ethical challenge prompts **Margolis, Grant and Molinsky** to reflect on the possible ethical means by which managers can handle ethical challenges. According to them,

> Ethical challenges abound in HRM. Each day, in the course of executing and communicating HR decisions, managers have the potential to change, shape, redirect, and fundamentally alter the course of other people's lives.
> Managers make hiring decisions that reward selected applicants with salaries, benefits, knowledge, and skills, but leave the remaining applicants bereft of these opportunities and advantages.
> Managers make promotion decisions that reward selected employees with raises, status, and responsibility, leaving other employees wondering about their future and their potential.
> Managers make firing and lay-off decisions in order to improve corporate performance, all the while harming the targeted individuals and even undermining the commitment and energy of the survivors.
> Even when managers complete performance appraisals and deliver performance feedback, they may inspire one employee and devastate another. For each HR

practice, there are winners and there are losers: those who get the job, or receive a portfolio of benefits, and those who do not (2007: 237).

To address these challenging and critical dilemmas, the authors proposed three ethical standards for HRM. Each of the standards is meant to protect a particular constituency whose interest and well-being depends on the performance of HRM. These standards are:

Standard # 1: *Advance the organization's objective*. Execute the task in question so that progress is made towards the objective that calls for it to be done in the first place.

Standard # 2: *Enhance the dignity of those harmed by the action*. When managers distribute opportunities and benefits, there are those who do not receive those opportunities and benefits— or who receive fewer than others. When companies go through cycles of destruction— restructuring, downsizing—individuals get harmed. In both instances, those who lose out are due treatment that respects their standing, fosters their resilience, and enables them to continue to function effectively.

Standard # 3: *Sustain the moral sensibility of those executing morally ambiguous tasks*. Someone must deliver the poor performance appraisal, announce the lay-off, or shut down the manufacturing facility. The ambivalence induced in performing these tasks reflects an underlying uneasiness about fair treatment and fair outcomes, and managers ought to remain attuned to that uneasiness (ibid: 240).

Summary of Study Session 9

1) Human resource management (HRM) is a recent development in organisational theory. It is meant to complement the existing procedure about how people can contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation. This is why it is called people management.
2) The assumption behind it is that if people are treated fairly and adequately at the work place, it leads to the release of their potential which eventually enables productive performance.
3) The problem, which necessitates the intervention of ethicists, is that between HRM and the need for productivity, there is usually a whole lot of ethical problems and dilemma. For instance, how does an organisation ensure high performance without making slaves out of its workers? How does a manager act with justice in the attempt to achieve the organisation's objective and pacify workers who are hurt by that objective?
4) The ethics of HRM ensures that while HRM can be considered within its strategic aspiration of achieving corporate profitability, it must also be assessed as to the extent to which it is willing to do that without crossing the moral rubicon especially with regards to the employees who make such profitability possible in the first place

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 9

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next study Support Meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module

SAQ 9.1

State the Significance of Public servants in Public Administration

SAQ 9.2

Show your understanding of Human resource management

SAQ 9.3

Highlight the Functions of Line managers

Study Session 10: The Code of Conduct of the Nigerian Civil Service

Introduction

In this last study session, you will be learning about the Nigerian Civil Service as a concrete administrative framework supervising the delivery of public goods to Nigerian citizens. The manner of this delivery is spelled out in several governmental documents and codes of conduct.

In this study session, you will learn about the evolution of the Nigeria civil service, its code of ethics and the ethical dilemmas in the Nigeria civil service.

Learning Outcomes for Study Session 10

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

10.1 Discuss the evolution of the Nigerian Civil Service

10.2 Explain the Code of Ethics in Government Business

10.3 Describe the Ethical Dilemmas in the Nigerian Civil Service

10.1 Evolution of the Nigerian Civil Service

The Nigerian Civil Service was a colonial legacy that evolved from the British Civil Service model. This civil service was built on the idea of the establishment of a career service founded on the Weberian bureaucratic principles. Max Weber, the German sociologist, in 1920 sets out the fundamental principles that should guide the operations of public administration.

Figure 10.1: Max Weber

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Weber

These principles were meant to put in place career officers who will ensure the workings of government and the objective of service delivery that is not constraint by anything. In other words, the bureaucracy is to be founded on rules and principles that would ensure a scientific progress in government business. The salient features of this traditional Weberian model of the bureaucracy are:

1. There should be a clear separation between politics and administration, and therefore a distinct role for political leaders and state officials
2. Administration should be continuous and predictable, operating on the basis of written, unambiguous rules;
3. Administrators should be recruited on the basis of qualifications, and should be trained professionals;
4. Organisations should reflect a functional division of labour, and a hierarchical arrangement of tasks and people;
5. Resources should belong to the organisation, not to individuals working in the organisations;
6. The principal motivation should be a sense of duty or public interest, which should override organisational or private interests.

These principles are projected in the 1854 Northcote-Trevelyan Report on the reform of the British Civil Service. In reforming the British service, the Report introduced the principle of open competition for candidates intending to be public servants via a competitive examination. It also ensured that promotion is based on merit rather than preferment, patronage or length of service. The Report states that:

> ...that the public service should be carried on by admission into its lower ranks of a carefully selected body of young men (and women) who should be employed from the first upon work suited to their capacities and their education and should be made constantly to feel that their promotion and

future prospects depend entirely on the industry and ability with which they discharge their duties, that with average abilities [and] superior powers they may rationally hope to attain the highest prices in the service. If they prove decidedly incompetent or incurably indolent, they must expect to be removed from it (cited in Olaopa, 2009: 1).

Transmitted into the Nigerian context during the colonial period, this Weberian model implies a lifetime career prospect for Nigerians, with expectations of advancement till retirement. Such advancement is premised on the capacity of the official to familiarise him or herself with the necessary rules and apply them to the administrative context and situations consistently.

By 1960 when Nigerian became independent, the Nigerianisation Policy became necessary to resolve the problem of replacing the foreign colonial expatriates with their Nigerian counterparts. This problem derives from a deliberate colonial policy which excluded Nigerians from professional positions reserved exclusively for colonial officers.

It is therefore logical that the colonial policy would lead inevitably to paucity of indigenous public service personnel, as well as a chronic lack of other administrative resources, weak administrative infrastructure, and the seed of a tense relationship between bureaucrats and politicians.

All these colonial traps embedded in the inherited administrative tradition combined with other postcolonial realities to weaken the Nigerian Civil Service and prevent it from achieving the goal of a prompt and effective service delivery to the citizens.

By 1975, fifteen years after independence, the Nigerian Civil Service had already begun a steady decline. The seed for the decline, apart from the colonial policy of exclusion, is contained in the irresponsible developmental plans of the Nigerian Government. Due to the excessive oil revenue of the 70s and the beginning of the state-led development planning, the civil service received huge investments that inspired immense institutional expansion.

Figure 10.2: Nigerian Civil Service Building in Abuja

Source: http://www.punchng.com/opinion/letters/the-nigerian-civil-service-of-the-future/

The consequence of this expansion is that "With this development and the vigorous competition among agencies for managerial talents, officers with unproven capacities were picked and catapulted overnight into a higher position.... Promotions were usually rapid with those promoted lacking sufficient experience to complement their sudden status with peak performance" (ibid: 3-4).

From this immediate post-independence period till now—a period of fifty solid years—the Nigerian Civil Service has been crippled within a crippling context of political instability and socio-economic corruption complex.

In order to put the civil service right back on track, several reforms committee were put in place to analyse the administrative situation and proffer solutions especially to

1. The problem of wages,
2. Capacity building,
3. Rigid bureaucratic framework,
4. Organisational and managerial discrepancies,
5. Damaged performance profile,
6. Professionalism and so on.

Box 10.1: Nigeria Civil service reforms

The most popular of the civil service reforms are

The 1974 Udoji Reforms,

The 1988 Civil Service Reforms,

The 1995 Ayida Reforms,

The 1999 Obasanjo Reforms, and

The 2009 Yar'Adua Reforms.

Note that In spite of all these reform initiatives, the Nigerian Civil Service still remains less than normal.

Nigerian reformers have had to grapple with is the typical litany of problems and challenges faced by every reforming public sector especially in the developing world:

1. Crisis of governance resulting from weakened capacity of the state to meaningfully respond to development challenges and improve the quality of life;
2. The need to halt the erosion of public confidence in government and fulfil the heightened expectations of the citizenry;
3. Near collapse of virtually all public sector institutions hence the need for their repositioning as part of measures of modernizing Government machinery to achieve higher levels of efficiency and effectiveness;
4. Fiscal and budgetary pressures emanating from shrinking resource base to finance priority development programmes compelling the need to do more with less;

5. New public management with emphasis on cost-effectiveness, innovation and service delivery;
6. Impact of globalization and technological changes;
7. Emergence of civil societies exerting additional pressure on government to adhere to tenets of good governance;
8. The changing role of the state globally from a sole provider of employment and services to a new role of creating the enabling environment for job and wealth creation;
9. Pressure arising from regional and global development initiatives; and;
10. Pressure from international development partners for reforms as conditionality for winning their support for accessing their grants (*The Obasanjo Reforms:* 9-10).

The code of conduct of the Nigerian Civil Service is therefore necessary in view of these myriad of problems confronting the establishment of a service that Nigerians can be proud. Any civil service in the world has a set of values that are recognised generally as being conducive to the performance of the job in an ethically commendable manner.

These values include: accountability, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, openness, honesty, leadership, discipline, and so on. You remember that these are the values that go into the making of "moral competence in public life". The relevant issue is to understand how they are deployed into the Nigerian civil service context.

The Career Management Office of the Office of the Head of Service of the Federation (OHSF) outlines the Code of Ethics in Government Business. This specifically refers to officers of the civil service. It also includes some of the values we have earlier highlighted domesticated to the Nigerian context.

Figure 10.3: Danladi Kifasi (HoS)

Source: pic.twitter.com/j9uVbU6rUa

This guideline is meant to regulate the way and manner in which public officers' conduct government business on the background of widespread and endemic corruption rampant in

Nigeria. This framework of behaviour becomes the framework of public morality through which public and political officials will be assessed.

■ When was the Obasanjo reform of civil service?
☐ 1999

10.2 Code of Ethics in Government Business

(i) Discipline

2. The Civil Service must be well disciplined. Rules and regulations should be adhered to and the interests of the service must be paramount.

3. Senior Officers should prescribe codes of conduct which they themselves can and should comply with. Those who wish to lead other people should always remember that effective leadership involves exemplary character, hard work and transparent integrity conduct is one of the criteria for promotion.

4. Junior Officers should be familiar with Government Regulations and Rules regarding good conduct. They must learn to obey lawful orders and established authority.

(a) **Loyalty**

5. Civil servant should be loyal to the Government which has given them the opportunity to serve it. No officer or employee should assume that he has the right to a salary or wage without giving adequate service in return. Government has no obligation to retain inefficient or disloyal elements in the service.

(b) **Honesty**

6. Civil Servants should be honest in doing their duties and in their dealings with the public. They should realise that they are paid salaries for the duties which they perform. This means that they should be conscientious on duty and demand or receive nothing in money or kind from anyone in the performance of their duties.

(c) **Courage**

7. Courage is one of the greatest assets to the best of civil servants. The exhibition of this quality takes many forms. It may be shown in working hard in every busy post for there is really no reason to fear hard work. Civil servants should acquire the courage of working hard. They should not hesitate to take over an extensive schedule of duties.

8. Another type of courage involves doing what is morally right even though one does not stand to gain personally from such action. In your schedule of duties you should do the right thing, especially if it will enhance the reputation of the service and the country. You should, at all times resist temptations from whatever quarters. Where the prior consent of a superior authority is necessary be courteous in getting it.

(d) **Courtesy**

9. It costs nothing to be polite to your colleagues and the general public served by you. Polite instructions are usually more easily obeyed. Members of public always cherish courtesy and consideration from Civil Servants. Courtesy in the Office and to the general public makes it easier to get on with other people. A heavy schedule of duties or any other circumstance cannot justify bad tempter by civil servants.

(e) **Co-operation**

10. The eleven members of a good football team co-operated whenever they are on the field for a match. One or two members who believe they are as good as the rest of the team may cause the defeat of the whole team. Similarly, all the staff in the section of a Ministry should co-operate as a team in order to realise the overall purpose of the section. The officers and staff of a Ministry should work together to attain the goals of the Ministry.

(f) **Tact**

11. "Tact" means skillfulness in handling a difficult situation without giving offence to the people involved. This is very necessary in the service. Skills in dealing with people by creating an impression of willingness to be of assistance enhance the efficiency of the office and give the public satisfaction.

(g) **Industry**

12. In this sense, industry means useful hard work: This definition is necessary because some workers work furiously to get little or nothing done. They only waste their energy and often give false impression to their supervisors.

13. You have been engaged to serve your Ministry or Department in some way. In turn your Ministry or Department serves the Government and members of the public. Try to ensure that you work to earn your pay and promotions. To work hard with good results the following principles are useful:

- ❖ Know the scope of your work
- ❖ Know the various parts of your schedule of duties
- ❖ Decide the order or sequence you should deal with the various states of your work:
- ❖ Before you start, have a rough idea of when you should finish it:
- ❖ If your work involves some level of writing, ensure that your style is clear and direct.

(h) **Avoidance of Delay**

14. If you are hardworking, you are unlikely to delay action on files or projects. However, some schedules of duties are extremely busy. There are either so many people to interview and / or so many files to deal with.

15. Your time should be devoted to official work. If you are ill, you may be unable to concentrate on your work, in such a case, you should consult a Doctor and then return to work later unless, in a situation whereby you are put on the sick list.

16. If you are going to be away for a day or two, you should let your boss know as soon as possible. Any urgent work in your schedule may then be taken over by some other officers. You could avoid delay in the following ways:

   i.   Know precisely when you have to submit any piece of work to your supervisor or higher authority.
   ii.   Do not hoard files in the hope that you can dispose of them at the eleventh hour.
   iii. Avoid being bogged down by a difficult matter at the expense of many simpler ones. In this connection, there is a psychological advantage in disposing of several simple cases before taking on tougher ones.
   iv.   Come early to your work place and devote your time to work until the closing time.
   v.   Do not malinger in your work-place
   vi.   It pays to do some overtime occasionally in order to bring your work up to date.

17. Civil Servants should keep their offices tidy not only because visiting members of the public served by them are thereby more favorably impressed but also because an orderly office often gives an idea of the state of mind of its staff.

18. It usually enhances efficiency if files and equipment are placed so that they are easily located when necessary. In this connection, you may perhaps recall your own impression when you went to an officer who could not help you in getting some reference because his office was untidy and disorderly.

19. Workers should also ensure that they are properly dressed to do their duty in the office or work place. It is a good idea to dress in a business-like manner not as if one were going to a formal party or a beauty queen parade. It does not cost much to dress simply with carefully chosen materials. It is useful to remember that how people dress tells keen observers a great deal of the general character of such people.

(i) **Helpfulness**

20. You may have heard many people allege that it is now difficult for people to get help from those they do know. That there is something in this allegation is borne out by the fact that many young people now seem to believe that they can only get jobs from the public offices if they channel their applications through their personal friend's relatives or townsmen. This unfortunate tendency should be discouraged by all civil servants.

21. There are many opportunities of helping your colleagues and your juniors in the office at no personal cost at all. You could advise a young messenger to do further studies instead of allowing him to waste his official time and his money on football pools.

Similarly, Supervisors should find time to listen to their subordinates who have personal or domestic problems. Those who complain that some of their requests have been turned down should be told why it is impossible to meet their wishes.

22. Should papers or documents come to you by mistake from members of staff or the general public, find out the correct destination and take necessary directives as to rerouting it from your superior officer.

(j) **Kindness**

23. Being kind does not imply that you should give to people what they are not entitled to. Kindness involves respecting the privileges and rights of officers, employees and members of the public irrespective of the fact that those concerned are unknown to you. A Civil Servant is a public servant. He should, therefore, serve impartially.

24. Kindness also involves having a humane approach to dealing with people in difficulty.

This applies to staff as well as members of the public. A member of staff in difficulty needs help and, if you are in a position to do so, you should assist him to the best of your ability without of course, the breach of the regulations or disturbing the course of justice. The same consideration should be shown to the public.

(iii) **Attitude to Public Funds**

25. In study session 2, you learnt how government gets and spends public funds. There was reference to cost-consciousness in the same chapter. The principles already touched upon should always influence the conduct of Civil Servants. The following points are strongly emphasized:

   a) Do not waste funds. If you are frugal in spending your money you should be equally frugal in spending public funds.
   b) Collectors of Government Revenue should be conscientious in doing their duty and they should not make any rebates as a favour to anyone. In this regard, it is not kindness to reduce the Revenue due to Government on your own account or at your own level.
   c) Justify all expenditure and ensure that economy is insisted upon, e.g. discourage wasting public funds on ill-advised purchases near the end of the financial year.
   d) As a good citizen and a good civil servant, discourage financial abuses by making suitable reports through the correct channel.
   e) Made-in-Nigeria goods should be preferred to their imported counterparts. Patronage of local goods encourages the growth of local industries.

(iv) **National Consciousness**

26. The ideals held by people influence their actions. Therefore, Civil Servants should aim at inspiring, broad-minded ideals without being unrealistic. A united Nigeria is by far and always superior to any town or clan or ethnic group in the Federation. Therefore, the interest of the group should not be pursued at the expense of what is best for Nigeria.

Attempts by some people or ethnic groups to turn over public officers and resources to themselves or members of their group always tend to weaken and change the bonds of national unity. Sometimes, civil unrest may arise from indifference to or disguised encouragement of nepotism, favoritism and their associated vices.

(v) **A Good Image of the Service**

27. The Government of the Federation is the largest employer of labour. The Civil Services therefore have a leading role to play in the social and economic affairs of the Country.

28. Nigerian Civil Servants have proved their mettle in successfully grappling with the problems arising from the rapid, social and economic development of the Country. A deterioration of standards should not be tolerated. In achieving this goal on which a good image of the Civil Service depends. Nigerians particularly those at the top should continue to provide honest and courageous leadership.

(vi) **Efficiency**

29. The level of efficiency can be improved upon. Training-consciousness will help in this regard. No grade or group of officers should consider itself so good as to dispense with further training. As a matter of policy, advantage should be taken of induction Refresher and training courses.

30. In the national interest, training institutions in the Federal Service should be open to Civil servants in the States. As a matter of policy, staff may attend training courses in the State. It would be extremely rewarding if the training of some Federal and State personnel could be held jointly to promote a community of experience for such trainees.

31. The younger elements in the services are very important. Their most promising members will later be among the top Civil Servants, it is therefore suggested that the minds of the future leaders in our services should be exposed to good education and discipline.

32. The services should not only be disciplined: they should also be efficient.

(vii) **Social Problems and Social Justice**

33. As was stated in session 3, Civil Servants are responsible for helping to formulate and for implementing Government Polices. These policies concern the maintenance of law and order, promoting a healthy and well-educated nationhood, efficient systems of transport, reliable means of communication, opportunities for trade and industry, efficient development of national resources, etc.

34. The amenities provided by Governments should be equitably distributed among the people without reference to political parties, ethnic and religious groups.

35. As Civil Servants are paid from various taxes collected from the people, Government servants should help to ensure that:

   a) Equal opportunity for employment is provided for all job seekers.
   b) Under no circumstances should bribes and gifts .be taken from applicants for jobs. Interviews for employment should always be conducted by a duly constituted panel. It should never be left in the hands of a single person Proper records should be kept of the interview for future reference.
   c) Nepotism or any other form of preferential treatment should be avoided.
   d) In the services themselves, privileges should be granted only to those who are qualified for them.
   e) Civil Servants should never dispense private or personal favours with public funds and property.
   f) Justice and fair play should be extended to all concerned.

g) Ensure that public business is always discharged in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations of Government and with expenditure.
h) Discourage discriminatory practices to individuals and groups.
i) All irregularities reported should be investigated and corrective action promptly taken.

(viii) **The Use of Authority**

36. Authority may be defined as the power given to a body or person or office holder by a superior to ensure, that some definite objective is achieved. As the extent of the power given is usually stated, Authority" as a rule, is never limited. Furthermore, its duration is often defined.

37. Authority may be derived from the following sources:

(a) The Constitution of a Country or a State.

(b) National Assembly or the Legislature.

(c) Government Pronouncements and Publications.

(d) The Public Service Rules

(e) Financial Regulations

(f) Public Service Rules and Regulations published from time to time.

(g) Government Notices in Gazette.

(h) Circular and circular letters from Ministries and Departments.

(i) Official Notices and Instructions in Ministries or Divisions within Ministries/Departments.

Figure 10.4: National Assembly Complex

Source: http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/national-assembly-to-get-ministerial-list-after-recess/168488/

Authority in Ministries and Department

38. A head of Ministry or Extra-Ministerial Department has authority for the following functions among others:

(i) Organisation of Ministry/Department in such a way that its objectives could be as efficiently as possible.

(ii) Control of Votes in Annual Estimates

(iii) Maintenance of discipline of Staff.

(iv) Training and deployment of staff in a .manner that they become more efficient, effective and productive.

(v) Welfare of Staff.

Authority in Smaller Units

39. In the Department, Division, Branch or Section of a Ministry or Extra Ministerial Department, the head has power to:

    a) Ensure that the work allocated to the sub-division is done efficiently and promptly;
    b) Supervise his staff;
    c) Maintain discipline; and
    d) Look after the welfare of his staff.

Exercising Authority

40. It is important for those who wield authority to remember always that power enjoyed by them is to enable them achieve the goals of their organizations. In several matters in civil services, authority has to be exercised for the general welfare of the public and not for the private or personal gains of department or divisional heads. Authority should not be exercised in a manner to advance the interest of a family, clique or ethnic group.

Officers in authority should ensure that all those under them are given the same opportunities. Preferential treatment for any officer or class amounts to favoritism. A head or supervisor who is guilty of favoritism often makes it impossible for all his subordinates to do their best. Every head should make it clear to his staff that merit and loyalty, not family, religion or place of origin are decisive factors for achievement.

Flexibility and Decision-Making

41. Much of the work of the schedule officers involves taking decisions or supplying information to aid decision making. In doing this, Civil servants should ensure that as much as possible, they follow, the under listed steps as means of enhancing objectivity and good judgment.

i. Thorough mastery of the problems;

ii. Knowing the facts about the problems under consideration;

iii. Analysis of the facts collected;

iv. Examining whether available precedents fit into the problems under consideration;

v. Determining the conclusions in the light of the facts and other considerations; and

vi. Giving an idea of probable effect of the conclusions if implemented.

- ■ The national assembly grant authority, true or false
- ☐ True, it is one of the agency that grant authority

10.3 Ethical Dilemmas in the Nigerian Civil Service

Given the thrust of the argument from the beginning of this course, the existence of normative rules and guidelines are pointers to the fact that the public servants are confronted with anomalous and conflicting interests at work that militate against the objective, in the civil service, of an efficient and effective service delivery to the citizens. The nature of these anomalies and conflict of interests are varied and numerous.

These arise in the matrix of the interpersonal relationships between the civil servant and the public, between civil servants and other civil servants in the service, between civil servants and politicians, and between civil servants and their private counterparts. Gabriel Gundu has highlighted three critical situations in which these ethical dilemmas have occurred. It is the task of the students to attend to the complexity of these dilemmas and attempt a resolution.

Civil servants versus politicians

i) Would refusal to oblige the Minister's directive not displease him/her, thereby straining his/her relationship with the Permanent Secretary and echoing the latter's disloyalty to the former?

ii) Would a protracted conflict, arising from this incident, not stunt the delivery on the Ministry's mandate and adversely affect the corporate image of the Ministry with a collateral damage on the required public confidence and trust?

iii) Would succumbing to the pressures of the Minister, with a view to pleasing him/her, not lead to the violation of the acceptable accounting standards and practices, as well as administrative ethical principles, thereby derailing Nigeria's crusade for sound public service and ethical fitness?

iv) Would a violation of the public service ethics not expose the Permanent Secretary to the risk of misconduct sanctions as contained in the applicable sections of the "2008 Public Service rules", and "anti-corruption" laws, notably, the ICPC Act 2000, EFCC Act 2002 and Public Procurement Act 2007?

v) Would such an act not be inimical to the overall corporate image of the public service?

vi) In such a situation, would the Permanent Secretary's reliance on the advice of participants at the "Maiden Annual Forum of Serving and Retired Permanent Secretaries" (July 2009) provide a valuable exit? The advice is that Permanent Secretaries should, "inter alia":

a) Strike a healthy balance between their responsibilities as Accounting Officers and that of the Honorable Ministers as Chief Executives to avoid unnecessary conflict;

b) Uphold the rule of law, due process, firmness, fairness and tact in carrying out their responsibilities; and

c) Uphold the highest administrative, financial, ethical and moral standards in the Civil Service, irrespective of political pressure.

Figure 10.5: Civil Servants must avoid Bribe

Source: http://my-god-is.com/category/my-god-is-not-partial/

Civil servants versus citizens

i) Which preferred administrative discretionary choice would demonstrate professional discipline, equity, impartiality, fairness, honesty, integrity, reliability, pursuit of excellence, accountability, and pre-eminence of loyalty to the principle of safeguarding the best interest of the citizens?

ii) Which preferred administrative discretionary option would offend the sensibilities of the citizens with a collateral damage on public confidence and trust in the public service?

iii) Which preferred administrative discretionary choice would please the citizens at the expense of the survival, growth and development of the public service?

Intra-civil service

i) What would be the best line of action towards boosting staff morale and productivity?

ii) What would be the best course of action towards promoting professional merit and meeting staff expectations whilst avoiding waste of resources?

iii) What would be the best line of action towards preventing conflict between self-interest and best interest of staff? (Gundu, 2011: 147-148)

How best can the civil servants resolve these dilemmas? What are some of the institutional policies and structures that could militate against their resolutions? In what sense can the inability to resolve these questions undermine the objectives of the civil service?

These are questions that are significant if the Nigerian Civil Service is to achieve legitimacy for the Nigerian Government. The issue therefore is that making the civil service work effectively and efficiently requires more than outlining codes of ethical conduct.

Summary of Study Session 10

In Study Session 10, you have learnt that:

1. First, to give a concrete administrative situation that could be juxtaposed to the theoretical points made in the earlier lectures; second, to outline the Nigerian Civil Service as that concrete public administrative institution; and third, to give the students an opportunity to confront some of the ethical dilemmas in a specific context.

2. The evolutionary dynamics that gave birth to the Nigerian Civil Service and the code of ethical conduct in doing Government business, and finally some of the ethical dilemmas that the Nigerian public servants have had to confront in their attempt to achieve efficient and effective service delivery to Nigerian citizens.

3. Achieving effective service delivery in the Nigerian Civil Service goes beyond outlining a code of ethical conduct.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQs) for Study Session 10

Now that you have completed this study session, you can assess how well you have achieved its Learning outcomes by answering the following questions. Write your answers in your study Diary and discuss them with your Tutor at the next! Support meeting. You can check your answers with the Notes on the Self-Assessment questions at the end of this Module.

SAQ 10.1

Mention 5 features of the Max Weber model

SAQ 10.2

How do civil servants show loyalty to government?

SAQ 10.3

What do you think are the basis of the conflict between the public officials and Nigerian citizens?

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