

Desarrollo de la profesionalidad de la función pública y desarrollo de los recursos humanos para el control multilateral

Public Service Professionalism and Human Resources development for Multilateral Governance

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ABSTRACT

The deepening world crisis in recent months has served to underline the urgency and complexity of nascent global governance. Perhaps more than anything else, the conflicts in West Asia and in the Middle East brought into sharp relief the limits of brute force and resulting inability of military might, however overpowering, to bring about sustainable and workable solutions to major global problems. It has become apparent that such long-term approaches to intricate concerns which may affect us all, but touch us differentially in varying geographical latitudes, call for much give and take, considerable debate and a degree of consensus which may not have been necessary in centuries gone by. In light of what has happened from the dawn of this century onwards, we may need to review and disabuse ourselves of the idea that wars are fought and won on battlefields. Despite the dearth of evidence, which might lend it support, the view that populations bow to superior force, silently accept defeat, passively acquiesce in military *faits accomplis* and quietly surrender to an invading army, dies hard in Western countries.

Keywords: Public Service Professionalism, Multilateral Governance, Global Governance.

JEL Classification: F50, F59.

RESUMEN

La agudización de la crisis mundial en los últimos meses ha servido para subrayar la urgencia y la complejidad del incipiente gobierno global. Quizás más que cualquier otra cosa, los conflictos en el Asia occidental y en el Oriente han superado los límites de la fuerza bruta y han mostrado la incapacidad de la fuerza militar para lograr soluciones sostenibles y viables a los problemas mundiales más importantes. Se ha puesto de manifiesto que estos enfoques a largo plazo a los conflictos nos afectan a todos pero de manera diferente en diferentes latitudes geográficas, lo que ha introducido un amplio debate y un grado de consenso que puede no haber sido necesario en siglos pasados. A la luz de lo que ha ocurrido desde los albores de este siglo en adelante, podríamos replantearnos la idea de que las guerras se luchan y ganar en campos de batalla. A pesar de la escasez de pruebas que lo apoyen, la opinión de que las poblaciones se someten a la fuerza superior, silenciosamente aceptan la derrota, consienten pasivamente los hechos militares consumados y se rinden tranquilamente al ejército invasor, cala duro en los países occidentales.

Palabras Clave: Profesionalidad en la función pública, Control Multilateral, Gobierno Global.

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Clasificación JEL: F50, F59.



1. THE CASE FOR MULTILATERAL GOVERNANCE

We never seem to learn. And yet one of the lessons of sixty years of trying to shape a new world order suggests that workable patterns are those which gain acceptance from those that have a stake in their success. Current widespread support for participatory decision-making processes look askance at solutions, however attractive on surface, which represent the outcome of passive acquiescence and are imposed from above. Rather, contemporary approaches rely on confidence-building with a view to deliberations which may often be long, complex and time-consuming but, when they are based on trust, are likelier to produce customized, *win-win* agreements or, at the very least, resolution of disputes which reflects a degree of consensus.

The number, scale and complexity of the issues facing the world, which call for collective approaches, represent a true reflection of the growing interdependency of all who live on Earth, but also of the importance of global public goods, the spread of global commons and the proliferation of clamorous actors and players – governmental and non-governmental – on the international scene. Predictably, however, this cumulative development makes very pressing claims on the framework and the structures for multilateral governance. Keenly sensitive to this development, the International Conference on Administrative Sciences of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS), which was held in Monterrey from 17 to 21 July 2006, adopted the need for “transparency, integrity and accountability” both as the theme of the Conference and as its principal message to its constituent units. Openness, participation and democratic governance may show the way to the future. We cannot overlook, on the other hand, the strong and continuing pulls in the direction of secrecy and exclusion, which the practice of power politics still exerts in the conduct of international affairs.

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The ongoing shuttle diplomacy in and out of Headquarters, New York highlighted once again the prominence of structures set up to facilitate international negotiations and the primacy of the governments in such negotiations. They also demonstrated the growing relevance of international public opinion in nurturing responses to major global challenges. The emergence of consensus on such important issues as climate change and “trade and insecurity in an unequal world”¹ bears witness to the vigour and effectiveness of the ongoing debate.

The structures which facilitate international debate on major global issues include organizations like the United Nations, the European Union and the OECD. These represent accomplishments of the past 60 years. They also include, however, non-state

organisations, as well as the rich corpus of international law, which has a longer history but has been at the epicentre of the ongoing crisis and points to the significance of broadly accepted norms in the conduct of global affairs. Neo-conservative critics of the United Nations point to the many flaws of international agencies, while past and current advocates of *Realpolitik* dismiss international law as merely wishful thinking. Critics of global governance not only posit *might* as the main source of *right*, but also nation states as *sole* legitimate actors on the global scene. A current stark example of this approach was offered in the debate which pitted the U.S. Administration against a sizeable number of senior Republican leaders, as well as Congress at large. The main contentious issues revolved around provisions known as Common Article 3 of the Geneva Convention, which prohibits cruel treatment of combatants, and the related claim advanced by US authorities to reinterpret these provisions.²

In light of current happenings, it would be hard to ignore the several proponents of *Realpolitik* and neo-conservative ideologues.³ To them, the nation state still represents not only *the* ultimate reality, but also the sole arbiter of right or wrong, fully entitled to pursue its major national interests unbounded by any moral or legal considerations. To be sure, this age-old argument is seldom nowadays expressed in an absolute form. However, even the language of the ongoing debate, with the proliferation of sharply dissenting viewpoints, serves as a pointed reminder of an evolving reality, in which the State must share the international stage with other major players, which rival its appeal as foci of allegiance.

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“*My country right or wrong*” still resonates with force in certain quarters and still, in many places, the duty of obedience to one’s political leaders is construed as an absolute principle. There is reason to believe, on the other hand that, largely as a result of sixty years of multilateral governance, a different approach on major global issues is beginning to be heard. It is a *problematique* that brings to light the importance of shared global concerns, the rapid proliferation of global public goods, a *global public interest*, sense of a common destiny and, therefore, also the need for more effective global governance.

One of the major features in this debate is growing recognition of the claims of *global citizenship*. These do not supersede, but rather complement prior existing loyalties to nation states or in-groups to which one may belong. This sense of global citizenship, which underpins the notions of global public interest, public goods and global governance, rests on the ancient concept of *civitas humana*, which we owe to the Stoics and Greco-Roman thought, but which, in our own days, begins to represent a palpable reality reinforced by shared experiences of men and women living in a shrinking global village. Not in any way detracting from our feelings of belonging to particular ethnicities, religions or societies, such experience, nonetheless, puts these feelings in



perspective making us keenly aware of “*others*” in a slightly different light. It teaches us to live by “*letting others live*”.

It is a fragile construction which readily collapses; a delicate accomplishment which easily gives way at times of heavy stress, when pressures from the environment induce us to fall back on rationalizations, which barely cover up an unrestrained pursuit of narrow short-term gains, presenting it as struggle for self-preservation. Tolerance, objectivity, humanness, solidarity and cooperation may not be less congenial to people’s disposition than boundless self-reliance, individualism and competition. However, they undoubtedly make high demands on people and networks of support in which they grow because they are predicated on proper education and socialization and an enabling framework inspiring public trust. In the international context, this would entail a system of multilateral governance, in which the players and actors pursue their varied interests and exercise their rights within the established boundaries of international law, according to due process and the practice of friendly relations required by the *comity of nations*.

2. THE STRUCTURES AND THE CULTURE FOR MULTILATERAL GOVERNANCE

We hardly need reminding that processes and structures marked by respect for diversity and geared to multilateral decision-making may arguably take longer to reach results. True also, accommodation and compromise typically produce sub-optimal solutions which, for that very reason, might temporarily suffer from some efficiency deficit. However, what they lack in terms of short-term effectiveness, they more than compensate with gains in broad acceptance, sustained legitimation and durability. Because they rest on consensus, they lead to *win-win* situations. In the subtle age-long dialectic between formal structures and processes, on the one hand and the human leadership factor on the other, sometimes one set of concerns tends to prevail, but often also the other. This immanent discourse, which shapes our institutions and policies in action, has always been impacted by the pervasive influence of values, ideologies and belief systems, which critically affect behaviours in organizations -national and international.

Contrary to belief in the Idea of Progress, whose origins go back two centuries or longer⁴, the world appears to go through a cyclical development of theories and values. These peak and then decline yielding to “new” beliefs, which often are no more than re-statements of old doctrines. Indeed, we often veer from one extreme to another: from optimism to pessimism; from the unbridled quest for power combined with callous indifference for the plight of the bulk of humanity, to the advocacy of human rights⁵ among the goals and principles enshrined in the Declaration of the Millennium

Assembly⁶. Within our own lifetime, a century at the most, the world at large has moved from *laissez-faire* to centralism and, back from *dirigisme*, to the glorification of privatization and the high-tide of rhetoric against the State and government. Perhaps no less surprising, even disturbing, is the continuing shift from the ideals of reason and “*civitas humana*”, which we owe to the Enlightenment, to new forms of sectarianism, religious fundamentalism and national exclusiveness. In particular, this trend does not bode well for the future. It pits one belief system and one rhetorical pitch against another extreme, but renders meaningful dialogue between them highly unlikely. Rather, it sets the stage and builds the preconditions for wars, crusades and terror.

Dogmatism, fundamentalism and unidimensional thinking undermine the very basis of multilateral governance, which is made up of tolerance, cooperation, acceptance of diversity and the quest for consensus. The remarkable accomplishments of the decades that followed the conclusion of hostilities after the Second World War are a living testimony to the value of these foundations which underpinned the establishment and rapid progress made by the United Nations, in spite of the constraints imposed by the Cold War. The core of the values enshrined in both the U.N. Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁷ was forcefully defended by President Harry Truman at the San Francisco Conference. There the President reminded his compatriots, as well as the rest of the world, that “no matter how great our strength ... we must deny ourselves the licence to do as we please ... This is the price each nation will have to pay for world peace ... Unless we pay that price, no organization for world peace can accomplish its purpose. And what a reasonable price that is!”⁸.

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Indeed! One is tempted to say. But had we forgotten the value of restraint and moderation in the conduct of public affairs, global affairs in particular, the many lessons of history are always there reminding us that, as in the classical tragedies, *nemesis* follows *hubris* with surprising speed and certainty. It is wise to study history and re-learn its useful lessons, as the World is poised to explore alternative scenarios for remoulding the architecture for multilateral governance. There can be little doubt that changes must be made. The post-war international system which, in 1945, opened the way “for globalization both to emerge and to flourish”⁹ is becoming out of date. Designed in 1945 by the victorious Powers, or arguably earlier still, it still takes little cognizance on “new facts on the grounds”. Many new regional clusters have come to the fore and many new actors and players, including non-state actors demand the right to be heard, adding to the polyphony which some find disconcerting.

Under these circumstances building the *structures* and *cultures* for meaningful debate, showing progress in addressing the complex global challenges raised at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations¹⁰ represent a daunting task which faces the present and upcoming generations of leaders world wide. There can be no denying the legitimate diversity of cultures, ideologies, points of view and varying interests that will need to be



heeded in building a consensus. Likewise, the high disparities in wealth and opportunities must not be overlooked. There is reason to believe that failure to make progress with this important task, in recent years and months may be attributed largely to preconceived ideas and what may be described as the impatience of the few with the presumed nescience of the many.

Manifestly, the gulf that divides the affluent twenty per cent from the bulk of the world's population¹¹ is also a yawning gap in mutual understanding and genuine communication between the two. Increasingly, the quest for compromise is thwarted by mounting suspicion, prejudice and righteous indignation on both sides. Accommodation and compromise have suffered from one best way (*my way*) "one size fits all" approaches, which seem to take for granted that wisdom is vouchsafed to only a chosen few; small elites of *cognoscenti* with knowledge and capacity, indeed an obligation, to lead the rest of the world against its better judgement. Leadership *is* important, but seeking to reform and recreate the world in the leader's own image and likeness or according to his vision is not a hopeful start for the world of the 21st century.

Much has been made of "leaders" and the concepts of "vision" and "mission", in academic circles and politics alike. We often tend to forget that these were bandied about and leaders glorified with catastrophic consequences on many past occasions during the twentieth century, as well as prior times. We need to revisit these concepts and arguably to think of our leaders not as "the Man on Horseback"; as superhuman heroes guiding their "troops" to battle. Instead we may consider the leaders as mentors and planners and as persons of integrity, who win the trust of people because they respect its verdict. Arguably, we'd do well to value less the orator – and demagogue – and more the one who *listens* and *finds a common ground*. These are attributes in need, but not in high demand. Prospecting for such attributes and later complementing them with knowledge, skills and competencies, which make them operational and bring them to service of the public good, should arguably be the essence of Human Resources Development for multilateral governance.

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3. THE CENTRALITY OF THE HUMAN FACTOR

Whether we speak of governance or making progress in reaching the Millennium Goals, the human factor globally is generally understood to hold the key to success. Concepts like *social capital* and *human resources development* have been developed recently precisely on this account. Comparative studies have shown the beneficial impact of investing in human resources whether through public school and social welfare programmes or simply through sound management in the workplace. They also demonstrate the untoward effects of generalized neglect in these very critical areas, with poverty, inequality and *anomie* as prime results of this failure.¹² It should be emphasized

that, to address these issues, we need institutional changes, which will reinforce the structures and overhaul the processes of consultation, problem-solving and decision-making, while also building up a cadre of professionals able to help the above come to life. The necessary technology to make these developments possible - and multilateral governance an attainable goal - is to a large extent available. Indeed, one could affirm that the hurdles on the path towards a better world are neither of a technical nor even a cognitive nature, but that they rather lie in the realms of competence, emotional maturity, the prevailing management culture and political will. In the last analysis, progress hinges on the human factor and human resources development.

Accordingly, it is certain that we shall not make headway in the desired direction unless we address the needs, the role, potential and limits of the *human factor* in *multilateral governance*. Much has been said and written about the human factor since the beginning of time. We use the expression “*factor*” to imply that the human resources invested in a project and used in a work situation *are those that make the difference*. Indeed, it is commonly accepted that of all major factors in a productive process, the human factor is the one that carries the greatest relative weight. In the words of Rensis Likert, from one of the classics of literature:

“All activities of any expertise are initiated and determined by the persons who make up the institution. Plants, office computers, automated equipment, and all else that a modern firm uses are unproductive except for human effort and direction. Human beings design or order the equipment; they decide where and how to use computers; they modernise or fail to modernise the technology employed; they secure the capital needed and decide on the accounting and fiscal procedures to be used. Every aspect of a firm’s activities is determined by the competence, motivation, and general effectiveness of its human organization. Of all the tasks of management, managing the human component is the central and most important task, because all else depends upon how well it is done¹³”.

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So what do we understand by *Human Factor*? What specific contribution(s) are we led to expect and what attributes, what values spring to mind when that expression is used? We surely are making reference to the resources of knowledge and skills, experience, expertise and personality traits that individuals bring to the workplace, to decision-taking processes and policy analysis and to the production of outputs. It is also commonly accepted that these attributes will weigh significantly on the nature of the outcome and the quality of the result. The quality of these inputs is those that *make the difference*, yet this is mostly a *function* of the nature of the system or the systems in place. Whether we speak of health, education or justice, policy-making and administration, it is the ways of working of the institutional framework that determine



the quality of outcomes. Maintaining and improving this institutional framework – like oiling a machine – must be viewed as essential components of good governance. They certainly condition performance at the work place and, for that matter, the yield that countries may expect from efforts and investments in human resources development.

It has been rightly stated, with reference to governance, that no country or region may aspire to be a better public service than the quality and performance of its educational system¹⁴. Precisely on this account, investing in the improvement of public education has recently become a top priority world-wide. Already eight years ago at the UNESCO *World Conference on Higher Education*, participating governments adopted a *Declaration* calling for programmes and policies which both prepare young people for jobs in the global economy and help create conditions which favour democracy, equality, participative governance, respect for diversity and pluralism. In 2005, moreover, UNESCO proposed some guidelines towards building a knowledge society world-wide¹⁵.

The forceful stress on *pluralism* in the UNESCO document merits our special attention, because it was made in the context of democratic governance. This needs to be remembered, not merely on account of the nefarious outcomes of public sector reforms which, in the 1990s, reflected the one-dimensional thinking and *one size fits all solutions* of the New Public Management, but principally in light of the very nature of multilateral governance. Much has been made of the need to raise efficiency in multilateral agencies.

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However, efficiency, economy and effectiveness can neither be pursued nor secured in the long term at the expense of ownership, integrity, transparency and accountability. We need to be reminded that, glamoured but neglected, these very important attributes of what we call good governance condition *public trust*. They rest on civic involvement in the running of public affairs, but also a duly empowered professional officialdom.

4. THE VERY IMPORTANT ROLE OF PUBLIC SERVICE ELITES

Public service systems vary. Indeed they vary widely. Bureaucracy may take a number of different forms but, since Max Weber's days, is commonly regarded as truly a global phenomenon¹⁶. From China to the West and over many centuries, global literature has served as a rich source of insights on the character, predicament, lifestyles and contributions of a universally noticed although not invariably liked, let alone respected profession. We call them "public servants". In status, role and functions, they differ very widely. The Mandarins of China¹⁷ and, in our days, or since the 19th century, the senior public service in Britain, France and Germany consistently enjoyed a very high prestige¹⁸. Indeed, it has been argued that in a number of countries, not only of Western

Europe but also of Asia, notably Japan, Thailand, India and Pakistan, the senior public service represents an elite.

The concept of elites has lost some of the appeal which, until very recently, it has exerted in Europe, but which in the US it probably never had. The average American reader may find the concept quaint, possibly disconcerting, but certainly worth exploring. In it, he may detect more relevance and congruence with the American experience than arguably suspected at first glance. Administrative elites, though constituted variously in different national contexts, exercise a significant influence, which needs to be acknowledged and understood. The making of the elites is deeply rooted in the political culture and historical experience of the different countries concerned. Running through this broad range of influences, one detects the force of values and a model deeply embedded into the nature of the educational system, ingrained legal traditions, socio-political movements, prevailing ideologies and social structures. How else can one explain the remarkable resilience and striking continuity in the role and composition of the elites in Europe -- though not only on that continent -- in the midst of a sea change?

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Mostly fashioned in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the model bears the marks of 18th century thought and the values of the Enlightenment¹⁹. It reflected emerging concerns to protect the State and citizen from corruption, arbitrariness and the abuse of power; to establish preconditions for the rule of law and due process and to secure the growing but still unformed new systems of democratic governance from particularistic and other harmful pressures. The bureaucratic model seemed to answer these concerns. It provided for a cadre of permanent officials recruited and promoted solely on the basis of merit. It was hypothesized that individual merit could be precisely assessed. It was further believed that a tenured non-political career service provided guarantees not only of continuity, consistency and predictability, but also of integrity and expertise.

Even in the 18th century, the concept that society would be better served in this manner was certainly not new. What was fairly new, however, was the equation of merit with knowledge, learning and virtue and the meaning invested in knowledge. Given the certainty of knowledge and the objectivity of facts, the bureaucratic model appeared to satisfy the essential preconditions for value-maximizing, rational choices or, at least, to make available some of the basic tools for taking such decisions. It placed at the disposal of the decision-maker an organizational structure, a set of rules and procedures, a system of recruitment and a professional ethic, which were best calculated to give him full control of all the relevant data. The underlying assumption – that public administration was basically a technique and a disinterested neutral instrumentality – encouraged the belief that, given sound techniques and duly fashioned tools, the right decisions would follow²⁰.



5. MERIT AND NEUTRAL COMPETENCE

It might indeed be argued that this “bureaucratic” model which, for a hundred years after the 1850s, exerted a powerful influence on government reform world-wide, began by re-defining the concepts of elite and social order itself. It did so by highlighting the paramount significance of knowledge, merit and reason, where lineage and tradition, ethnic or social origin, and military valour hitherto reigned supreme. As Graham Wallas saw it, writing on British government in the early twentieth century, the model introduced personal merit and knowledge as an alternative source of “political authority”. He hailed the merit system as “the one great invention of nineteenth century England and discerned in its establishment the catalytic influence of a new approach to government. Graham Wallas wrote:

“The conception was gaining ground that it is upon serious and continued thought and not upon opinion that the power to carry out our purposes, whether in politics or elsewhere, must ultimately depend”²¹.

Have we since lost our innocence? However that may be, there can be little doubt that the intervening period through the mid-nineteen-seventies, witnessed, with the high-tide of the *merit-knowledge* principle, a sea change in the fields of public education, the role and organization of the great professions and the rise of the administrative state. These were no mean accomplishments and they were complemented with the emergence of the structures of international governance, notably after the end of the First and Second World Wars. Fashioned between the Wars, with some definitive touches in the decade of the 1940s, the International Secretariat was a product of this period, or rather the aspirations which, in spite of disappointments and some momentous failures, this era has brought forth.

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The principles which governed most public service reform in the first half of the century were also those that fashioned the structures and personnel policies of the International Secretariat²². These principles, in fact, were embodied in the Articles 100 and 101 of the Charter. Explicitly, the latter established *merit as a guide* in “the determination of the condition of service. “The latter defined “merit” as “securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.” The former, for its part, underscored and consecrated “the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff”; a phrase which resonates like re-statement of the concept of public service neutrality or neutral competence in the international context. International recruitment and tenured career development of the professional staff were logical corollaries of this approach.

There can be no denying that this century-old model has lately lost its shine. It was the subject of criticism, albeit only intermittently, from the 1930s onwards for purportedly not yielding all that it promised to offer, but mostly on account of the alleged biases of its recruitment system. More recently, however, from the 1980s onwards, the very fundamentals of the public service profession and of the merit principle have come under attack.

The value of “neutral competence” has been severely questioned; the scope of independent professional advice in the realm of policy-making also tacitly downgraded. Onslaughts against “bureaucracy” took aim against “big government” and the “administrative state”, but ultimately extended to the entire public sector, rejecting the idiosyncrasy, autonomy and role of the public service itself. The calls for *marketization* and for *privatization* did not so much portend reduction of the sphere of government activity, as conversion of the government and of the public service to private sector ways.

6. THE NPM REFORMS AND PUBLIC SERVICE PROFESSIONALISM

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The ascendancy of the movement known as New Public Management has carried in its trail de-emphasis of differences between business management and public administration but also, most importantly, resurrection, under a different form, of the Wilsonian dichotomy between administration and politics. In several countries worldwide recourse to private consultants and the overall propensity to *outsourcing* has presaged a decline in the traditional role of senior public servants as policy advisers. The relative importance of *institutional memory* and of substantive knowledge has correspondingly dropped in the hierarchy of values. The senior public servants have been “reinvented”, accordingly, as “resource” or programme managers whose first and foremost duty was to “*deliver results*”.

“Deliver, deliver, deliver” became the new “*mot d’ordre*”²³. In country after country, and at the international as well as the national levels, this carried in its trail the drastic overhaul of public personnel practices, but also re-definition of the required profile and corresponding *competencies*. “Letting the managers manage” has often carried with it – in practice, at any rate – doing away with safeguards protecting subordinate staff and attenuating controls on managers’ discretion. Consistent with these trends has been the rediscovery of in-service training as “*life-long learning*”. Valuable in itself, this concept has occasioned the great commercial development of “packaged training” for export, on the premise that “*one size fits all*”. Techniques and “*tools*” have been stressed, some staple management skills – especially interpersonal and communication skills – strongly emphasized and “resource mobilization” also stressed in the framework of budgeting and finance. By contrast, in-depth knowledge, sharp analytical skills,



critical judgement and ethics, required by senior managers and policy advisers, may have received short shrift, given the overall tendencies in the new scheme of things, recourse to short-term experts and, arguably some in countries, politicization of the upper echelon of the service.

It comes as no surprise that this new pattern of management spread far and wide affecting public services – both national and international – and shifting the course of reform in similar directions, in spite of major differences among organizations. In theory, the pressure came mostly from one source: the scarcity of resources. The rhetoric highlighted the quest of the 3Es (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) and “client-satisfaction” as the overarching goals. The practice on the ground, on the other hand, presented a different picture. It may be safely affirmed that the reforms pursued during the eighties and nineties of this past century, represented an attempt to arrest and to reverse a powerful long-term trend towards the attenuation of income and other disparities, in order to secure the basic preconditions for democratic governance under the rule of law.

Decolonization, the administrative state and the proliferation of international agencies, both in the U.N. system and beyond, were facets of this movement, which posited the primacy of human rights and welfare, peace, security and development and the comity of nations as overarching goals towards a better world.

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One of the principal outcomes of this secular trend has been the emergence and growth of a profession of government and with it the evolution of public administration and public law as major autonomous disciplines. These developments have been uneven in different parts of the world. In the ensuing tug-of-war between political pressures and professional considerations, sometimes the one but also sometimes the other enjoyed the upper hand. Since the early 1980s, in particular, the forces in the direction of politicization and marketization have reasserted themselves.

This is especially true of the United States²⁴, but even international organizations have not altogether escaped from pressures to “reform” in this direction. Plainly the forces at work are mostly *ideological*. However, political forces have made a powerful comeback, trying hard to re-possess a field which, for a time, had largely moved outside their sphere of influence and control. In all too many cases, the upshot of this tendency has been a sad return to clientelist practices, with rampant corruption and jobbery.

For international agencies, this trend, if allowed to continue, poses significant threats, because it goes to the heart of multilateral governance. Among the many differences that mark international agencies apart from their national counterparts, the lack of a cohesive, relatively homogeneous political superstructure stands out.

In the absence of the type of unified direction and control that a one-party government or president can give, the need for the consistency and continuity fostered by a cohesive body of competent high-level career officials, imbued with professional standards and a strong *esprit de corps*, represents a pressing challenge of multilateral governance for the 21st century. More than ever before in the past, international organizations need a professional corps of people dedicated to the global common weal, with knowledge and capacities commensurate to the task of designing global answers for the complex intractable problems which confront the world as a whole.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT FOR MULTILATERAL GOVERNANCE

To build this professional corps, we have no need to reinvent the wheel. The requisite accoutrements of a career structure for this high-level group may be already in place, but ought to be revamped, fine-tuned and reinforced. We are talking, in effect, of a professional elite. True, the concept of elites does not go down well together with democratic governance and some, on this side of the Atlantic, many find it disconcerting. Still, for the special needs of multilateral governance we ought to explore it further. We are talking of a group, a mere few thousands strong, which must be representative not only of some two hundred nation-states dividing the world, but also of the diversity of cultures, belief systems and socio-economic conditions which make up the totality of the human experience.

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Management of *diversity* is seen as one of the keys to the success of this project. *Tenure* is certainly another given the critical need for commitment, continuity, professional integrity and solid neutral competence. However, to combat stagnation and complacency that often come with tenure, career paths and human resources development for this small group of people need to be characterized by periodic *movement*, that is to say mobility with *motivation* and *merit*. This is also a sure way to fend off the dangers of closure, parochialism and fundamentalism. This is a complex challenge to which educational systems provide a partial response. We know from past experience that even the best education cannot secure the needed beneficent outcomes without a proper follow-up. This must come in two forms:

- Career development policies, which deepen people's knowledge, and broaden their horizons, refine high-level skills and strengthen their commitment to serve the public good; and,
- Training as life-long learning which forms part of these policies in action.



The merits of *mobility* were touched upon already²⁵. It ought to include the transfer from national to regional to global organizations but equally the transfer of people from the business to the political spheres; or *vice versa*. This has been common practice in certain Western countries, together with exchanges between the academic community and business or politics. In stating that this practice ought to be spread invites us to reflect on the needed preconditions which probably only exist in a limited number of countries. The call for more pro-active career development programmes, more global in their scope, springs from the realization that we cannot entrust the global common weal to a small elite of nationals of a few, mostly prosperous developed States. The need to win the *trust* of all the world's population in this new corps of officers; and the need to build credibility for these fledgling institutions demand that we seek out existing talent beyond known catchment areas. We need to cast our nets wider than in the past, but more than anything else, create the institutional framework which will *recruit, retain, develop* and *motivate* competent men and women putting their skills effectively in the service of the global public interest.

Training as life-long learning plainly forms an integral part of *human resources development*, which must be aligned with policies and career paths intended to bring out the best that people can offer. As a critical component of all capacity-building, it ought to target the enhancement of the full range of attributes and competencies needed in the discharge of duties whether at the national, the regional or the inter-regional levels. These clearly include:

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- Knowledge, both general and specialized;
- Skills, both cognitive and interpersonal; and,
- Attitudes and behaviours conducive to professionalism and winning public trust.

8. THE PRIMACY OF KNOWLEDGE AND ETHICS

As has already been mentioned, training in recent years, has focused on developing the skills required by managers at various authority levels, with a view to their greater efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, such skills have included:

- Information and technology management;
- Human Resources Management;
- Budgeting and finance; and,
- Contracts and Programme management.

Conflict management together with inter-personal skills have also been addressed. By contrast, knowledge and ethics have not so far received the attention they deserve. In

spite of much lip service, which has been paid to virtue and denunciations of evil²⁶, ethics courses have been limited, for the most part, to familiarization of employees with the contents of ubiquitous codes of conduct, with limited effectiveness overall.

Knowledge has been neglected, general knowledge especially, in spite of the widely acknowledged incontrovertible fact that mastery of a field cannot be taken for granted. It underpins professionalism, but needs “refresher” courses which bring it up-to-date and reinforce it periodically. General knowledge and ethics arguably go together, considering that ethics is after all the sum and essence of human experience through centuries of learning and discourse.

Whether, as argued earlier, this signal depreciation of general knowledge and ethics is traceable to the conviction that senior public servants are first and foremost managers and that substantive issues are properly the tasks of policy advisers and of ad hoc consultants, the upshot was to focus in-service training mostly to management concerns, the 3Es, in particular.

To conclude this presentation, let me reiterate Professor Dror’s injunction to pay greater attention to the neglected claims of solid in-depth knowledge for senior public servants. In his seminal book, *The Capacity to Govern*²⁷, Dror not only made the case for improving our capacities in this regard but also identified the principal areas of focus of such an in-depth learning. He stressed “thinking in history”, but more than that has argued that knowledge and virtue are linked. As we well know, this premise goes back in time to Plato and Aristotle – arguably also to Mencius and Confucius.

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Debate on what they taught us and statecraft at large have amply demonstrated the truth of a remark that “*government on the cheap can cost a country a lot.*” *A fortiori* this applies to global governance. In light of all the challenges that face our world to-day, we absolutely need to dedicate more time and more resources to educating our masters.

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- ² See *New York Times* Friday September 15, 2006, A1, & Monday, September 25, 2006, A10 & A20 & A25.
- ³ The names and range of views of the foremost ideologues of the neo-conservative movement can be found in the 60th Anniversary Issue of *Commentary* in a *Symposium* on “Defending Freedom”. See *Commentary* Vol 120, No 4, pp. 21-76.
- ⁴ See Nisbet R. (1993) *History of the Idea of Progress*, new edition, Brunswick, N.J. Transaction Books.
- ⁵ See Rawls, John (1999) *The Law of the Peoples* Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press.

⁶ A/RES/55/2 dated 18 September 2000, See also Roadmap Towards the Implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration E/56/326, 6 September 2001.

⁷ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* General Assembly Resolution 217(111) 10 December 1948.

⁸ Quoted by Stephen Schlesinger in “An Annoying, Necessary Friend ...” in *Los Angeles Times*, January 31, 2005, Home Edition.

⁹ Kofi Annan (2000): “*We the Peoples: the Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*”, New York, United Nations.

¹⁰ A/RES/55/2 (19 September 2000) and A/56/326 (6 September 2001).

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40 ¹³ Rensis Likert, *The Human Organization*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York 1967, p.1

¹⁴ Pichardo Pagaza, Ignacio: Unpublished paper prepared for the International Conference of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) in Monterrey, Mexico 17-21 July 2006.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See Bendix, R. (1977) *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, Che XIII esp; Pichardo Pagaza, Ignacio (2004) *Modernizacion Administrativa Propuestas para una reforma inaplazable*, Mexico, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico.

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