Global Journals LaTeX JournalKaleidoscope™
Artificial Intelligence formulated this projection for compatibility purposes from the original article published at Global Journals. However, this technology is currently in beta. *Therefore, kindly ignore odd layouts, missed formulae, text, tables, or figures.*

Public Administration in "Small and Island Developing States": A Debate about Implications of Smallness

Dr. Hemant B Chittoo[1]

[1] University of Technology, Mauritius

Received: 19 July 2011 Accepted: 8 August 2011 Published: 18 August 2011

Abstract

Much administrative theory is concerned with the role and function of the public service according to general principles. Thus, a small country?s public service is a small version of that in a big country, especially, those of the United Kingdom or France as most small countries and islands were once colonies of these European colonial masters. But, is it realistic to assume this linearity? Or, does something change substantively once certain thresholds of size are passed? We assume, for instance, that the Maldives Islands take a place in the United Nations with the same voting rights as China or India, but is this uniform acceptance realistic when considering how the public service works, or does not work? The number of publications specifically addressing this problem, as opposed to the general problems of smallness, is remarkably limited (Dommen and Hein 1985; Hope 1983; Jones 1976; Kersell 1985, 1987; Khan 1976; Murray 1981; Richards 1982; Schahzenski 1990; United Nations 1969; Baker 1992, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985, Collins and Warrington, 1997, UNEP 1998), and the amount of empirically based study is negligible. Thus, the main purpose of this paper is to explore the hypothesis that the nature of government changes with scale.

Index terms— assume, considering, opposed

1 INTRODUCTION

uch administrative theory is concerned with the role and function of the public service according to general principles. Thus, a small country's public service is a small version of that in a big country, especially, those of the United Kingdom or France as most small countries and islands were once colonies of these European colonial masters. But, is it realistic to assume this linearity? Or, does something change substantively once certain thresholds of size are passed? We assume, for instance, that the Maldives Islands take a place in the United Nations with the same voting rights as China or India, but is this uniform acceptance realistic when considering how the public service works, or does not work? The number of publications specifically addressing this problem, as opposed to the general problems of smallness, is remarkably limited (Dommen and Hein 1985; Hope 1983; Jones 1976; Kersell 1985Kersell , 1987 Collins and **??**arrington, 1997, UNEP 1998), and the amount of empirically based study is negligible. Thus, the main purpose of this paper is to explore the hypothesis that the nature of government changes with scale.

Author : E -mail : schittoo@hotmail.com

In debating the contention that public administration in small and island developing states inadequately fits the traditional Weberian model, we are firstly going to argue what smallness means in the context of small and island developing states. Secondly, we are going to consider some of the specificities of such states in relation to the administrative variable. These arguments will then allow us to assess whether or not public administration in small and island developing states is just a miniature of those in large states or does something significantly change as scale is considerably reduced. If public administration in small and island developing states is problematic

when considered within the Weberian tradition, there should be solutions to these human problems. These creative opportunities will also be considered before a conclusion is reached with a few generally applicable recommendations.

2 II. 'SMALLNESS': ARE SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES A DISTINCTIVE CATEGORY?

Are 'small islands developing states' a distinctive category. The answer is as yet not clear and the issue is still on the agenda for debate. Considerable time could be spent in debating what does small precisely mean. Nevertheless, if we are searching for qualitative differences an attempt must be made to explore where the cut-off points occur. It is conceivable that they occur at different levels for different functions, and the issue clearly should be placed on the agenda for empirical and quantitative research (Baker, 1992). In this paper I will examine the conventional wisdom on the subject, most of which is purely arbitrary before pointing to recent developments. In 1969, the United Nations (UN) fixed upon the figure of one million people as defining small states (UNITAR, 1969). Population has consistently been the defining characteristic, as opposed to territorial area; had it been the case, Rwanda with its population of nearly ten million would have been considered as small on account of its territorial area, and Botswana, for instance, with its population of less than one million but a large territoria area would be considered as big. In terms of governance, a definition of small based on the number of people makes more sense than one based on M In fact, the scale (size) dimension has not featured prominently in discussions of the nature of public administration until very recently, and the number of empirical studies, as already pointed out, is extremely few. Furthermore, the issue is clouded by the fact that there is little agreement on what smallness actually means, and the fact that even when some consensus is reached, small states are also characterized by enormous diversity in terms of wealth, resource endowment, ethnic composition and diversity, isolation and other factors. Although the economies of some conspicuously rich small states are based on oil (e.g. Brunei, United Arab Emirates), gambling (e.g. Macao-China), or certain geographical peculiarities (e.g. Hawaii, Seychelles, Caribbean Islands), this paper focuses on poor countries that constitute the vast majority of small states. geographic area. For example, millions of people crushed into a geographically constricted area such as Hong Kong or Singapore still allow for many administrative differentiations, an adequate revenue base, and the possibility of a broad range of administrative skills. Still critiques may argue that Hong Kong and Singapore have developed a wide variety of administrative skills, and, in spite of limited or no natural resources have experienced unparalleled development because of sound government policies and not because of the mere size of their populations. Some may argue that they are small states. Also, the 1969 definition of the United Nations by taking population size of less than one million as the cut-off point to define a state as small may itself be outdated 33 years since it was prescribed. The population of the island of Mauritius that had been below one million for most of the last century cannot in 2003 just fall out of the definition because its population has slightly exceeded one million due to natural growth. The debate, although academic in this paper, should not downplay the importance of the issue especially in today's world of globalization where the mere qualification under a particular definition may qualify or disqualify a state, for example, for foreign aid, access to developed world markets, or the like, on which some small states are dependent for their survival.

More recent developments, especially when small states are joining hands to look for privileged derogation from WTO agreements or for other global issues such as the effect of global warming and the rise of sea level are bringing new members into the club. The United Nation's 'limited population' definition seems to be outdated. A recent conference on 'small and island developing states' held in Seychelles in 1997, for instance, was attended by seventy top administrators, politicians, scholars and consultants from seventeen territories. They included representatives of states having populations of 5 million persons or less. Singapore with a population of 2.9 million was also represented.

Within the general category of population size, enormous diversity exists. Some countries, such as Luxembourg and Bermuda, have high per capita incomes, and others figure very low on the table (Guinea-Bissau). Some countries are kingdoms (Tonga), and others are republics (Guyana, Mauritius); these states enjoy different constitutional status, and comprise various political systems. Some are ethnically homogeneous (Malta, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Samoa); more are multi-racial societies, an important factor in past or present political tensions (Cyprus, Fiji, Mauritius, Singapore). While most are now multi-party democracies, several have weathered political crises including revolution (Grenada), invasion (Cyprus), military coups (Fiji, Lesotho, Seychelles), or contested electoral outcomes (Malta). Each territory has, in a nutshell, its own unique character -a compound of its history, geography, and demography. Each has a distinctive experience of transacting the business of government; a constitution that reflects local political developments and compromises; patterns of leadership, habits of thought and decision-making; welldefined administrative traditions, and accumulated experience, skill and ethos in public administration (Collins and Warrington, 1997). As **??**ayle (1986, 8) observes 'size is an elusive variable'.

One pertinent question which was raised at the conference in Seychelles was: "Which is more important from the point of view of governance: such shared characteristics as 'small and island states' may have, or those features that are distinctive?" Once again, no straightforward answer emerged. Though impossible to define, the notions of 'smallness' and 'islandness' have gained currency in international forum, giving diplomatic leverage

to states and territories that would otherwise be disadvantaged. Besides, important patterns of organization, leadership and decision-making can be discerned, and there is much that is common in the experience of these diverse polities. This paper focuses, naturally, on shared characteristics and experiences especially for those states which complement smallness with developing country status.

3 III.

4 SIZE AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE VARIABLE

Most of the administrative characteristics of small states are conventionally presented as constraints and they are examined in the context here. Later in the paper these same characteristics are evaluated in terms of the opportunities they may afford. A review of the literature on administration in small states, as Khan has done, shows that the negative picture is both overwhelming and extremely depressing:

Overextended personnel, small spare/reserve capacity, few specialists attracted or retained, inadequate compensation level, inappropriate and infrequent training, low turnover rate, small establishment, limited promotion and mobility, limited alternative employment, low morale and motivation, low job satisfaction, low productivity, low adaptability to changing conditions, shortage of management skills, low problem solving capacity, high level of fear and frustration, absenteeism, timid decision-making, continued systemic uncertainty, low level of innovativeness and entrepreneurship, excessive routine dependence?small size inhibiting the realization of rational-legal management systems. (Khan 1991, 11) Khan found that all these characteristics in relatively recent writings on small states. With problems of this nature, it seems a miracle that these states operate at all. It also suggests that anything and everything may be attributed to the one very visible variable of size. Other variables, however, are contributing factors. For instance, the overwhelming majority of small states share a common colonial heritage, and this produces its own generic administrative incapacity for purely inertial reasons. The colonial civil service was designed for law-and-order functions, for a local policy vacuum, and for the maintenance of 'ideal' investment conditions for the colonial economy. With independence there usually comes much examination of ideology and policy, but somehow the civil service scrapes through unchanged, perhaps because the myth has really been accepted that it is neutral and objective and, therefore, 'one size fits all'.

The second complicating factor is that, once more, the majority of the countries in the small-state category are in the lower-income group. Thus the problems of administrative incapacity must coexist with considerable per capita resource constraints. I would, however, focus only on those variables that have a direct relationship with administration.

5 Administrative Variable applied to Organization

Culture, Policy-making and Human Resource civil servants in small and island states are highly vulnerable to the influence of relatives, friends, acquaintances, and political interventions due to the small size of their societies; -many small and island states have long standing traditions of decision-making using communitybased, highly consultative, consensual approach which can significantly reduce the speed with which decisions can be taken; -small scale society makes it virtually impossible to operate according to conventions of an objective and somewhat detached public service; -structures of government tend to emulate the divisions and hierarchies of larger governments, which is often unsuitable in smaller polities; -in very small states 'power must be seen to be distributed throughout the diverse cultures and geographical areas of the country'; -there is a great deal of transparency in decisionmaking, but also a lack of confidentiality. environment of changing administration and partisan political intervention; -impact of state size on the professional conduct of the civil servant -distinguishing between the domains of private and public life; -post-colonial/neo-colonial paradigms of status, hierarchy and power inhibiting fundamental change in human resource policy and practice. The issue of human resource is of vital importance to small and island developing states because it affects other variables and therefore needs more in-depth treatment. The UNEP report (1998) writing on Human Resources profile observed that, small island developing states are at different stages of development, with per capita income, health and education indicators varying considerably from country to country. Such differences notwithstanding, small island developing states share economic and geographic features that constitute serious constraints on their efforts to develop human resources. Recent studies on the vulnerability of small and island developing states agree that they suffer from the limitations of a small population. The majority of small island developing states have populations of less than one million people, in most cases less than half a million people. Factoring in the dependency ratios, their economically active labor force is extremely small. Except for a few small and island developing states, their local technical capacity is insignificant. For instance, in Kiribati, total personnel engaged in research and development and experimental development in all sectors numbers 3, in Tonga 15, in Seychelles 33 and in Cyprus 366. With a small population and labor force on which to build endogenous capacity, small island developing states experience great difficulties in developing local expertise to meet the wide-ranging and growing demands for sustainable development.

Economic factors of small and island developing states also hinder human resource development. With the exception of a few larger states, most have highly specialized and concentrated output structure as a result of their indigenous resource endowments and small populations. The highly concentrated pattern of the economy

leads to a narrow range of locally available expertise since a small population does not allow the building of a critical mass except in a few selected sectors.

With the probable few exceptions of countries like Hong Kong and Singapore, a small country usually only has a small pool of skilled persons to perform the indispensable, key roles of the public service. Most researchers who have had the experience in the workings of a microstate have known of certain individuals who had unique skills in the context of a particular country (Baker, 1992). I have the privilege of being able to confirm this viewpoint being native of a small island state and having the experience of working visits in a few other states in a similar position. The relative shortage of shortage of skills is further exacerbated by the tendency to proliferate the number of vertical and horizontal divisions within the public service, in accordance with the inherited and emulatory practice, in the pursuit of a 'normal' administration. In addition to maintaining the basic functions of a public service, all truly sovereign small states have to hold the extremely expensive trappings of sovereignty such as United Nations membership, the diplomatic corps, some defense posture, and so on. Furthermore, because skilled personnel are so scarce, key persons must perform a broad range of functions, thereby diffusing their attention. It may be noteworthy that a public officer from a small country may not be a specialist like those in big countries but is often, as the saying goes, a 'jack of all trade'. Along these lines of thinking, **??**urray (1985, 248) observed a 'blurring of job descriptions, often of quite radical nature between policy and administrative, public and private, public and parastatal board membership'. In these circumstances it is possible for the person to define the post, rather than the reverse, and the consequences of a single careerchange decision can be an enormous dislocation as institutional expertise, memory, and wisdom depart with the incumbent.

Such a small environment may bring the satisfaction of considerable responsibility to those who have taken the time to complete the appropriate training, though even releasing some people for training can produce a short-term crisis. As a training manager I have even experienced the need to cancel training programs, or, conduct internationally funded programs with substandard trainees because of the inability to recruit enough or appropriate candidates. Even if some attend the programs, they are frequently called back to office.

In small countries, some employees rise faster and higher than similarly qualified employees elsewhere. Such rise may either be based on merit or at times as Max Weber had argued on the basis of whom one knows rather than what one knows. In a small country where people are aware of most events and are competing for scarce opportunities, one can consider the amount of frustration that normally follows. Baker (1990) points out that although this is often the case, this rapid promotion at home is often offset by the fact that these key personnel identify themselves not just with domestically marketable skills, but, with internationally marketable ones. Thus they are able to measure their positions against how they might be doing if they were employed in the U.S, Canada, Australia, Europe or even working for foreign organization and then coming back as an expatriate consultant. This process is visible when aid agencies turn up for country evaluation, and when lending teams turn up on a regular basis. Through this mechanism, key personnel are constantly made aware of where they might be if they changed jobs, and they are exposed to people who could make the move possible.

It is a fact that this type of poaching is only encouraged by the 'quota' approach of international organizations which ensures that everyone receives a fair chance at jobs in the international bureaucracy. This is also a controversial issue. On the one hand it is a fact that 'brain drain' affects developing countries. In the case of small states, only a few brains need to be drained before a serious crisis can occur. On the other hand, however, the limited opportunities offered by these same small states can be very frustrating to those who have worked hard to make it through but get stuck in their career for one reason or another. It is also a fact that there are dangers associated when foreign consultants cannot be checked by people who have experiences of local realities, culture, politics and so on (Girishankar, 1999). All being said, brain drain remains a serious problematic issue for small states and the simple solution of trying to retain them by force is too inhuman. The issue has to be put on the research agenda for a more just approach. Not everyone in the public service has the same international visibility or marketability, but the pay scales in the public service take no account of that. How much is it worth to keep the one trained in New Public Management, one trained budget analyst the country possesses or for that matter any trained expert of any kind which most of the time can be counted on the single digit? Should it pay the international going rate and divide the public service into those the world is ready to poach and those who are trapped by their 'unmarketability'? Mauritius has already instituted contract employment for such skills in recognition of the need to remain competitive in the global market place. Some Caribbean islands have also done the same. This will surely lead to a lot of frustration and if not implemented carefully is likely to aggravate the problem. In Mauritius, it seems to be a clear return to the spoils system under the pretext of scarcity of skills with all the implications that goes with that and which are beyond the scope of this paper. It can be safely said that none of the top jobs carrying phenomenal salaries were filled following advertisements leading to general exacerbated frustration in the public service. Foreigners have also been employed under the pretext that local officials are incapable! Success or failure, time will tell. But any success will have to be carefully interpreted as being due to high salary, foreigner employment or political support to the person in the position or ability of the person in the position? Which is which? Unfortunately decisions are only in the hands of politicians.

Since the core of executive skills tend to be small in the small states, it follows that a large proportion of decisions will be referred to that level because many of the management steps may be missing. Furthermore there will be a fear to devolve decisions when management skills fall off quickly down the line. There is clear indication that they would be overloaded with day-to-day routines rather than being in a position to give strategic

direction to their organizations and lead to the development of what Burns (1963) calls 'pathological systems' i.e. a situation where a heavy load of decisions find its way to the chief executive with resulting problems that such problems create for already bureaucratic civil services.

With the coming of independence to postcolonial small states, the public service had to adapt to a wide range of new specialized roles and turn to the technical assistance network to compensate for the loss of the colonial (expatriate) civil service. This sharply accentuated the critical mass situation relative to the local pool of skilled labor, and many of the local postholders anticipated the same levels of benefits (such as Fiji's forty-five-year retirement age, subsidized housing, vehicle loans) that had helped induce the colonials away from the 'metropol'. The previous difference between local salaries and expatriate ones became blurred, which helped make the civil service expensive. But it also produced a new problem, that of training. It was extremely difficult to justify a training base to produce the few high-level people needed or to retrain and update the relatively small public service. In the short run the only feasible course of action was expensive overseas training, which tended to lock the trainees into a large-country context and a different cultural environment. Reviewing the Caribbean experience, the Caribbean Center for Development Administration found that:

'There is a scarcity of manpower and technical personnel in these governments to perform new, complex functions of national development because of the small size of the population, the difficulties of recruiting and maintaining qualified personnel in view of the scarce financial resources of the public sector and the consequent low levels of the salaries; the difficulties of educating the officials to perform tasks requiring scientific and technical knowledge in view of the lack of opportunities for higher education, and the problem of retaining them when educated or trained externally. They tend to migrate to the larger, developed countries in which they have wider professional horizons, better remuneration for their work and better amenities for them and their families.' (CARICAD 1988,14).

Further accentuating the financial problems of small-state administrations is the fact that they have to divert a disproportionately large proportion of their revenues to infrastructure costs such as roads and utilities (Agora, 1999). It is not that they have more infrastructure per capita, but that the per capita costs of these basic services are much higher because the pool of users is small, and the overhead costs do not diminish linearly with scale. Thus as Srinivasan noted: 'In building thermal capacity for power generation, for instance, it has been estimated that small countries face a cost disadvantage averaging 65 percent. However, for small countries with high population densities such as Barbados, this disadvantage is only 20 percent' (Srinivasan, 1986, 211 citing **??**egarda) At what point it becomes 'economical' to have an in-country training capacity for different skills remains uncertain, but clearly there is a critical minimum mass of trainees to make the conventional public service institute, or higher education establishment, viable.

6 The Personal Nature of Administrative Transactions.

In small states it is impractical to separate personality from function, since officials have to interact with their constituents as neighbors, relatives, and friends to a much higher degree than in a larger country. In this context, it would seem that officials must operate in a climate strongly conducive to unavoidable partiality, since:

'In a socially small society the personalized and multiplex nature of human relationships makes it extremely difficult for partiality to be absent?. There is the difficulty of maintaining anonymity. If a difficult, unpopular decision has to be made in the national interest, all may know who is responsible. In a small environment, this may have repercussions in the individual civil servant's life? In tiny societies, all members of the public are a kind of extended family; networks of influence extend everywhere. To secure advances, the civil servant must tread a cautious path.' **??**Rajbansee, 1972, 217-221).

In small states, public officials are personally identified with the consequences of their decisions, which put those officials under great personal pressure. The problem is how such officials can avoid assuming brokerage roles for the communities or interest groups from which they come. Work for them does not end at 4 or 5 p.m., but continues in their after office social engagements and activities. Richards (1982) has described this as the 'ubiquity' of government, and it is difficult for a public servant to hide behind the rule-book or blame the consequences on the politicians, the government, or some institutional escape-goat. Decisions made or enacted by public officials are much more pervasive in such small systems than might be the case in a larger context. 'I was only doing my job' carries little weight under these circumstances. 'You let us down' does. One of the real challenges is not to perfect the institutional detachment, but to capitalize on the face-to-face nature of public life and turn that to an advantage without sacrificing the conventions of professionalism.

The repercussions of the personalization of the public service operate within the service as well, since public officials have to operate professionally within a hierarchy of people, with whom they are unavoidably personally acquainted, related or otherwise connected in a non-work environment. This coziness is often instinctively distrusted because of the dangers of partiality, nepotism, and 'done deals', though there is no empirical evidence to suggest that these extramural relationships are any more or less significant than government by golf course in Japan or the United states. Is this necessarily a bad way to do business? -another controversial issue in my opinion. In a large country, blurring the boundaries between official and official roles is clearly seen as bypassing the rules of fairness and neutrality, but in small states it may well be the only practical way of doing business. Any claim of full neutrality and fairness is simply a pretense not to say a lie. The separation of roles may simply be unrealistic, and this informal way of 'doing government' may itself need creative research and development

as a reflection of the considerable difficulty of separating state and society in any operational way according to Western convenience.

7 External Dependency

Small-state governments face a particularly difficult problem when it comes to developing the nation's physical capital. Except when the countries are blessed with oil or some other high-value internationally marketable commodity, general revenue is small, and foreign exchange earnings may be particularly so in absolute terms. In addition, infrastructure costs may be disproportionately high, and these projects frequently require the importation of foreign skills and materials. This tends to make developing countries dependent on larger/richer nations, banks, and other foreign institutions for their capital development budgets. In some cases this may reach 80 percent (Tonga) or even 100 percent in the case of Tuvalu. Some writers have argued (though often without empirical evidence) that this produces an acute case of vulnerability. 'Local governments are often hopelessly weak, ill organized, or incapable of resisting gifts and onslaughts of international finance' **??**Cohen 1983, 11). The point is very valid if one considers strings often attached with financial aids. It is not a secret that Americans often have to 'buy' the votes of members of the United Nations Security Council. It may be noteworthy that America has come up with an Africa Growth and Opportunity Bill for the expressed objective of attracting investment and increasing exports of African countries to the US. However delicate to say, it is also an attempt to get the almost guaranteed support of these countries in international forum especially in the uni-polar world where the US is increasingly tempted to take unilateral decisions of all kinds. There are naturally tactful claims by writers that this excessive need induces governments to 'give away the store' to foreigners:

The dilemma of offering economic advantages to attract foreigners and foreign capital versus political disadvantages for the nations is reflected in the nationalist, anti-foreign sentiment over their presence, and the attendant effect on employment, housing, cost of living, and the unsettling influence onslaught on the traditional way of life and local culture. (Richards 1982, 158) Rajbansee (1972, 211) has identified 'a need to align with other states to realize indigenous need? with a consequent danger of external dependence'. If so much of the capital dependence comes from abroad, then there is a real question about who has the ultimate decision-making authority over policy and priorities in the recipient country: the host government or the donors and lenders. Because of the critical mass problem and the shortage of essential skills locally, there is a natural tendency for aid missions to assume the role of identifying projects and deciding whether they are acceptable for funding and all international conferences on the area never overlook that call (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985, Collins and Warrington, 1997, UNEP, 1998). This occurs in all less developed countries, but its importance is bound to be more significant where the aid contribution and external borrowing represent a greater proportion of the capital budget. Furthermore, if these items are to be funded from a diversity of external sources, there are additional problems of varying criteria for design and approval, the 'spotting' of projects by donors, and the co-ordination of projects into any sort of cohesive unity. When there is an inadequacy of skills at the planning level, cozy relationships may develop between aid donors and the technical staff at the line ministry or departmental level, further confounding the prospect of cohesion and uniformity of purpose.

The intentions of the lenders are not necessarily malign, but the lenders want to have their own way unless they are confronted with well-thought-out programs detailing priorities, needs and the guidelines within which they operate. When this linkage between the aid/technical assistance personnel and the ministries exists, there is a danger that the internal logic of the project will dominate, rather than the overall development needs of the countries. One victim of this might be co-ordination, so that individual projects run ahead of one another, duplicate needs, put unsupportable pressures on existing local skills, and so forth. The project approach may also have a more shortterms perspective than wider-ranging development view, and it may not be sensitive to broader political considerations. Local governments are under pressure, however, because no one wants to turn away aid or look unprepared or foolish to the donors. So pressures abound for the development to be driven by the priorities of others and by international capital. I would like to add the rich but unpleasant experience I had to co-ordinate a European Fund Development project for my organization with all the problems depicted above.

In addition, because of overhead arguments, donors often prefer larger than smaller projects. It was estimated that the average overhead cost of preparing projects for the Asian Development Bank was around US$ 250,000, and the sum immediately predetermined the types of activities that seemed reasonable (Baker, 1990). It is also the case that in many small countries, apart from the difficulty of finding an array of suitable projects for donors and lenders, the capital side of development (the aid) tends to outrun the locally generated recurrent cost capacity and the available manpower to make these projects work. Thus the capital side of the budget can overheat unless it is carefully controlled. In the case I cited above, I would like to add that the cost of the project financed by the European Development Fund was bigger than yearly recurrent budget of the organization for which the project was meant, a project which was irrelevant by the time it was implemented being 3 years late on schedule. Also noteworthy was that 60 % of the budget was outright earmarked to pay for consultants from Europe all of whom were at least academically less qualified than our organizational professional staff. A report was produced which did not take local culture and realities into consideration. Who can dare refuse foreign aid?

One other observation that receives very little attention is that small-state governments have difficulty in the area of procurement because they are small operators and cannot negotiate with any degree of clout when buying capital good abroad. All this increases the unit costs of development. More delicate a problem is the insistence of

donors that procurement from countries from which the funds come from if payments are to be approved by the donor. Often the products available do not suit local conditions. Worse is that at times the national procurement regulations have to be expertly 'violated' to be able to procure products/equipments from donor countries if the funds are to be successfully tapped. Failure to procure from donor countries can result in withdrawal of funding. If anything goes wrong, needless to say the public officer/s may have to bear the cap. Foreign aid is welcome but there is a price to pay in terms of sovereignty.

Also, new expenditures tend to overwhelm existing development, and maintenance often falls on the shoulders of the host country to such an extent that it cannot be supported. In general, aid donors and lenders, especially since the crisis of lending to governments following Mexico's debt interest default in 1982, have sharply reduced lending and do not favor loans for recurrent costs or maintenance on the grounds that the country should have planned to cover such costs before undertaking the capital development in the first place.

IV.

8 IS PUBLIC ADMINISTATION, THEREFORE, SIZE-NEUTRAL?

From the above arguments, it can be deduced that public administration in small states are bound to have great challenges facing their administrations which are limited in capacity by size, quality and resources, as well as by specificities of smallness. But such differences are not easily admitted. For instance, there is no general agreement that factors influencing states change based on scale alone. At the economic level this has been contested for decades. As **??**ayle (1986,8) observed:

'It was in 1960 that Simon Kuznets argued that the economic structure of small nations was so different from that of larger nations that both could not be treated as comparable units in economic development theory.

In 1963 Wassily Leontief asserted that, to the contrary, smaller and less-developed countries could be expected to exploit available productive capital independent of immediate needs?. Using regression analysis of average annual GNP growth in 30 countries between 1951-57, Nadim Khalaf concluded that there were no statistically positive coefficients between economic development and country size, or economic growth and country size?.For the Small Developing States, economic growth becomes much more closely correlated with effective involvement in international trade and finance than in the case of larger, poor countries.'

The argument that size has no determining effect on economic health was reaffirmed by **??**rinivasan (1986, 218): "Many of the alleged problems of small economies are either not peculiar to small economies, or can be addressed through suitable policy measures." This rather definitive conclusion does not prevent a litany of perceived scale-related economic disadvantages heading almost every paper about small states. These problems customarily include absence of scale economies, vulnerability of fluctuations in the world market due to their "openness"; frequent remoteness; limited domestic resource base and market; and high levels of emigration (Dommen and Hein 1985, Collins and Warrington, 1997). If the economic picture is confused, the administrative one, which is much less thoroughly researched or grounded in theory, is acutely so.

In a sense, some writers are raising a critical mass argument with regard to the application of conventional models and prescriptions, principles and norms, of public administration in small states. Citing the rather extreme case of Tuvalu, **??**urray (1981, 245) made precisely this point: 'Consider the standard prescription for effective administration in local government: "there should be a career civil service that provides reasonable prospects for promotion on merit and seniority ?," and "? the requisites of a sound personnel system can be fulfilled where there is a separate personnel system for each authority" (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs), and relate that to the circumstances of Tuvalu where, for the total population of 8, 000 distributed over seven islands, there is a local government council for each island served by one executive officer ?. The likely reaction is that the prescription is inapplicable in Tuvalu, and that raises the question of how much conventional wisdom about effective administration assumes, without stating, a state with a certain size.' It may appear tempting, therefore, from a theoretical standpoint, to apply to the small states the context often reserved for local government in other parts of the world where the small scale and personal nature of administration may prevail. However, a sovereign state has to conduct a range of functions quite unimaginable to a local government, even one that is bigger than many sovereign nations. Local governments do not print or issue money; they do not conduct relations with other states; do not maintain defense obligations, and so forth. Nor is it particularly helpful to try to cast these states into scale models of big government anywhere. Rather, it is necessary to consider their peculiar attributes and derive solutions to innovative approaches from these. **??**ichards (1982, 170) rejects the temptation to try to scale down the doctrines on effective administration to suit the circumstances of mini-states, or scale up the mini-states to suit the doctrines in his plea for a clear recognition of the qualitative nature of the scale question:

'They (the microstates) are more than hybrids, or half-way-houses between the large states proper and local subdivisions within such states. The differences are qualitative as well as quantitative. It is the combination of social homogeneity and particularism associated with smallness; the strong self-conscious feeling of collective identity asserted against the outside world; the more intimate relationship of state and society; the differences between formal constitutional theory and political reality; the prominence of personality politics; the peculiar

nature of political parties and cleavage systems; the relatively muted nature of the opposition-it is all these factors located together within a discrete area which give the micro-state its separate and distinctive character.'

The linear theory, therefore, with the obvious implications of public administration of small island developing states being a small version of those of big states seem not to play a propitious role. In fact as **??**ee (1989, 628) holds '? adapting (seminal ideas) to small societies was not just a question of reducing them in scale. Their very applicability to societies of a different scale itself posed a formidable intellectual challenge and called for sustained theoretical work.' The section below makes such an attempt.

9 a) General Theory Implications

The issue of scale calls into question the general assumptions about the Weberian model of the public service. "The scale issue remains largely off the agenda-Public Administration is considered to be scale neutral" **??**Murray 1981, 247). The conventions of an objective and somewhat detached public service often seem totally unrealistic in small-scale operations: 'Society in larger states is much more an autonomous aggregate of groups separate from the state, whereas in smaller polities society is still very closely enmeshed with the state and the state with society. This linkage takes place through individuals and personalities rather than through impersonal, organizational bureaucracies representing the state... The converse of this is that such differences that do occur are more personal, more intense, and more emotionally charged. In the West we have moved away from the charismatic king toward 'rationalized legal' power? It is a major function of the institutions of the modern democratic state to help channel and resolve public conflict through formal and impersonal organizations rather than through informal face-to-face negotiations by the antagonists themselves.' Nevertheless, the models prevailing in almost all smaller states are derived from the same Weberian type that larger countries use. Part of the problem is that most of the small-state models are derived, since the vast majority of such countries concerned were formerly colonial or dependent territories. The real challenge is to see whether those very aspects of weakness relative to the Weberian model may not offer some potential for innovative and more relevant systems of public administration. What really is the role of the public service in this context, and how can it best perform that role in the peculiar circumstances of small communities that are nations?

When small countries adopt the public service models of large countries, the best they can do is shrink them down. The net result is many tiny units whose effectiveness must be seriously doubted. Do countries such as Fiji or Mauritius really need twenty-five to thirty ministries? Do they need all the administrative grades? Do they need the same rigid, vertical separation that typifies much of the western system? What does objectivity mean? Above all, these remnants systems may prove costly, reaching the extraordinary situation in the British Crown colony of St. Helena, in which twothirds of the active population work for the civil service. Other countries, the Bahamas, for instance, have hugely expensive bureaucracies that consume public revenue that presumably cannot be used for other investment and opportunities.

Our need is to differentiate "between those kinds of administrative practice that are appropriate and efficient, irrespective of the size of the state, and those that may be size-based" (Schahczenski; **??**990,75). Hence, this paper examines not only the general dimensions of the problem, but also some possible solutions. In particular an attempt is made to determine whether some of the conventional 'disadvantages" of the current state of affairs cannot be turned into advantages.

V.

10 OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE

Having categorized the array of perceived problems and constraints, it does not mean that everything is black. 'As a matter of fact, one of the blessings of small size is the opportunity it gives to avoid bureaucratic rigidities' **??**Rajbansee 1972, 216). This requires approaching the question of scale with a much more open mind, in accordance with the ideas suggested by **??**urray (1981, 249):

'It is in the spirit of Small is Beautiful to recognize that people in microstates have a knowledge and experience that can contribute both to solving problems in those states and to a wider understanding, but for such knowledge to be accessible it needs to be systematized and organized. This existing understanding is what Lindblom describes as ordinary knowledge, to distinguish it from professional social enquiry?.and some of the ordinary knowledge of microstates concerns the development of forms of, and practices of administration, which in most such states involves molding and fashioning administration inherited from a colonial power to meet local needs and suit local circumstances. Judged by the standards of conventional wisdom of public administration many such improvisations could be regarded as examples of bad practice; but such expedients may alternatively be treated as experiments in developing forms of administration more appropriate to the circumstances of a microstate.'

There have been some genuine postindependence initiatives. One of these was the establishment in 1980, in Barbados, of CARICAD (Caribbean Center for Development Administration), which provides a base for training and consultancy for its fifteen regional members. It also serves as an exchange forum for innovative experiences and provides an alternative to sending administrative staff to larger, richer economies for training. The Islands of the Indian Ocean have created what is now known as the University of the Indian Ocean based on the same model as the University of the West Indies to provide high level education and training to people from

member states. The presence of such organizations also allows for the creative expenditure of regionally directed investment and development funds from donors and lenders. In the South Pacific, regional organizations provide a vehicle for the establishment of regional services such as the South Pacific Forum shipping line. Naturally it is far from easy to provide comprehensive training and service for individual countries that have different staff designations, standards, and so on, and there is not always close harmony among states as to what the purpose of the public service may be. Regional funds and organization also represent, in the minds of some politicians and bureaucrats, the loss of control over resources. Nevertheless such regional initiatives may offer some possibility of achieving efficiency, or indeed of making some services possible at all. In the very small states of the Caribbean, fundamental developments have taken place in terms of currency issue and control, as well as joint foreign representation. Regional integration initiatives, notably among the English-speaking Caribbean states, have given even the smallest, poorest Public Administration in "Small and Island Developing States": A Debate about Implications of Smallness partners access to public goods such as quality tertiary education (University of the West Indies), as well as securing diplomatic leverage in regional or world affairs.

Sovereignty, which seemed a dubious proposition for small territories only two decades ago, has proved to be a precious commodity that many small states trade upon to good effect.

Within the individual states there has been less innovation, probably because of the inherited rigidities and the perception that there is a norm for the shape of administrations. The typical view of reform has been one that usually excludes the structure and function of the administration, concentrating instead on such factors as apply equivalency, pay rates, job descriptions and the like. As **??**urray (1981, 249) observes, the 'purpose, organizational concept and structures are often taken as given. Then we train people to fit these jobs.' Instead of working within the rigid hierarchies of the civil service, it might be more productive to look at more temporary, flexible, and collective arrangements that bring people together to face certain nationally perceived task priorities, as well as the ongoing role of government. All this flies in the face of standard practice and will doubtless meet strong opposition from entrenched power and privilege lobbies, as well as those who hold Max Weber in a messianic context.

Apart from the problems posed by size, there are some areas of comparative advantage. The concentration of population in a small area, except in such cases as the Kiribati, which has a tiny population spread across the Pacific, may offer greater access to decision makers and greater prospects for finding out what public opinion is and mobilizing it. There should also be easier oversight in a small context, and ready access to those who can provide the answers and the go-ahead for change. Small, concentrated populations should also permit the more efficient presentation of services, to some extent counteracting the high unit cost of infrastructure. Indeed, the formality of the whole arrangement could, and perhaps should, be turned to advantage instead of being kept at an unrealistic arm's length as it is at present. Where skills are scarce, it makes more sense to share them, rather than divide them vertically into watertight compartments.

But from where is this initiative to come? As has been observed, 'the administration' is normally taken as given, and who will stand up-or has the authority-to say 'let's put it all on the table'? Perhaps the public service commission? But, this would be seen by many as a threatening move, and relations between ministries and public service commissions are already tense in most places. What then of the executive? One problem here is that a broad subdivision of the public service keeps power bases to a minimum and allows the maximum potential for rewarding one's friends through the spoils system. We are, after all, considering possibilities to strengthen the public service, and not everyone sees that as advantageous. Once more we have the problem of the inherited colonial legacy in the developing-world members of the small state group.

During colonial times there really was no political function in dependent territories. Indeed you could be locked up if you ventured into that arena. The relationship between politicians and the bureaucracy is therefore an evolving one and still characterized by nervousness, distrust (the bureaucracy used to administer the colony, after all). The public service sees itself as having, the requisite knowledge and experience, whereas politicians are seen as potential wreckers and driven only by short-term political gains. From the political standpoint, the public service is often viewed as self-serving, inefficient and obstructive. All this has to be overcome by a sense of common purpose and mission, as well as by clearly defined roles and missions-which is not the same as rigid job descriptions and hierarchies prescribed by the Weberian model.

CARICAD **??**1988,12) has pointed out the following: 'Administrative development, which is an important part of economic and social development, is usually isolated?Administrative change is an end in itself, and is not seen as the means to improvement of government action in concrete areas.' Indeed, it is the effective and realistic pursuit of the development mission that should provide the 'greater purpose', enabling a realistic evaluation of the role and organization of the public service to be made. Small countries provide a most interesting laboratory for the examination of the conventional wisdom of public administration in the context of scale.

VI.

11 CONCLUSION AND SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has argued that the rational-legal, impersonal and objective Weberian model of public administration used in large Western Countries may not be fully applicable in small island developing states. Most if not all of them have acquired their public administration systems from their colonial masters of the west and have perpetuated its traditions as replicate of the Weberian model in 'miniature'. They cannot be blamed for that.

But, 'smallness' taken in this paper more as 'smallness of population' than anything else, makes the expected objectivity and ability to act in impersonal manner impossible in practice. Besides, the small populations of small developing states result in most cases in limited administrative capacity exacerbated by perpetuation of colonial legacy, low per capita income, low investment in education and training, brain drain, among other problems. The challenges facing small states are as big as the ones of big states in that they have to conduct all the functions of a big state including international ones. The mere adoption of the Weberian model in its totality can only result in Public Administration in "Small and Island Developing States": A Debate about Implications of Smallness expensive public administration coupled with inefficiency in the light of limited resources. While the paper does not take the risk to claim that the western model should be replaced by a new system, it does make an appeal that adaptations wherever necessary should be welcomed.

In light of discussions in this paper about the administration problems in small and island developing states, I believe certain recommendations can be made which by and large could be applicable to most of them:

It is strongly recommended that governments of small island and developing states continue to accord priority to human resources development and training, and resource management in specific fields; Human resource is of prime importance as, it is in the case of many small and island developing states, the only resource which can make a difference and can further improve the administrative capacity; Governments should create conditions, including through regional mechanisms, to retain newly acquired or updated endogenous expertise; For instance, instead of losing trained manpower to world 'metropol', the really 'marketable' people can take positions in regional public administrations with international salary scales and serve their countries and their regional association of nations. This will, all by retaining their services/expertise, avoid create frustration in country specific administrations and reduce dependence on expatriates who are usually not welcomed in any case.

Small island developing states should further strengthen regional co-operation through pooling resources and expertise, should increase the effectiveness of such cooperation through systematic identification of needs and planning projects, and should increase the efficiency of regional resource use through better coordination;

Regional organizations and the United Nations System should strengthen their support to small and island developing states. In particular, the organizations and bodies of the United Nations System should increase their operational activities for providing training and expertise to small and island developing states. Areas where local capacity is relatively insignificant should be accorded priority in the funding and provision of technical assistance. [1] [2]

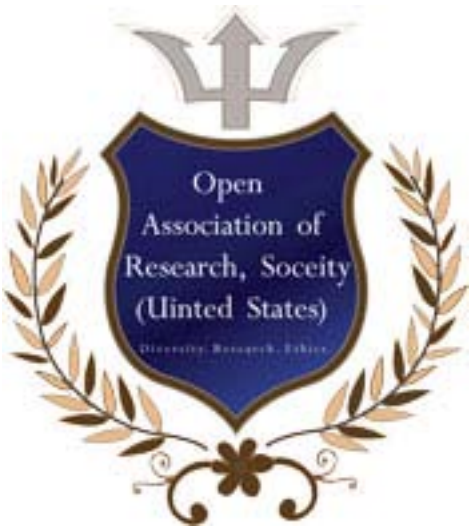

Figure 1: 1.

[1] © 2011 Global Journals Inc. (US) September

[2] © 2011 Global Journals Inc. (US) © 2011 Global Journals Inc. (US)

[Schumacher ()] , E F Schumacher . *Small is Beautiful. London: Blond and Briggs* 1973.

[Washington ()] , D C Washington . 1983. International Monetary Fund.

[States et al. ()] , Microstates States , Islands , N H Dover . 1985. Croom Helm.

[Lee and Ireland ()] , J J Lee , Ireland . 1989. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. .

[Cohen ()] *African Islands and Enclaves*, R Cohen . 1983. Beverly Hills: Sage.

[Baker ()] R Baker . *Public Administration in Small and Island States*, (Connecticut) 1992. Kumarian Press.

[Jones (ed.) ()] *Bureaucracy as a Problem Solving Mechanism in Small States: A Review in Terms of the Current Literature*, E Jones . V. Lewis Mona (ed.) 1976. Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research. (Size, Self-Determination and International Relations: The Caribbean)

[Girishankar ()] *Civil Service Reform: A Review of World Bank Assistance, Operations Evaluation Department*, N Girishankar . no. 19599. 1999. World Bank, Washington D.C. (Report)

[Schahczenski ()] 'Development Administration in the Small Developing State: A Review'. J J Schahczenski . *Public Administration and Development* 1990. 10 p. .

[Khan ()] *Development Administration: Field Research in Barbados*, J Khan . 1976. Bridgetown, Barbados: Yoruba Press.

[Selwyn ()] *Development Policy in Small Countries*, P Selwyn . 1975. New York: Holmes and Meier.

[Baker ()] 'Foreign Assistance and Development in a Small Island Economy: The Case of Fiji'. R Baker . *Public Administration and Development* 1990. 10 p. .

[Kersell ()] 'Government Administration in a Small Microstate: Developing the Caymen Islands'. . J Kersell . *Public Administration and Development* 1987. (7) p. .

[Human Resource Development in Small Island Developing States', Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementat
'Human Resource Development in Small Island Developing States', Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States'. http://www.unep.ch/islands/dd98-7a9.htm *UNEP ISLANDS Website* April-May, 1998. (UNEP)

[Burns (1963)] 'Industry in a New Age'. T Burns . *Organization Theory*, D S Pugh (ed.) (Penguin) 31 January 1963. 1990. (reprinted in)

[Richards ()] 'Politics in Small, Independent Communities: Conflict or Consensus?'. J Richards . *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 1982. 20 (2) p. .

[Public Administration Division, Comparative Analysis of the Distinctive Public Administration Problems of Small States and Te
'Public Administration Division, Comparative Analysis of the Distinctive Public Administration Problems of Small States and Territories'. *United Nations* 1969. (United Nations)

[Murray (ed.)] *Public Administration the Microstates of the Pacific*, D J Murray . Dommen, E. and Hein, P. (ed.)

[Khan ()] *Public Management: The Eastern Caribbean Experience*, J Khan . 1982. Leiden, The Netherlands. Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology

[Rajbansee ()] 'Size and Bureaucracy in the Caribbean'. J Rajbansee . *Journal of Comparative Administration* 1972. (4) p. .

[Murray ()] 'Small and Island Developing States": A Debate about Implications of Smallness REFERENCES RÉFÉRENCES REFERENCIAS 20'. D J Murray . *Public Administration and Development* 1981. (1) p. . (Microstates: Public Administration for the Small and Beautiful)

[Legarda] *Small Tropical Countries: An Overview*, B Legarda .

[Dommen Hein (ed.) ()] *States, Microstates and Islands*, E Dommen, P Hein (ed.) 1985. Croom Helm.

[Status and Problems of Very Small Territories ()] *Status and Problems of Very Small Territories*, 1969. Mimeo. UNITAR

[Hope ()] 'The Administration of Development in Emergent Nations: The Problems in the Caribbean'. K R Hope . *Public Administration and Development* 1983. (3) p. .

[Kersell ()] 'The Administration of Government in Bermuda'. J E Kersell . *Public Administration and Development* 1985. (5) p. .

[The Commonwealth Caribbean Small Island States and the CARICAD Caribbean Center for Development Administration (CAR
'The Commonwealth Caribbean Small Island States and the CARICAD'. *Caribbean Center for Development Administration (CARICAD)*, 1988.

[Srinivasan ()] 'The Costs and Benefits of Being a Small, Remote, Island, Landlocked or Ministate Economy'. T N Srinivasan . *Research Observer* 1986. 1 p. .

[Collins and Warrington (1997)] 'The New Public Administration: Lessons From the Experiences of Small and Island States'. P Collins , E Warrington . IASIA/SEYCHELLES/CAPAM. *A Report on the Seychelles/CAPAM/IASIA Conference*, April 11-17,1997. July 1997.

[Gayle ()] *The Small Developing State*, D J Gayle . 1986. Brookfield, Vt: Gower Publishing.

[Weber ()] *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, M Weber . 1947. Free Press.

[Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society. London: Commonwealth Secretariat ()] *Vulnerability: Small States in the Global Society. London: Commonwealth Secretariat*, 1985.