

Governing the Public Service in Southern Africa: Past, Present and Future

George Abel Mhango
Mzuzu University
Centre for Security Studies

A paper presented at the Osaka University Lecture Series on 'Human Resources
and Governance'
16th January 2013.

Outline of Presentation

- Understanding the Public Service
- Why Govern the Public Service?
- Nature of Public Service Reforms in Southern Africa
- Reforms for Better Public Service Governance?
- Prospects for an Effective Public Service in Southern Africa

Southern Africa



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Understanding the Public Service

- A system of employment: civil servants + public servants
- Policy implementers, fixers, producers, arrangers, clients and customers
- Instruments of governance: institutions that serve as a bridge between state and administrative organs
 - Public Service provides **technical**, administrative, regulatory and extractive capacities to the three branches of government.

Why Governance in the Public Service?

- Public Service is essential for development outcomes and good governance.
 - ‘an efficient government workforce is a necessary condition for genuine accountability, transparency, participation, and the rule of law ... a very bad civil service is sufficient in itself to eventually produce bad governance’ (Schiavo-Campo and McFerson, 2008:176)
- As a promoter of governance, the Public Services must be effectively governed.
 - A **procedural approach** as opposed to an outcome-based approach to governance.
- This justifies the need for **Public Service Refoms**

Nature of Public Service Reforms In Southern Africa

	1960 - 1980 (1 st Generation reforms)	1980s (2 nd Generation reforms)	1990s (3 rd Generation reforms)	2000s (4 th Generation reforms)
Political Economy Orientation	African Socialism, State Capitalism, Command Economies	SAPs, Economic Liberalization (rolling the State back)	Governance Improvement	Poverty reduction
Prevailing Administrative Reforms	Development Administration & Indeginization	Downsizing (Right sizing) for cost reduction and deficit management	NPM, capacity building , Market reforms	Service delivery, budget reform and support, Strategic Performance Management

Reforms for Better Public Service Governance?

- Reforms' contribution towards quality in Public Service not satisfactory
- The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th generation reforms lacked a solid base:
 - were overly transplanted into the African public service without consideration of its context
- 3rd generation reforms led to flight of human resource due to its uncompetitive remuneration system
 - A decline in the quality of higher education standards (a threat to effectiveness)

Reforms for Better Public Service Governance? (Cont'd)

Human Capital Flight in southern Africa as of 2000

➤ 50 %	Seychelles
25-50 %	Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique
5-25 %	DRC, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia

Reforms for Better Public Service Governance? (Cont'd)

- Capacity constraints: inadequate experts who are concentrated in government headquarters
- Reforms have unearthed a deep seated structural conflict in the Public Service but fail to address it.
 - Conflict between two model of administration ie. Hierarchical devolution of authority (British style) and Work Specialization and Professionalism
- Reforms lack ownership (donor-driven).
 - Deepen a culture of dependency
 - The public service not reforming but 'going through the motions'.
- Declining leadership in the Public Service due to political interference

Prospects of an Efficient Public Service in Southern Africa

- Capacity development (quality human resource, and sound administrative doctrine)
- An independent Civil/Public Service Commission
- Strong leadership – political and administrative
- Need for a value-based public service
- Reforms must consider the socio-cultural context and indigenous knowledge systems
- Role of external actors should be properly framed

Concluding Thought

- There is need to recognize the special position that the public service occupies and its indispensable role in promoting governance. Hence it is imperative that the institutions, structures and process that guarantee the effective functioning of the public service are supported at all times.

Arigato Gozaimasu