

RE-ENGINEERING THE PUBLIC SECTOR: INTEGRATION OF INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

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ABSTRACT

Africa has been plagued by the 'crisis of governance' right from independence through the 'lost decades' of the 70's and 80's calling for a radical rethinking and paradigm shift to a new management ethos. This paradigm shift included the redefinition of the role of the state in development initiatives, re-engineering of governance structures and management culture in public organizations. This paper traces the successes, failures and challenges of these innovative and entrepreneurial aspects of governance in order to keep alive the debate on Africa's developmental prospects in the new millennium.

Keywords: Re-inventing government, entrepreneurial government, Decentralization, New Public Management.

INTRODUCTION

There is an implicit agreement, in the public management literature, that the two decades spanning 1975–1995 witnessed a near universal re-definition of the relative roles of government, business and the market in both developed and developing countries. Evidence from the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe, as well as Australia and New Zealand, suggests that the new public management (NPM) is, but the contemporary response to the on-going process of change in public administration and governance since the late 18th Century (Boston, 2000; Barzelay, 2001; Khaleghian and Gupta, 2005)

Over the past two decades, the NPM movement has offered a wide menu from which public service reformers (PSR) can pick and choose from. The approach has encompassed techniques and approaches, some old, some new such as job rotation, job enrichment, total quality management, project teams, strategic planning, performance budgeting and re-engineering, familiar in international businesses, but quite rare in large public bureaucracies (Golembiewski et al., 2002; Caiden and Sundaram, 2004). From these, public service reformers have selected and implemented approved programmes with more success in the developed than in the less developed economies (Polidano and Hulme, 1999). The literature also has what is often conceded to be the actual components or elements of the NPM reform, which include: privatization and regulation; civil service reforms; decentralization; contracting and market mechanisms; improved service delivery; human resource management and development; information and communication technology; sustainable development and good governance (Hope, 2001; Minogue, 2001; Schacter, 2001; Taylor, 2001).

According to Caiden and Sundaram (2004, p. 376), many of these reforms are relatively new and experimental, given that performance measures are inadequate and omit adverse effects and unintended consequences (Boston, 2000). The thematic focus of NPM as a tool for re-engineering the public sector is based on the assumption that the approach is a contemporary political economy agenda that goes far beyond the housekeeping functions of government to question the basis of the 'public interests' approach. The rational assumption is that government had grown too big and that it ought to shed activities that other institutions could perform. In the literature, many writers tend to argue that government should be brought closer to citizens and consider things from their view not just from its own superior vantage point. This line of thing is pursued further in the following section.

Reinventing Government

To most people, reinventing the government implies changing the political system or restructuring the system to make it more efficient. To some, it means downsizing the government or embracing the policy of privatization. And some interpret it as reducing 'waste, fraud and abuse'. But reinventing government means much more. Osborne & Gaebler (1992) contend that "Reinvention is about replacing bureaucratic organizations and behavior with entrepreneurial organizations and behavior. It is about creating public organizations and systems that habitually innovate, that continually improve their quality without having to be pushed from outside. It is about creating a public sector that has a built-in drive to improve, what some call a "self-renewing system." The prevailing culture in such organizations is one of continuous change.

Reinvention in public institutions in developed democracies has led to the emergence of entrepreneurial governments. Holding public employees accountable for results, providing customer choice and engaging in competition with private sector organizations has become the norm. Reinvention of the government has taken place in many countries including USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden Norway, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands and Germany. Some developing countries like Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, South Africa, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and Philippines have also taken initiatives to reinvent their governments. The common motive that prompted all these countries to reinvent their governments was the need to create public institutions capable of solving the most pressing problems in society.

The Need for Entrepreneurial Behavior

Hierarchical and centralized bureaucracies designed in the 1940s are an absolute misfit in today's ever-changing technologically advanced society. The fast growing economy and expanding global marketplace puts enormous pressure on our economic institutions. People in today's society have faster access to information and receive it almost as fast as it reaches the leaders. We are living in an age of niche markets where customers demand high quality products and services and have a variety of choices. Thus, these bureaucratic institutions developed several decades ago have ceased to function well. They are also expensive to run and have come to be referred to as 'white elephants'.

The twenty first century necessitates that public institutions be more flexible and adaptable, deliver high-quality goods and services, be sensitive to the needs of their customers, give their employees a sense of meaning, control and ownership, and empower citizens while providing them with world-class services that they have increasingly begun to expect.

Bureaucratic institutions may still be able to function, as they had done earlier in those situations, which are not characterized by volatile changes in the environment. However, most of the work performed by government institutions is intricate and needs to be performed in competitive and rapidly changing environments with customers demanding quality and choice. These hardcore realities make functioning of public institutions founded several decades ago virtually impossible. In their pursuit of climbing the rungs to the next office or precariously clinging on to their positions, civil servants and political leaders may be too pressed for time to consider reinventing the system. Hence, the old ways of looking at problems continue to exist. They fail to see solutions that are so glaringly obvious. As the great economist John Maynard Keynes once noted, 'the difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones'.

The basic problem facing the citizens in the developing world is the existence of the wrong kind of government. The people need a better government and better governance. Government is the instrument through which people by and large solve problems and the needs of the society. Today, this very instrument is outmoded, which calls for radical change and large-scale reinvention. The need of the hour is for the governments at the center and states to decentralize authority, reduce hierarchies, focus on providing services of high quality, become sensitive to customer demands and synchronize the efforts of its various arms to remain competitive in the new global marketplace. The government and its institutions must strive to adapt itself to massive change and become more flexible, more innovative and more entrepreneurial. In the absence of such widespread changes in the functioning of the government, the developing world will go from one crisis to another, and may miss out on many of the emerging opportunities that are unfolding on the world stage.

Entrepreneurial Government

Traditional bureaucratic governments have nurtured people with tendencies to protect their position, to resist change, to build authority, to enlarge their sphere of control, to encourage and defend projects and schemes irrespective of their relevance to the present conditions and in short to protect the status quo. On the contrary, 'entrepreneurial' government initiates more efficient and effective ways of managing systems and organizations. It is a government that recognizes the importance of abandoning old and irrelevant programs and methods. It encourages taking timely and necessary action. It is a government that is creative and innovative. It is business-oriented. It privatizes wherever it makes pragmatic sense, and where private operators can provide the same service much more effectively. It makes room for new ventures and revenue-generating operations. It is customer-driven and adopts transparent performance metrics. It rewards merit. It is a government that welcomes change and challenges and has the will to win. In summary, an entrepreneurial government is one that ensures the continual betterment of resource utilization in its broadest connotation.

In addition, entrepreneurial governments support competition between service providers. They empower citizens by shifting control of the bureaucracy into communities. Performance of their agencies is measured on the basis of outputs produced rather than inputs expended. Clear mission and goals drive every organization. Rules and regulations are of little importance. Citizens are treated as customers and they can legitimately expect the delivery of quality service. Anticipating problems and preventing them is the norm, instead of offering redress after the problem arises. Authority is decentralized and everybody is encouraged to participate. They are highly market-oriented and shun bureaucracy in all forms. They encourage and involve the public, private and voluntary sectors, to solve community

problems instead of merely engaging only themselves in providing public services. These principles put together form an entrepreneurial government, which has the potential to solve major contemporary problems facing the society.

For over two decades a set of management techniques and practices, mostly associated with market and private-for-profit sectors, have been used to reform administration and management in government, in a variety of countries, notably the UK, New Zealand and Australia. The past decade has seen the application of some of these practices in some developing and transitional economies. These techniques and practices have been collectively referred to as the 'New Public Management' (NPM). The NPM reform trends have been driven by a combination of factors, no one of which can be said to be responsible for driving reforms on its own.

Drivers of change

Various factors and forces have combined to create a heightened demand for change in African countries. Notable among these are discussed below:

- a) Economic and fiscal pressures on governments, experienced in most developed countries in the 70s and early 80s, and more dramatically in developing countries in Africa and Asia and, more recently, in the Asian Tiger economies. Fiscal stress caused by massive public sector deficits, external trade imbalances and growing indebtedness, especially in developing countries, has been a major driver for restructuring the public sector, and rethinking and reshaping the role of government. Issues of downsizing, privatization and contracting out gained prominence as methods of controlling the fiscal deficits and restructuring the public sector.
- b) Public attitudes and increasing criticisms (especially by public choice theorists) of the ineffectiveness and inefficiencies of delivering public services through bureaucratic organizational arrangements and the need to search for alternatives. Old public administration was seen as too slow, driven by rules instead of performance, inefficient and unresponsive to users.
- c) The resurgence of new right politics in the late 70s and 80s (e.g. Reganomics and Thatcherism) that were pro-market and pro-private sector. NPM had ideological underpinnings, challenging the post-war consensus on the welfare state as unsustainable.
- d) The proliferation of management ideas generated, packaged and marketed by international management consultants, who often act as advisers on reforms to governments around the world.
- e) In the case of most developing and transitional countries, an additional factor driving NPM-type reforms has been donor advocacy and lending conditions of international financial institutions, notably the IMF and the World Bank, with the adoption of a more pro-market and pro-private sector stance in structural adjustment programmes.
- f) The spread of global markets, especially those related to financial integration and liberalization and the resultant competition forcing the public sector in most countries to reshape itself to keep pace with the emerging global economy and modern information technology. These are changing conventional ideas about the public sector.
- g) The growth and use of new information technology has also provided impetus for some of the changes. Some aspects of the NPM reforms such as performance management, executive agencies and management decentralization of public services

have been facilitated by the development of information technology that allows for indirect monitoring and control of performance.

New Public Management (NPM)

New Public Management (NPM) has come to be regarded as a collective term for a bundle of particular management approaches and techniques, many of which are borrowed from the private-for-profit sector. It is a rising body of managerial thought (Ferlie et al. 1996). Some (e.g. Pollitt, 1990) have even characterized it as an ideological thought system based on ideas generated in the private sector and imported into public sector organizations. The new public management is not a homogenous whole, but consists of varieties of practices and techniques. The key components of NPM include:

- a) Breaking up huge bureaucracies by disaggregating separable functions into separate agencies. This may involve hiving-off operational arms of ministries to form separate agencies. There is a split between the strategic policy core and operational arms of government. These agencies will then be related to the central or parent ministries not through the traditional hierarchy but by contractual agreements and on arms length basis. The best examples are executive agencies in the UK.
- b) Replacing traditional 'tall hierarchies' with flatter, flexible and more responsive structures formed and reformed around specific processes (e.g. issuing licenses, paying benefits) rather than the traditional functions (e.g. finance and personnel).
- c) Separation between funding, purchasing and provision of services. Making a clearer separation (organizational and financial) between defining the need for and paying for public services on one hand and, on the other hand, actually providing those services. This means that governments can provide finance for services, but do not necessarily have to provide the service by themselves. Service provision may be contracted-out to the private sector.
- d) Decentralizing management authority within public agencies - giving top management freedom to manage with clear responsibility, and reducing the management role of the centre.
- e) Devolving budgets and financial control to decentralized units; creating budget centres/spending units. Delegation of financial responsibility gives managers some leeway to consider alternative methods of ensuring the provision of required services.
- f) Capping budgets and making them more transparent in accounting terms. This usually involves some combination of output oriented budgeting and devising ways of making managers more aware not merely of current costs of operations but also of capital employed (e.g. by means of accrual accounting).
- g) Shift to output-orientation. Greater emphasis on output controls in resource allocation and rewards linked to measured performance; use of performance agreements and performance-related pay. There is a shift from inputs and process to outputs in control and accountability mechanisms. This requires managers to work to performance targets, indicators and output objectives. Devolved budgets and financial control and output orientation allow for entrepreneurial flexibility in meeting targets by offering managers greater control over the purchase, use and sale of assets necessary to produce the required outputs.

The practice and impact of NPM reforms in Africa

According to Bandura (1999) NPM reforms seek to reconfigure the relations between states, markets, and societies by giving prominence to market forces, managerial efficiency, and

accountable government. In most African countries, NPM has largely featured through decentralization and civil service reform programmes. A detailed discussion on these areas is presented in the following sections.

Decentralization

A good summary of the concept of decentralization including its costs and benefits, applicable to Africa can be found in Hope (2000, 2001); and Hope and Chikulo (2000). Much of the decentralization that has occurred in the last decade has been motivated by the political rationale that good governments are those closer to the people. The spread of multiparty political systems in Africa is creating demand for more local voice in decision-making. Political changes have therefore given voice to local demands and the need to bring economic and political systems closer to local communities.

The primary modes of decentralization in Africa that are attributed to NPM reforms are deconcentration; delegation; devolution; and privatization. Deconcentration is the passing down of selected administrative functions to lower levels or subnational units within government agencies or departments. It is the least extensive form of decentralization. However, it is the most common form of decentralization employed in the agriculture services, primary education, preventive health, and population subsectors (Silverman, 1992). In Botswana, for example, the central government has created and supervises district councils as well as a national Rural Development Council for the coordination and implementation of, among other things, rural development activities such as drought relief measures and agricultural development. In South Africa and Zambia, for example, independent revenue authorities have been created with corporate outlooks on governance to increase the efficiency and accountability of tax collection beyond the bureaucracy of their Finance Ministries.

Delegation is the transfer of specific authority and decision-making powers to organizations that are outside the regular bureaucratic structure and that are only indirectly controlled by a government, such as parastatals, regional development corporations, and semiautonomous agencies, for example. Delegation is seen as a way of offering public goods and services through a more business-like organizational structure that makes use of managerial accounting techniques normally associated with private enterprise. Delegation has been used extensively in Africa. In Kenya, for example, public corporations have been used to organize, finance, and manage large-scale agricultural projects such as tea production. In Lesotho, a parastatal was created to finance and manage a huge water development project in the country's highlands area. In Botswana and Ghana, autonomous hospitals with independent management boards have been established to improve efficiency in service delivery; improve responsiveness to users' needs and preferences through market-based initiatives such as user fees; and reduce the financial and managerial burden of large hospitals on the health ministries (Larbi, 1998, 1999).

Devolution is the granting of decision-making powers to lower authorities or managers and allowing them to take full responsibility without reference back to the authorizing government. This includes financial power as well as the authority to design and execute development projects and programs. *Devolution is the strongest form of decentralization.* Its essence is discretionary authority and it allows for the reduction of the levels of administration through which activities have to pass and no reference back to central administrative machinery is required. Ghana, for example, has put into place a public

financial management program which gives managers greater control of their budgets (Larbi, 1999), while Ethiopia has devolved very extensive legislative, executive, judicial, and fiscal powers to the regional authorities (Koehn, 1995). Decentralization, through devolution, provides a mechanism that enables the population to participate in the process of governance, as well as a framework for allowing the local communities' interests to be represented in government decision-making structures (Hentic and Bernier, 1999). It is therefore a key element of NPM-type reforms. The more participatory the decision-making process, the more legitimacy it acquires in the eyes of all observers both domestic and international.

Privatization is taken here to mean the transfer of operational control and responsibilities for government functions and services to the private sector, private voluntary organizations or private enterprises. From a wider perspective, privatization encompasses a wide range of policies to encourage private sector participation in public service provision and eliminate or modify the monopoly status of public enterprises (Rondinelli and Kasarda, 1993). Privatization can be a complex process, frequently involving choices between the need to improve financial and economic efficiency, political opposition and varying degrees of unpopularity and distinguishing between sectors and services that are essentially in the public interest and those which should be hived off to the private sector (Hentic and Bernier, 1999). Privatization in Africa has taken many forms. It has included the commercialization of government services which are contracted out to an outside agency, joint ventures between government agencies/ministries and private entities, the sale of some government services or functions, such as water supply or telecommunications, to the private sector, management contracts for the private sector to manage specific government functions and services such as postal services, the leasing of government assets that are used to provide public services, and the granting of concessions to private entities to operate and finance some public services delivery.

During the past two decades, privatization has progressed globally and has come to be seen as highly desirable in Africa (Hope, 2001). The process has been prompted in many cases by economic necessity and enabled by the political changes occurring across Africa (White and Bhatia, 1998). However, privatization is more of a management reform issue than a political one. The primary reason for pursuing privatization in Africa is that state-owned enterprises or parastatals tend to be loss-making and divert scarce public funds that could be put to better use in meeting other public policy goals such as better health care and education services. In addition, public enterprises generally suffer from extensive corruption and bureaucratic management structures that get in the way of efficient service delivery.

Overall, the total number of public enterprises in Africa is estimated to have fallen by about 37% between 1990 and 1995 (Sarbib, 1997). This figure has certainly increased significantly since then. Africa's contemporary leaders have moved forcefully in the restructuring of their economies. Many countries, including Angola, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, for example, have all launched extensive privatization programs. Some francophone countries, including Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, and Senegal, have also completed major privatization programs involving their electricity, telecoms, water, and banking sectors (Samuel, 1999).

In the telecommunications sector, several countries, including Botswana, Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, and Cote d'Ivoire, for example, have either concluded the privatization of their telecommunications enterprises or they are seeking strategic investors to do so. Particularly, in the area of wireless service, there has been considerably private sector activity

through the bidding for cellular operators' licenses. The electricity sector's privatization has primarily been by way of management contracts followed by leases and demonopolization and build-own-operate (BOO). Countries such as Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone have opted for management contracts, lease arrangements are used in Cote d'Ivoire, and Morocco and Tunisia have independent power projects (African Development Bank, 1999).

The water and transportation sectors have also seen their share of privatization activities. In the water sector, the selected modality has been focused primarily on management contracts or leases. Some African countries, such as Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, and Morocco, for example, have privatized their water sectors on the basis of competition for concessions. In the transportation sector, some contracting out of road maintenance has been in practice in Kenya for several years before being adopted in Algeria and other African countries. The Tanzania Railway Corporation divested itself of noncore operations and is under private management while Cameroon has concluded a concession agreement with a French-South African joint venture to run its railway facilities. In the Sudan and Senegal, locomotive repairs and maintenance have been contracted out. Also, in such countries as Nigeria, Mozambique, Togo, and Guinea, for example, ports and/or airports have been privatized through lease arrangements or management contracts.

Some airlines, including Kenya Airways, Royal Air Maroc, Air Tunisia, and South African Airways, for example, have also been privatized through various modalities (Samuel, 1999; African Development Bank, 1999). Apart from infrastructure, privatization in Africa has also proceeded in other areas. Services in particular have been contracted out in significant numbers. In Botswana, for example, the parastatals have contracted out a number of services including those related to maintenance and security. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, nonclinical health services such as cleaning, laundry, catering, security, maintenance, and billing are contracted out, while some clinical services are contracted out on a limited scale (Larbi, 1999). Also, in Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana, for example, noncore state activities have been, or are being, transferred to the private sector and greater corporatization of public sector activities is taking place (Hope and Chikulo, 2000; Therkildsen, 1999).

Benefits of Decentralization

Despite the fact that there are some obvious costs to decentralization (Hope, 2001, 2000), it has yielded significant benefits in those countries where properly implemented. In Africa, decentralization has drastically improved the reliability and delivery of services to the public including improved quality assurance. Moreover, through decentralization, and privatization in particular, the burden on government resources has eased somewhat leading to the use of those resources in other priority areas. For example, the privatization of Kenya Airways provided the Kenyan Treasury with US\$76 million from the sale of 77% of its shares in 1996 and, due to enhanced efficiency and better performing management, some 400 new jobs have been created (Samuel, 1999). Moreover, highly centralized forms of government generate administrative pathologies.

Centralized states tend to be unresponsive to the needs of citizens. Restructuring the delivery of public services, by decentralizing functions and resources, thus becomes a central claim of the NPM based on the growing body of evidence indicating that the decentralization of government services can be far more efficient than their supply by bureaus. Undoubtedly, service delivery systems based on centralized bureaucracy have now been discredited and

African governments have, commendably, been shifting their focus from hierarchy and control to participation and empowerment. Decentralization in Africa has resulted in better governance, it has facilitated the development of more effective and efficient public sector management, it has increased popular participation in government, it has allowed for better mobilization and use of resources, and it has encouraged market-like responsiveness to the provision and consumption of public services (Hope, 2001). Its use as an instrument of NPM reforms must be expanded and deepened in Africa. Indeed, there is a growing momentum across the African continent for reform initiatives that shift resources, responsibility for service delivery, and accountability for results from central governments to more decentralized levels. In some cases, like Ethiopia and South Africa, for example, this has even been entrenched in federal-style constitutions.

Civil service reform

During the 1980s, many African countries concluded that their civil services were not providing public goods and services in the most cost-effective and efficient manner. Consequently, reform of the civil service became necessary to pursue and maintain the path of economic liberalization and good governance that had been embarked upon. In this new century, African governments are also beginning to realize that the globalization wave dictates that further and deeper reforms of their civil services are required in order to successfully ride the rising tide of borderless economic activities encompassed in that globalization wave. NPM-type reforms have been, and are being, applied to African civil services because these civil services are seen as unprofessional, often lacking capacity to solve the tough new problems of their governments, too bloated in size in relationship to their outputs, suffering from dysfunctional rigidity, lacking in and not caring about, measurement of their performance, preoccupied with their own rules and practices rather than promoting, protecting, and serving the public interest and, generally, being too corrupt and intent on maintaining their own patrimonial and territorial interests.

Although some African governments had, from time to time embarked on civil service reform, for the majority, the efforts became concentrated in comprehensive strategies that were included in the economic liberalization packages of structural adjustment that were facilitated by the World Bank and IMF. The basic thrust of the reform process was, and continues to be, to build a professional, meritocratic, and qualified public workforce to ensure effective and efficient delivery of public services and combat bureaucratic corruption. Without such reform, the performance of the civil service and, hence, of their respective governments, will continue to be deficient. A government's performance can only be as good as the people who do its work. African governments, or any government for that matter, will perform poorly if there is a failure to recruit, retain, reward appropriately, and assure the integrity of highly skilled civil servants (Hope, 2001; World Bank, 2000; Kettl et al., 1996).

The key elements of the process of reform of the civil service in Africa have been centered on pay and employment measures, productivity enhancement, capacity building, training, improving accountability and transparency and making management more effective (Lindauer and Nunberg (1994); Robinson (1990); Lienert and Modi (1997); Goldsmith (1999)). Due to the concern with the fact that two major contributors to bureaucratic corruption in Africa are the erosion and the compression of salary scales of civil servants, pay and grading reform has been at the forefront of pay and employment measures in the attempts to reform the civil service. Pay and grading reform generally has five objectives: (1) an increase in overall real pay levels; (2) the decompression of pay scales to improve the

competitiveness of civil service pay at higher levels; (3) a new grading system based on job evaluations; (4) the introduction of performance-based pay; and (5) the improvement of pay policy-making and administration (De Merode and Thomas, 1994). The experience of pay and grading reform suggests some success in outcomes. In Ghana, Mozambique, and Guinea, for example, the net pay compression ratio of the civil service improved; the ratio of the highest-paid echelon to the lowest-paid widened; and real pay improved spectacularly. Similarly, in Tanzania and Uganda, average civil service salaries have increased by 300% and 75%, respectively, in real terms, since the early 1990s (Clarke and Wood, 2001).

Additionally, several countries, including the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, and Uganda, have made considerable progress in simplifying their grading structures. That, in turn, has acted as a magnet to attract and motivate some top professionals including those with scarce skills such as physicians and accountants. Many countries have also been able to downsize their civil services and thereby reduce the number of surplus employees on the government payroll. A number of methods have been used in this regard including enforcing mandatory retirement ages, abolishing job guarantees for high school and university graduates, ensuring attrition through hiring freezes, introducing voluntary departure schemes, making outright dismissals, and eliminating “ghost” employees from the payroll (Hope, 2001).

In Tanzania and Uganda, the size of the civil service has declined by 23% and 55%, respectively, since the early 1990s (Clarke and Wood, 2001). Likewise, in Zambia, the size of the nonmilitary public service dropped from 137,000 in 1997 to 112,000 by the end of 1999 without affecting front-line service providers such as nurses, teachers, and the police who were exempt from retrenchment (IMF and World Bank, 2000). Also, some countries, such as South Africa and Ghana, have moved toward competitive and open recruitment procedures with selection based on merit as an integral part of their employment reform measures. This helps to ensure that vacancies are filled on the basis of skills and competence rather than on other factors such as ethnicity and kinship. Similar merit-based systems were put in place with respect to promotions. Merit-based promotions tend to attract more individuals into the civil service who have strong preferences for making an impact on their government’s task of providing public goods. Together, merit-based recruitment and promotion serve as mutually reinforcing mechanisms to build commitment towards the goal of an efficient civil service. Other countries, such as Botswana have also decentralized some human resource management functions to ministries. Permanent secretaries of these ministries are, among other things, empowered to appoint, promote, and discipline their staff members.

Productivity enhancement strategies in Africa are primarily aimed at bringing about a greater customer-orientation in goods and services delivery and an improvement in the quality of those goods and services delivered while at the same time creating a much more positive attitude toward work by the civil servants. In Botswana, the government introduced the productivity and quality improvement program in 1993 by creating work improvement teams (WITS) within various institutions and departments of ministries. WITS are based on the Japanese framework of Quality Control Circles. Similar types of quality circles can be found in Mauritius (Hope, 2001). Other popular methods used for productivity enhancement in Africa are the introduction of performance management systems in government agencies and ministries and the use of performance contracts for individual employees and departments.

Performance management systems are regarded as means of getting results from individuals, teams, and the organization at large within a given framework of planned goals, objectives, and standards. It allows for the setting of targets and the development of indicators against

which performance can later be measured. Performance management systems have been put in place in Uganda, South Africa, Kenya, Botswana and Ghana and are currently in various stages of implementation in most countries. Performance contracts or agreements specify standards of performance or quantifiable targets which a government requires public officials or the management of public agencies or ministries to meet over a stated period of time. At the end of the stated period, performance can then be measured against these standards or targets.

Capacity building has now taken center stage in what is regarded as the second phase of NPM-style reforms currently being implemented in Africa. Capacity building has come to the fore because African governments and donors have come to recognize the centrality of capacity in the development process in the region. Capacity is the combination of human resources and institutions that enable countries to achieve their development goals. Lacking capacity, a government cannot adequately perform the tasks that make an economy function. The need for capacity exists in virtually all areas of the public sector in Africa. Consequently, capacity building is important to generate the capability for those countries to develop indigenous and self-reliant development policies and strengthen the interface between government, civil society, and the private sector. Apart from the region-wide Partnerships for Capacity Building (PACT) being implemented by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACDF) based in Zimbabwe, other countries, such as Tanzania and Guinea, for example, have their own respective ongoing efforts for public sector capacity building financed through Adaptable Program Loans (APLs) from the World Bank. In this regard, training is an integral part of efforts to build capacity in the African civil services. Many African countries now have institutes of public administration or administrative staff colleges to train their civil servants. Others, such as Botswana, have set up national productivity centers for training in productivity and quality improvement. Training provides an essential means through which African states can develop a career civil service in order to modernize and develop. As argued by Agere (1999), the strengthening of the civil service is an integral part of policy reform which can best be accomplished through the use of civil service training institutes which have a mandate to train civil servants in the management of the new responsibilities linked to good governance and economic liberalization. An emphasis on improving accountability and transparency can be found in most civil service reform efforts in Africa. Anticorruption measures and the development of codes of conduct for public officials are two strategies most prevalent in that regard and, in some countries, such as Uganda, they are encompassed in national integrity systems (Hope, 2001; Hope and Chikulo, 1999). In both cases, the intent is to bring about a stronger allegiance to the nation-state and, hence, a commitment to the national interest rather than to personal and sectional interests and produce civil servants who are vigilant, upright, honest, and just. In other words, they are meant to instill an atmosphere of public accountability and ethical behavior in civil servants so that they respect not only their obligations to be honest, obey the laws, and behave within the confines of bureaucratic rules and regulations, but also demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, honesty, fairness, justice, and openness.

Making management more effective entails providing public managers with the necessary tools to deliver public services in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. This includes management structures and institutional mechanisms that improve policy development, coordination, and implementation for better public sector outcomes. In addition to the need to have some control over human and financial resources, public managers in Africa are also being provided with efficiency tools such as better management information systems. Indeed, major improvements have been achieved through the use of information technology for

efficient revenue collection, financial management and accounting, and interdepartmental communication systems (Kaul, 1996). In countries such as South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, and Mauritius, for example, operational and management control systems are in place (Odedra, 1993). These are applications that are designed to improve operations, management control, and decision-making capabilities.

Reforming the civil service in Africa through NPM-style strategies is, ultimately, intended to make the civil service accountable, transparent, and responsive to the public in the delivery of public goods and services. The lessons of experience of civil service reform in developing countries suggests some mixed results with the application of strategies from the NPM menu (Manning, 2000). However, this ought not to be surprising to anyone familiar with the African scene where there are varying levels of capacity and institutional frameworks for implementing development policy. Indeed, the application of NPM-style reforms is intended to rectify some of these deficiencies and improve civil service performance. Undoubtedly, many countries in Africa have benefited tremendously from civil service reform based on NPM-style activities (Hope, 2001). In particular, civil service wage bills have declined in some countries whereas there is greater penetration of information technology. In addition, the concentration of bureaucratic power at the expense of accountability and transparency has diminished considerably in most countries. Nonetheless, like the developed countries, reforming the civil service in Africa is a work in progress and better assessment indicators will be available in the next few years as the second phase of reform measures take hold.

CONCLUSION

The application of NPM-type reforms in Africa, despite their mixed results, has, from the point of view of the authors, been quite successful. Agreeably, there still exist such things as extensive bureaucratic corruption, for example. However, Hope (2001) cites data that indicate that African economies have been recording positive rates of economic growth during the past several years. These are all positive indicators and they did not emerge through divine intervention. They are, undoubtedly, the result of policy reforms, primarily NPM-type reforms, which have been implemented during the past two decades. Over the next few years, and assuming no policy reversals, there will be even further gains recorded as a result of the application of the second phase of NPM-type reforms.

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