Administrative Process

Dr. S. B. M. Marume[1]

[1]BA, Hons BA, MA, MAdmin, MSoc Sc, PhD
Department of Public Administration, Zimbabwe Open University

Abstract: *Many a prominent social scientist argue that the administrative process is a collective term for all the sub-processes that fall within an accepted classification framework. It has taken long, however, to obtain a meaningful classification framework, and numbers of distinguished overseas authors have written of the administrative process and then discussed the widest diversity of the processes in their works; and it was only in 1967 that Professor J. J. N. Cloete in his book, Introduction of Public Administration, gave the most meaningful analytical framework which is the subject matter of this article.*

Keywords: *administrative process, collective term, sub-processes, classification framework, and six main categories.*

I.   Introduction

On the basis of long, exhaustive and extensive studies it is possible to come to the conclusion that administration comprises those generic processes aimed at goal realization within any institutionalized group action, but no satisfactory account of the components of the generic processes has been offered and how these components of generic processes are interwoven.

It is to be remembered that there is not acceptance of **Luther Dulick`s POSDCORD-ism.** Nor are many social scientists prepared to accept Lois Allen`s "planning- organization – leadership- control" dogma

II.   Purpose of the article

The purpose of this article is to analyse the collective term of administrative process by answering the following basic relevant questions:
a)   Where does public administration fit into the total government set- up in any government areas?
b)   What precisely consists the administrative process?
*   What specifically are these sub- and sub- sub- processes?
*   How many are these sub-processes and sub -sub processes?
c)   Why do some leading social scientists not accept the prominent views of the exponents of management as the basis of study in Public Administration?
d)   Does the polymorphous concept of administrative process provide a reasonably workable conceptual framework?

III.   The administrative process

The first basic relevant question is:
*   To What Does the Term "**administrative process**" refers.
*   **Answers and explanation**:
a)   Surely one of the oddest aspects of our administrative studies is that none of us could take you to an office or department and tell you what you are looking at is "administration" the totality of generic processes. Other functional specialised fields of work are easily identifiable and in a given context are visually perceptible; for example; the design of a bridge or, repair of a machine, the digging of a trench. In contrast, **administration is an extremely polymorphous activity found everywhere in one form or another**. One official may be engaged in merely a fractional unit of administration, while another, in a high position, may be concerned with the whole process. The polymorphous type of activity which we propose to make into an academic discipline may possibly cause defaitism in us by making us feel that the study of Public Administration is simply a waste of time.
b)   Our greatest comfort both in theory and in practice is the institutional law by which any specialised public functionary finds that as time goes on he has increasing administrative functions with proportionately fewer specialised functions, while his work content and official working hours remain unchanged. The use of the terms "generic processes" and "administrative processes" implies that in spite of the fragmented or polymorphic nature of the activities aimed at goal attainment, there must be systematized order in the process of "administration".

c) In order to understand in any government context that is, *local, provincial or national* – the nature and extent of administration, **a systematized analysis is necessary. Significant progression of knowledge is based on meaningful; analytic frameworks that will provide a logical and rational explanation of the "administrative process".** The purpose here is to try by means of oversimplified analytical frameworks to give a significant conception of how the whole government complex focus of our study lies.

d) Since administration is "not an end in itself" and cannot exist in a "vacuum" [J.J.N. Cloete, 1972:1-2], we must put the administrative process into relative perspectives in the environment in which the processes take place. The various perspectives we propose phenomena in a given governmental area.

3.1 The purely rational perspective of any operational reality.

It is generally accepted that the actions of any rational being are directed towards the attainment of a goal. And a goal is a desirable future state of affairs, simply because the present state of affairs provides no satisfaction. If the present state of affairs provides adequate satisfaction and contains no problem areas, the individual will set no new goal to change the currently satisfactory state of affairs. However, goal substitution is possible to maintain the current state of affairs.

As in the home goals are set and activities undertaken to reach goals, so in the government economy we find that a multiplicity of goals (occasionally conflicting with one another owing to partly political polarizations) have to be attained through the process of public administration. The action(s) intended to realise goals can be schematically represented as in figure 1/1.
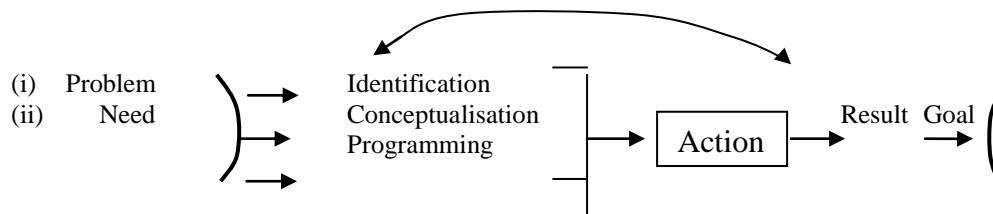

Fig. 1/1: Oversimplified system for goal realisation

When a problem or need exists it is necessary to identify the problem or need as well as to conceptualise the factors affecting the problem or need, and to draw up a programme of action. Once the necessary action has been taken the result is measured by the identified problem or goal.

This system of goal realization is in fact the simple cybernetic model of N. Wiener [1961] and Deutsch [1963 and 1966]. In this course you do not need a deep knowledge of *cybernetics* but if you are interested read the work by Deutsch. In course II you will learn about it.

3.2 The systems perspective

Following on from above purely rational perspective we have found it necessary to **extend the process of goal realisation** to a **global governmental area** as exemplified by **a local, provincial or national government.** Before we go any further you would do well to study figure 1/2
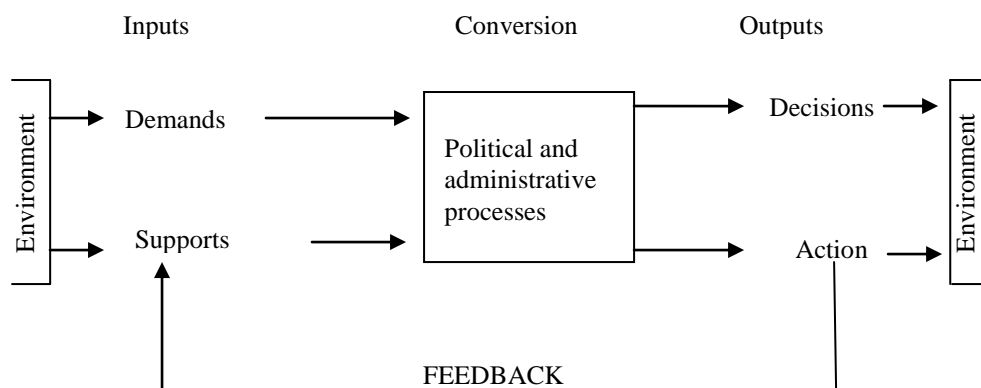

Fig. 1/2 David Easton's combined political-administration systems model

In any given governmental area certain **demands** are made on the authority by the **environment** of the authority; for example, demands by the electorate, demands by natural evils such as floods, drought stricken areas, terrorists' activities. **Support** is found in the environment for certain government action by way of such things as election mandates, willingness to pay taxes and obedience to laws and decisions. **The demands and**

support provide the necessary inputs, which through **careful political consultation** in the **policy-determining council chambers** (in the **democratic ideology**) and **careful administrative calculation** and **programming**, lead to political **decisions (laws, ordinances or decrees) administrative** (in a comprehensive sense) **action**, which are **ipso facto** aimed at the environment, must effect the necessary **changes** to satisfy the demands and supports; therefore a continual **feedback (party congresses, news reports, press declarations and political speeches) is necessary to test the qualitative and the quantitative aspects of the whole system of goal realisation**. Unfortunately this account is too macro-perspective to obtain detailed knowledge of the role of public administration. We need a broader framework than the foregoing to obtain a thorough **grasp of the role of public administration** in the total government complex.

3.3   The structural-functional perspective
W. R. Mitchell [1962] and **G. A. Almond** and **J. S. Coleman[1960]** built on ideas of Professor **David Easton[1965]** and explained that the different **systems, subsystems and sub-subsystems are integrally interdependent**, and that each must have a **structure** and a *useful function*. **Structures** with **pernicious functions** are apt to contaminate the other **structures** in a **system or subsystem**; for example, the **role of militant trade unions** or **pressure groups in influencing government decisions affects the economy**. In any meaningful study of a governmental complex the inputs, conversion processes and outputs must be defined and in his systems model (figure 1/3). W. R. Mitchell [1962] has tried to identify all the fragmented structural-functional entities.
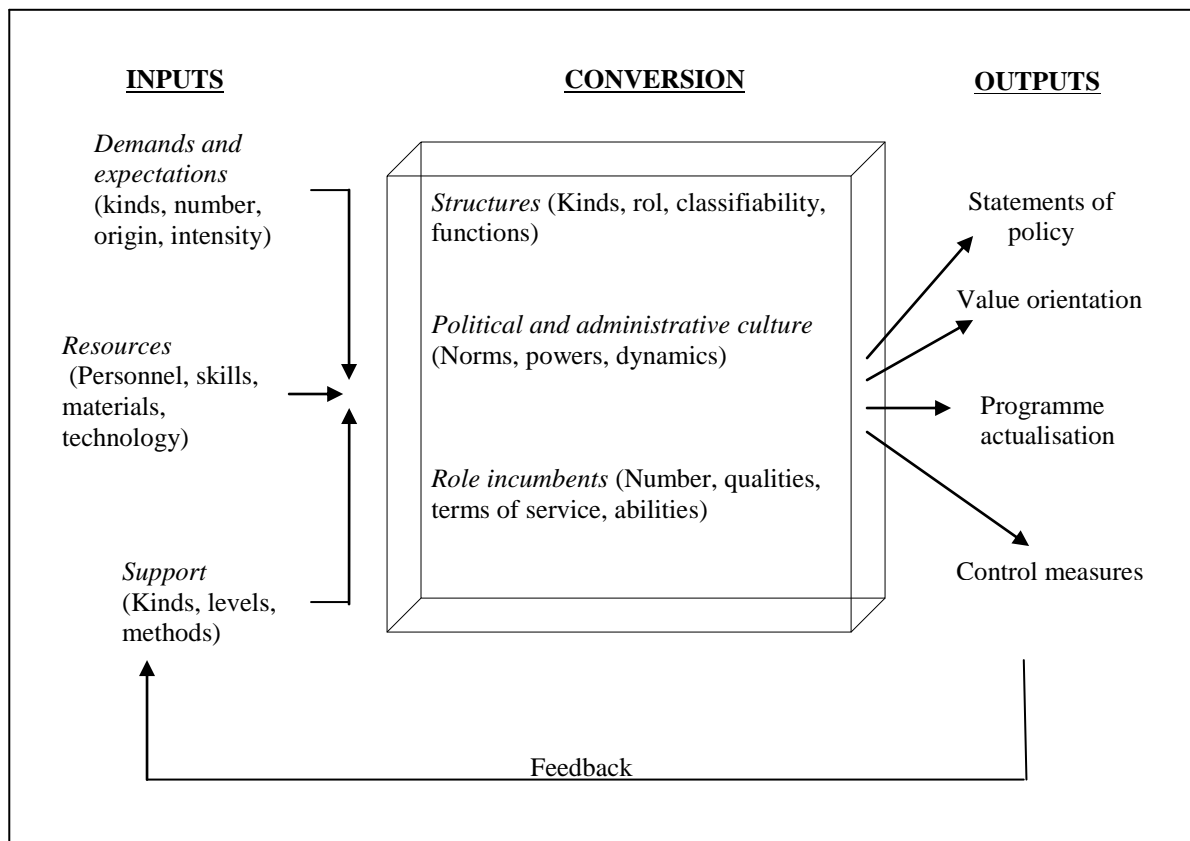

| INPUTS | CONVERSION | OUTPUTS |

Demands and expectations (kinds, number, origin, intensity)

Resources (Personnel, skills, materials, technology)

Support (Kinds, levels, methods)

Structures (Kinds, rol, classifiability, functions)

Political and administrative culture (Norms, powers, dynamics)

Role incumbents (Number, qualities, terms of service, abilities)

Statements of policy

Value orientation

Programme actualisation

Control measures

Feedback

Fig. 1/3: Structural-functional goal-realisation system

In figure 1/3 the inputs to a given system of authority are fragmented into:

(a)   *demands and expectations* set by the community concerned – e.g. a municipal, a provincial or even a national community;

(b)   *resources* available for the realisation of goals; and

(c)   *support* in terms of *goodwill, sympathy and obedience*. The support is usually more specifically manifested in elections and party congresses. Quite understandably, electoral promises, demands from pressure groups (e.g. trade unions, expectations of interest groups such, the national consumer board, chamber of commerce and many others) and available resources cannot lead automatically to goal realisation: order and systematic are essential. Something has to be done to **convert** all the *demands,*

expectations, supports and *resources* into policy, value orientations, programme actualization and control [F.F. Ridley, 1972:70]. The "black box" in which all this conversion takes place consists in *structured institutions* **staffed** by **political office-holders and public servants.** Indeed F. F. Ridley maintained that the "black box" comprised public servants only, but this is somewhat dogmatic, for **public servants and political office-holders perform their activities on a partnership basis [1972:70].**

(d)   Explanations of the contents of the black box
In fact the black box consists of:

- *structures* **such as legislative bodies, a cabinet, government departments, public corporations**, *agricultural products control boards, research institutes, local authorities, provincial institutions and numbers of other structural manifestations of a public nature;*

- *a political and administrative culture* **governed by norms**, *political ideologies, appointed powers and institutional dynamics*; and

- *role incumbents***, the office-holders, the people who use their intellectual and physical abilities to satisfy social needs by producing goods and services.** These three entities people separated for analytical purposes only, but in a system perspective are interwoven and interdependent. Every entity fulfils its role by performing a function; in other words, it serves as a means to an end. The goals set – e.g. defence, immigration control use of resources – have to be reached by the processes of policy determination, value orientations, implementation of work programmes, and continuous control; i.e. testing or evaluation of achievement by the goal set (feedback). Here we should point out that because "public administration" cannot take place in a vacuum, very many factors influence its nature and as Politics and public administration are continuously interwoven. In fact it has become dogmatic to say that public administration always takes place in a political milieu. To complete the picture of public goal realisation we must extend the systems model still further.

3.4 The operational perspective
So far we have seen that the angle from which we study a governmental complex and its essential functions does not matter, for **we return to the conclusion that public administration has a central role in the implementation of political decisions.** Indeed, political demands and expectations (promises) cannot be made operational except through public administration. As we have indicated, administration in any institutional context is directed at goal realisation. The study of the "administrative process" is very largely determined by the classifiability of actions found in the process of administration. **Administrative process is therefore a collective term for all the sub-processes that fall within an accepted classification framework. It has taken long however, to obtain a meaningful classification framework and numbers of overseas authors have written of the "administrative process**" and then discussed the widest diversity of "processes" in their work. In 1967, however, (**Professor J. J. N. Cloete** in his book, Introduction to Public Administration 1967), **gave the most meaningful analytical framework so far thought out.** Now we must emphasize that his classification of "processes" is not entirely new "invention", for in most books on Public Administration the division into chapters is in accordance with the administrative processes, even though the authors of such books may not have realised that their chapter headings constituted the "administrative process, even though the authors of such books may not have realised that their chapter headings constituted the "administrative process'. [Compare the work of Cloete with the works of Dimock, Dimock and Koenig, Marx, Pfiffner and Presthus, White.]
We **consider** the work of Professor J.J.N. Cloete to be **extremely rational and practical, and believe that it could be made operational in any institutional frame of reference.** In this course our discussion of **the six main administrative categories listed by him, namely, policy, organization, finance, personnel, procedures and control [POFPPC], will be merely introductory, and only** in the advanced courses will they be examined in detail. We need to remember that the administrative process can literally be applied in all shapes of work. For example, the head of a stores department is responsible for –

(a)   determining an internal stores *policy* and advising his departmental head of the policy of   the institution in this particular regard.
(b)   the establishment of *organisational arrangements* such as coordination, communication,   distribution of authority, function allocation, delegation;
(c)   *financial matters* relating to stores in general and his stores in particular;
(d)   handing *personnel matters*, e.g. training, incentives to work, proper utilisation of personnel;
(e)   constant reviewing and improvement of stores *procedures and methods* of operation; and
(f)   *control* and evaluation of activities of the stores section.

As we can see, '*administration' is eminently flexible in its application and can be used in a global government context* or in the narrow field of office routine. The processes apply equally to *international, central, regional and municipal or local government*, and the analytical model for public administration is applicable also to the analysis of State Corporations, agricultural products control boards or public research institutions.

Since the *administrative process* forms such an important basis of study in Public Administration, we feel it advisable to provide the readers you with an "analytical model". In this context "model" means a true representation of reality, but on a smaller scale.

3.5 The analytical model for public administration

a) The administration process consists of six substantive elements policy, organization, finance, personnel, procedures and control [POFPPC].
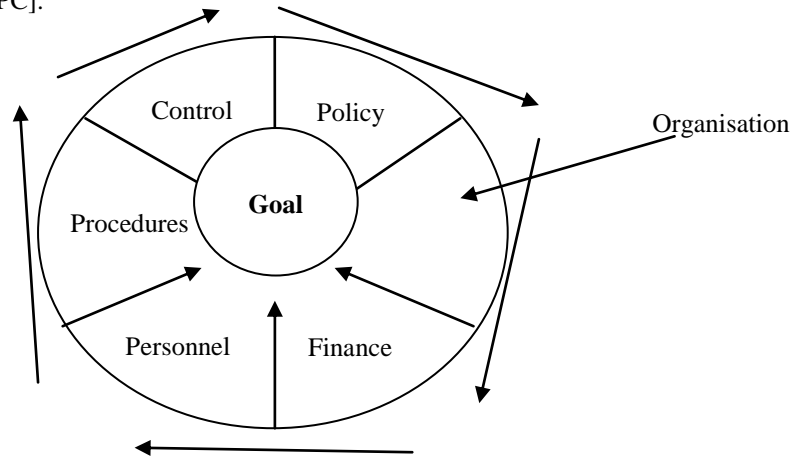
Figure 1/4: Analytical Model for public administration

b) Our model is **circular** to obviate the appearance of a specific hierarchy in the process. For meaningful analysis we can begin with any sector and move in any direction wish[P.S. Botes, 1981] since the analytical model is applicable to the entire field of public authority, whatever the governmental level be it local, provincial, national or international government[S.B.M. Marume:1983, 1988 and 2015]. If the model is used for government on a municipal level the substance and the scope of every process will be applicable to the municipal milieu, and if the central authority is used as the frame of reference the substance of every process will include comprehensive global processes. Here additional frames of references are necessary for a clear concept of an analysis of any one of the global processes. For example, in a consideration of the category finance at central governmental level the further analytical model will be as follows:
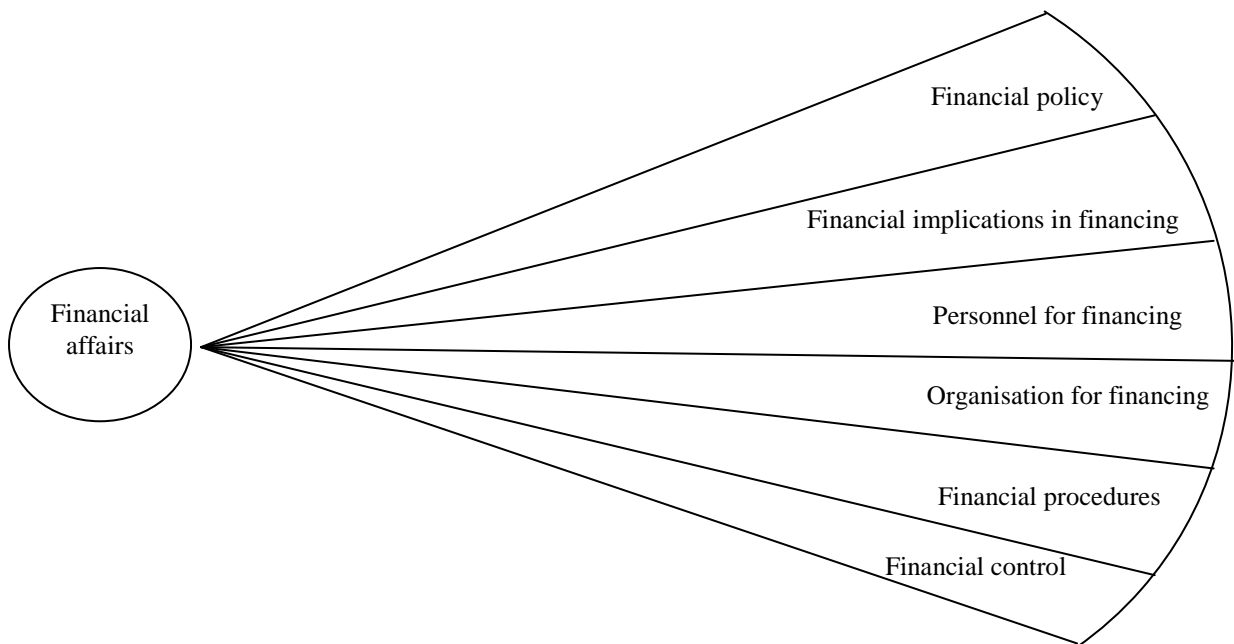
Fig 1/5: Administrative aspects pertaining to government finance

IV. Conclusion

a) Professor J.J.N. Cloete as a leading social scientist provides a reasonably rational conceptual framework for public administration.

b) The simplified model in Figure 1.5 explains the administrative process found in financing any governmental context. Bear in mind however, that the separate "processes" In this frame of reference contain *inherent sub-processes* capable of being expanded in the same fashion.

c) So we may continue systematically extending the *administrative process* until we reach the *sub-sub-sub-processes* on the operational or worker's level. In other words, our argument agrees with figure 1/5 in this study. Merely by examining this chain relationship more closely readers will realise the importance of defining the frame of reference readers are working with at any particular moment.

d) Obviously it is difficult to frame valid theories for any one of the processes without first defining the relevant frame of reference.

Bibliography

[1]   Allen, L. A. *Management and Organisation*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1958.
[2]   Allen, L. A. *The Management Profession*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1964.
[3]   Appleby, P. *Policy and Administration*, Alabama, Alabama U. P., 1949.
[4]   Botes, P. S. "The concept administration," *The Public Servant* – Official magazine of the Public Servants Association of South Africa, Vol LIII, No. 2, February 1973.
[5]   Cloete, J. J. N. *Introduction to Public Administration*, Pretoria, J. L. van Schaik (pty) Ltd 1985.
[6]   Emmerich, H. "The scope of the practice of Public Administration" in Charlesworth, James, C. (ed.), *Theory and Practice of Public Administration: Scope, Objective, Methods*, Philadelphia, The American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1968.
[7]   Fayol, H. *General and Industrial Management*, New York, Pitman, 1949.
[8]   Garson, David G. and Overman, Samuel E. *Public Management Research in the United States,* New York, Praeger Publishers, 1983.
[9]   W. Fox and Ivan Meyer: Public Administration Dictionary: Juta and Company; 1995
[10]   Gladden, E, N. *A History of Public Administration*, Vol. 2, London Frank Cass, 1972.
[11]   Glick, Luther and Urwick, L. (eds.) *Papers on the Science of Administration*, New York, Institute of Public Administration, 1937.
[12]   Hanekom, S. X. and Thornhill, C. *Public Administration in Contemporary Society*, Johannesburg, Macmillan, 1983.
[13]   Hood, Christopher C. *The Limits of Administration*, London John Wiley & Sons, 1976.
[14]   Marume, S.B.M.: SADCC administration of economic programmes with reference to food and agricultural programmes: unpublished PhD [Public Administration] thesis: California University for Advanced Studies: October 31, 1988.
[15]   Nigro, F. A. *Public Administration Readings and Documents*, New York, Rinehart & Co., 1951.
[16]   Ridley, F. F. *The Study of Government: Political Science and Public Administration*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1975.
[17]   Robbins, Stephen P. *The Administrative Process*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1980.
[18]   Roux, B. *"The functioning and efficiency of the S.A. Public sector"* in SAIPA – Journal of Public Administration, Vol. 6, No. 4, December 1971.
[19]   Smith Edward C. and Zurcher, Arnold J. *Dictionary of American Politics*, New York, Barnes & Noble Inc., 1968.
[20]   White, L. D. *Introduction to the Study of Public Administration*. New York, Macmillan, 1955.
[21]   Wilson, Woodrow: *The Study of Public Administration*, Washington, Public Affairs Press (Introduced by Ralph Purcell), 1955.

Profile of contributor and photograph

Samson Brown Muchineripi Marume: a former senior civil servant for over 37 years serving in various capacities of seniority and 10 years as deputy permanent secretary; thirteen years as a large commercial farmer; well travelled domestically within Zimbabwe; regionally [SADC countries: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritius, Swaziland, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Zambia and DRC]; and Africa [Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Libya, and Uganda]; and internationally [Washington, New York and California in USA; Dublin and Cork in Irish Republic; England in United Kingdom; Netherlands, Frankfurt in Germany; Lisbon in Portugal; Spain (Nice), Paris in France, Geneva in Switzerland, Belgrade in former Yugoslavia-; Rome and Turin in Italy; Nicosia – Cyprus; Athens – Greece; Beijing and Great Walls of China; Singapore; Hong Kong; Tokyo, Kyoto, Yokohama, and Osaka, in Japan]; fourteen years as management consultant and part – time lecturer for BA/BSc and MA/MBA degree levels with Christ College- affiliate of Great Zimbabwe University and National University of Science and Technology; six years as PhD/DPhil research thesis supervisor, internal and external examiner with Christ University, Bangalore, India, and Zimbabwe Open University; external examiner of management and administrative sciences at Great Zimbabwe University (2016 – 2019); currently senior lecturer and acting chairperson of Department of Public Administration in Faculty of Commerce and Law of Zimbabwe Open University; a negotiator; a prolific writer who has published five books, twenty five modules in public administration and political science for undergraduate and postgraduate students, and over sixty referred journal articles in international journals [IOSR, IJSR, ISCA – IRJSS, IJESR, MJESR, IJESI, IJBMI, IJHSS and Quest Journals] on constitutional and administrative law, public administration, political science, philosophy, Africa in international politics, local government and administration, sociology and community development; vastly experienced public administrator; and an eminent scholar with specialist qualifications from University of South Africa, and from California University for Advanced Studies, State of California, United States of America: BA with majors in public administration and political science and subsidiaries in sociology, constitutional law and English; postgraduate special Hons BA [Public Administration]; MA [Public Administration]; MAdmin magna cum laude in transport economics as major, and minors in public management and communications; MSoc Sc cum laude in international politics as a major and minors in comparative government and law, war and strategic studies, sociology, and social science research methodologies; and PhD summa cum laude in Public Administration.