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Globalization and the Human Factor in the Public Service Organization

Globalización y el factor humano en en la organización de servicio publico

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ABSTRACT

The assumption underpinning the push to "shrink the State" may have been that the ongoing globalization of markets had made traditional forms of government intervention in economic sphere redundant and possibly harmful; and that, in any event, markets were more efficient at allocating resources than either politicians or the professional bureaucrats. In my modest opinion, this view though not completely unfounded, takes insufficient cognizance of a subtle, multiple shift which, since the 1980s, has drastically altered the balance of power world-wide: from the South and from the East to the Northwest; from the public sector to private enterprise; and in a number of countries, from organized labour to management. The dominant ideology during the 1980s and 1990s reflected this state of affairs and continues in the 21st Century.

Keywords: Public Service Organization, Globalization of Markets, Human Factor.

JEL CODE: H12

RESUMEN

La suposición que subyace al impulso para "reducir el Estado" puede haber sido que la globalización en curso de los mercados había hecho que las formas tradicionales de intervención del gobierno en la esfera económica fueran redundantes y posiblemente dañinas; y que, en cualquier caso, los mercados fueran más eficientes en la asignación de recursos que los políticos o los burócratas profesionales. En mi modesta opinión, esta visión, aunque no del todo infundada, no tiene en cuenta suficientemente un cambio sutil y múltiple que, desde la década de 1980, ha alterado drásticamente el equilibrio de poder en todo el mundo: del Sur y del Este al Noroeste; del sector público a la empresa privada; y en varios países, desde el trabajo organizado hasta la gestión. La ideología dominante durante las décadas de 1980 y 1990 reflejó este estado de cosas y continúa vigente en el siglo XXI.

Palabras clave: Organización de servicios públicos, globalización de los mercados, factor humano

JEL CODE**:** H12

INTRODUCTION: SUMMER OF DISCONTENT

The recent beginning of term and opening of schools in Europe and America marked the end of a summer of violence; Man's violence against Man, but also Nature's violence against a fragile ecosystem. In Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur and Palestine, the killing and the suffering continued unabated, with hardly an end in sight. Extreme weather patterns in Europe brought floods and chilly temperatures in Britain, Norway, and Holland, but extreme drought and heat around the Mediterranean.

The thermometer in Greece hit 47 degrees for many days in a row, provoking forest fires and making 2007 the hottest of the last hundred years. Scores of people died in fires or of exposure and dehydration in lands as far apart as Jordan and Romania.

In the West of England, by contrast, incessant precipitation made this the wettest summer in all recorded history-ever since statistics were kept in the United Kingdom. It was so bad, in fact, that newly-appointed Premier Mr. Gordon Brown, considered cutting short his maiden trip to Washington. He relented, in the end, and visited Camp David. Quite openly, however, his newly-nominated Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. M. Malloch-Brown, who previously had served as the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, voiced doubts that the Bush-Brown relationship would be "joined at the hip like the Bush-Blair relationship had been." (Rutenberg & Lyall, 2007, p. A3)

In trying to explain this statement, Mr. Malloch-Brown remarked that, what is now required, is "to build coalitions that are lateral, which go beyond the bilateral blinkers of the normal partners." More than the stark inadequacy of multilateral structures, events in this past summer have amply demonstrated the dangers and the follies of heady unilateralism.

The disasters in West Asia brought upon by the War and the continued failure by one important government to sign the Kyoto protocol come to mind in this connection. The plight of countless millions from India and Pakistan to parts of Latin America, give the measure of the price that the many have to pay for the failings of the few. What has become apparent is the asymmetry of it all; the long and widening distance the labyrinthine paths that separate the causes of action or inaction from their effects.

Thus, the decisions reached in Washington, D.C. send waves of refugees fleeing Iraq for Jordan. Massive sustained pollution in parts of North America, East Asia or Western Europe is rapidly bringing about the melting of the ice cap in the Arctic and Antarctica, with costly repercussions for Bangladesh, the atolls of the Pacific and even New Orleans.

Small wonder that the title of Joseph Stiglitz's masterpiece, the one that he produced on the heels of the Nobel Award, which he won in 2001, was "Globalization and its Discontents"[1]; and that its opening salvo, in a Chapter on "The Promise of Global Institutions" reads: "International Bureaucrats (the faceless symbols of the world economic order) are under attack everywhere" (Stiglitz, 2002).

It took the summit meeting of the G-8 in Germany and a disastrous summer of floods and forest fires to bring home the reality of globalization and demonstrate the fact that the actions or inactions of international agencies (and the governments that run them) carry a heavy toll, which those that end up paying are often least able to afford. Confronted with the floods, which left hundreds of thousands for days without drinking water, Mr. Brown, the British Prime Minister made a direct connection to climate change (Lyall, 2007, p. A4) but also promised that Britain would upgrade its infrastructure, some of which is dating back to the Victorian era. In Greece, the forest fires, brought about by drought and heat, caught the country's public services very largely unprepared.

The government was criticised and has been forced to apologize for inadequate response to the vagaries of nature, that must somehow be countered. Greece is arguably a small country, but inadequate response, on a much grander scale, was evidenced two years ago, in the mightiest country of all, when Katrina struck Louisiana. New Orleans has yet to recover.

IS GOVERNMENT TO BLAME?

Was government to blame? What government? Which part? Do we expect too much from government and governments? Barely twenty years ago, the answer might be "yes". By contrast in a sharp swing, the 1980s and 90s produced attacks on the State, denigration of "bureaucracy", onslaughts on public service and critiques against "big government", which have subsided somewhat, but have not gone away, certainly not disappeared. What neo-liberal critics of the post-war welfare state and development administration railed against was the magnitude and frequency of "government failures". Accordingly, a new model saw the light of the day, to epitomize "good governance." In line with the World Bank:

> The new model requires a smaller state equipped with a professional, accountable bureaucracy that can provide an 'enabling environment' for private sector-led growth to discharge effectively core functions, such as economic management, and to pursue sustained poverty reduction (World Bank, 1994, p.XVI)

[1] A title probably inspired from Sigmund Freud's own *"Civilization and its Discontent"*, New York, Norton, 1961.

Allied to implicit faith in private sector capacity to drive the growth agenda, the concept of the "Shrinking State" emerged as a critical element of the "Washington Consensus" (Stiglitz, 2002), which dominated the scene during the early nineties. The model still retained an aura of importance, as the century drew to its close. It loomed large in a report significantly entitled "The State in a Changing World[2]" (World Bank, 1997), which the World Bank produced in 1997.

Even several years later and in our days, faint echoes of its precepts can still be heard. However, much had changed in the intervening years. Several countries of Africa and Eastern Europe were in the throes of crises, which invited joint World Bank – IMF interventions and the related programmes of structural adjustments, which these carried in their trail. But as against these crises, the world had seen the miracle of the East Asian tigers where, as the Minister put it in her keynote address delivered at the IIAS World Conference in New Delhi, 2002, the government had played a truly preponderant role, almost totally impervious to donors' conditionalities (Fraser-Moleketi, 2003).

"Hollowing out the State"[3] has lost its earlier shine. In large parts of the world, people are waking up to the dysfunctional outcomes of hasty interventions, "shock therapies" and "big bangs" which structural adjustments frequently brought in their trail. High hopes evaporated as highly predictable failures followed the earlier promises of quick success (Hesse, 2000; Newland, 1996). Wholesale privatization and downsizing of the State seldom ushered the Millennium of a "strong civil society participating in public affairs and … behaving under the rule of law," prophesied by the World Bank (1994, p.VII). Far from circumscribing the scope of government failures" as heralded, the marketization of government and the wholesale induction of the New Public Management, with a stress on deregulation and decentralization, often exacerbated the incidence of fraud, corruption, failure, arbitrariness and the abuse of power.

The assumption underpinning the push to "shrink the State" may have been that the ongoing globalization of markets had made traditional forms of government intervention in economic sphere redundant and possibly harmful; and that, in any event, markets were more efficient at allocating resources than either politicians or the professional bureaucrats. In my modest opinion, this view though not completely unfounded , takes insufficient cognizance of a subtle, multiple shift which, since the 1980s, has drastically altered the balance of power world-wide: from the South and from the East to the Northwest; from the public sector to

[2] World Bank (1997) *The State in a Changing World*, Washington D.C., World Bank.

[3] Expression borrowed from Carol Harlow, Public Administration and Globalisation: International and Supranational Institution, *Interim Report to the First International Conference of the IIAS*, Bologna, Italy, 19-22 June 2000.

private enterprise; and in a number of countries, from organized labour to management. The dominant ideology during the 1980s and 1990s reflected this state of affairs. There are currently indications of a new swing of the pendulum, but how far it will go and precisely in what direction, it is still too early to tell.

One indisputable trend over the past quarter century is the emergence of transnationals (gigantic corporations in finance, industrial activity, telecommunications, energy and e-commerce) as major political players on the international scene. The former Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan quickly seized on this development and formed the global compact, in an effort to enlist the support and cooperation of the socially responsible among the TNCs for U.N. programme activities. Though, once again, we are talking of new forces taking shape on the international scene, when it comes to global governance, we need to ask ourselves whom precisely these transnationals or other emanations of global civil society may represent; whose interests they promote. With "representativity" a critical concern, come the issues of transparency, accountability and balance in decision making processes on the international scene. Far more than its predecessor, the short lived League of Nations, our own United Nations was from the start conceived as expressing the will of the people.

"We the Peoples of the United Nations*"* are the opening words of the Charter, whose fundamental principles have been reaffirmed as recently as seven years ago in the landmark Declaration of the Millennium Assembly.[4] Frequently, in our days, a hiatus has been drawn between government and people and between government and governance, as if some contradiction and qualitative difference between the two had not been sufficiently noticed and needed reaffirmation. "From Government to Governance" became a leitmotiv of the New Public Management and neoliberal rhetoric suggestive of a trend or transformational pattern that could be clearly observed throughout the world on the domestic, national and international levels.

"From government to governance" subtly conjured up visions of fully empowered world citizens taking charge of global affairs – a populist pipe dream. Although a distinction exists, the one chiefly referring to an entity and its mandate; the other to an activity, to trace a cleavage between them would be ill conceived. "From government to governance" is clearly not a trend; the one is part of the other; the latter expresses the former. In democratic government, whatever the level of government (national or international) the People must be viewed as both the source of Authority and ultimate justification for the exercise of Power. Implicitly this message is made in the preamble which begins with the words "We the Peoples …" and concludes by tasking "Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco … to establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations."

[4] Resolution A/RES/55/2/8 September 2000.

FROM GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNANCE?

Though the anti-government rhetoric of the 1980s and 90s may have subsided somewhat, faint echoes are still heard in libertarian circles proposing that, in national and international governance, the functions of national governments be narrowly circumscribed and truly counter-balanced by representative groups in global civil society. A more realistic approach would call on national governments, which (with some noted exceptions) enjoy a higher degree of democratic legitimacy than most organizations, private or non governmental, to take charge and provide the needed counterpoise to powerful pressure groups active on many levels. No one should try to limit the freedom of such groups to advance legitimate interests within the bounds of morality and of the Law. At quite an early date, the XIIIth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration & Finance put forward this position adding that, in its view, strong markets and strong states needed and complemented each other. [5]

Complementarity and balance suggest relations of trust, mutual respect and synergy. They imply a win-win partnership, at best. Still, if the rule of law and democratic governance have any meaning at all, those constitutionally empowered to speak for all the People must have the final say. Though this may sound self-evident, it hardly represented the mainstream point of view at the apogee of neo-liberalism, the onslaught against "big government" and the New Public Management's calls on the public sector to embrace marketization, adopt the language of business and to convert the State to private sector ways. Still some ten years ago, these voices could be heard even within the halls of the United Nations and certainly of the World Bank and the OECD.

To-day, it would appear that, even in the heartland of libertarian thinking, both State and public sector have been granted a reprieve. However, one suspects that this is given conditionally and chiefly on account of pressures from the War and security considerations. Essentially underpinned by neo-conservative thinking, the Bush administration's approach to government services, and public sector reform continue to subscribe to neo-liberal measures and policy tools. Outsourcing, for example, still plays a major role in such core government functions as conduct of the War. It had been featured prominently in Secretary Rumsfeld's proposed legislation entitled "The Defense Transformation for the 21st Century Act", which would allow the Pentagon to hire outside civilians and transfer thousands of jobs to business contractors (Newland, 2007). A noted American Scholar, Professor Chester Newland sees an increasing trend towards the fragmentation of all the public service, both

[5] Report, E/1997/86, Exec. Summary.

federal and state, in spite of what he calls the parallel twin trend from Welfare to Warfare and from the Facilitative to the Garrison State (Newland, 2007).

Not surprisingly, the traits through which the Garrison State has manifested itself are the embrace of unilateralism, dislike for compromise and a strong corresponding distrust for multilateral ways in addressing global issues. Although domestic pressures may have had some effect in moving the US Government towards a greater acceptance of the U.N. and multilateral stances, it may be still too early to tell if this will last and will extend to other critical global issues like international trade and climate change. Both on the right and left, sizeable forces are pushing broadly in the direction of closure and of Fortress America. Hopefully, they will not prevail and, even more importantly, such trends in the U.S. may not be replicated other parts of the world (Europe, East Asia, Africa and Latin America) where the United Nations, multilateral approaches and democratic governance find favour and support.

So what may we conclude from this all too cursory survey of developments regarding the nature of globalization and the public organization? Firstly, that we are not headed (not in the foreseeable future) towards some form of world government. "The case for a global imperium is still made in some quarters. However, both the prospects for global hegemony and the prohibitive costs of the enterprise in human, economic and moral terms make it unrealistic, as well as most unpalatable (Fraser-Moleketi, 2005).

The expression "global village" suggests a palpable truth, as well as lived reality. We live in close proximity, we the nearly 7 billion inhabitants of the Earth, which counted barely two when the U.N. was founded, 62 years ago (Fraser-Moleketi, 2005). But for the rapid advances in science and technology, our life on planet Earth might have turned into a nightmare. However, though biotechnology, as well as the green revolution may have averted famine for billions of humanity, they may have also abetted a number of perilous trends which, under the crowded conditions in which we live, could spell disasters for mankind. Pollution, climate change, as well as the rapid depletion of non renewable natural resources spring to mind in this connection. To argue that technology may have it in its power to mitigate these dangers begs the question why the countries most advanced in this respect are also the greatest polluters, as well as most insatiable consumers of resources in energy, potable water, etc. Is this just a coincidence or does it rather flow from the ability of such countries to export their discontent and buy out from the need to move to change their ways and to reform?

In a recent interview of Kemal Dervis in Athens,[6] the Administrator of the UNDP revealed that, as we speak, more than two thirds (2/3) of the emissions of CO_2 are produced in a handful of countries, some of the richest in fact, of the Northern Hemisphere. "It would be

[6] Kathimerini, Sunday 3 June 2007, p.14.

unfair" he added, "that we should ask the peoples of the developing world to shoulder the resulting burden."[7] But is this not precisely what happens nowadays in our divided world? Our world is deeply divided – probably more than before – inspite of the rapid advances in information technology, telecommunications and transportation, which have it in their power to bring the people closer. Much has been said and written regarding "global convergence". It may be a "useful myth" (Pollitt, 2001). Reality, however, tells us a different story. In his keynote address to the recent Athens Conference on globalisation, Kemal Dervis confirmed what the Secretary-General of the United Nations had underscored just seven years ago: "The benefits and opportunities of globalization remain highly concentrated among a relatively small number of countries and are spread unevenly within them." (United Nations, 2000)

In theory, this condition could easily be arrested (even reversed). Mr. Kemal Dervis again reminded his audience that the world as a whole spent on development programmes only a tenth of the trillion of US dollars that every single year go to military purposes. Does any one remember the "peace dividend" rhetoric on the morrow of the End of the Cold War? What accounts for this ongoing and apparently escalating arms race at times of peace? Arguably, one of the saddest, most wasteful and destructive among the many sidelines of this build-up is the trade in small arms, which floods the African continent and other parts of the world, with cheap and "user-friendly" handguns, that literally are obtainable just around the corner. What the older generation associated with Hollywood and the Wild West has now become the predicament of vast segments of humanity. In Africa, in particular, it accounts for half a million or possibly more "child soldiers", who work as mercenaries, sowing death and destruction around them but also bringing misery to their poor lives.

Considering the fact that barely a dozen countries account for the bulk of the trade in handguns and small arms, it should not prove impossible to circumscribe the problem and traffic in such weapons. That this has not been done, in spite of years of trying by the United Nations is telling testimony to the significant profits that are garnered by the few at the expense of the many. Regrettably, here also we witness one more symptom of the practice of rich countries to export potential problems, with the downsides of their progress, to the developing world.

It cannot escape our notice that this flourishing arms trade and the proliferation of guns have become a major cause and important contributing factor of crime, graft and corruption, undermining the efforts of government and international agencies for public service reform and socio-economic development. It is hard to escape the conclusion that lack of political will and of counterveiling pressures, rather than the ineffectiveness of institutional structures on the international level, must be viewed as chiefly responsible for the continued failure of globalisation to yield its full potential for the good of the bulk of humanity (Dwivedi, Khator

[7] Ibid.

and Nef, 2007). Managing Development in a Global Context, New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES FOR GOVERNMENTS

The problems as we've seen, are major global challenges confronting the bulk of humanity, across time zones. Broadly, in line with the conclusions of the Millennium Summit, these are summed up as follows:

- first and foremost climate change;
- secondly deepening poverty in segments of humanity in tandem with a growing and perilous divide between the affluent few and the bulk of the world's population; [8]
- a vast rearmament effort draining the world's resources which could be spent more usefully on welfare and development;
- proliferation of handguns in many developing countries, accounting for vast numbers of mercenary child soldiers and fuelling armed conflicts, breakdown of law and order, political instability and diversion from peaceful pursuits;
- high incidence of crime, abuse of power, corruption and graft, creating a climate of lawlessness and a culture of impunity[9] with disastrous implications

[8] From the *New York Times*, Tuesday, August 16, 2007, p.A3.
"Prime Minister Manmohan Singh cautioned Indians against hubris in his annual Independence Day speech on Wednesday and promised a spate of antipoverty measures that hinted at the vulnerabilities facing his government and the nation.
"India cannot become a nation with islands of high growth and vast areas untouched by development, where the benefits of growth accrue only to a few," and Mr. Singh, speaking from behind a bulletproof glass shield at the historic Red Fort."
On the *United States*, see the latest Census Report according to the Editorial "A Sobering Census Report" published in the *New York Times*, Wednesday, August 29, 2007, p.A22.
"Over all, the new data on incomes and poverty mesh consistently with the pattern of the last five years, in which the spoils of the nation's economic growth have flowed almost exclusively to the wealthy and the extremely wealthy, leaving little for everybody else.
Standard measures of inequality did not increase last year, according to the new census data. But over a longer period, the trend becomes crystal clear: the only group for which earnings in 2006 exceeded those of 2000 were the households in the top five percent of the earnings distribution. For everybody else, they were lower.
This stilted distribution of rewards underscores how economic growth alone has been insufficient to provide better living standards for most American families. What are needed are policies to help spread benefits broadly – be it more progressive taxation, or policies to strengthen public education and increase access to affordable health care.
Unfortunately, these policies are unlikely to come from the current White House. This administration prefers tax cuts for the lucky ones in the top five percent."

[9] On the international level, the United Nations Secretariat Staff Union, on 27 August 2007, resolved to express concern that *"the culture of impunity permeating the higher levels of the Organization, complemented by a dysfunctional internal justice system, continues to deny staff members justice."* It urged the Secretary-General to *"scrupulously apply the existing standard of conduct and develop a system-wide code of ethics for all U.N. personnel,"* [Res/42/37].

for the political system, the administration of justice, public services delivery and basic human rights;

- growing frequency and intensity of natural calamities and disease of pandemic proportions;
- dismal failure of the world's most powerful and rich nations to meaningfully address these six most pressing challenges; and
- finally an asymmetrical pattern which reserves to very few – some twenty per cent of the world – the bulk of all the benefits of civilisation, of technological progress and globalisation, but also makes it possible for these few to export attendant problems to those least able to cope.

It has already been argued and may be clear by now that challenges and problems, which spring from one part of the world, soon (due to globalization) spread and manifest themselves in other parts of the world. Extreme climatic phenomena, which plagued large parts of Europe during the summer months, or the rapid advance of the desert afflicting the Sahel both may well have their source in far-away East Asia or the North American Continent. Likewise, with the hundreds of thousands which flee the war in Iraq seeking refuge in Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

Wherever the source of the problems, whatever their configuration, it is the public servants, the public organizations and governments of countries, very often far away, that are left to pick the pieces. These are the unsung heroes who try to cope with crises and, in the midst of these, to improve the public services which will create conditions for sustainable development. In his keynote address, in the capital of Greece, Mr. Kemal Dervis could not have been more explicit. In his view, the proper functioning of public administration and what we call "good governance" are the key to balanced growth, while their absence leads to failure of some countries to create and to sustain conditions, which would favour and promote development and progress.[10]

Surprisingly the world, very largely under the influence of Reaganite conservatives and leading international financial institutions, expended time and money during the 80s and 90s disparaging the government, fragmenting and "de-privileging" the public service, ostensibly in the name of fighting "public bureaucracy". In developing countries especially, where the institutions of government were still in the making, the damage has been grave, accounting for Moses Kiggundu's description of those years as "lost decades" for Africa. But even out of Africa, in certain parts of Europe, even in Latin America, the blessings of these policies have been extremely mixed. "Rendez-nous notre état!" were the words of Jacques Chirac (1994), reacting to the extremes of these neo-liberal tendencies.

[10] Kathimerini, Athens, op.cit.

Let us hope we've turned that corner because what, in my view, developing countries in Africa and other parts of the world need more than anything else are governments that lead and strong administrative systems that bolster government efforts, and implement the policies with expertise, compassion, intelligence, efficiency, effectiveness and speed. What all developing countries require, as pre-conditions of any further progress, may be summed in two words: capacity-reinforcement or capacity-building.

Allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to spend the rest of the time I have been allocated to giving some details on what this often-used but much misunderstood expression could cover and should mean. Because much has been written and said on the 3Es (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) – too often out of context – I shall elaborate only to make the point that efficiency and effectiveness cannot be considered as "absolutes". They have meaning and significance within the set parameters of institutional frameworks and given programme goals. We need to know these frameworks and programme goals (indeed their beneficiaries) before expressing views on the virtue of those 3Es. Manifestly then, much more is involved in capacity-building than the quest of the 3Es. Properly understood as deliberate, sustained and balanced reinforcement of the institutional framework for public policy-making and programme implementation, with human resources development and periodically-needed technological upgrading, capacity-building is critical not merely for good governance, but mostly enabling governments to address and overcome the mounting problems and challenges of globalisation.

As we have tried to show, coping with globalisation pre-eminently means having to deal with problems whose causes or whose source and impact or effect are clearly asymptotic. The rise of avian flu might prove to be in East Asia. Its incidence, however, could be world-wide. Significantly, the countries which will be least affected are those with public sectors well-organized, alert, proactive if required, but always "on the ready" to move and to respond to crisis situation or any other contingency appearing on the ground. By definition, crises are problem situations arising here and now. Above all else, a government and public organizations must be prepared to act judiciously, decisively, equitably and effectively. This is hardly the description of how US authorities (federal, state or local) reacted to Katrina about than two years ago. Like Katrina, the recent forest fires in Greece, the floods in the UK or desertification in major parts of Africa, the problems that a government is called upon to face appear like "acts of God". They very seldom are. Too often human failure or human greed, somewhere on planet Earth, must take their share of the blame. Others must pick the pieces. Still, inaction is no excuse. Neither a head of government nor public organisation, can shirk their responsibilities.

"THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY"

Reaction, effective reaction is always on the ground, which means that we need agencies, duly empowered and competent, close to where the action is. Rightly, subsidiarity has been established as an important principle, as well as a cardinal feature in the EU architecture (Pappas, 1993). Neither globalisation (with the Bretton Woods Institutions or the United Nations as quintessential hubs) nor "regionalisation" or regional integration on the EU or NEPAD models will in any way detract from the need for capacity-building, on the national, sub-national and even local levels.

The opposite, in fact, may be required given the rising pressures and growing interdependencies that these entail (Fraser-Moleketi, 2005). What, arguably, may seem – but only seem – much harder to establish and justify is the case for capacity-building with regards to policy-making, law-making and sound governance on the global or regional levels. Understandably, small players on the international scene – poor countries and small nations – may feel quite overwhelmed, dismally unprepared and, many even unwilling to risk antagonizing major powers or multinationals. Passivity, however, in the face of unilateralism and the abuse of power, is hardly sound advice. Instead, we need to remember the cynical French dictum: "les absents ont toujours tort"[11] and need to be reminded of Bismark's famous aphorism: "Beati possidentes". The fate of being ignored in international councils is hardly going to change unless it is first challenged. A position of visible weakness will also not be remedied without concerted action by those who have been wronged.

International relations, during the past half century, have yield many lessons in this regard. The rise but subsequent slide of the Group of 77, after the end of the Cold War, show how much can be gained by countries joining forces around agreed positions, but also conversely surrendered through disarray or failure to build and to promote coherent policy platforms. The recent strides accomplished by the three emerging giants of the developing world: South Africa, Brazil and India, suggest how much is possible given leadership and statesmanship.

Realistically, however, neither will take effect unless we make it happen in public organizations that is the public service and the institutions of government. Let us pause for a moment to ask ourselves precisely what these two weighty terms, so often used in vain, do mean. An answer may be obtained by surveying the world scene, as we have done already, and observing the results of their most notable absence: the continuing wars in West Asia and the global climate change, which a recently published report of some 1500 pages described characteristically as the gravest market failure of our times (United Nations, 2007).

[11] "Those absent are always wrong."

More examples could be garnered to show where we've gone wrong by emphasizing markets to the detriment of government, as if all could be left to the work of "the invisible hand." From the retreat of government, three notable derivatives are present beyond doubt: a pandemic of corruption, the growing asymmetry of power and the skewed distribution of benefits that flow from progress world-wide.

Of corruption, the famous British statesman Edmund Burke rightly said two hundred years ago:"… it takes away the vigour from our arms, wisdom from our councils and every shadow of authority … from the most venerable parts of our Constitution*"* (British Council, n.d; Caiden et al, 2001;World Bank, 2007). Burke was addressing the need for public service reform, which came to England eventually from the 1850s onwards.

Corruption now is everywhere. It fuels the drug trade; supplies armies of mercenaries – many of them young boys and girls; but also without fail, as Edmund Burke remarked, saps the needed credibility and capacity of governments, world-wide and at all levels: global, national and sub-national. In exploring, as we do, the paths to capacity-building and restoring credibility to government, the following must take precedence: combating corruption decisively; reinforcing the cognitive parts in the institutions of government and enhancing certain traits in the manner government works, the public service especially. Of the needed characteristics, integrity, coherence, consistency, transparency, accountability and trust stand out. In my view they represent the core of public servants' essential contribution to democratic governance and the political process. What is more, these are precisely the traits that contribute efficiency and effectiveness in the long run.

Let us linger for a moment on the importance of the long-term, which arguably it behooves our senior public servants to defend against the pressing claims and hyperbolic promises of short-term considerations. Speaking of globalisation, there can be little doubt that, what we seek to address, are mostly long-term concerns. Sustainable development and poverty eradication, in the meaning of the goals of the Millennium Summit, are clearly of this order.

Confronting the effects, on good governance, of escalating disparities and the plight of the urban poor, protecting the ecosystem and safeguarding the next generation from the effects of climate change are long-term considerations, which frequently give way to political expediency. The persistent rearguard action of the petroleum industry in the United States, continuing to deny mounting evidence on the issue of global warming, in an effort to block legislation on this highly important issue, has been too well-documented to be facilely ignored.

The future, the poor and children, all those who have no voice need advocates and spokesmen. More generally, however, the voice of expertise and ethical concerns should regain its rightful place in decision-making processes, whether in policy making or the

management of programmes. "An Inconvenient Truth"(Begley, 2007), which most of us have read or seen on DVD, reminds us all too poignantly of the disasters visited on Planet Earth by mindless profiteers ready to bend the lessons of science and morality to their quest for "quick results". Lobbies and pressure groups mostly push for "quick results." Regard for speedy expedients is occasionally the price that the many have to pay for freedom and democracy. But we have gone too far in our quest for quick success, and the dictum "results over process", (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993, p.19), which we owe to NPM and the Reinvention Movement, may have been accepted too readily as an article of faith.

The effects of this new mindset on the public service ethos have been far from beneficent. Not only has the "focus on results not rules" (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993, p.19), conveyed the wrong impression that laws and rules are expendable; the tenor of pronouncements like "let the managers manage", "entrepreneurial management" and "management is management", which came with NPM, played havoc with the concept, the mission and the roles of public service.

Perhaps more than all else, the image and identity of public servants suffered. If what they had been tasked with were jobs of little consequence, essentially indistinguishable from "any other job", why bother with reform if this were not to cut, downsize and marketize the Service. "Off loading" and "outsourcing" became ideas in vogue and, after Mrs. Thatcher's epic quarrels with her aides, the role of public servants as key advisers to government experienced a decline. Somehow the idea prevailed that, in the famous words of someone very famous: "You are either for or against us." Pondered objective advice plainly came at a discount. Deliberately or not, New Public Management logic opened the doors to cronyism and marketization, but also to a return to spoils in many lands. Concepts like impartiality, respect for expert knowledge, professionalism, adherence to due process, and service to the public took a dive in the hierarchy of values.

MERIT, INTEGRITY, KNOWLEDGE & CAPACITY-REINFORCEMENT

The world is paying the price for this regrettable slide. The lamentable performance of people twisting facts in an attempt to "prove" the imminence of danger from WMDs brings into sharp relief the role and need of officers "speaking the truth to power" (Mulgan, 2007). From Continental Europe during the Second World War to apartheid South Africa; from Guantanamo to Iraq, we have seen too many examples of efficiency and effectiveness in the blind pursuit of power and of blind obedience to orders that should have been resisted. These crimes against humanity, too many perpetrated during our own lifetime, should warn us of the dangers of clever panaceas savvily packaged for export and promising the moon.

Even more so this experience, in light of both the prospects and perils of globalisation, ought to lead us to revalue and accord more weight to knowledge and integrity in the whole scheme of governance and of the public service. The link between the two – indeed the implicit equation of wisdom and integrity – have been part of a rich legacy that stood the test of time for close to three millennia, because it is the fruit of global human experience.

The close inter-relationship of learning, integrity and wisdom have clearly underpinned the drive for public sector reform in large parts of the worlds from the 19th century onwards. Not very long ago, a book highlighted their value but also made suggestions on ways to enhance their impact on government and governance. The author was Yehezkel Dror. The title of the book: "The Capacity to Govern: Report to the Club of Rome"(Dror, 2001). As its very title suggest, the author sees "deep knowledge" and "virtue against vices" as critical determinants of "Capacity to Govern". Not so for NPM. In spite of much lip service, they seem to be reduced to one denominator "competencies", and simply evaluated in terms of their effects on output and results. But even Peter Drucker, "the American Arch-Guru of Capitalism", as he is sometimes called (Aucoin, 2001) took a similar position that plainly measured knowledge in utilitarian terms:

> "Traditional knowledge" he wrote, was general. What we now consider knowledge is of necessity highly specialised …what we now consider knowledge is information-effective in action, information focused on results. These results are seen outside the person – in society and the economy, or in the advancement of knowledge itself." (Drucker, 1993)

An attractive proposition, one might argue, if it were not belied, in practice, by results which have too often proved self-serving and pernicious, precisely on account of being one-sided and short-term. We should ask ourselves instead whether over-specialisation, of which New Public Management itself has been a product, does not, in actual fact, produce a closeted mind and one-dimensional thinking. Is this good preparation for complex problem-solving on either the domestic or international fronts?

Instead of reducing the world (or indeed our own society) to its most simplistic expression and all the issues of governance to those of applied economics, should we not rather look for broadly-gauged approaches and more constructive strategies? Instead of the narrow perception of "my station and its duties", which a closeted career often tends to cultivate, should we not rather encourage mobility and, through movement, versatility and the readier acceptance of change? Should we not foster attitudes, among our senior cadres, that actively welcome diversity, internalise complexity and consciously adopt a balanced, inter-disciplinary approach to most of what they do? We hardly need reminding that most of the problems of governance (on the national, sub-national or international levels) are of this nature; that, with all due respect to NPM proponents, "management is seldom management, if such a thing existed in pure form. It is also law, economics, psychology, sociology, ethics, political science and now information or knowledge management.

Public administration, which all in senior management claim as our common field, is made of all these disciplines or, to be more precise, lies at the intersection of them all. A sound appreciation of their interconnectedness and where they interface -- not the unattainable mastery of all these fields -- is needed. The need can best be addressed through an appropriate mix of career development policies and in-service training. Speaking of career development, the principal objective, as has already been argued, is that of counteracting departmental chauvinism and other forms of bigotry, which all too often grow after long years of service in a single narrow slot and thus tend to undermine the "we-ness", synergy, sharing and close cooperation which are sine qua nons of sound effective governance, national or international.

Mobility is the vaccine that keeps us from stagnating. Accompanied by training, it sheds light on the dictum "training as life-long learning". Under the right conditions, it helps us welcome challenge; turn challenge into opportunity. But more than anything else, mobility helps shape our sense of duty and loyalty as senior public servants; not only to our department, but chiefly to the values of our profession and to the public interest – national or international.

Training is life-long learning; a vehicle for growth and for career development. Effectiveness in training – needless to emphasise it – requires a proper balance of the thematic content, approach, technique and method. Overtime, as we have seen, the weight accorded to substance, but also the meaning of knowledge have drastically changed as new technologies surfaced and work-related skills acquired new salience. Not only specialisation has prevailed over general knowledge, but also "how to" competencies sharply risen in importance, recasting goals in training and criteria in the selection and advancement of government officers. We may have overprized the short-term utility and instrumental value of knowledge, neglectful of its substance and its intrinsic worth.

To close this presentation, let me suggest it's time to revisit the profile of the Senior Public Service with a view to capacity-building. Rapid change across the board, sprawling areas of uncertainty with increasing interdependencies in the wake of globalisation and/or regional integration call for decisive action to strengthen the core structures of government and of the public service. Priority, in our view, must go cognitive skills and to "the thinking arm" or "central minds of government"(Dror, 2001). These are functions that a government outsources at its peril. Of course, it should be added: self-reliance comes at a price.

We need to arrest the erosion, indeed to move decisively to upgrade the public service. Although this may seem difficult, it is a feasible project, whose beneficial impact will spread throughout society, the country and the Continent. What it calls for primarily is revaluation of merit, with knowledge and integrity much closer to the top in our hierarchy of values and the respect for knowledge much higher on this scale. Coping with globalisation, coping with it effectively and making the best of developments demands that we reach out and try to

embrace the world in all its great diversity. It calls for the understanding of problems, whose complexity is often compounded by distance and the varying vantage points from which they may be observed. We ought to address these problems both with an open mind and with the firm conviction that we must find solutions which will not mortgage the future, but bring the best of available knowledge and institutional memory to the service of the long-term, the long-term public interest, national and international.

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