

Abstract

Bureaucratic politics - defined here as efforts to influence the policies or behaviour of other organizations - represent a small but significant proportion of the activities of managers. This study reviews more than 119 such efforts among 1,800 management events that took place in 9 southern African countries in August, 1984. Unlike the large-scale case studies of bureaucratic politics that provide much of the information available on the subject to American students of organization theory, these mini-cases permit the analyst to identify "common" or "ordinary" issues of bureaucratic politics, to study the tactics the "players" followed, and even to compare their effectiveness in terms of resolving the issues involved. The most successful tactic employed in these events was appeal to higher authority or the application of authority ("brute force"). The use of compromise was rare in these strongly hierarchic settings. Since most of the issues involved in these events concerned funding, personnel resources, and jurisdiction, perhaps it is not surprising that hierarchical solutions were more common than horizontal negotiations. The absence of negotiations over issues of policy or the public interest provides a somewhat disturbing but not highly surprising note. On the brighter side, the events reveal very little evidence of impropriety: the occasions when managers showed disappointment over the outcome of their efforts were much more frequently associated with incompetence than with corruption or venality. Most organization theorists would doubtless agree that incompetence is easier to deal with than corruption.

Bureaucratic Politics in Southern Africa

by John D. Montgomery

Most of what academics know about "bureaucratic politics" comes from large-scale case studies that tell us why large organizations made big mistakes: why, for example, the American military was unable to take advantage of intelligence information warning of an attack on Pearl Harbor; why missiles were not withdrawn from Turkey in accordance with a presidential order; or even why individual members of a bureaucratic organization were denied official recognition for their achievements.¹ The details of these events, their frequency, and their general significance - how organizations negotiate with each other over turf, how individuals protect their perquisites, which games bureaucrats play successfully and which are filled with risk, and just when substantive issues have to give way to procedural concerns - are of less interest to students of administration than are their consequences. But these familiar consequences are probably exaggerated as general descriptions of how bureaucrats behave. Readers of case studies of bureaucratic politics may be forgiven for a tendency to apply Murphy's Law to all the work of large organizations, since they have no basis for appraising their importance in the context of other problems of government. This article takes the opposite tack, for the moment ignoring consequences in order to examine in detail the kinds of activities managers perform when they are engaging in bureaucratic politics. It offers no judgment as to their costs in terms of national goals.²

The activities on which this analysis is based were recorded during the summer of 1984, when nine countries in Southern Africa (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, cooperated as a group known as the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference or SADCC), in authorizing

a large-scale study of management in order to identify training needs and other means of improving performance. The managers who collaborated in the research included members not only of the public and private sectors but also of intermediate hybrids such as parastatal organizations, public enterprises, or statutory corporations.³ As one means of appraising administrative performance in the region, the study team gathered reports of management events that displayed either "effective" or "ineffective" behavior on the part of these administrators. Each such incident, of which there were more than 1800, was later coded to identify training needs and performance characteristics that might lead to improved management.⁴ One such characteristic was bureaucratic politics.⁵

The total sample yielded 119 events that might be described as instances of bureaucratic politics - not a very large proportion of events characterizing the lives of these managers. All of these events involved efforts to influence organizational behavior or policy as they affected other organizations.⁶ These events were coded to distinguish between the "process" involved (such as appeals to higher authority to resolve an interorganizational conflict, as contrasted with direct negotiations, the use of intimidation, coercion, or positive incentives, or the surrender of a desired resource) and the "issue" that gave rise to the event (personnel matters, financial and other resource questions, problems of authority or jurisdiction, the performance of one of the organizations involved, questions of policy, and non-organizational or unofficial matters). The events were also examined separately for "improper behavior," to check on the validity of the common suspicion that bureaucratic politics are somehow reprehensible.

Bureaucratic Politics as a Process.

The events coded as bureaucratic politics describe, in the main, direct negotiations, uncomplicated by devious dodges or personal ploys. Of the 119 events coded as involving bureaucratic politics, 46 of them (39 percent) were of this order, conducted with full consciousness of interorganizational issues and in an effort to deal with them directly. Some of these negotiations were carried out successfully, some not, and they involved both trivial and important matters. But there seemed nothing surreptitious or dubious about them. Two examples appears below (the numbers in parentheses refer to the serial number in the data base):

◦The work of our section was criticized by another department. The manager of that department and I carried out a joint inspection during which it transpired that my subordinate did all the computations correctly and the mistake was in his department. (404)

◦A couple of years ago there was a dispute between our ministry of industry and the ministry of transport as to who should be in charge of the assembly and manufacture of vehicles. I prepared a paper outlining our case which later formed the basis for our successful negotiations. (1230)

Some situations permitted negotiations that circumvented regulations that would have produced problems for all concerned:

◦I consulted the under secretary about the appointment of retired colleague. I told him that we should inform the personnel commission that he was retired; he advised me to obtain approval for the appointment first, and then inform the commission. It worked; if we had put the two together the request would have been denied. (1733)

Not all situations were resolved to everyone's satisfaction, to be sure:

◦This year's foreign exchange allocations for the industrial sector were cut much more than those for the commerce sector though the latter is not a

foreign exchange earner. In spite of our arguing the case effectively, the finance ministry did not budge. (1233)

Some situations seemed to call for the exercise of what in bureaucratic politics passes for "brute force." There were 28 such cases (24 percent of the total), ranging from the trivial to the unimportant (apparently the sheer use of authority does not resolve important issues very often in these countries):

•My boss wanted to implement a project that was not included in the development plan. Since we had already given priority to established projects, I could not give higher priority to the boss's new one. I had to fit it in by giving the excuse that one of the projects included in the plan was delayed. (1282)

•A department head was pressing me to send a member of his staff abroad under a fellowship, but she was not as well qualified as two other candidates, and in fact did not even meet the minimum requirements. He even went to the trouble of getting his minister to call my office and then put pressure on my superior. (103)

•Though I scheduled transportation well in advance of my meeting, the fleet control officer authorized the vehicle to some one who had not scheduled its use. (276)

•When my PS went abroad I was appointed the acting PS. When, as per the normal practice, I wanted to operate from his room, his secretary would not allow me. But I insisted and had my way. (1729)

Appeals to higher authority provided the basis of another 15 instances of bureaucratic politics (13 percent of the total). Like the "brute force" examples, the events show little evidence of negotiations or of compromise solutions:

•A South African company wanted to build some silos here that were not beneficial to the country, and managed to get approval by going through higher authorities in the Ministry of Agriculture. (1545)

- I took a proposal to the Finance Ministry, fully justified by facts and figures, for a loan for a road service...The officer flatly refused...I then went straight to the Finance Minister and got the loan sanctioned. (1724)
- When I was PS (Finance) I encountered a controversy over the implementation of a policy. I briefed the President and convinced him that my position was correct and the Ministry of Agriculture was wrong. (2025)
- I led a delegation abroad to negotiate a loan. The deputy minister complained that I had gone without permission. I collected information to justify the necessity of my trip and submitted it to the Cabinet Minister. Things calmed down ultimately. (1516)

In only seven cases were bureaucratic controversies resolved by surrender of a position taken earlier, in the face of objections from another party:

- A policy proposal I wrote and fully expected to promote successfully with my superiors failed at the last minute, to my surprise. (17)
- We were supposed to carry out a joint activity with another ministry. But they just would not respond at all and we could not proceed with it. (658)

Four instances of confrontation were reported, including these two:

- I was asked to handle an important matter. The individual kept nagging; so I intentionally sent him a confusing message which ultimately led to unnecessary friction and ill feeling. (398)
- A doctor returning from abroad asked for assigned housing, but was refused. He came to me and told me that he had been promised a house on his return, and believing him, I allotted him a house. Later I learned he had lied to me and made him vacate the house. (2010)

As might be expected, there were a fair number of incidents involving bureaucratic politics - 19 - in which the processes involved were unspecified or unclear. One event stated that the boss declined to deal with field problems, leaving his subordinate

"embarrassed at the things he had to resort to" in solving them (129); another described difficulties in getting money because the Finance Ministry did not understand their problem (826); one mentioned an instance of one-upmanship on the part of a colleague in pretending to authority he did not possess (1746); several described personal characteristics on the part of colleagues that appeared to interfere with smooth operations; and others stated events in such a way as to leave the processes obscure. Such vagueness should not be surprising, since this study was not designed to investigate such sensitive matters.

There are too few instances in the various categories to draw firm conclusions about the relative effectiveness of these processes. But it is possible to observe that among the instances where the problem was resolved (17, or 14 percent of the total), appeals to higher authority were the processes most likely to be involved (8 times when they occurred, the problem was resolved; in only one case was it left hanging). The invocation of what we have called "brute force" worked in the sense of producing a solution 10 times, but left the issue unresolved 11 times (although another 7 instances could not be classified). Somewhat surprisingly, the outcomes of direct negotiations were often disappointing: from the evidence presented in the descriptions of the events, only 6 situations were resolved in that manner. Judgments about the relative success of these processes should remain tentative, however: even among this number of incidents, 17 were apparently unresolved and 23 more could not readily coded as either successes or failures. Conclusions about the other processes employed were still more ambiguous. Even so, unfortunately for students of administration who believe in the advantages of decentralized decision-making, it would appear that in Southern Africa at least, appeal to higher authority is a better bet for obtaining a resolution of bureaucratic conflicts than are negotiations or attempts to tough it out.

Issues in Bureaucratic Politics.

What do bureaucrats wrangle over? These examples seem familiar enough to transcend their origins in Southern Africa. No one will be surprised to discover that the issues are money, turf, other bureaucrats, and policy. What may be surprising is relative frequency of management events that deal with these issues..

Funding is the most crucial subject matter in these bureaucratic events: 29 incidents involved money matters. The examples could have occurred anywhere:

- I wrote a memo to the accounts department asking them to make a payment.

They refused, saying I had misinterpreted the rules, and I appealed to the Minister of Manpower Development to get the payment made. (564)

- It took a year after the approval by the donor to get the money for a project through bureaucratic channels. (1261)

- We were charged with the task of collecting money from all the departments for damages caused by their vehicles. Those of the Defense Department frequently are at fault, but they do not bother to pay the accounts due. (1347)

Turf - or, more elegantly, issues of jurisdiction - was the occasion for 25 events involving bureaucratic politics. Most of these situations involved personal relationships, though one or two hinged on organizational matters:

- When I gave instructions to my subordinates, they sometimes shelved them to work first on my superior's instructions, causing delay and frustrations. (908)

- I had written a letter asking an organization to hire a nurse. My supervisor told me that was not part of my work. When I explained that I had been doing it for seven years, and showed that the function appeared in my job description, he backed off, but it was a bitter pill to swallow. (E06)

- My predecessor in this job thought he knew more about it than I do even though several new divisions have been added. He also suggested that I should report to him, though we are of the same rank. (1335)

•A colleague in the old Ministry of Trade resisted the creation of a new Ministry of Industry and Trade. He did not see the need to bring workers into one ministry. (538)

There were 21 instances in which bureaucratic politics involved performance by other organizations that was considered substandard and thus injured prospects for success in ventures that were supposedly interdependent. It is noteworthy that such complaints are nearly always directed at other organizations: it hardly ever seems to be one's own unit that is at fault:

•The work of our section was criticized by another department. The manager of that department and I carried out a joint inspection, during which it turned out that we had done all the computations correctly and the mistake was in his department. (404)

•One manager did not cooperate in the building of the Independence Pavillion, which delayed completion of the project. (539)

•The ministry failed to produce materials we needed for the adult literacy campaign. (825)

•While we were preparing for the pledging conference, I asked the Chief Mining Engineer about the status of our preparations, and he assured me everything was fine. But at the meeting it turned out he had not consulted all parties and our brief was inadequate. (1754)

In about the same number of instances (21) central personnel procedures or assignments were in contention. The examples presented in this study (with the possible exception of the first) seem typical of the genre, wherever found:

•My boss overruled my employment recommendations because of politics and seniority. He said I should employ everybody he directed irrespective of qualifications or the organization's aims or procedures and targets. (193)

•My superior wrote a letter requesting transfer of an employee and promised him many things that were against the policy of the company. (380)

•The post of controller was downgraded when my predecessor, afraid of competition and seeking to make the post unattractive to other potential candidates, asked that it be downgraded. Now morale is low because prospects for upward mobility are not good. (1233)

Policy issues were not as valent as we had expected - there were only 18 instances when substantive matters were at stake. But it is especially significant that in nearly all cases, it was the *absence of concern* over policy that produced the incident:

•A co-worker wrote a report deliberately giving false information to please the addressee. He ought to take a stand on what he thinks is correct. (655)

•A colleague of mine and I had agreed on a particular course of action. When implementation problems arose, he dissociated himself from the original decision. (1747)

•One of my superiors yielded to political pressure to hand out a fellowship to someone who really did not deserve it. She had already received one fellowship but had not used it for any public benefit. In granting this fellowship, on the basis of a direct order, I felt I was misusing a public resource. (105)

•A person being kept in custody was released as soon as some one from another organization with a high level of authority ordered his release. (211)

Which kinds of issues do bureaucratic politics resolve best? Strangely enough, the clearest definition on that point appears to be over policy issues: in 8 cases the incident was coded as resolved (not necessarily wisely or favorably), and in 10 it was unresolved or not classifiable. On financial issues, the bureaucrats did poorly: only 4 were resolved, 10 unresolved, and 15 uncoded. In matters of personnel, turf, and the

performance of other organizations, the incidents showed that some resolution had come about in only about a fifth of the cases.

The Issue of Propriety.

Since laymen often think of "bureaucratic politics" as a form of deviation from rationality or from the public interest, it may be useful to subject these events to close scrutiny for evidence of fraud or corruption, ignorance, negligence or uncooperativeness, or lack of ability that might characterize these apparently normal conflict situations. All of these forms of behavior were revealed in these instances, not necessarily in the expected order of intensity or frequency.

By far the largest number of behavioral qualities coded in these events were those of sheer incapacity- a total of 60 instances, or half of the total. These behaviors explain some resentment and much concern over the operations of the system, but they do not reveal actual improprieties, as these examples (as well as some already cited) make clear:

- I attended a client in the best way I knew. But he went to my supervisor and said my actions were nonsense. So he delegated the case to a colleague who handled it in a way I can prove was wrong. (213)
- A delayed reply from Treasury was responsible for the loss of certain training classes which were being planned for the end of the fiscal year. (953)
- Recently a junior officer from another ministry requested us to take action on a sensitive issue. I authorized the action, but later found I had done something wrong. I did not read the letter thoroughly or investigate the matter adequately. I failed to consult senior officials in other ministries. (1517)

Among the other specific types of behavior coded in this exercise, instances of corruption, fraud, and misuse of authority were the next most frequent occurrences. There were 33 instances (28 percent of the total events listed as bureaucratic politics) in this category, indeed an unsettling number. But the events themselves were trivial

and petty, for the most part. Whatever major peculations may have been taking place would obviously not be picked up in reported management events. Even so, little reassurance can be derived from examples like these:

- A road examiner favored a girl by giving her a driving licence improperly. I prepared a case for his dismissal, but my PS liked the girl and recommended no punishment. (1348)
- My boss told me one thing and wrote another. My expectations had been raised high and this disappointed me immensely...(639)
- By using personal contacts, a colleague got a scholarship out of turn. (695)
- My colleague was unwilling to hand over his duties to me because I am black. (1129)
- The draft report I prepared was circulated by my superior as his own work. (1399)
- For political reasons, a colleague of mine had me sign an apparently routine form which he was later able to use to discredit me. (1749)

There were 16 management events showing negligence or lack of cooperation on the part of colleagues sharing official responsibilities, and another three in which the latter displayed ignorance. The charge seems to be carelessness rather than malfeasance, with one exception:

- A superior informed the ministry that I had refused to go to an international conference. I had not been invited to go to any of the previous meetings; and I was reluctant to go without a proper briefing of what had gone on before. (889)
- I repeatedly asked an office for information, but they never sent it. (1046)
- A PS intercepted a government vehicle that belonged to another department but was being misused. He took possession of the vehicle and directed the driver not to go to the office any more, instead of reporting it to the department concerned.

Since bureaucratic politics involves at least the potential for controversy, perhaps it should also be reported that some of the adversarial behavior described in these events took the form of normal communications:

•There was a conflict between my Community Services Officer and the Domestic Services Mistress over the areas of their responsibility. I intervened to resolve it. (1390)

•A file was brought to me by one of the personnel officers with the recommendation that someone be dismissed for drinking on the job. But the views of the delinquent's department were not consulted. I asked the personnel officer to go back and present the case through the proper channel. (1350)

It is not possible to determine from the incidents themselves which forms of behavior produced the most satisfactory results. For if one party loses, another wins; if a situation is resolved, there is no way of showing that the outcome was happy for the participants or that the public was well served. But it does not offer much reassurance to note that corruption, even as defined here to include minor abuses of authority, was instrumental in resolving more than a third of the cases in which it appeared, while incapability left the largest number of cases unresolved or indeterminate. Minor corruption (which no doubt produces results of some sort) less of a threat to the public weal than a general incompetence that leaves the outcome of public action constantly in doubt.

Conclusion

How do "bureaucratic" politics differ from other kinds? A direct comparison is impossible because studies like this one do not exist for "normal" politics. Some speculations are in order, however. Impressionistically, I see four areas of difference between the two kinds of politics, and one basis for offering a caveat about the whole exercise.

The differences are these: First, bureaucratic actors resolve issues on the basis of personal relationships without often attempting to build structural coalitions of like-minded partners. "Politicians" need parties and coalitions; "managers" need colleagues and organizational resources. Second, the managers who engage in bureaucratic politics, at least in this sample, are not necessarily working as agents of their organizations or as originators of policies. They are more likely to be trying to solve immediate problems than to develop a constituency, and in so doing are not subject to intense public scrutiny. Responsibility is a somewhat more parochial issue in Africa than in the West: the lack of organizational coherence as a restraint on managerial operations. Managers in Africa do not often act officially as spokesmen for their organizations.⁷ There is little evidence from these events that they seek to develop a sense of institutional mission or loyalty among their colleagues and subordinates, and since their functions are derived as much from history as from legislative battles, the cohesiveness that some agencies in the West derive from legislative debate is absent. In negotiating with their counterparts in other units, managers tell it "like it is" from their personal perspective. They do not consult their colleagues or attempt to formulate organizational positions prior to engaging in bureaucratic politics. They bargain for advantage, of course, and not necessarily for personal gain, but almost always their positions involve some species of personal vindication or some special perception of national advantage.⁸

The African scene adds two other dimensions that may be unique to its own environment: when issues of turf and questions of policy arise, the response is defensive rather than proactive. Managers treat them as if they were threats to an accepted order, rather than as areas of potential expansion or as a source of innovation. The incidents involving questions of jurisdiction did not reflect the hope of expanding an organization's mission or areas of responsibility so much as of defining them. Even when matters of turf were under negotiation, they not perceived as a efforts to expand

to an existing program or authority. More likely they reflected uncertainty about the roles of two or more organizations.

Finally, when resources like goods and services are at stake, the context is scarcity. There is not much concern over their relation to their public origin or to the public interest. The sense of public interest⁹ that has developed in constitutional states in the West brought in its train an attitude toward "the commons" that distinguishes public property from that of the king's household. Civil servants in industrialized states are supposed to consider themselves custodians of public goods. This sense is only latent in Africa. Wherever the commons is considered as something belonging to the people in many of those states, traditional law and custom assign it to the tribe rather than the government.¹⁰ Arguments and negotiations over public vehicles, housing, and equipment centered about the convenience of the individual users more than about the mission of the organization to which they were assigned.

The first caveat about these distinctions derives from the fact that these examples are drawn from largely trivial, day-to-day activities and are not very much like major events from which most of our systematic knowledge of Western bureaucratic politics comes. It is possible that bureaucratic politics that are not related to crises are different from those familiar to us through the magisterial cases on which much of our teaching is based.

It is also important to recall the relatively greater autonomy enjoyed by public managers in Africa as compared with their counterparts elsewhere, largely because of the absence of countervailing political forces. Ironically, this absence of constitutional restraints or an other institutional basis for insuring accountability creates more, rather than less, uncertainty in matters of policy and public interest. There are few authoritative statements about their work on which African managers can rely to build programs and policy. There managers are left to choose among alternatives and to design missions with little guidance and only a slight chance that

an unwise decision will produce official retaliation. Managers are fairly free to take risks, but they seldom seem to do so in an adventurous way because there are so few guidelines to help them identify the public values that they might be expected to advance by so doing.

Even though factions exist within most one-party systems like those found in Africa, these processes and schisms are not sufficiently matters of public knowledge to permit managers to work intelligently within them to build coalitions. They are consequently forced to rely on Old-Boy, Old-Girl Networks and ethnic relationships in seeking partners for program support.

The major caveat I place on such speculations is remediable. Much of our present knowledge of bureaucratic politics is based on studies of large-scale crises involving political leaders and known in detail because of the diligence of scholars who believe that such meaningful case studies provide an avenue to knowledge about these kinds of decisions. Very few, if any, case studies of major decisions or events exist for the developing world. There is no third-world counterpart for our studies of intelligence failures, missile crises, or foolish weapons decisions. On the other hand, mini-cases like those on which this paper is based have not been gathered in the industrialized countries, whose scholars are not very much interested in routine administration and the career decisionmakers in our national and local governments. What most of us know about bureaucratic politics comes from the study of major political actors and big issues involving national security or high technology, not civil servants and objectionable personnel actions. Thus the comparisons suggested here have to remain impressionistic. But they seem plausible, in the context of other studies of such systems, and until better data come along, students and practitioners of administration will have to base their teaching and actions on judgments like these.

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- ¹ Roberta Wohlstetter, Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962); Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision, Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little Brown, 1971); Edwin Layton with Roger Pineau and John Costello, "And I Was There" Pearl Harbor and Midway-- Breaking the Secrets (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1986). Other major studies of bureaucratic politics include I.M. Destler, Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); Morton Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy (Washington: Brookings Inst., 1974); Richard E. Neustadt, The Swine Flu Affair: decision making on a slippery disease (Washington: U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978); Glenn D. Paige, The Korean Decision, June 24-30, 1950 (New York: Free Press, 1968); Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior 3rd edition (New York: Free Press, 1976); John Steinbruner, Cybernetic Theory of Decision (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); Harold L. Wilensky, Organizational Intelligence: Knowledge and Policy in Government and Industry (New York: Basic Books, 1967).

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- ² See John D. Montgomery, "How African Managers Serve National Goals," Comparative Politics, forthcoming, and "Life at the Apex," Journal of Developing Areas, forthcoming.
- ³ The data were gathered by an international team on which I served as project director. Other team members were Dr. Esau M. Chiviya, Zimbabwe Institute of Public Administration and Management; Professor Robert E. Klitgaard, Harvard University; Mr. Modiri J. Mbaakani, Executive Director, Botswana Employers Federation; Professor A. Gaylord Obern, University of Pittsburgh; Professor Louis A. Picard, University of Nebraska; Professor Rukudzo Murapa, University of Zimbabwe; Mr. Bhekie R. Diamini, Institute of Development Management, Swaziland; Dr. Rogerio F.S. Pinto, Organization of American States; and Mr. M. J. Ziyane, Swaziland Institute of Management and Public Administration. This team worked on behalf of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference under a contract between the U.S. Agency for International Development and the National Association of Schools of Public Administration and Affairs. Professor Wendell Schaeffer was the coordinator of the project for NASPAA, and Ms. Jeanne North for AID; both of them made substantial contributions to both the management and substance of the project. Twenty students at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government performed the

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coding of events for skills and other factors: Lewis Brandt, Mary Byrne, Changyin Chung, Gabriela Dreyer, John Druke, Ronnie Friedman-Partie, Mrs. A.L. Ganapathi, Laura Ibarra, Cord Jakobeit, S. Krishna Kumar, Roop Jyoti, Nural Nadeem, Otty Nxumalo, Bruno Pouezat, Junio Ragragio, Hafeez Ur Rehman, Alejandro Reyes, Catherine Reilly, Peter Semneby, and Leah Taylor. They worked under the supervision of Mr. V.V. Rama Subba Rao, my research assistant at the Kennedy School.

- ⁴ The method employed is derived from the "critical incident" procedure, which was developed during World War II in order to determine whether and how training and organizational changes could improve the performance of combat pilots. It has since been employed thousands of times for purposes of studying human performance in different situations, private, professional, military and civilian. The seminal articles on this experience are J.C. Flanagan, "Critical Requirements: A New Approach to Employee Evaluation," Personnel Psychology, vol. 2 (1949), pp. 419-425. For a recent bibliography on the subject see Grace Fivars, The Critical Incident Technique: A Bibliography (Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research, 2nd Edition, 1980). This method should not be confused with survey techniques, which are intended to elicit information about opinions, and, as a predictive

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tool, rely on statistical sampling techniques to prevent distortion. In the critical incident method, it is the most recent experience of the respondents that is to be gathered, and that constitutes the universe to be analyzed. It is random in the sense that its selection of events requires each respondent to cite the most recent incident in his/her experience.

- 5 In coding these responses, Angola and Mozambique were omitted because of language and other logistical difficulties. In sample incidents reconstructed for the sake of comparison, however, the basic experiences were not significantly different from those of the other seven countries.
- 6 Readers may observe that African managers are not intensely involved in interorganizational issues. But they should not conclude from these proportions that only 5 percent of all managerial activities involved bureaucratic factors like dealing with rules and regulations, or suffering the effects of bureaucratic inertia. The coding procedure used for this article excluded events whose context did not specifically mention organizational policy or behavior.

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7 "Life at the Apex," cited, presents the evidence for this conclusion.

8 I encountered this phenomenon personally when observing a panel of "experts" from the nine SADCC countries deal with problems of improving management training in the region. The managers were not much interested in improving management, and knew little about it, having been designated to attend the conference on the basis of other than professional considerations. The positions they took were derived more from their personal views and their perceptions of the national interest than they were from reactions to the proposals to improve managerial performance.

9 See John D. Montgomery, "Public Interest in the Ideologies of National Development," in Carl J. Friedrich, The Public Interest, Nomos V (New York: Atherton Press, 1962).

10 See Goran Hyden, No Shortcuts to Progress: African Development Management in Perspective (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

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