

## **PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS IN COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC SERVICE ETHICS: THE CASE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN KENYA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background of the Study:** Public sector reforms is intended to change public service to be more responsive to citizen needs and ensure ethical service delivery.

**Objective of the Study:** The aim of this paper is to discuss the impact of public sector reforms on compliance with public service ethics at the devolved County Governments of Kenya.

**Methodology:** The study is based on systematic review methods to discuss the rationale, drivers, achievement, challenges and the general lessons learned and whether the reform has any effect on public service ethics compliance.

**Results and findings:** Results showed that in the last thirty years, many countries especially in Africa adopted reforms with varied outcomes and impact on public service ethics compliance. The reviewed literatures have also revealed that implementation of public sector reforms is considered more important for reengineering the public service than compliance with public service ethics. Moreover, review has also identified several barriers including the changing reform paradigm is globally, regionally and nationally well documented. In Africa and Kenya in particular literature on reforms is generally inconclusive on the impact of reforms on compliance with public service ethics. In addition, the review has also identified some important theoretical, conceptual and methodological drawbacks in previous studies that restrict generalization of results to particular contexts such as County Governments.

**Recommendations:** The recommendation is made for further research focusing on the relationships between strategic leadership and reform implementation and employee commitment to public service ethics compliance.

**Keywords:** *Public Sector Reforms, Public Service Ethics, County Governments, Kenya*

## **1. Introduction**

The global operating environment for the public sector has greatly changed over the years spelling the need for changes in their often-inflexible bureaucratic administrations. There is substantial agreement in literature that the old public administration needed to change more often in order to address inherent inefficiencies and unethical behaviour that had slowly crept into government bureaucracies (Bryson, Crosby & Bloomberg, 2014; Hood, 1991). The public sector is conceptualized as all the services offered by or on behalf of the government and not just those offered by the civil service (Kilelo, Beru, & Nassiuma, 2015). Public sector reforms are the organizational changes governments in many countries make in response to ongoing pressures to modernize public service to be more responsive to citizen needs (Scotland, 2016). Since the early 1980s governments, especially in developing countries, started implementing reforms as a developmental imperative to reduce poverty, improve livelihoods and sustain good governance (Van Dooren & Van de Walle, 2016; Larti, 2003). The clamor to change government bureaucracies were informed by the evolving ideas of managing public service that had by the 1990s crystallized into the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm (Hood, 1991).

The ongoing public sector reforms originated in the West, primarily the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and later the USA mainly due to economic and fiscal pressures on governments in the 70s and early 80s (Hood, 1990). During the 1990s other countries including Kenya adopted reforms that entailed professional management of government in small units, adopting private sector practices such as strategic planning. In the new approach improving performance of the public sector was key concern that could be achieved by addressing issues of public values through performance-based accountability systems such as output budgeting and accrual accounting, privatization and contracting out, and contract employment in both developed and developing countries (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016).

Public values are the norms and standards of behavior that bind public service when carrying out activities of government while public value is the intrinsic benefit emanating from government business, (Dickson, 2015; Bryson, Crosby & Bloomberg, 2015). Public service values are part of the wider ethical expectations that are integral to public service delivery. Public service ethics are the broad norms that delineate how public servants as agents of the state and as members of a profession should exercise judgment and discretion in carrying out their official duties (Engida &

Bardill, 2013). Ethics is important since as Lawton (1998) argued people working in the public service needed to realize that they work in organizations that exist for social and ethical purposes. Indeed, Terry (2015) has asserted that the purpose of public official profession is to carry public service delivery with the same moral burden expected in a free society that is shared by all citizens. The Government of Kenya has stated that the core ethical values that should guide the work of public servants in Kenya is to fulfill their lawful obligation to government with professionalism and integrity; perform their official duties honestly, faithfully and efficiently respecting the rights of the public and their colleagues; and should not bring their employer into disrepute through their private activities (GOK, 2015). The extent to which public sector reforms influence compliance with ethics in government agencies such as County Governments of Kenya is therefore a theme of interest not only to citizens but public sector leadership and research as well. The issue of public service in the relationship between government and citizens has been well explained in theory.

### **1.1 Theory and Public Sector Reforms**

The public sector has been explained in a confluence of theories generally regarded as administrative theory. With regard to public sector reforms theories like public choice, agency, and stakeholder theories have been used to explain changes that take place in government in its various forms. Public choice theory was postulated in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and is credited to several authors who proposed application of economic reasoning in making choices to resolve public administration dilemmas (Mueller, 2008). According to this theory the reasoned decisions by the majority are binding to all. The postulate explains decisions by authorities such as the public service that is established through a democratic process. According to agency theory by Jensen and Meckling (1976), an agency relationship exists between one party, the owner or principal who delegates work to another party such as management as agent. Applied to public sector, the theory predicts a fundamental problem when absent or distant seniors control professional executives from the center to act on their behalf at the local level. Dispersion or decentralization of resources and management authority is therefore recommended. The Soufflé theory proposed by Parker (1995) predicts how decentralization can benefit firm management. The theory advocates for decentralization of financial, political, and administrative aspects as critical requirements to the success of public service. The stakeholder theory proposed by Wheeler and Ng, (2004) is important in explaining relationships. The theory postulates that suppliers, employees and business partners are affected by the organizational objectives and suggests that managers need to serve and maintain

relationships with such stakeholders. This explains the new public service operating environment that has greatly changed to include citizens and other stakeholders in service delivery.

## **2. Methodology**

The study purposively sample public sector reforms literature for systematic review. In order to place reforms in the right perspective, global, regional and articles of reforms in Kenya were considered to discover the rationale for introducing public sector reforms, achievements and lesson learnt from implementation of reforms. The methodology involved a selection of available prior research and synthesizing reforms experiences from the Western countries including Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Kenya. The next step in the methodology was to identify relationship between the concept of reform and compliance with public service ethics.

## **3. Rationale, Achievements and Lessons of Public Sector Reforms**

Globally, the NPM-based reforms were driven by a combination of factors including economic and fiscal pressures on governments in the 70s and early 80s that attracted pro-market and pro-private sector in the developed countries. In the West, NPM paradigm had challenged the post-war consensus on the welfare state ideology as unsustainable (Hood, 1991). The economic-neoliberal political thought that advocated for decreased government involvement in society to cut expenses on welfare programmes became the main reason for adopting reforms (Bryson, Barbara & Laura, 2019). Unlike the West, ineffectiveness and inefficiencies in public services were the main drivers of reform in the developing countries of Africa and Asia (Hope, 2014). For example, countries like Bangladesh, Botswana, Uganda, Ghana and Kenya were provided administrative capacity building to strengthen policy processes to enhance efficiency, reduce costs and improve productivity under the World Bank Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) (Heidhues & Obare, 2011). With Kenya experiencing aggravated needs for socio-economic development amidst crippling public debt, fiscal problems and high rate of unemployment the government adopted SAPs-supported reforms as a means out of the challenges, (NPMAC, 2018; Chemengich, 2013). Although the reforms aimed to ensure people-centered public service delivery, Marobela and Boy (2012) averred that reforms were resisted due World Bank conditions for SAPs loans that were lased with neoliberal political agenda.

Despite the differing rationale for the introduction of reforms, globally extant literature is replete with examples of extensive application of public sector reforms aimed at reducing government

role and improvement public sector performance. The introduction of NPM-reforms entailed changing the role of government; dispersing and decentralization to lower units; marketization of public services, emphasis on performance management and changing employment relations (De Vries & Nemec, 2013). Reforms therefore caused governments to re-define the vision, mission, core functions and objectives, divesture from non-core functions as such reducing employees, changing structures and dispersing and decentralizing services giving managers and employees more freedom to manage (Hope, 2014).

### **3.1 Changing Role of Government**

The reviewed literature revealed that the most outstanding impact of public sector reforms was the change of government role from regulation and control to facilitation. Under public sector reforms the operation of government business tremendously changed from highly hierarchical systems to different forms of dispersion and decentralization of public service delivery. Using the NPM-based reforms many countries attempted to redefine the role of government by separating functions into different agencies and downsizing to create leaner and more rationalized organizational structures, systems and flexible processes.

The UK, Australia and New Zealand created executive agencies and granted them autonomy to manage while in Korea and Singapore service boards were set up under similar terms (Dickson, 2015). Other countries like Jamaica, Latvia, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya created executive agencies out of existing ministries. The government in Kenya downsized by creating specialized Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAs), (NPMAC, 2018). The Country also established the integrated one-stop service model known as “Huduma Centers” that were considered more flexible and responsive mode of service delivery. The integrated services mainly driven by electronic systems such as e-citizen, i-tax and numerous other e-pay systems were in line with the Country’s digital revolution, (Ndemo & Weiss 2017). The other fundamental change in running government was brought about by decentralization which in Kenya granted substantial autonomy to lower levels of government.

In Kenya as central government control weakened after devolution, so did local nationalism strengthen and conflicts escalated. After studying the persistent conflict situation in Marsabit County, Scott-Villiers (2017) concluded that ethnic conflicts escalated into small wars after devolution. Government and civil society reports indicate that Kenya’s sporadic intra and inter-

ethnic skirmishes have been frequent since devolution was established in 2013. These include ongoing conflicts in Mandera, Baringo, Narok, Bungoma, Tana River and inter-county disputes between Meru and Isiolo, Meru and Tharaka Nithi, Elgeyo Marakwet and Turkana, Kisii and Narok, Kisumu and Kericho, Laikipia and Baringo and Rift valley and Western regions, (Sahgal et al, 2019; Cannon & Ali, 2018; Emase, 2017; Abdi, 2014)

### **3.2 Decentralization**

Decentralization was an attractive reform agenda to developing countries especially in Africa where over thirty out of fifty-four Countries practiced some form of decentralization in public service delivery (Mookherjee, 2014; Juma, Korir & Mulongo 2014). Under public sector reforms, decentralization was considered an important initiative to enhance capacity of lower levels of Government to conform to service delivery benchmarks and standards (Hope, 2015). After trying different methods since independence, Kenya's decentralization initiatives crystalized into devolution upon promulgation of the new constitution (GOK, 2010). Devolution is the statutory delegation of powers from the central government of a sovereign state to govern at a sub-national level, such as a regional or local (Oketch, 2017).

Devolution generated a lot enthusiasm and several frameworks to enforce ethical standards were developed. The most comprehensive was developed by the Public Service Commission of Kenya [PSCCK] (2015) framework to operationalize the constitutional and other legal and regulatory provisions to enforce ethical standards in the public service. Despite the express constitutional provisions (Article 190) for cooperation between counties and national government, Juma et al (2014) observed that confusion still lingers whether devolution is decentralization or federalism which often led to antagonistic relationship and confusion about the actual point of responsibility and accountability.

Devolution in Kenya had the immediate benefit of improved equity since public resources hitherto concentrated at the center were channeled to all 47 County governments leading to expanded services to the whole Country (Korir, Rotich & Bengat, 2015). However, Wagana, Iravo and Nzulwa, (2015) described Kenya's devolution as partial decentralization since many responsibilities were shared with national government. With respect to financial management for example, the Public Finance and Management Act (2012) gave national treasury inordinate power to disburse funds to Counties.

### **3.3 Marketization**

The NPM emerged as a new approach to address the inflexibility of the old public administration in adjusting to the demands of a competitive market economy. It is required that governments should separate funding from provision of services by emphasizing use of market mechanisms. In practice this meant that governments provide finance for services, but not necessarily provide the service but contract-out to the private sector using instruments such as franchising, vouchers, contracting out and instituting internal markets user fees (O'Flynn, 2007). Another manifestation of market orientation was privatization or sale of government stake or shares in whole or part to commercial interests (Kalimullah, Alam & Nour 2012).

There are several challenges with market approaches that affect the private and public sector differently. Box (1999) while analyzing the concept of running government like a business concluded that operating with private sector entrepreneurial techniques in the public sphere can subvert values of openness, fairness, and public propriety. Moreover, market-like techniques though hailed as ensuring economical use of scarce resources are subject to failure. Box argued that countries can survive market failure but not government failure. This is because private sector can divest from unprofitable service but government cannot withdraw from unprofitable enterprise when services are required by citizens.

Since the 1990s, privatization became popular with Africa and development partners as a key principle of managing public resources to ensure expanded access to services. Privatization has since metamorphosed to co-creation, which involves a practice where the public service and citizens cooperate to offer a public service. The co-creation characteristics include supplementing or supplanting practice of governance, more interaction between policy makers, citizens and other actors and acting in accordance with context (Torfing, Røiseland & Sørensen, 2016). In Australia and New Zealand, Butcher and Gilchrist (2016) observed that due to financial and social contingencies governments adopted a collaborative approach by incorporating Not-for-Profit organizations in public service delivery. The mix of players brought about challenges of ethics compliance in several countries. In the UK there was attempts to cure this by applying the same ethical requirements to public service and private sector agencies offering public services (Carmel, & Harlock, 2008).



Marketization in Kenya involved privatization and government entering in joint ventures or contracting out government service to be offered by the private sector and introducing user fees in health, water and education (NPMAC, 2018). However, as Kimathi (2017) found in Kenya, monitoring and accountability become problematic due to system weaknesses leading to abuse and loss of revenue to hospitals through corruption. Privatization in Kenya is guided by specific law on privatization and public private partnership (PPPs). However, government parastatals are some of the most corruption prone government agencies and difficult to reform due community interests.

### **3.4 Performance Management**

Performance Management is another major plank of public sector reforms that countries adopted for the potential to improve production in both developed and developing countries. Performance management systems have been defined as processes designed by management and imposed on employees mainly in an attempt to link performance to reward (Korir, Rotich & Bengat, 2015). This requires managers to work on performance targets, indicators and output objectives. Shifting to output-orientation called for greater emphasis on output controls in resource allocation and rewards linked to measured performance, use of performance agreements and performance-related pay. The experience with performance management differed from country to country. In some, performance management did not yield meaningful results due to a number of factors chief among them the government lukewarm commitment to performance improvement related to pay.

The introduction of results based management [RBM] had different outcomes. Nõmm and Randma-Liiv (2012) analyzed Estonian government documents and performance audits and results indicated there were difficulties in introducing performance measurement tools. The Kenya performance measurement was very successful at pilot stage where state corporations put on performance contracting returned highly improved results in absolute terms, (Obong'o, 2009).

The challenge with performance management was related to the reward. Reforms required that fairness and objectivity is upheld, that performance targets and criteria are clearly stated, and that performance measurements and rewards are based on actual work performed (Hope, 2014). This expectation in many countries remains a mirage. According Rauh, (2018) New Public Management only shrunk the number of government employees but increased the size of government spending. In Africa, Engida and Bardill (2013) observed that outcomes of some aspects of public sector reform such as downsizing, retrenchment, employment freeze, cost-



sharing though important to maintain the size and lowering cost of public sector were unpopular. Another challenge is the discrepancy in remuneration between the highly paid senior staff and other employees who are lowly paid. Attempts at harmonization have remained just an agenda with the Salaries and Remuneration Commission [SRC] and Public Service of Kenya [PSCK]. For example, the PSCK *Guidelines for Implementation of Performance Rewards and Sanctions* intended to address the equity gap among other issues remains just a draft. This failure to adequately address issues of equity in pay and benefits resulted in unprecedented labour unrests in County health services of Kenya (Oketch, 2017).

#### **4. Public Sector Reforms and Compliance with Ethics**

Reviewed literature shows the exposition of profoundly divergent positions on the outcomes of public sector reforms. Reform outcomes have been diverse as the experiences of the specific country or region. The differences in reform outcomes were associated with a country's or region's interaction with factors such as the changing theoretical framework underpinning the reform efforts, drivers of reform, historical background, administrative capacity, political philosophy, level of development and community culture. Even the guiding principles that defined the public service and marked public sector reforms kept on evolving. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the old public administration model of bureaucracy had evolved through four stages namely old public administration, new public management, new public governance and new public service (Knies, Boselie, Gould-Williams & Vandenabeele, 2017; Torfing & Triantafillou 2013). The public administration model was based on hierarchy and meritocracy as foundational principles to ensure government services were ethical. Under public administration Government business was based on compliance with orders and a model of serving citizens. Table 1 shows the instruments of ethics compliance used in Kenya.

**Table 1. Kenya’s Instruments for Ethics Compliance**

<b>Instruments for Ethics Compliance</b>	<b>Year</b>
Induction Handbook for the Public Service	2017
The Public Service Code of Conduct And Ethics, 2016	2016
Public Officer Ethics Act No. 4 Of 2003 (Revised)	2016
Discipline Manual for the public service, 2016	2016
PSCK Framework for Implementation of Values and Principles in Articles 10 and 232 of the Constitution in the Public Service	2015
Public Service (Values And Principles) Act No. 1 of 2015	2015
Leadership And Integrity Act Chapter 182	2015
Constitution of Kenya	2010

Source: GOK (2017).

The new public management (NPM) was based on the need for economical use of resources for effective services to the citizen as customer of the service. The NPM system which sought to replace the old public administration system as a different paradigm, in practice ended up only as another framework mainly due to unclear theoretical underpinnings such as questions of suitability of neo-liberalism to administrative theories. The third view; the New Public Governance (NPG) was adopted to improve customer experience with public service. As an approach NPG constitutive elements included classical public administration and new public management with goals such as efficiency, democracy, innovation and elevated the citizen to a customer whose needs the government had to meet as a democratic right. The fourth and the newest of these approaches is the New Public Service (NPS). The NPS approach is premised on public management drawing from democratic theory hence the citizen is treated not only as a customer but as participant in public service delivery.

The theoretical and paradigmatic underpinnings of reform did not completely replace management paradigms but are still evolving as countries continue implementing reforms. Rather than seeking a firm framework therefore the public service should instead manage the resulting hybrid arrangements comprising features of all the different paradigms in defining and managing issues staff competency, organizational values and de-centered governance that include citizens (Dickson, 2015). This imperative was captured well by Ventriss, Perry, Nabatchi, Milward and Johnston (2019) when discussing the growing distrust of public institutions, political polarization, and rising support for populism, particularly in the United States. Ventriss et al (2019) showed that the trends had contributed to a diminished sense of public duty including erosion of public

values which public service had to repair and strengthen. In concurrence Bryson et al., (2019) stated that the new approach is a public service that is networked, multisector, no-one-wholly-in-charge system with world values beyond coherence and especially democratic values are prominent. However, Bryson insisted that Government still has a special role to play as a guarantor of public values with citizens as well as businesses and nonprofit organizations as important and active public problem solvers. In this regard Yeboah (2016), argued that public sector reforms needed to consider the complex context of public sector management that is invariably unique in order to effectively tackle unethical issues such as corruption that was constantly growing in sophistication.

The common thread is that all the changes that took place in the public sector had certain effects and potential to influence compliance with public service ethics, (Rahmawati & Sarjito 2020; Onyango, 2019; Wu & Jingjun, 2018; Kim & Yun, 2017; Thonzhe & Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017; Lamidi, Agboola, & Taleat, 2016). For example, in Indonesia Rahmawati and Sarjito (2020) found that successful strategic leaders upheld both the law and promoted anti-corruption. Wu and Jingjun (2018) studied China's rapid economic development and findings showed that strict enforcement of reform implementation had led to punishment of 1.2 million persons over corruption. Kim and Yun's (2017) study of the Korean experience also noted that reforms that strengthened public service ethics prevented corruption. Thonzhe & Vyas-Doorgapersad (2017) studied the South African public service experience and found that when reforms were well monitored to ensure ethical leadership, ethical character, ethical organizational culture and ethics training they contributed to a value-driven public administration.

Another important aspect that was not adequately considered when introducing NPM-based reforms was country context. The contextual elements of historical background, administrative capacity, governance and ethical culture affected reforms in particular jurisdictions. Most of the success was registered in the Western economies. For example, Lynn (2006) examined the evolution of managerial structures, practices, and values in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and United States of America and concluded that public sector reform in any country was inevitably shaped by that country's history. This contention was supported in an historical analysis of the US public service by Hijal-Moghrabi and Sabharwal (2018) that concluded that the service maintained values after NPM-based reforms because of US history of ethics. Calogero, (2010)

observed that Italy successfully changed from a bureaucratic to managerial model. Although Lynn (2006) averred that new public management was inappropriate to developing countries on account of historical problems of corruption and low administrative capacity this was sufficiently contradicted. Dan and Pollitt (2015) for example averred that though reforms in the Central and Eastern Europe were not always successful to the extent expected and promoted, there was enough evidence to show that some of the central ideas in NPM had led to improvement in public service in particular countries. In Bangladesh and other developing countries in Africa Islam (2015) noted that the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm had replaced the old public administration and improved public service delivery and accountability.

The apprehension regarding the negative impact of NPM-based reforms on public administration is well documented. During implementation, reforms tended to oversimplify organizational complexities of public service such as those brought about by politics which caused difficulties (Roman, 2015; Kuipers, Higgs, Kickert, Tummers, Grandia & Van der Voet, 2014). According to Kellis and Bing (2015) the focus of NPM-inspired reforms on outcomes and hierarchical authority had created an environment in which administrative evil could occur. This was observed in Poland where Glinka (2017) conducted a study and found that constant reforms had negative impact on public servants. Similar outcomes were observed by Kim and Han (2015) after studying the South Korea's administrative and found that the old form of bureaucracy had not weakened as anticipated largely because the bureaucrats themselves had to design and manage administrative reform leading to resistance.

The mode of introduction of reforms as a package of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAPs) which had neoliberal political agenda by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund lacked ownership in many developing countries and led to failure (Marobela and Boy, 2012). The SAPs engineered reforms suffered bad timing due to unpreparedness, while using external agencies and experts who rarely had detailed knowledge or long-term commitment for reforms hampered success. As the World Bank (2001) itself admitted, the application of NPM reforms in countries like Kenya needed to take context into account.

In Africa reforms were not fully embraced mainly for failure to consider unique contexts. Engida and Bardill (2012) based on the study of NPM reforms in Sub-Saharan African Countries cautioned that the new approach could not be a cure to the problems of public administration and

recommended a wise selection and adoption of beneficial elements of NPM. Guma (2013) noted that even without reforms officials in Uganda were motivated and faithfully implemented policies decided by the political class within the old Westminster-Whitehall model of the Weberian ideal-type bureaucratic administration. Rather than abandoning the NPM-based public sector reforms that were widely used in Africa, Kilelo (2015) concurred about the need to refine the system to fit contexts and for reforms to address leadership issues in the public sector.

Decentralization is another aspect of reforms that could influence compliance with public service ethics. Studies have shown that decentralization can help promote compliance with public service ethics since devolved units have delegated powers of a sovereign state to govern and can be held accountable at the local level (Bojanic, 2018; Muigua, 2018; Balunywa et al., 2014). In Uganda Balunywa et al., (2014) found that decentralization improved financial accountability. Importantly, The Kenyan decentralization scenario had mixed results and the extent to which devolution shielded County Governments from unethical behaviour has been put to question. For example Oketch (2017) found a mismatch between allocation of resources for universal health coverage and actual planning for equitable service delivery. D'Arcy and Cornell, (2016) tended to agree and indicated that devolution did not reduce unethical character of Kenya's public service of ethnic patronage politics. Findings of a study carried out by Kimathi (2017) indicated that devolution was actually to blame for the deteriorating service delivery and corruption at the County governments in Kenya.

Further studies in the continent indicate that reforms models were imposed leading to imitations related to generalization such as for ignoring African cultural norms upon which ethics depended (Sebola, 2014). Ethics includes practicing integrity as a cultural behaviour based on personal conviction (Okiri, Ngugi, & Wandayi, 2019; Robinson et al. 2018; Marang'a, Ouma & Kosimbei, 2018; Knights, 2016). After analyzing why major solutions to tame judicial corruption in Kenya had failed, Okiri, Ngugi, & Wandayi (2019) found the linear approach to offering solutions was to blame. Okiri et al., (2019) observed that corruption is not only a legal issue but also a moral concern and recommended including promotion of integrity as a better approach.

**Table 2: History of Strained Public Sector Reform Programme in Kenya**

Reform Milestones	Year	Major Activities	Achievements
Civil Service Reform Programme 1	1993	Definition functions of ministries, departments, staffing and pay issues, rationalization	Right-sizing of the civil service. Largely failed for ignoring social impact.
Civil Service Reform Programme 11	1999	Performance improvement	Implementation using donor-funded “Dream Team” failed
Economic and Recovery Strategy	2003-2007	Attempts at improving management of wage bill.	Set back due to post-election violence (PEV) disruption
Vision 2030	2007	Activities towards enactment of new constitution	Delayed implementation
Public Service Reform Strategy	2008	Government was expanded after Peace Accord defeating reform goals.	Strenuous issues of a divided government hampered implementation
Public Sector Transformation Strategy	2010 -2014	Service and Openness; Coordination and Cooperation; Effectiveness & Accountability	Excellent planning and paperwork with less than optimal implementation
The new Constitution	2010	National Values and Principles of Governance	Low reform interest. Devolution led to increased unethical conduct
Public Sector Reforms Vision 2030	2013-2017	Elaborate plan for RBM (Performance Contracts)	Virtual all MDAs except Counties on PCs by 2015
Mwongozo	2015	Stare corporation management	Bold guide to parastatals that was not implemented
Public Service Kenya Framework	2015	Consolidated Framework	Partial evaluation excluding County Governments

Source: GOK (2017).

## 5. Conclusions

Review of previous research reveals that there exists a relationship between public sector reforms and public service ethics especially in the western world where the reforms originated. The study also revealed extensive adoption of reforms and a substantial corpus of research on reforms. Whereas the nexus of reforms and performance is apparent, in literature this is not so for public sector reforms and compliance with public service ethics.

Research showed that public sector reforms led to fundamental change in running government probably more than any other event in recent history. The role of government changed substantially, while decentralization of government services became the new norm. The idea of marketization continued to evolve from simple government divestiture to co-creation. Although performance management meant adoption of other pertinent aspects of private sector practices for efficiency and effectiveness, important accompanying practices for effective human resource

management were lacking. For example, in Africa reduction of staff through retrenchment though necessary to tame the ballooning wage bill was roundly criticized for being anti-social. Although retrenchment initially reduced staff numbers, after devolution this was quickly reversed when County Governors used their power liberally to employ new staff leading to exponential growth of the public service.

Public sector reforms were an attempt to break up the boundary that conceptually defined the difference between traditional public administration based on non-profit service delivery and private sector profit-based business model. The change policies and frameworks remained relevant only for a short time due to not only constantly meet the changing citizen needs but also due to differences in response to challenges that were experienced in implementation. In developing Reforms also opened a loophole to avoid meritocracy in the name of performance based reward system.

Public sector reforms emerged for different reasons in different jurisdictions. Whereas reforms were intended to solve the challenges of meeting expenses of the welfare based public services in the West, the developing countries needed to improve administrative capacity. Kenya's reform journey started in earnest in the 1990s but gained traction after 2010 with devolution, arguably the most important reform achievement other than passing of the constitution itself.

The enactment of the Constitution of Kenya (GOK, 2010) heralded a transformation of Kenya's governance structure with two independent levels of Government. County Governments are required by the constitution (GOK, 2010) to develop strategic plans known as County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP). Evidence of the use of CIDP process to influence observance of public service ethics is scant. The few available studies focused on evaluation of performance and rarely on cause and effect of the outcomes of devolution (Masungu et al. 2015; Korir et al. 2015).

## **6. Recommendations**

There is need to sequence reforms in such a way that initial reform measures focus on ensuring that the preconditions for a particular element of NPM are in place before introducing others. This calls for an incremental approach to implementation. For instance, it may be advisable to have a good management information system in place before introducing performance agreements and performance-related pay. Also some education and publicity of new systems may enhance understanding and acceptance by key stakeholders.



### **7. Gaps Identified from Literature**

The existing research is mainly based on the western countries with few from the developing countries of Africa. Available research is to large extent qualitative and based on case studies. Due to methodological, contextual and conceptual gaps in literature, further research is recommended to address the gaps and generate information in specific areas of reform. In addition, future studies need to address the effect of major aspects of reform such as strategic leadership and compliance with public service ethics.

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