

ECONOMIC RESEARCH FOR TANZANIA: Some Reflections on
Programmes, Priorities, and Procedures

By

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I

The economic research needs of Tanzania are hardly unique - indeed the assumption that the economic research requirements of developing economies are sui generis is a rather dubious one in general. Economic research is predominantly applied - potentially if not overtly. Pure research usually leads fairly directly to applied. The higher reaches of the new welfare economics or of econometric growth model formulation are not, after all, the stock in trade of a very high proportion of economic researchers anywhere. Equally, most economic research relates primarily to the economy of the country in which it is carried out or to international economic forces, patterns, and institutions as they impinge on the national economy.

On the face of it these two rather platitudinous generalities suggest that economic research as actually conceived and carried out is along lines which, broadly speaking, are relevant to Tanzania and that the primary problems may be ones of quantity and distribution of emphasis rather than radical shifts in nature and scope. However, at a slightly more detailed level certain problems become apparent. First, the number of researchers is very low in relation to the amount of work to be done, especially because the stock of existing studies is itself very sparse. On the one hand this makes co-ordination more imperative to secure a relatively comprehensive and coherent body of work. Laissez faire would be a less inefficient strategy than it actually is in developing economy research work were there enough researchers to guarantee that all major topics would attract at least one student in the absence of some overall planning and resource allocation mechanism. On the other hand, the scarcity of personnel creates a bias toward "quick payoff" research and against applied as well as pure theory. Here the case is much less impressive than that for co-ordination.

It is quite probable that relatively little work in pure theory will be carried out in Tanzania - or East Africa - in the next couple of decades. Neither the research opportunities nor the probable orientations of most personnel would seem to render that likely. The situation in respect to applied theory is much less clear. Applied theory depends very heavily on the institutional and structural assumptions made in its formulation. Applied research normally rests on some explicit or implicit applied theoretical model. However general "pure" theory and certain economic techniques may be the same can hardly be said for institutional and structural conditions. The widespread disenchantment with economic theory in the Tiers Monde and the resultant rise of an "economic underworld" which is often more influential than the "received doctrine" - e.g. in the international trade and payments field - based on largely implicit, imperfectly examined, fragmentary, and often faulty theoretical assumptions are the direct result of inadequate applied theory research centred on developing economies. The use of applied theory based on the "special case" of industrial economies (whether capitalist or socialist) to the "general cases" of Tiers Monde

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economies is at best a make shift and at worse highly misleading to the point of counterproductivity. Indeed, if there is a unique characteristic of economic research about Africa it is its non-African nature. A large - though happily declining - proportion treats Africa either as an extension of impingement of an external economy or of an international economic system not as a centre of attention in itself. The bulk of research - even today - implicitly accepts many of the institutional and structural assumptions (including the non-economic as well as the economic) of applied theory developed in and for the industrial world. Applied theory should, therefore, play a substantial role in the development of any overall economic research programme in Tanzania.

The most relevant extant "school" of applied research for Tanzania is probably that loosely defined as structuralist. It is the only overall - coherent would be rather too formal a term given its diversity and lack of rigour - approach to applied theory which has emerged and is centred to a substantial extent on the Tiers Monde type economy. Its earliest centre was probably Rangoon University under Professor Myint, its most famous (or notorious, depending on one's point of view) the Economic Commission for Latin America under Professor Prebisch, and its best known Africa centred proponents (at least best known in East Africa) Professor Seers and some of his colleagues at ECA and Sussex. (There are probably more Francophonic than Anglophonic Africa centred structuralists but Professors Perroux, de Bernis, La Croix, Amin, et alia are almost unknown in Anglophonic Africa).

The issues of economic researcher-government contact and communication also have significant uniformities in most countries. Data provision, two way communication, the role of academicians in government, provision of study results to interested government bodies in a useable form at a useful time - these could as well be workshop agenda items in Washington as in Kampala. Admittedly their exact nature varies from country to country. Published data and unofficial personal sources are scarcer in Africa so that the researcher tends to be more dependent on official contacts and provision of unpublished source materials. The proportion of short term visitors and of expatriates is very high leading to very realistic doubts as to the probable return flow of ideas and studies and also as to their likely quality and relevance. In varying degrees the problem of security (very broadly defined in terms of knowledge approximating power) is also perceived as more acute when most data seekers are foreign. The scarcity of top level economic civil servants creates further stresses - every minute spent with a researcher is a minute taken away from pressing public business and must be justified as at least potentially benefitting Tanzania now or in the future.

To be rather brutally frank economic researchers - viewed as a group - have tended to exacerbate these problems, in Tanzania with the notable exception of the security concern. Frequent requests are made for interviews when the data actually sought is available in print; promises to send drafts of studies to assisting ministries are not always fulfilled (or even made); busy officials' time is sometimes treated as of no importance; complete lack of preparation and background for meaningful research is displayed again and again. Two random examples may help illustrate. The first concerns a student (apparently acting on the advice of an ex-University of East Africa Faculty member) who wanted to do a thesis of paper on "Manpower and Employment Policy in Tanzania". At least that seemed to be his proposed topic, he was rather vaguer. He knew nothing about Tanzania, nor for that matter did he seem to know much about his employment and manpower policy anywhere; his proposed methodology was fifty odd extended, unstructured interviews with Ministers, senior officials, advisors, and parastatal managers. The second is a form letter requesting social, political, demographic, institutional, and economic information on a regional basis in a form and quantity

that is not available for U.S. states. The letter rather brusquely informed the Minister - to whom it was addressed by title - that Tanzania was one of a dozen odd selected countries honored by the request and would please to reply promptly so the professor and his research staff would not be kept waiting. These are, admittedly, extreme cases and not ones for which any institution or individual present is responsible but the accumulation of such cases, along with less flagrant ones, has affected the official climate in relation to all economic research. This is particularly true of research not carried on under the aegis of an institution with a record of providing information and advice in return for time and data.

II

A taxonomic approach to the economic research needs of Tanzania would doubtless rival Professor Meade's magnum opus on trade, payments, and welfare in length but hardly in interest or usefulness. A short checklist would be exceedingly dry and probably not very illuminating. However, it may be useful to sketch:

- (a) types of economic research with some observations on examples of each;
- (b) research related functions which are likely to be part of the demands placed on a research programme or at least on its staff; and
- (c) a few requirements for fruitful relations between economic researchers and the government including greater freedom of movement between the two spheres.

Six general types of research are: applied theory, strategy, policy, programme, project, and procedural or institutional. Any one study is likely to have elements relating to more than one category although most are dominantly within one or another. For example, although a variety of policy and institutional proposals are made in the General Theory it is basically a study in applied theory. Despite its presentation of a quasi-operational econometric programming model, Paul Clark's planning volume is primarily a study in the strategy of planning not in programming as such.

Applied theory, as the term is used here, represent formulation or reformulation of economic theory in the context of a particular set of conditions and institutions. For example, a study of the relevant principles and requirements for economic union among developing countries (as opposed to the Meade-Viner work on economic union among developed industrial economies) would fall into this category. So would an analysis of the relevance of multiple or variable exchange rates to the attainment of external balance under specified assumptions as to the internal structural and external institutional and other exogenous characteristics relevant to the Tanzanian or a more generalized "primary export oriented" economy.

Particularly critical areas for applied theoretical work in East Africa would appear to include international economic relationships, economic structure and its relationship to economic and social development, and development sequences. Applied research as such does not usually provide answers to policy questions but it does - or at least should - provide a framework within which to test alternatives and a foundation from which to build more directly applied work. For example, a Tanzanian study elaborating the work of Linder on trade and development would be likely to form a useful starting point for a review of Tanzanian's foreign economic strategy and policy, a review which it would be very difficult to carry out in a systematic manner at present because of the need to examine the assumptions of available theory and strategy models on an ad hoc basis, a process which is prodigal of time and damaging to overall

consistency. In practice most applied theory workers are directly concerned with the political economic implications of their work and offer at least an outline of what they see as its strategic and policy implications, for example, Ewing on industrialization in Africa. The inverse may also hold, policy and strategy writers often seek to generalise their more specific conclusions backward to create a more general frame, for example, Samir Amin on overall development (albeit the resulting applied theory model is rather scattered and fragmented).

Research on economic strategy may be overall, e.g. development and/or planning of the entire economy, or - more usual - sectoral. It seeks to establish broad guide lines and perspectives with some attention to, but not necessarily detailed formulation of, policy and programme instruments for implementation. Some recent work on African economic integration, e.g. Seidman and Green, and on industrialisation in countries or sub-regions, e.g. La Croix and de Bernis, falls into this category.

Strategic, like applied theoretical, research is an area in which university researcher leadership is particularly critical. It is most unlikely that understaffed government economic units will be able to give sustained attention to basic research on twenty year perspectives and guidelines but essential that they have some background studies of this type to use in formulating perspective plans and at least certain sectoral programmes, e.g. research and manpower development. An evident weakness of industrial sector planning in Tanzania (in all of East Africa for that matter) is the lack of any coherent, reasoned, and worked out strategy beyond a rather unsophisticated combination of consumer and construction goods, import substitution, export processing, and competitive regional market acquisition.

The lack of national industrial strategies, and of a serious research grounding on which to base them, leads directly to a lack of co-ordinated regional economic strategy in the field of industry. That lack, if perpetuated, is likely to prove exceedingly damaging both to the East African Community and to the attainable degree of viable industrialization in each member country.

A quick check list of sectors or topics urgently requiring strategic research includes: industrial development, regional economic unification, long term export development, and overall rural development approaches (including non-agricultural as well as agricultural activities and paying specific attention to choices between concentration and breadth of coverage in relation to areas, crops, and farmers).

Policy research assumes some working base of relevant applied theory and strategy if it is intended to be directly relevant to actual policy formulation and selection. For example, a study of optimal industrial protection is rather hard to formulate, much less complete, without some assumptions as to desirable roles and strategic growth paths for industry. This is not to say that some useful policy research cannot proceed strategic or theoretical studies. Effective protection and break even ratio studies can be carried out on a self contained basis. However, without some assumptions they do not (except in the cases of quite nonsensical rates) provide very clear policy guidance. For example, uniform levels of protection are hardly likely to be sound unless one makes quite extreme homogeneity assumptions about the industrial sector and cut-off ceilings for effective protection uniformly applied implicitly assume that forward and backward linkage effects are of distinctly secondary importance. (One problem of standard effective protection theory is that it assumes inputs into a manufacturing industry are independent of its existence an assumption which is often demonstrably false, e.g. sugar growing and sugar processing, dairying and dairy industry establishments, barley growing and brewing - in East Africa at least).

Much policy research in East Africa does appear to suffer from inappropriate, unclear, or fragmentary applied theory, strategy, and political economic aims premises. Explicit assumptions would be of great value as, in general, it is possible to "rerun" a study with different assumptions at least in an approximate form far more easily than to do a new study or to try to guess what assumptions have been made and how they affect the end results.

Policy research is particularly important because the besetting sin of simplified macro economics in the field of growth is over-emphasis on gross fixed capital formation while that of the present conventional wisdom in economic planning is placing primary emphasis in individual project viability. As a result policy issues may tend to receive distinctly secondary attention rather as if one were truly engaged in formulating comprehensive, centralized material balances plans within a political economic framework which made their implementation practicable. Such a tendency would be particularly dangerous in the fields of commerce and of agriculture. Here detailed central intervention, throughgoing public sector ownership, and large capital intensive projects are at best of limited applicability and at worst represent a diversion of resources and attention from genuine issues and opportunities to marginal enthusiasms (or animadversions) and primrose paths.

The broad field in which policy research - or even a comprehensive body of descriptive studies of scope and quality - is most singularly lacking is commerce with the partial exception of international trade and related marketing board mechanisms. Domestic commerce outside major cities, a few export crops, and a handful of specialized papers whose central concern is often not economic policy, is virtually a terra incognita. The comparison with West Africa is striking and the superficial explanation that West African domestic trade is far more varied and important is far from being self evidently valid. (One could argue that the greater research effort has created the greater awareness of domestic commerce and not the reverse.) Commerce overlaps with agricultural development. Fairly clearly incentives in terms of closer, surer, and more remunerative markets for produce and of a wider array of easily obtainable goods at lower prices are likely to be among the key policy variables in securing greater agricultural output and in achieving changes in output patterns on the part of the four million or more farm families who form the bulk of the rural sector. Neither the declining private plantation nor the specialized and relatively slowly growing state (or parastatal) farming subsectors will take over the dominant role of the smallholders in the foreseeable future.

If centrally formulated goals for small farmers are to have any operational significance it must be achieved largely through policy instruments. Marketing and commerce, research and extension, crop and input pricing, agricultural education - all are basically policy and recurrent budget areas not items on the capital budget list. In sum they are probably at least as important as provision of additional transport and storage facilities and certainly much more so than large scale ranches and irrigation schemes. The possibilities for rural development policy research are almost limitless and while much more has been done in this sector than in commerce the problem facing the would be researcher is still one of the number and scope of untouched fields not of their paucity or limited significance.

Programme studies are likely to encompass a set of policies and projects. For example, a coffee diversification programme research project might include investigation of means to render coffee growing less economically attractive subject to realistically evaluated social and political constraints, potential alternative crops in present coffee growing areas and their marginal productivity as compared to that of coffee, possible supplementary activities for

coffee growers which would at least reduce their emphasis on expanding output, and the projects and policies necessary to make the new and supplemental activities economically acceptable and technically practicable for potential and/or present coffee growers.

A problem which is inherent to such programme research is illustrated by the above example. If a number of related but scattered and variegated projects and a congeries of policies with similar or complementary aims (at least in principle and intent) but quite different specific approaches are involved a study in depth will be excessively time consuming for a single researcher. One possible approach would be that of joint programme studies arising from several individual policy or project studies, and conducted as a part of the smaller research projects. For example, a study of large scale agricultural venture programmes might be built up from a set of studies comprising the Tanzanian Sisal Corporation, the Ruvu State Farm, the NDC ranching schemes and tea plantations, the Settlement Division, tobacco, rice and wheat settlement schemes, and the Ministry of Agriculture's large scale wheat scheme. Each would be conducted as a study in itself but certain uniform data would be sought in each case in order to allow a second stage study of large scale public and parastatal agricultural programmes as a group.

Project research is perhaps virtually self defining, if not necessarily very homogenous. It can range from management studies of a few selected smallholder units to an evaluation of a multiunit industry such as milling and can include ex ante viability as well as ex post evaluation research.

In practice both industrial and pre establishment "economic plausibility" studies are relatively scarce. The most evident reason is lack of data. East African industrialists (including by and large the public sector ones though in this case to a decreasing degree) are not always very forthcoming with the data necessary for serious evaluations when it is requested by official bodies let alone by unofficial researchers. However, with increasing government concern with and involvement in the industrial sector (including the private portion) the quantity and quality of information available is likely to increase. This process might be speeded up if East African statistical reporting legislation, and in particular its limitations on use of data provided, were to be reviewed in the light of national analytical needs.

"Economic plausibility" studies may require closer government-university liaison in the form of providing lists of projects which have just entered the "speculative consideration" category. While non-government researchers should be encouraged to attempt pre-feasibility studies of projects they think should be of national economic interest the provision of lists of projects which are or are about to come under serious government investigations should be a useful guide. It is not very useful to ask for non-government research advice at the same time that an official feasibility study is commissioned unless some method for combining the two or integrating the university researcher in the official study is possible. Such a combined operation might often be valuable given the limited ministerial and parastatal economic analytical capacity and the biases inherent in feasibility work done by those directly or indirectly associated with project promoters. Certainly studies which identified which of a set of project ideas appeared the most promising (and which ones were clearly non-starters) or provided independent evaluations of schemes under active consideration could be of substantial value to Tanzania if they were completed and made available to the relevant decision makers in good time.

Procedural or institutional research centres on "machinery" for carrying out projects or implementing policies. This is again a field in which relatively little has been done outside a handful of

official studies although increased interest has been evidenced over the past two years, partly at least as a result of the major expansion of the public sector following Arusha.

Among the more important areas are: coordination and decentralization of decision taking in rural development strategy implementation; credit allocation and regulation; rural credit allocation, channelling, supervision, and recovery; organization of public sector directly productive activities and their integration into the overall planning process; the role of foreign managing agents in Tanzanian owned (whether public or private) enterprises; the budgetary process and its effectiveness as an allocation and policy implementation tool; planning ministry instruments for controlling implementation of plan policy and project objectives (including but not limited to control over formulation of monetary development budgets); co-ordination of economic policy formulation and decision making within government.

These are areas of administrative rather than pure economics and management, administration, and other applied political scientists have a major role to play in their study. However, they clearly do have economic aspects. Machinery may not cause anything to happen but it can certainly increase the probability of events taking place, influence the type of decisions taken, and - at worst - cripple perfectly well designed strategies, programmes, policies, and projects. Economic research can hardly eschew consideration of procedures and structures or treat them as peripheral if it is to be seriously concerned with what actually happens and how either in terms of explaining or of influencing events.

Where research should be carried out is neither a matter of rigid principles nor even hard and fast operational rules. Applied theory and strategy work is likely to be carried out almost solely in the university context in Tanzania at least for the next decade. Specific research on tax programme formulation and implementation is necessarily carried out under conditions of secrecy which normally - though not inevitably - preclude non-governmental participation. Comprehensive sectoral feasibility and viability studies - e.g. for an integrated iron and steel industry in Southern Tanzania and for a resultant engineering industry to utilize the iron and steel output are likely to require greater resources both in terms of funds and of personnel than can be secured except through the hiring of outside consultants or the creation of specialized research programmes. However, more ingenuity is needed in the involvement of both governmental and unofficial researchers in such overall exercises in order to make use of what national capacity exists now and - equally critical - broaden the base of national experience and capability for future studies.

The basic needs seem to be for co-ordination of all research, both governmental and non-governmental, and for the exchange of information on ongoing work and its state of progress. It is neither practicable, nor desirable, to specify topic areas by institution, assign studies arbitrarily to particular individuals, nor to forbid overlapping studies. It is desirable to attempt to secure some comprehensiveness and cohesion in the overall pattern of research attempted, to pool efforts in areas of interest to several individuals and institutions, and to avoid pure duplications of effort.

III

In addition to research proper a number of quasi-research, quasi-operational needs can usefully be met by research personnel. In the Tanzania context it is often true that there is no one else available to meet them. These functions may be loosely categorized as gap filling, secondment, and part time operational service.

Gap filling may at one extreme be very close to normal research and at the other very close to routine operational economic reporting and control. In the course of preparing for international economic conferences or working up relevant background materials and projections for planning it is fairly common to identify topics which are, in the abstract, important; present complex and intellectually interesting questions; but are not of apparent central concern to Tanzanian interests and planning. If these are handled within the government economic service they can only be treated in a superficial, routine manner in the hope that their apparent irrelevance or marginality is real and not illusive. The alternative is to "subcontract" the preparation of a serious study to a researcher who is interested in the topic and can give it more attention. For example: Tanzania is unlikely to be a world market sugar exporter on any scale for many years. Therefore, if a detailed Tanzanian study on the best means for reforming the International Sugar Agreement is to be prepared it is necessary to give serious consideration to whether an outside researcher would be interested as neither Agriculture, Treasury, nor Commerce priorities are likely to allow them to spare the staff.

When planned in advance, gap filling of the type just sketched can result in substantial research studies. However, more urgent and less academic demands also arise. Immediately, following the nationalization of commercial banking in Tanzania basic data on certain aspects of credit provision, normal seasonal credit swings, interlocking lines of credit, and external commercial credit were required as well as a day to day reporting system covering changes in overall, branch, and sectoral deposits and advance levels. A leisurely study was neither wanted nor possible, data had to start flowing at once. While the data were doubtless of interest from a research point of view and the subsequently elaborated National Bank of Commerce statistical reporting system is a tool for monetary research in Tanzania, it would be idel to pretend that what the Tanzania Treasury desired, was offered, and secured from the Economic Research Bureau was research on banking system organization and credit control.

Gap filling merges into ad hoc secondment. Conference paper or brief writing may lead to selection to the delegation for an extended conference such as UNCTAD. Working on the setting up and initial operation of a data collection and reporting system in NBC led to more extended loan of several Economic Research Bureau members for economic analytical and advisory work. The reasons which lead to public sector requests of this kind are evident. The public economic service has less than no spare senior personnel; external recruitment tends to be time consuming and is, in any event, not suitable for short term assignments; preexisting personal and institutional contacts tend to be critical for rapid establishment of working relationships.

The research payoff from ad hoc secondment will vary tremendously depending not only on the actual job but also on the researchers own interests. A short term secondment to a planning ministry can be exceedingly valuable for a student of planning; working in a relatively routine advisory capacity in a bank would not be likely to be of great value to an international monetary institutions researcher. Similarly conference attendance can be stimulating and valuable as a means of being brought into close contact with new ideas and people but it is also extremely time consuming.

Part time operational posts include membership on Boards of Directors (e.g. National Development Corporation, Bank of Tanzania); participation in the planning process (e.g. the working groups for the Tanzania Second Five Year Plan); membership on permanent or semi-permanent official policy evaluation and advisory committee (e.g. the Tanzania Common Market Council interministerial official committee). The government's aim in seeking informed unofficial economists members of such bodies is, again, not to promote research as such but to benefit from the involvement of experienced personnel and (indirectly at least) from their research work in related fields as it contributes to their participation.

However, a university member who serves on a body which is relevant to his special interests and takes his role seriously is likely to find it stimulating and fruitful from a research point of view. On the one hand memberships do give access to fairly clear lists of pressing issues and problems as seen by the government and the parastatal sector and to papers presenting information and ideas on how they might be tackled. On the other, they provide an effective avenue for presenting new ideas and research findings (perhaps stimulated directly by the agenda and papers) as well as a forum for very directly applied economic discussion. The danger confronting the serious unofficial member is not likely to be lack of challenge but inability to select a limited array of topics for really new thinking and study while dealing with others in less depth on the basis of his existing knowledge and experience.

The government attitudes toward quasi-research activities are fairly straightforward. Economic research should be relevant to seeking solutions to economic problems and therefore it is desirable to bring the mind of the researcher to bear in the context of problem solving in fields related to his research as well as in his study itself. Further, research economists represent a fairly high proportion of all trained economists in Tanzania and the only group who can readily rearrange their programmes to free time for meeting emergency needs. Finally, participation in policy advising and problem solving is likely to be a stimulus and a guide to more fruitful future research.

The first and last government positions are basically consistent with those of many researchers. Concern with the application of research findings is common to many economists and for them participation in policy advising and membership on decision making bodies is clearly a logical extension of their work. Similarly the applied research economist is likely to find such participation beneficial in clarifying the nature of problems as they confront economic decision makers and in resolving questions of priority in choosing research topics. The second

government position poses more problems - it is fatally easy for a researcher to be seduced into a situation in which he finds himself more and more an ad hoc, relatively superficial consultant and less and less a serious student of the problems on which he is consulting.

This analysis suggests both that quasi-research functions are likely to be a lasting, not a transitional, part of Tanzania's research (or at least researcher) needs and that these functions are not necessarily very different in Tanzania compared to developed economies. The academic economist as advisor, consultant, board member, and short term civil servant is certainly a common figure in North America and increasingly so in Western Europe. The primary danger also appears to be the same - for the economist to end with a grabbag of unrelated advisory and consultancy functions which take up all or most of his time and leave him divorced from the more focused and serious work which originally made him valuable in advisory roles.

IV

General discussions of the requirements for effective government - outside researcher cooperation are often "academic" in the worst sense. The basic principles involved are so simple as to be virtually platitudinous. On the other hand the concrete details of putting the principles into operation in any particular case tend to be very specific to individual situations and times and to have very limited general validity or interest in and of themselves. What is appropriate in Tanzania in 1969 is not necessarily workable in Uganda in 1969 and may have become inappropriate for Tanzania by 1974. However, a brief glance at a few general requirements and of some of the ways in which they may be met can have some value at least as a stimulus to further thought.

It is important to remember that all requirements whether for data, for confidence, for communication are two way. An effective national research programme places responsibilities and imposes demands on all participants not merely the government official or the non-government researcher. True, a government may decide that it does not attach any great significance to outside research and that therefore it cannot be expected to give much priority to assisting it. When - as in Tanzania - the government decides that the promotion of both official and unofficial research is of significant national interest, it thereby assumes a responsibility for cooperating fully in making research possible and fruitful. Equally, a research programme basically independent of government finance, data, advice, official time, and other assistance has substantially less obligation to adjust its topics and approach to the government's view of national priorities or to assist in the decision making process by the provision of data and personnel, than does one whose operations are significantly dependent on government finance, data, or other support and assistance.

The basic requirements are data, time, ideas, candid comments, and informed advice. Time poses special problems - it is not possible for senior government officials to deal with an unlimited number of researchers nor to attend an unlimited number of seminars to offer advice and comments. The reverse problem of unlimited government requests for data, advice, and time has been less acute to date. It can, however, be quite as real, especially in the quasi-research areas.

It is the need to allocate limited time effectively - not the problem of security as such - which is the basic justification for seeking to establish centralized research clearance procedures. The ideal characteristics of such a procedure include: simplicity, expeditiousness, approval related to competence of researcher and importance of topic, joint university-government participation. In practice these ideals are hard to achieve. Two categories of researcher seem particularly hard to handle. First the short term visitor with a serious but limited and short term programme who simply cannot spend weeks awaiting clearance. Second the ill prepared graduate student whom it is sometimes difficult to reject especially if he is from the national university itself.

Maintaining a two way flow of ideas, comments, advice, and results requires more formal channels of communication than personal contacts alone can provide. This is especially true given the high turnover of researchers and economic civil servants. Purely personal contacts are broken by transfers and departures, new personnel need ways of meeting relevant individuals speedily and in a less formal context than an office interview, group discussions help in bringing newcomers up to date relatively rapidly and painlessly.

Institutional channels of communication are relatively easy to set up at the formal Economic Research Bureau-Government level. Both the Council and the Programme Committee of the Economic Research Bureau are bodies with both university and government representation which function positively and effectively. However, channels for sharing information through seminars and effective distribution of papers are harder to create and maintain.

Economic civil service attendance at seminars is weak and, distressingly, especially so among citizen economists. Effective government readership of most Economic Research Bureau papers is probably quite low. A mutual desire to remedy these weaknesses has not yet led to major success in so doing. A number of possible lines of procedure are worth considering. Is low seminar attendance related to the timing and location of meetings and/or to faulty distribution of notices and papers? Would seminars on broader policy topics using two or three research papers as spring boards for discussion be more attractive to officials? Do junior citizen economists feel their presence is desired and do they feel participation would be meaningful? If not, what can be done by more senior economic civil servants to encourage their attendance?

The large number of Economic Research Bureau papers may in itself reduce their readership. No one economic civil servant is likely to find all of them directly relevant and for most a limited number of papers are of real significance. A small mimeographed document is easily mislaid or buried if reading has to be deferred. Conceivably individual Economic Research Bureau papers could be sent with cover notes to the economic officials likely to find them of immediate value. Then, quarterly, a three month volume of papers with an annotated contents list could be sent to the full mailing list. Papers in limited numbers with notes indicating their relevance to the recipient have a fairly good chance of being read; volumes are much easier than individual papers to keep to hand for later reading or reference.

The rather limited nature of these suggestions and reflections is deliberate. The present seminars and mailings are by no means totally unsuccessful; rather they are less successful than one would wish. Further part of the reason is the very heavy work load most economic civil servants carry--by give in the afternoon the thought of two more hours of meetings on economics is often understandably unappealing.

V.

One apparently mechanical issue does appear of very considerable importance to meeting national economic research needs and to encouraging close relationships between civil service, parastatal, university, and other professional economists. That is the creation of procedures through which it will not only be possible but normal practice for citizen economists to participate in teaching, research, and public sector operational service at some point in their careers whichever one of the three forms basic post. It is highly undesirable that economists should be divided into three distinct groups who meet occasionally on committees, in seminars, at Economic Society Meetings but otherwise inhabit quite distinct worlds. Unfortunately such a division appears to be in danger of developing among citizen economists. What traffic is envisaged seems to consist solely of one way movements from the academic to the governmental. This problem exists elsewhere in Africa and, to a lesser degree, in much of Latin America and South Asia but it is nonetheless disquieting.

In part the cause lies once again in the shortage of personnel. It would be very difficult for the economic civil service to spare individuals for secondment to the university and very welcome to secure additional staff from it. In large measure, however, the cause is probably failure to pose the problem and its possible solutions squarely and forcefully.

A research economist whose interests include public policy and the actual operation of economic development can benefit significantly from occasional tours of civil service or parastatal work. The constraints on government and public sector corporation decision making look very different when seen from within. The same holds for the decision making and implementing process. Gains in terms of securing information and ideas which are in no sense secret but are not in practice readily available to the outside scholar can also be substantial.

Teaching experience can also be valuable both to the researcher and to his students. For the one there is the challenge of making a particular field intelligible, challenging, and important to those not specializing in it. For the others there is the excitement of seeing how the basic tools of their craft are actually being applied to significant problems and questions.

The case for government or parastatal service by teachers of economics is analagous to that for researchers. Teaching about public policy making and implementation-especially to students many of whom will soon be public servants - is likely to be more interesting and illuminating if the lecturer has an operational grounding behind him. Research experience is - or should be - intellectually stimulating and recharging as well as an aid to interesting and effective teaching.

From the government's point of view there can be gains from the employment of seconded research and teaching personnel. The economic civil servant is basically an advisor whose knowledge of economics and how to apply it is at least as important as his experience with specific cases and far more important than his expertise in procedures as such. The academic economist brings new ideas and insights and by looking at longstanding problems with fresh eyes may be extremely valuable in identifying previously overlooked ways of tackling them. The number of successful temporary civil servants on "loan" from universities in a wide range of countries and the number of at least reasonably effective economic advisors and economists in East Africa whose background is basically academic strongly suggest that research and teaching does not disqualify an economist from dealing realistically with concrete policy and programme matters.

It is perhaps the final case - that for research and teaching sabbaticals for civil service and parastatal economists - which is most likely to be challenged. There are few if any economies in which it is normal for senior economic civil servants to spend time at universities or non-governmental research institutes as a regular part of their careers. Acquisition of advanced degrees, "sabbaticals" related to the absence of their party from office, and post-retirement university positions are quite common but planned "secondments" are much less so. However it should also be noted that they are becoming less uncommon.

The value of an economist in the civil or parastatal service depends basically on his ability to advise on the economic implications and consequences of actual or potential events, programmes, and decisions. Experience with the specific problems or questions that he faces from day to day is of value to an economic advisor but it is not in itself adequate to make him effective. The ability to place specifics in a more general context, the capability of analyzing data and of interpreting their meaning, the breadth of background and perception to see and use relevant partial analogies in dealing with the problem in hand-all of these are critical. Ideally the civil or parastatal service economist should have advanced training in economics, some knowledge of recent advances in economic research and methodology, and a broad knowledge of economic theory and policy from which to draw partially relevant parallels to use in dealing with present issues.

Unfortunately it is quite impossible to keep even reasonably up to date on research and methodology or on relevant developments, policies, issues, successes, and failures elsewhere in the world while serving as a senior economic public servant in a senior manpower short developing economy. Keeping enough time for consideration of medium and long term strategy and policy formulation clear from day to day demands is in itself a daunting task and sometimes an impossible one. The implication of this situation is that the breadth and depth of a public sector economist's advice and analysis will tend to narrow and shallow over time. Of necessity past experiences and precedents will bulk larger and new insights and comparisons smaller.

Regular secondment to university positions—say one year in five or six — could be of substantial value in preventing such a process of narrowing. A year of reading, participating in seminars, carrying out a research project related to but differing from normal public sector areas of responsibility, and engaging in a limited amount of lecturing could be immensely refreshing and broadening. The value of such seconded faculty members to the university is evident, what is in danger of being overlooked is that the value of such exchanges to the public service may well be even greater.

The practical difficulties of working out a cross-secondment system should not be very great. This is especially true in Tanzania where civil service economists are posted by a single ministry and where secondment of public servants is a known procedure. Sabbaticals and leaves of absence from universities are hardly novel and trading of research bureau and teaching department faculty should hardly present administrative problems of any magnitude.

Central coordination of exchanges is necessary. The shortage of personnel requires that an approximate balance be maintained between public servants seconded to and academicians borrowed from the university. In the public sector some reshuffling of personnel is likely to be necessary to make the best use of the incoming temporary civil or parastatal servants. However, neither of these needs should pose insuperable difficulties if the principle of cross-secondment is accepted. Coordination of personnel requirements and planning for high level manpower allocation are areas in which both Central Establishments and the manpower section of Planning have considerable experience. Consequential moves of personnel are a normal result of any kind of transfer, promotion or departure, not merely of secondments of the type proposed.

The relevance of the forgoing proposal to developing awareness of and programmes to tackle national economic research needs is quite direct. If the typical research worker or teacher has served in the public sector and the typical economic civil servant has engaged in full time research communication and cooperation will tend to be much more effective and closer. A number of the rather artificial distinctions and barriers to communication which tend to result from a situation in which the government is the prime user and requestor of information and the university the prime provider would vanish if most economists had served with both.