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The Theory of Public Administration and Its Relevance to Nigerian Administrative Ecology

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KEY WORDS Public administration; bureaucracy; quota system; federal character; political neutrality; politics-administration dichotomy.

ABSTRACT We analytically put the concept of public administration into perspective in this paper. In the process, we traced its genealogy and, its theoretical provisions as well as the implications and challenges of these provisions at each stage of its development. We specifically zeroed-in on the practical applications of these provisions in a country like Nigeria. Prominence was given to the features - (political neutrality, anonymity and permanence) - of the Nigerian civil service and their attendant practicability or otherwise within the context of the nation's ecological factors, slippery administrative terrains and cultural pluralism. Within this same context, the issues of representative bureaucracy and its accompanying principles of quota system, federal character, as well as the inherent prevalence of conflict of interest and political patronage engendered in the process. Consequent on these efforts, we conclusively argued that there is need for a re-orientation by the Nigerian citizenry and Public Bureaucrats vis-à-vis the principles of meritocracy and non-partisanship in dealing with socio-economic, cultural and political issues within the nation's administrative landscape.