



**PALGRAVE STUDIES OF
PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA**
*Series Editors: Robert E. Hinson · Nnamdi Madichie
Justice Nyigmah Bawole*

New Public Management in Africa

Contemporary Issues

Edited by
Robert E. Hinson
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Palgrave Studies of Public Sector
Management in Africa

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This series examines the business and management strategies that are employed in the management of public services in Africa, which is currently experiencing significant change and revolution.

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Preface

It is not debatable that governments in Africa utilise an inordinately large proportion of the nation's resources to staff ministries, departments, and agencies and deliver on various political manifestos. By implication, African public sector institutions should, therefore, strive to deliver superior quality service to their citizens. The essence of public sector institutions is to provide goods and services that meet citizens' needs, alleviate poverty, and promote a sustainable economic trajectory. Crucial to achieving the goals of public institutions is ensuring that public resources are well managed, people-centred policies are enacted, and services that meet citizens' needs are provided through effective administrative and management processes. Unfortunately, having management and administrative processes that will deliver the citizens' expectations in public sector institutions have been challenging in Africa. This has especially been the outcome of the old Weberian model of public administration.

To achieve the service quality desired in public sector management, the Weberian model of a centralised and hierarchical public service with its attendant issues of being bloated, inefficient, and self-serving had to give way to the New Public Management (NPM) approach. This NPM is premised fundamentally on private sector norms like entrepreneurial leadership, performance orientation, separation of politics and administration, and the notion that patrons of public goods and services ought to be valued customers and not just citizens or consumers.

Getting public sector institutions in Africa to deliver on their product and service promises has been a subject that has attracted policy reforms, research, and even the adoption of administrative practices from Western nations. The birth of the NPM principles in Africa is premised on its attendant success in Western countries. Decades have passed since the adoption of NPM as a substitute for the former Public Administration in Africa, characterised by inefficiencies, corruption, bureaucracies, and ineffectiveness. Therefore, we must take account of the theoretical and practical positions of NPM in Africa towards framing an Afrocentric approach to public sector management.

The discussions in this book respond to the need for new Afrocentric perspectives on NPM. Framed around thirteen chapters, we cover topics such as market orientation, trust and branding, human capital, logistics management, contractualism, outsourcing, total quality management (TQM), and public–private partnerships (PPPs). The book is targeted at professionals, administrators, researchers, and students interested in the management of public administration in Africa. The book extends the theoretical and practical insights in NPM and provides recommendations on how best the public sectors in Africa can manage their work processes to achieve the expected goals.

This book on NPM could not have been written at a better time than now when the fifty-five member states of the Africa Union (AU) have just established an African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to create a single continent-wide market for goods and services, and to promote the movement of capital and people. The book provides the appropriate platform for Public Sector Institutions in Africa to rise from their business-as-usual approaches to a more proactive institutional posture that makes each country better poised to take advantage of AfCFTA as it aims at trading effectively within the continent and with other regional economic blocs of the world.

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1

New Public Management in Africa: An Introduction

Robert E. Hinson, Nnamdi Madichie, Ogechi Adeola,
Justice Nyigmah Bawole, Isaiah Adisa,
and Kwame Asamoah

Introduction

The theoretical and practical trajectory of New Public Management (NPM) has attracted scholarly discussions since it was introduced in the 1980s and mid-1990s (see den Heyer, 2011; Dunleavy et al., 2006; Hope Sr, 2001; Philip & Daganda, 2013; Rubakula, 2014; Schedler & Proeller, 2000; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2011). The discussions were premised on the

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realities introduced by the NPM, such as the challenges, its core characteristics, and associated benefits (Arellano–Gault, 2000; Dunleavy & Hood, 1994; Gruening, 2001; Levi-Faur & Vigoda-Gadot, 2006; Sehested, 2002; Whitcombe, 2008). For instance, Dunleavy et al. (2006) identified cost–service efficiency and effectiveness, accountability, and the strengthening of public sector institutions as key benefits introduced by the NPM. Similarly, Dunleavy et al. argued that the ideologies and practices of the NPM need to be reviewed to accommodate the digital era governance. NPM is a theoretical concept, applied in practice to substitute Public Administration (PA), which had a lacuna in its culture of service and perceived the citizens as consumers rather than customers. Vyas-Doorgapersad (2011) asserts that Public Administration (PA) consists of six main themes: organising, policymaking, financing, determination of work procedure and control, personnel provision, and utilisation. Vyas-Doorgapersad further affirms that the PA is an autocratic, repressive, and conservative approach to public administration which adopted Weber’s bureaucratic hierarchical tenets. The failings of the PA led to NPM globally.

The NPM was introduced to substitute the traditional approach to the management of public service institutions which was embedded in the orientations of PA. The NPM is an approach to the management of public sector institutions geared towards productivity, enhancing the efficiency of public services, accountability, and effective public service delivery (Dzimbiri, 2008). Dzimbiri noted that NPM is more results-oriented than PA, which was process-oriented. It emphasises on reduction in bureaucratic practices in public institutions and agitates for private–public partnership as an alternative approach for the delivery of public services. NPM is a concept premised on the principle of incentivisation, competition, and disaggregation (Dunleavy et al., 2006). The core focus of NPM is to reduce wastage and improve the performance of public sector organisations. In recent times, the outcomes of NPM in

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different parts of the world have called for the review of the practice to fit into current realities. In Africa, public service delivery has been in a conundrum and, in its quest for solution, adopted the NPM to transform its public sector institutions. The progress, challenges, and the way forward for the performance of public sector institutions in Africa are areas of research that have attracted less attention in Africa. In this chapter and throughout the book, we provide an evaluation of the theoretical and practical position of NPM in Africa and propose a way forward.

Public Service Governance in Africa

Africa is blessed with abundant natural and human resources but is still crippled by underdevelopment, sheer corruption, and poor state resources management (Moti, 2019). The economic and social challenges that characterise the continent could be due in part to the systemic weaknesses and poor performance of public sector institutions (De Vries et al., 2016; Therkildsen, 2000). For instance, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2020) reported that between 2010 and 2019, fourteen countries in Africa had an improved governance structure; thirteen experienced increased deterioration; twelve experienced increased improvement; ten experienced serious warning signs of deterioration, and two bounced back from deterioration. The Gambia was found to have experienced the most significant improvement between 2010 and 2019, while Libya experienced the highest decline in its public governance structure. The governance structure in Africa was measured by the following criteria (Table 1.1):

- a) Security and the rule of law
- b) Participation, rights, and inclusion
- c) Foundation for economic opportunity
- d) Opportunity for human development

The overall public governance structure in Africa is considered to be experiencing a slow improvement. According to the report, accountability, transparency, and anti-corruption continue to decline while public administration is slowly improving. The cause of this slow improvement cannot be separated from the lack of integrity in public governance, which has

Table 1.1 Governance in Africa

S/n	Measures	Constructs	Status
1	Security and the rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-corruption • Rule of Law and Justice • Security and Safety • Accountability and Transparency 	Increased deterioration
2	Participation, rights, and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender • Participation • Inclusion • Rights 	Slowing deterioration
3	Foundation for economic opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural sector • Business Environment • Public administration • Infrastructure 	Slowing improvement
4	Human development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social protection • Health • Sustainable environment • Education 	Increased improvement

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2020)

been a menace in Africa (Armstrong, 2005). Armstrong (2005) affirmed that the standard of conduct in public services has been a major problem for Africa’s government. The author further stressed that preventing and managing misconduct is a conundrum in public service institutions that the government has battled but with limited success. The management of Africa’s public sector has been a challenge for decades. Several donor agencies like the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), and sister institutions like the World Bank have invested tens of millions of dollars into Africa in the new millennium, with the funding of several public sector reform programmes with little effect (Asiedu, 2006; Ayers, 2006; Newland & Patrick, 2004; Ismi, 2004; Oshikoya, 1994). In response to these cases, the NPM paradigm was adopted to address the inefficiencies in delivering government services in public sector institutions.

Since its inception, NPM has gained traction over the years (see den Heyer, 2011; Dzimbiri, 2008; Philip & Daganda, 2013; Rubakula, 2014; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2011). In Africa, public service administration has been fraught with widespread bureaucratic inertia and insensitivity to

various stakeholders' needs, especially the citizenry and the organised private sector. Ironically, Cousins (1990) argued nearly three decades ago that there is a need for the recognition of the public as customers, hence the adoption of marketing tools and strategic marketing planning to sell government policies. The application of marketing ideologies in public institutions' management is a crucial tenet of NPM. Although NPM could be a game changer in many state governments, it does not seem to have gained an adequate foothold in several state-owned enterprises and government institutions in Africa. This new book on NPM in Africa aims at filling the knowledge and practice gap in this area.

The NPM movement began in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Its first practitioners emerged in the United Kingdom under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the municipal governments in the United States of America (e.g., Sunnyvale, California) that had suffered most heavily from economic recession and tax revolts (Gruening, 2001). Some of NPM's significant characteristics are the separation of politics and administration and the notion that patrons of public goods and services should be customers and not citizens or consumers (den Heyer, 2011; Hope Sr, 2001). NPM, thus, strongly endorses the need for a service or customer orientation in the public sector. The principle of customer focus/orientation is geared towards restructuring any organisational entity to meet the needs and requirements of the customers that the organisation serves (Asim, 2001). Governments in any society deliver many services and goods to their populations, and to get this done productively, there is the need to employ efficiency, managerialism, devolution, and market orientation.

This approach to public service resources—employees, money, and laws—is most efficiently transformed into desirable policy outputs and outcomes. NPM represented a serious challenge to the managers of public sector organisations who found themselves operating and behaving differently from the past in a more competitive and value-driven working environment. However, there is no agreement on a precise definition or specific characteristics of NPM, even from the Western perspective. NPM is a topical term to describe how management techniques from the private sector are now being applied to public services. It suffices not to change the name without adopting new practices. This chapter highlights

how NPM can be successful in Africa and provide a seven-strand conceptualisation. We hypothesise that NPM success in Africa should be a function of leadership and human capital management, strategic market orientation, trust-building, contractualism, and digitalisation, which will all be discussed in subsequent chapters.

New Public Management and Core Issues and Themes in Africa

NPM as a theoretical postulation and practice was introduced to drive public sector institutions' performance by changing the orientations, values, and culture they hitherto thrived on (Hope Sr, 2001; Philip & Daganda, 2013). NPM came as a paradigm shift from the usual PA, which focuses on the "what" and "why" of public service delivery rather than the more effective "how" of private organisations (Philip & Daganda, 2013). According to Philip and Daganda (2013), NPM came to integrate the three approaches of what, why, and how to create a public service delivery with the goal of ensuring that wastage of economic resources is eradicated, efficient services are rendered, and resources are effectively utilised towards solving social problems. The authors describe the activities which NPM is interested in towards driving the effectiveness and performance of the sector as

performance appraisal, managerial autonomy, cost cutting, financial incentives, output targets, innovation, responsiveness, competence, accountability, market orientation, quality improvement, contracting out, flexibility, competition, choice, information technology, de-bureaucratisation, decentralisation, down-sizing and entrepreneurialism. (Philip & Daganda, 2013 pp. 9)

These variables are usually associated with private organisations, and they play crucial roles in ensuring operations' effectiveness. A similar outcome is needed in public sector institutions in Africa, which is the core reason why NPM has been widely adopted on the continent. The old Public Sector Administration (PSA) ideology was characterised by

inefficiency, huge debts, ineffectiveness, and lack of integrity and accountability from the public servants and political office holders (Gumede & Dipholo, 2014). Despite the adoption of NPM, African nations still harbour some of the problems which necessitated the adoption of NPM (Gumede & Dipholo, 2014). For instance, Gumede and Dipholo (2014) asserted that in South Africa, despite the adoption of the tenets of NPM, the nation still suffers from systemic corruption, poor service delivery, lack of accountability, bureaucracy, and nepotism. Some arguments for this unexpected outcome was that NPM is a Eurocentric approach to managing public sector institutions that might not fit the operations of public sector institutions in Africa, creating a gap between the adopted system and the African nation's sociocultural and environmental contexts. Despite South Africa's report, it is not to say that NPM practices have not yielded positive outcomes in some African countries.

For instance, in Botswana, Dzimbiri (2008) identified that performance system management, a core activity introduced by NPM, had enhanced public service delivery performance in public institutions. In Nigeria, the situation is somewhat paradoxical with the acceptance of the NPM practices along with traditional approaches (Philip & Daganda, 2013). Despite the successful implementation of the performance system management, the country still experiences numerous challenges such as knowledge gaps, little system-wide commitment, lack of support for performance improvement coordinators, and funding and reform fatigue (Philip & Daganda, 2013). NPM has had a significant impact on public service delivery worldwide, including some countries in Africa, though this cannot be generalised (Rubakula, 2014). The impact of NPM differs among African nations, which has led to calls for an African-centric approach to public service delivery—Public Value Management (PVM).

Rubakula (2014) argued that NPM is market-oriented while PVM focuses on building trust, public integrity, professionalism, competence, and confidence, which the public has lost in public institutions. Hence, it is argued that African countries need to go beyond NPM to PVM for the expected performance outcome to be recorded.

Significantly, administrative culture and development status have also been identified as reasons for the likely misfit between successful NPM outcomes in European nations and the results in African countries.

African countries must manage the public value through effective leadership, market orientation, trust, contractualism, public–private partnership, and digitalisation. Value for people and harnessing the opportunities in collaborative efforts are important aspects of NPM that can influence public sector institutions' performance in Africa and encourage the public's perception of value in the public sector (Hope Sr, 2001). Leadership in the public sector that values and respects stakeholders (employees and citizens) cannot be overemphasised as the leader's actions could communicate interest in the people's socio-economic conditions. Adopting the tenets of market orientation in public service delivery is an important principle of NPM that must not be disregarded in the quest to manage public value. Market orientation is a major paradigm shift that is not available in the public service administration practices, but is embedded in NPM and must be sustained going forward. Market orientation offers that the public service institutions in Africa must focus on meeting citizens' needs, even though they see them as customers and not consumers (den Heyer, 2011; Hope Sr, 2001).

Aside from leadership and market orientation, contractualism and digitalisation in the public service delivery of African nations must also be considered towards ensuring that the management of public services creates the expected value for public sector institutions' performance. Contractualism recognises contracting out social services for effectiveness and introduces mechanised techniques for monitoring, controlling, and reporting (Philip & Daganda, 2013; Hope Sr, 2001). Leadership, market orientation, contractualism, and digitalisation are crucial to creating a public service value positioned in the citizens' minds through public sector performance.

Theoretical Pathway to New Public Management

den Heyer (2011) suggested that the thoughts and building blocks of the NPM are developed based on the principles of five different theories. The author identifies public choice theory, principal–agent theory,

transaction cost theory, technical rational theory, and institutional theory as a theoretical orientation that makes up the practices in NPM. To den Heyer (2011), public choice theory and principal–agent theory had the strongest influence on the theoretical principles of NPM. The theory posits that people are rational, self-seeking, and motivated by their interests. Hence, it was important to limit the role and power of the state. Public choice theory, which is also associated with rational choice and social choice theory, extends that one way to minimise the abuse of power by the government and its institutions is to separate the government’s policymaking function from its service provision functions. This approach would provide the right platform to evaluate government institutions’ performance and probably allow for efficiency and effectiveness.

The tenet of public choice theory is embedded in the principles of accountability and transparency in NPM. On the other hand, principal–agent theory posits that the relationships between the governed and governors are best understood from the purview of a contract, such that a party agrees to provide some services or take responsibility for the need of another with the intention of getting a reward. Hence, this theory’s position is extended into the fabrics of the basic principles that make up NPM by emphasising that the citizens should not be seen as consumers but rather as customers whom public sector institutions are meant to satisfy by providing the best services at the lowest possible cost. Similarly, the transaction cost theory focuses on the cost aspect of the relationship between public sector institutions and citizens. The theory offers that public sector institutions’ structure should allow that services are rendered at the lowest cost without jeopardising effectiveness and efficiency (Williamson, 2008). This theory’s position is framed within the tenets of substituting bureaucracy and other structural excesses that affect the effectiveness of public sector organisations in Africa with contemporary practices such as digitalisation and outsourcing. Outsourcing of core government functions to private organisations will bring about public–private partnership and ensure effectiveness in areas where government institutions are incapacitated. This is why contracting, outsourcing, and digital mechanism are critical tenets of NPM (Fig. 1.1).

The technical rational theory posits that a technical rational position on an institutional framework, after implementation, will lead to change

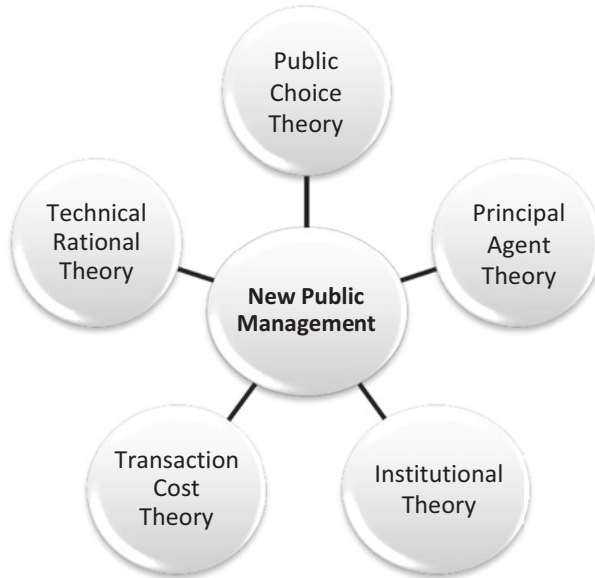


Fig. 1.1 Theoretical explanations for NPM. Source: Authors

in the order of operation, create a new culture, and interrupt the usual norms. NPM is a technically rational position on how public sector organisations should be operated, organised, and managed. NPM introduces a new culture of service excellence, and creates a new standard of public servants' behaviour and ethical public service delivery. Integrity, trust, dedication, commitment, and meritocracy are cultures introduced by NPM. Lastly, the institutional theory takes a different direction by explaining the need to innovate and change processes by exploring the difference between formal and informal institutions. It takes systematic comparison into account to imbibe and develop a new operational perspective. The institutional theory explains “why” the NPM was introduced and “how”. The NPM was developed to make public sector institutions more efficient, effective, and goal-oriented (why) by adopting practices from the private organisations (how) into public enterprises to achieve similar or better results.

Theoretically, NPM provides a Western results-oriented approach to how best public sector organisations should be managed and organised.

NPM also redefine the goals of public service institutions and ensure that they contribute positively to African nations' social and economic trajectory. A positive outcome from the adoption of NPM by African nations cannot be comprehensive, with so many African countries still struggling to get the best possible outcome from their public sector institutions. This book provides the pathway for public sector institutions' performance in Africa through the theoretical perspectives from literature and information from data.

Structure of the Book

This book explores the practices of NPM in Africa, highlights the challenges, and provides context-specific recommendations for the development and performance of the public sector institutions in Africa. To achieve this goal, we have structured the discussion in the book accordingly.

Isaac Sewornu Coffie and Robert Hinson, in Chap. 2, discuss *Market Orientation and the Public Sector in Africa*, elaborating on the benefits of the adoption of marketing techniques and practices in public sector institutions in Africa. Ogechi Adeola, in Chap. 3, focuses on *Leveraging Trust to Enhance The Public Sector Brand in Africa* and highlights the activities and actions that should be taken to restore trust between public sector organisations in Africa and the citizens.

In Chap. 4, Kwame Asamoah, focuses on *The Trust Puzzle: Policy Implications for Promoting Good Governance in Ghana*. Alexander Preko, in Chap. 5, focuses on *Leadership and Human Capital Management in New Public Management*, highlighting how leadership can facilitate the development and management of human capital in Africa's public sector. In Chap. 6, Frank Ojadi and Marvel Ogah examine *Logistics in Africa's New Public Management Framework* and identify the attendant challenges circumventing the effectiveness of NPM deployment to logistics framework in sub-Saharan African countries. Similarly, Zechariah Langnel and Justice Nyigmah Bawole, in Chap. 7, focus on contractualism in the public sector and buttresses the importance of contractualism in the success of public service delivery in Africa.

Anthony Dadizie, Cynthia Aboagye-Otchere, and Kojo Kakra Twum, in Chap. 8, extend the conversation to the exploration of *The New Public Management & Outsourcing: An African Perspective*. Outsourcing is a crucial aspect of NPM, which advocates for government institutions to delegate their core activities to third parties for effectiveness. The chapter highlights how these realities can be achieved in Africa. Twum Kojo, in Chap. 9, focuses on the subject of *Enhancing Public Sector Quality Performance Using TQM in Developing Economies*, seeking to highlight areas of interventions for the numerous challenges associated with evaluating public sector performance in Africa.

Nnamdi Madichie, in Chap. 10, focuses on *Managing Complexity in the Public Sector: The Case of African Higher Education*. Madichie explores the complexities associated with public sector institutions in Africa and provides appropriate recommendations. Building on the complexity discussed in the previous chapter, Nnamdi Madichie, in Chap. 11, interrogates the debate around *Public Sector Restructuring and Public–Private Partnership*. In so doing, he proposes how public sector organisations can be best positioned by partnering with private organisations to create a compelling and enabling platform for the performance of the public sector in Africa. Anita Baku, in Chap. 12, examines *Digitalisation and New Public Management in Africa*, highlighting case illustrations from the continent with a view to demonstrating how the public sector is becoming relevant in the global discourse to harness the opportunities in the fourth industrial revolution.

Robert Hinson, Nnamdi Madichie, Ogechi Adeola, Justice Nyigmah Bawole, Isaiah Adisa, and Kwame Asamoah wrap up the book in Chap. 13 with the concluding section. The authors highlight the key suggestions of the chapters and present a holistic recommendation for public institutions' performance in Africa.

Conclusion

New Public Sector Management is a theoretical and practical perspective to organising and building a functioning public sector in Africa. Due to associated challenges experienced in Africa and the quest for an Afrocentric