

*Full Length Research Paper*

# The changing global Public Administration and its theoretical and practical implications for Africa

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**‘Classical’ public administration theories, principles and paradigms continually fascinate scholars given their relevance to government practices especially in Africa. As used here, ‘public administration’ (in lower case) denotes government activities whereas ‘Public Administration’, often associated with Woodrow Wilson’s renowned 1887 essay, refers to the subject matter. However, New Public Management (NPM) dominated Public Administration from the 1970s-1990s when it was replaced by ‘Governance’. This article examines Public Administration theory, practice and related theories and how the centuries-old discipline developed from their introduction, interpretation and application in the public sector during each era. It will conclude that these developments have had mixed consequences for Africa, on which the article focuses, owing largely to the effect of colonialism on the continent’s public administration. Using the selected examples of African countries’ experiences, this article relies on a qualitative and literature analysis of the issues discussed. Africa, like other ‘Third World’ or developing regions, is largely perceived as a consumer of the mostly western-dominated or inclined Public Administration, New Public Management and governance models which it inherited primarily through colonialism.**

**Key words:** Public administration theory, new public management, governance, Africa.

## INTRODUCTION

The field of public administration has experienced a continuous shift from one theory to the other well over 100 years (1880s-2014). Public Administration, the oldest theory that was introduced in 1887, was replaced by New Public Management (NPM) from the 1970s – 1990s. NPM itself was replaced by governance (1990s to date-2014). This article attempts to explain the seemingly endless movement from one theory to another in this field and how this affected the African continent. It analyses the historical development of the discipline, especially the

subsequent introduction of NPM; the successes and limitations of NPM and the emergence of governance as an alternative approach. These authors subscribe to the view that in as much as the practice of public administration is now fully integrated into the operational requirements of many countries’ public sectors, Public Administration as a subject in universities and colleges globally can similarly be viewed as a distinct discipline in the same way that economics, history, psychology, political science, sociology, law, philosophy etc. are

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accepted as disciplines (Peters and Pierre, 2003: 7). Over the years, a concerted attempt has been made by numerous scholars to define its scope, terms, conceptual features including what is generally known as theories of public administration (Basu, 2009; Peters and Pierre, 2003; Thoenig, 2003; Knott and Hammond, 2003; and Heady, 1984).

Due to the difficulty in developing this subject, some terms such as 'discipline' 'theory', 'paradigm' 'concept' 'terminology' etc. have been used interchangeably and probably to the detriment of the subject. Nevertheless, while recognising this apparent limitation, it cannot be assumed that public administration as a school of thought does not have its own body of knowledge which includes theories, terms and systematically researched frameworks which have informed its development trajectory.

In this regard, the methodology and approach adopted in this paper warrants some attention.

## **METHODOLOGY, SCOPE AND CONCEPTUAL APPROACH**

The methodology adopted in this article essentially follows a qualitative approach in order to understand the relationships between Public Administration, New Public Management (NPM) and governance as well as their practical manifestation in Africa. The article attempts to trace the key arguments of scholars who have over centuries postulated the formulation and re-formulation of a body of ideas for the development of what subsequently became popularly known as Public Administration; its practical implementation especially within a government or public sector setting; as well as its metamorphosis into NPM and governance.

The authors assume that the subject of Public Administration and its practical manifestation have now been accepted globally to an extent that methodical study of this body of knowledge is possible through systematic analysis and critique. In this article, such systematic analysis and critique essentially take the form of document and literature analysis as well as theoretical postulation in an attempt to explain the development of the subject matter and unravel its implications for Africa. Owing to the wealth of literature that has developed over centuries, the authors adopted a review of the extant literature on Public Administration and its practical component in an attempt to understand how far the school of thought has developed and to analyse its development trajectory.

In terms of the literature review, the objective was not to compile a bibliography but rather to identify references that focus on the key issues raised by the authors. It is acknowledged that Africa is not homogeneous but rather a very diverse and complex range of countries that are largely divided along Anglophone, Lusophone, Francophone (that is, former British, Portuguese and French

colonies, respectively) and the Afro-Arabic countries in North Africa (Ndjoze-Ojo, 2008:162). These geo-political dynamics are accommodated in the analysis and not overlooked. Yet, despite Africa's vast geographical landscape, huge demographic and cultural diversities and the fact that the continent now comprises 54 independent countries in terms of the scope of the article, the attempt was not to cover each region comprehensively but to draw inferences where possible on the literature available using a few selected examples.

## **Conceptualizing Public Administration**

The importance of creating common terms in the development of a body of knowledge is critical. However, in the case of Public Administration scholars often disagree on concepts or terms, especially the name of the discipline itself (Coetzee, 2012:16). Similarly, observers note that:

*While theory and practice, and an array of academic disciplines contend for control over the study of public administration, the fundamental point that should be emphasized is that all of these perspectives bring something with them that helps to illuminate administration in the public sector (Peters and Pierre, 2003: 7).*

Therefore, this article also does not posit to offer a universally acceptable definition of the idea. However, some distinguish between 'public administration' with lower case and 'Public Administration' (capital initials P and A) (Coetzee, 2012:30), based on the origin and content of the subject matter. In terms of content, Botes et al. (1997:257) argue that Public Administration (with capital initials) is an academic discipline or subject taught at tertiary institutions, whereas "public administration" (lower case) indicates the execution of a country's laws, rules and regulations, in order to meet the needs of the citizenry (see also Botes et al., 1997; Coetzee, 2012:16-21). That is, 'One teaches Public Administration but one performs or carries out public administration' (Kent-Brown and Roux, 2003:68). In terms of origin, according to Fox and Meyer (1995), Coetzee (2012:30) and Basu (2009:1) the practice of public administration is as old as mankind itself, while Public Administration is almost a century old.

Furthermore, the rudimentary development of this subject is inextricably linked with the work of the German sociologist, Max Weber, '...who developed much of what is today called the theory of bureaucracy' (Robbin and Barnwell 2002:42, 487; Fox et al., 2000:79). This particularly includes his focus on public administration as an area of study and its general characteristics such as 'hierarchy, formal authority, division of labor by specialization, employment by merit, merit judged by education and other formal preparation, compensation

based on performance of official functions...to enhance efficiency' (Cooper et al., 1998:5-6). Yet, as observers argued, it is to be noted that the "[t]he Weberian or 'classic' model of bureaucracy [or public administration] applies essentially to the countries of Western Europe, which are the prototypes for developed or modernised polities" (Heady, 1984: 76).

The following outlines some important stages in the development of Public Administration.

### Development of Public Administration

According to Coetzee (2012:35-36) and Basu (2009:16) the first stage in the development of public administration as a systematic study began with the publication of Woodrow Wilson's 'The Study of Administration' in 1887 during what Basu calls the "politics-administration dichotomy" (1887-1926) era. Distinguishing between politics and administration, Wilson saw administration as being concerned with the implementation of policy decisions, not making them (Uwizeyimana, 2013:2). Similarly, Goodnow's *Politics and Administration* 1900, which endorsed the Wilsonian theme, identified three separate government authorities (powers), which he termed 'the execution of the state will' (Goodnow, in Shafritz et al., 2004:35-37). The first was the judiciary, which makes laws (Goodnow, 1900:17-26); followed by 'the executive authorities', whose function is the "general supervision of the execution of the state will" (ibid). The third was the administrative authority whose function was 'to attend to the scientific, technical and, so to speak, commercial activities of government' (Goodnow, 1900:17-27; Goodnow in Shafritz et al., 2004:35-37).

Yet, it is Leonard White's 'Introduction to the Study of Public Administration' in 1926 which was recognized as the first textbook on the subject (Basu, 2009:16; Hyde and Shafritz, 2012:12). The second stage called 'scientific management' (also known as *principles of administration phase*) ranges from 1927 to 1937 (Nasrullah, 2005:199; Basheka, 2012:41). According to Basu (2009:17) the central belief of this period was that certain 'principles of administration' existed and scholars had to discover and advocate them.

The most influential of these scientists is Frederick W. Taylor who is also often credited as being the 'founder of scientific management' (Locke, 1982:14). In 1909, Taylor proposed that by optimizing and simplifying jobs, productivity would increase. In one of his experiments, Taylor 'experimented with a shovel design until he had a one that would allow workers to shovel for several hours straight' (Mindtools, n.d.:1). With bricklayers, according to Costanzo (2014:2), he experimented with the various motions required and developed an efficient way to lay bricks. Literature shows that the persons who directly imported Taylor's theories of 'scientific management' and Fayol's 'theories of business administration' in the public sector were Gulick and Urwick through their famous POSDCORB acronym, which stands for steps in

the administrative process, namely: Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting (Gulick, 1936:3). Thanks to Sarah Greer, a bilingual assistant to Luther Gulick, who found and translated a 1923 speech by Fayol on 'The Administrative Theory in the State'. Gulick and Urwick (1937) were able to publish the acronym (Wren et al., 2002:906; Basu, 2009:17). Largely drawn from the work of French industrialist Henri Fayol, it first appeared in a 1936 staff paper '*Notes on the Theory of Organization*', written by Luther Gulick and Lyndall Urwick for the Brownlow Committee in 1937 (Basu, 2009:17). Being a mining engineer and director of mines, Henri Fayol's theories were developed for the private sector in general and for the mining industries in particular. It could therefore be argued that while the application of the scientific management principles in the private sector was based on a number of known scientific experiments, it was not the case in the public sector.

The third stage in the development of public administration, known as 'Era of Heterodoxy and Challenge' (1938-1947) (Coetzee, 2012:37; Basheka, 2012:43), was a reaction against what was perceived as the mechanical approach of the scientific management. The so-called 'principles of administration' were challenged and dubbed 'naturalistic fallacies' and 'proverbs' (Basu, 2009:19). In short, according to the University of Mumbai (n.d.:12) "this period witnessed the spectacle of Political Science not only letting Public Administration separate itself from what was then seen as the main subject, but also not fostering and encouraging its growth and development within its own field". Inevitably, at that time there were serious disagreements as to whether Public Administration deserves to be a stand-alone science or a subset of Political Science (is it or is it not)? Therefore, in the post-World War II period, the claims of Public Administration of being a science and a distinct subject or area of study from political science were questioned. This led to the perception of Public Administration as a political science as well as an administration science and subsequently the development of administrative theory (Lungu, 1986:126).

The most notable contribution to this era came from the famous Hawthorne experiments from 1920 to 1932. The Hawthorne study found that productivity in organizations was not only affected by the way in which the job is designed and economic rewards associated to it, but also by 'certain social, environmental and psychological factors too' (Basu, 2009:19). The focus in both the private and public sector organizations then shifted to 'human relations' (Basu, 2009:19).

The fourth stage, 'New Public Administration (NPA)', a period of 'Identity Crisis' (Basheka, 2012:51), ranged from 1948 to 1970s and is characterized by the rejection of the principles of administration and the politics-administration dichotomy (Basu, 2009:19). Accordingly, the latter approach not only recognized the political environment within which administration functioned especially in the public sector, but also posited that

politics and public administration should be separated. However, as a comprehensive body of literature has shown, this would be easier said than done given that public administration operates in a largely political environment and given ‘...the constant and insistent demands which “politics” makes on administration...’ (Wamalwa, 1986:59; Uwizeyimana, 2013:171). This stage was ushered in by two significant publications of Simon’s ‘Administrative Behavior’ and Robert Dahl’s essay entitled ‘The Science of Public Administration: three Problems’ in the 1940s. According to Nasrullah (2005: 200), by rejecting both the ‘classical principles of administration’ and the ‘politics-administration dichotomy’ in administrative thought and practice, Simon’s approach widened the scope of the subject by relating it to psychology, sociology, economics and political science. The fifth stage is known as ‘New public management – NPM’, which lasted from the 1970s to the late 1990s (Nasrullah, 2005:200, Basheka, 2012:51). NPM or ‘managerialism’ essentially sought to transform the traditional tenets of ‘old’ or Weberian public administration, particularly through the greater involvement of the private sector in public institutions (Uwizeyimana, 2008:20). As observers noted, ‘...almost every reform in the 1980s and 1990s included participation of one or more big management consultancies...’ such as Andersen, Ernst and Young, and KPMG (Maphunye, 2003:7, citing Pollit and Bouckaert, 2000:20).

NPM dominated the field till the early 1990s when it was replaced by a new paradigm, governance (from the late 1990s to-date) (Basheka, 2012:56). The theory of governance has in turn spawned what became known as “good governance” (Levy, 2002). In Africa, this approach is usually associated with multi-lateral or donor agencies and closely related to ‘institutional reforms to strengthen political governance...’ (Hope, 2003:4). Key among its mechanisms is the improvement of ‘...administrative and civil services...the strengthening of parliamentary oversight...the promotion of participatory decision-making...and the adoption of judicial reforms’ (Hope, 2003:4). The approach emphasized on assessing and improving governance and the quality of the bureaucracy using specific ‘governance indicators’ (Levy, 2002:14-22).

All these stages, except NPM and governance (that is, Stage 1-4) constitute what this article refers to as Old/Traditional Public Administration. In the case of Africa, much of this debate on the historical development outlined above happened mostly in Europe and North America although much of it had serious implications for public administration in many developing countries.

Table 1 traces different stages of development of Public Administration and the movement from old/traditional public administration to NPM and governance.

### **Criticism of the ‘Old’ Public Administration**

The traditional public administration contributed to many

countries around the world up to the end of the late 1960s and early 1970s (Ibrahim, 2012). However, by the 1970s, there were calls for new management systems based on market orientation. The need for such a management system arose from mounting criticism that traditional public administration was no longer suitable for modern circumstances and thus should be replaced (Ibrahim, 2012:1). Some criticisms focused on large scale government which led to overconsumption of resources; government’s involvement in too many activities; widespread bureaucracy; high rates of inflation; the absence of separation between policy and administration; the absence of rational decision-making; and disregard for citizens’ satisfaction (Ibrahim, 2012:1).

Others targeted inefficiency, corruption, lack of accountability and inflexibility (Ibrahim, 2012:1). Given such criticisms, it is not surprising that countries that recently achieved independence e.g. South Africa, wanted to ‘transform’ their Weberian-type public administration systems by learning from the best practices of ‘civil service systems [such as those] of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Singapore and the United Kingdom’ (Maphunye, 2003: 7). Perhaps the harshest criticism of the traditional public administration focused on its implementation of policies. Its emphasis on the supremacy of politicians over the administrators (as in the politics-administration dichotomy) (1887-1930s), and its over-emphasis on the scientific management methods (according to POSDCORB) after Gulick and Urwick’s ‘*Papers on the Science of Administration*’ in 1937 affected negatively the relationship between policy-makers and administrators. Policy-makers have been variously described as politicians, statesmen (Wilson, 1887:28-29) and law makers (Goodnow, 1900:17-26). Traditional public administration considered politicians to be at the apex of the bureaucratic pyramid (Weber, 1946 in Shafritz et al., 2004:50) and to be the key actors in policy-making and implementation. This assumes policy implementation to be a machine-like process (Cloete and Wissink, 2000:167) and considers subordinates as cogs in the policy implementation machine (Hjern and Hull, 1982:107; Moya, 2002:30; Botes in Cloete and Wissink, 2000:167). The model also assumed that subordinates are passive and unquestioning receivers and executors of instructions from politicians/policy-makers at the top, obediently, dutifully and with military precision (Uwizeyimana, 2011:110, citing Matland, 1995:146; Cloete and Wissink, 2000:166-167).

For decades, this bone of contention as revealed in the 1980s debates on the ‘convergence thesis’ by Joel Aberbach and his colleagues has marred public administration discourse. Their research sought to expose the limitations of the so-called politics-administration dichotomy and instead proposed that senior officials (bureaucrats) and their political executives (ministers) tended to think more alike because they faced increasingly similar problems (Aberbach et al., 1981).

**Table 1.** Stages of development of Public Administration.

Stages	Period	Description	Main characteristics	
Stage 1	1887-1926	Politics-administration dichotomy	1.Woodrow Wilson writing, 1887 2.Goodnow's <i>Politics and Administration</i> , 1900 3.Leonard White's <i>Introduction to the Study of Public Administration</i> , 1926	<b>OLD/ TRADITIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION</b>
Stage 2	1927-1937	Scientific Management (and Principles of administration)	1.Orthodoxy in Public Administration and a drive towards efficiency, 2.Gulick and Urwick importation of Fredrick N. Taylor's theories of 'scientific management' and Henri Fayol's 'theories of business administration' in the public sector-through the famous POSDCORB.	
Stage 3	1938-1950	Period of heterodoxy (or Conceptual challenge)	1.Challenge of both the politics-administration dichotomy and scientific management. 2.Hawthorne experiments (1920 to 1932) and 3.More emphasis on human relations	
Stage 4	1950s-1970s	The New Public Administration (NPA)	1.Identity Crisis 2.Rejection of both the principles of administration and the politics-administration dichotomy. 3.Simon's 'Administrative Behavior' and Robert Dahl's essay on 'The Science of Public Administration: three Problems', 1940s'. 4.Widening the scope of the Public Administration by relating it to other subjects such as psychology, sociology, economics and political science	<b>NPM</b>
Stage 5	1970s – 1990s	The New Public Management (NPM)	1.Focus on "Managerialism", 2.Introduction of various forms of privatisation 3.Greater involvement of the private sector institutions in the management of public institutions and provision of public goods and services, 4.Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS) especially in Africa.	
Stage 6	1990s to date (2014)	Governance period	1.Improvement of administrative and civil services 2.strengthening of parliamentary oversight 3.promotion of participatory decision-making 4.adoption of judicial reforms	<b>GOVERNANCE/ GOOD GOVERNANCE</b>

Table adapted by the authors on the basis of arguments presented by Coetzee, 2012; Basheka, 2012; Basu, 2009; Nasrullah, 2005.

Some major criticisms of the scientific model included Its ignorance of the effects of the prevailing environmental circumstances and/or social, economic and political contexts in which government operates; and ignoring human factors such as resistance to orders given by authorities (Uwizeyimana, 2011:112).. In countries such as South Africa, with its command and control culture or control-driven apartheid legacy, this model generated tensions between the authorities and the communities. Hence, the country experienced several service delivery public protests a few years after the 1994 inauguration of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress government.

It is the harsh criticisms leveled against the traditional/old public administration that helped in the rapid emergence of the New Public Management (NPM) a new model in the late 1980s/1990s (Ibrahim, 2012:1).

In the case of many African countries, it has to be noted that the above period was an era that was largely characterised by the overall enforcement of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes Programmes (Uwizeyimana, 2006:37); which inevitably attracted resistance and rejection by the citizens of the African countries that had to implement such programmes. Thus, as Olowu clearly demonstrates in his essay on "*The*

*Crisis of African Public Administration*”, the reform of African Public Administration to such programmes or even NPM was essentially characterised by the age-old colonial legacy. He argues that “the continent’s public administration systems have functioned under the shadow of the colonial model of the state since their development in the early parts of the twentieth century” (Olowu, 2003: 510).

## THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT (NPM)

The era of the New Public Management (NPM) stretches from the 1970s to the late 1990s although in Africa these public administration reforms were slow to take root in many African countries for reasons already outlined above. It is thus not surprising that even when these reforms eventually reached the African shores, many countries in the continent were still reeling from the shocks and effects of the structural adjustment programmes, making them to be less receptive to yet another new model of Public Administration that would presumably improve their situations. As Olowu rightly defines these effects, many African countries which were adversely affected by the programmes had to cut their civil services drastically; some public enterprises were sold to the private sector, which resulted in negative perceptions among Africans about any new initiatives such as NPM which followed subsequently (Olowu, 2003: 510).

However, in terms of its origins, according to Gruening (2001:1) and Bala and Alibali (2010:75), the first practitioners of the NPM emerged in the United Kingdom under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979–90) and in the municipal governments in the U.S. (e.g., Sunnyvale, California) that had suffered most heavily from economic recession and tax revolts. The governments of New Zealand and Australia were the next to join the movement (Bala and Alibali, 2010:75). It is the success in these pioneer countries that put NPM administrative reforms on the agendas of most OECD countries and other nations (Gruening, 2001:1, citing OECD, 1995). Like public administration, NPM has no universally acceptable definition. Some such as Waine (2004:16) argue that NPM is a generic term which refers to a set of systematic changes, which occurred in the organization of public sector services. Ormond and Loffler (2002:11) and Batley (2004:32) argue that NPM should be viewed as a ‘shopping list’, ‘toolbox’ or just a ‘menu’ with many elements. From the NPM toolbox or shopping list different countries pick some elements to implement with a view to developing an ‘Effective, Efficient, and Economic’ public management’ (Uwizeyimana, 2012:11, citing Manning, 2001:297; Kessler and Alexander, 2003:2; Polidano, 1999:6-8; Mutahaba and Kiragu, 2004:51-72; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000).

An analysis of the relevant literature shows that NPM was supposed to represent a move both “down grid” in

the sense of relaxing procedural rules as well as “down group” in the sense of reducing the professional boundaries between public and private sectors (Lodge and Gill, 2011:142). The pioneers of the NPM such as New Zealand sought to introduce NPM principles by being more radical in pursuing ‘massive scale privatization’, while others like the United Kingdom (UK) were more radical in their focus on the ‘Managerialism’ (Uwizeyimana, 2008 citing O’Neil, 1994:4). According to Steward and Walsh (1992:1) ‘in reality, it is these two different approaches (that is, *privatization* and *managerialism*) that are referred to when the term New Public Management is mentioned’ (Uwizeyimana, 2008:33-34). Managerialism is about the application of ‘a set of particular management approaches and techniques which are mainly borrowed from the private sector’ to the public sector (Mongkol, 2011:36). Privatization is used to denote all possible practical policy options designed to promote greater role and involvement of the private sector in the provision, administration and/or financing of traditional government services (Baird, 2004:3).

## Successes and limitations of the NPM

One of the highlights of the NPM approach was its criticism of the ‘classical role of the civil servant as a Weberian bureaucrat...’ (Lægred, 2000: 880) who passively obeys orders from higher up without any discretion or significant contribution to the policy-making process in public administration. During the 1970s to late 1990s, according to Manning (2001:299) ‘NPM presented itself unambiguously as the first best model for policy implementation - a public management for all seasons or the one-best way’ in all situations. NPM ‘was often derided as a useful model for developing countries to follow from the first spotting of the trend’ (Manning, 2001:297). According to Osborne and Gaebler (1992 in Manning, 2001:299) many managerial innovations were also well packaged as the best of their times; but the ‘NPM was distinctive in that it carried overtones of the end of history, suggesting that we were lucky to be in public management at a time when the truth had been discovered’ (Manning, 2001:299). For example, its proponents claimed that “the NPM menu or toolbox” was no dietary supplement to its administrative theory predecessors – ‘NPM was seemingly to replace the previous managerial fare’ once and for all (Manning, 2001: 300). Evidence shows that the NPM did not win as resoundingly as it claimed (Mangkol, 2011:35).

One of the compelling analyses of the successes and failures of NPM in developed countries such as Switzerland and the Netherlands was presented by Noordhoek and Saner in their 2005 article entitled ‘*Beyond New Public Management: answering the claims of both politics and society*’. In this article, Noordhoek and Saner (2005:36) argue that the NPM was actively

propagated to Switzerland by Professor Ernst Buschor in the early 1990s while he was still professor of management at St. Gallen University, the premier MBA school of Switzerland. Like many other countries in developed and developing world (e.g. New Zealand, Wallis and Dollery, 2001), 'NPM principles were proposed to Swiss administrations as sine qua non conditions to achieve a modern form of public administration' (Noordhoek and Saner, 2005:36).

Despite the seemingly 'unstoppable implementation of the NPM in Switzerland there were also clear indications of increasing difficulties with its implementation and strong reservations expressed by some leading academics' (Noordhoek and Saner, 2005:3). In the case of Switzerland, according to Noordhoek and Saner (2005:35), 'NPM was rejected by the votes of two parliaments, one provincial, the other municipal'. As they put it: "Voters expressed concerns about the incompatibility of NPM with existing administrative culture and others raised objections to the political implications of NPM for Switzerland's federal and political constitution and its citizens' rights" (Noordhoek and Saner, 2005:36). For example, in Geneva, an important city and canton in Switzerland ventured into NPM projects in the mid 1990's but then also abandoned the exercise because the privatization element that came with it was considered to be 'a step too far' (Noordhoek and Saner, 2005:4).

Furthermore, unlike Manning (2001:298) who argues that 'NPM has in practice not been applied extensively outside its native OECD/Commonwealth habitat'; a body of literature suggests that the IMF and World Bank among other international financial institutions (IFIs) 'took advantage of the need for loan and debt relief of many of the Sub-Saharan African countries to increase the pace and the magnitude of New Public Management style reforms in the 1980s and 1990s' (Uwizeyimana, 2008:34-35, citing Common, 2001:440-448; Baird, 2004:3; Björkman, 2003:2). The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) have been singled out as 'the main vehicle through which the NPM principles were transported and expended into some Sub-Sahara African countries in the 1980s' (Osei, 2002:3; ECA, 2003:5; Mutahaba and Kiragu, 2004:51-72). Apart from donor agencies' insistence on 'managerialism' or decentralized management as part of a package of public sector reforms in Africa (ECA, 2003:17), 'privatization was the main condition laid by the IMF and World Bank, so that developing countries can access loans and debt relief' (Tangri, 1999:38; Grusky, 2001:46; Uwizeyimana, 2012: 148). Unfortunately, in the case of many African countries, the several donor-driven attempts to introduce NPM-related public sector reforms were usually associated with the negative image of Africa as '...a continent mired in social-political strife, armed conflict and military dictatorships, diseases, corruption, vulnerability to the elements leading to famine and a global decline in standards of living...' (Kamoche, 2002:994). Thus, whether NPM type of reforms were the panacea for such

challenges has always been contentious.

### Reasons for the NPM failure

The primary reason why the NPM did not win as resoundingly as it promised in developed and developing countries is that its debate was unable to establish visible 'public service ethos' or the 'civil service culture' which are distinct from those of the Old/traditional Public Administration it sought to replace (Manning, 2001:302). For example, some important characteristics of the Old Public Administration such as 'the continuing discipline of compliance management' remained. Furthermore, 'most government functions retained their vertically integrated bureaucracies which operated pretty much as Weber might have intended, more than a century ago' (Manning, 2001:302; Bhatta, 2003:12). Manning maintains that 'any review of public management developments in any developing country in any region demonstrates beyond doubt that hierarchical bureaucracies have not been substantially replaced by chains of interlinked contracts' (2001:302).

Finally, the NPM could not connect to existing key drivers of public service improvement and failed to create them where they did not exist. According to Noordhoek and Saner (2005:38-40) 'NPM has been used as too much of a stand-alone method with less or no consideration for the economic and social-political environment context in which it was being applied.' Unfortunately, as this article will show, NPM was also replaced by governance only after having partially achieved the objectives set by its proponents.

### GOVERNANCE

According to Maldonado (2010:3), 'governance' was first used in the 1989 World Bank Study '*Sub-Saharan Africa – from Crisis to Sustainable Growth*' to describe the need for institutional reform and a better and more efficient public sector in Sub-Saharan countries. The Africa-study of 1989 defined governance as "the exercise of political power to manage a nation's affairs" (Maldonado, 2010:3) in an effective, efficient and economic manner (my emphasis). The term 'governance' as championed by Western countries and financial institutions is offered by Cajvaneanu (2011:113-114) who argues that:

*'The concept of governance accompanied a paradigmatic shift in economic thought through a focus on political institutions as determinants of economic development and growth. The World Bank's question was "what types of political institutions were needed to create and maintain an institutional infrastructure that led to economizing on transaction costs"?*

This resonates with the argument of scholars who

advocate for a democratic developmental state in Africa whose public administration will be of greater relevance to the continent's contemporary development challenges (Maphunye, 2011). Once again, like its predecessors, especially the NPM, the focus of governance, as originally envisaged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank (WB) was to grow the economy and this was to be achieved through the application of private business principles in government services. To some extent, this meant the neglect by the WB and IMF of largely social and political issues (Uwizeyimana, 2014:1), which have not been analysed comprehensively here as they are beyond the scope of this article.

Thus, a pertinent question then is how issues of democracy and social justice became part of governance. According to Grindle (2010:6-7) it is the human rights community and the United Nations including its subsidiaries such as UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), human rights organizations such as Human Right Watch and Amnesty International but most importantly social and environmental organizations that claimed 'with considerable force and reason, that countries with good governance respected human rights' (UNDP, 1997; Chowdhury and Skarstedt, 2005:5). Once these organizations had generated a belief that 'good governance' was essential to development - and in their view, a precondition for it—then it was certainly advantageous for these environmentalist and human right advocates to have their cause listed among the characteristics of good governance (Grindle, 2010:7).

This is not to deny the IMF's/World Bank's roles in promoting development in Africa (Davids et al., 2005:30, 90) or its interest in democracy and human rights globally. According to Dañino (2006:7) and Maldonado (2010:16) the Bank [and other IFIs] could only take human rights considerations into account in three specific situations: 'First, if the borrowing country asked the Bank to do so; second, if human rights violations had an economic effect; and third, if a human rights violation would lead to a breach of international obligations relevant to the Bank, such as those created under binding decisions of the UN Security Council.' Based on this analysis, it is clear that the only time the Bank takes into account countries' human rights records is when the violation of such rights affects foreign investors and when such violation leads to a situation in which the country cannot fulfil its financial commitments to the World Bank. Examples of countries that have been able to avoid economic sanctions facing Zimbabwe today- because, despite their poor human right records, they embraced the neo-liberal structural adjustments advocated by the World Bank and the IMF include Rwanda under Major-General Paul Kagame, and Uganda under Lt. General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (Uwizeyimana, 2012). Following is clear evidence that the term governance was invented by the IMF/World Bank and its original intention was purely for economic development - not human right or democracy etc.

### Governance as the IMF/World Bank's project

An analysis of the World Bank (and all banks associated with it) such as the African Development Bank's (AFDB) own 'Articles of agreement' leaves no doubt that the World Bank did not agree with the inclusion of demands such as human rights, democracy, social justice etc. in its governance proposals. According to Maldonado (2010: 22) at 'the beginning of the governance debate, the Bank limited itself to 'purely' economic aspects of its work, thereby following a strict interpretation of the Bank's articles of agreement'. For example, Art. IV, section 10 of the 'articles of agreement' commands that the bank must refrain at all costs from taking account of political considerations in its work (Maldonado, 2010:13). This section entitled 'Political Activity Prohibited' reads thus:

*The bank and its officers shall not interfere in the political affairs of any member; nor shall they be influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member or members concerned. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to their decisions, and these considerations shall be weighed impartially in order to achieve the purposes stated in Article I (World Bank, Article IV, Section 10; Sheeran and Rodley, 2014:267).*

Moreover, the prohibition of political activities also relates to two articles Article III and Article V of the Bank's articles of agreement which read as follows:

*Art. III, section 5 (b): The Bank shall make arrangements to ensure that the proceeds of any loan are used only for the purposes for which the loan was granted, with due attention to considerations of economy and efficiency and without regard to political or other non-economic influences or considerations (World Bank's Articles of Agreement; Article III, Section 5(b) see also Palacio, 2006:2).*

Both articles III and V of the World Bank's articles of agreement are strengthened by Article V section 5 (c) which reads as follows:

*The President, officers and staff of the Bank, in the discharge of their offices, owe their duty entirely to the Bank and to no other authority. Each member of the Bank shall respect the international character of this duty and shall refrain from all attempts to influence any of them in the discharge of their duties (Article V section 5 (c); Palacio, 2006:2).*

Section 2 of Article 38 of the Agreement establishing the African Development Bank (AFDB) emphasizes that: 'The Bank, its President, Vice-Presidents, officers and staff shall not interfere in the political affairs of any member; nor shall they be influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member concerned. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to their decisions. Such considerations shall be weighed impartially in order

to achieve and carry out the functions of the Bank' (AFDB, 2011:31). Section 5 of article 15 which deals with the 'Conditions of Financing', states that: 'The Fund shall make arrangements to ensure that the proceeds of any financing are used only for the purposes for which the financing was provided, with due attention to considerations of economy, efficiency and competitive international trade and without regard to political or other non-economic influences or considerations' (AFDB, 2011:8).

The authors' contention is that human rights and other democratic movements' activities or operations were adversely affected in some African countries wherein the IMF-WB and other IFIs deliberately ignored adverse socio-political conditions of the citizenry as perpetrated by their own governments during the course of enforcing public sector reforms such as NPM and "good governance". Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that this offshoot of these reforms itself requires systematic treatment and study which is beyond the scope of the analysis in this article.

Yet, a strong link exists between this discussion on the IMF/World Bank's articles of agreement and the NPM and the governance debate with the politico-economic development processes currently taking place in Africa. As analysis in this article shows, much of this debate or historical development outlined here mostly happened in Europe and North America and was introduced in Africa by the IFIs and western donor countries to some extent. The trend has been like this over the years. Whether it was Daniel Arap Moi (former Kenyan President, 1978-2002), Jerry Rawlings (former Ghanaian President, 1966-1968) or Yoweri Museveni, current Ugandan President (1986-) — all their regimes had to demonstrate to the IMF, WB and some western donors that they had the ability to push through anti-democratic, anti-labor and other anti-people policies (Boafo-Arthur, 1999:17 in Alidu and Ame, 2012). For example, while critics accuse Paul Kagame, the Rwandan President of being authoritarian and trampling on political freedoms" he (Kagame) has continued to earn international praise for rebuilding the country after the 1994 genocide and both the IFIs as well as many foreign governments continued to applaud Rwanda's development successes (Clover et al., 2013:1).

### **SUMMARY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR AFRICA**

The development of Public Administration as a subject matter as well as a practice has largely produced mixed results for Africa in particular. On the one hand, Africa has over the years since the development of Public Administration enjoyed the spin-offs from the largely developed countries through the training of its public sector workers and its civil services, and the development of its private sector and overall infrastructure. This has

largely developed into Public Administration as we know it today in Africa, with its distinct characteristics and features that have largely enabled African countries to participate in the global economy. From reforms and immense developments in Public Administration, introduction of New Public Management and further reform of the system through the introduction of governance models, African countries have largely managed to keep pace with the rest of the world in terms of the metamorphosis of the subject; though they usually lagged behind as the overall flow of innovative ideas and practices was predominantly from Western countries.

On the other hand, however, the development of Public Administration as a distinct subject area as well as a practice, including its subsequent derivatives, has had few positive implications for the African continent primarily because these developments largely emanated from colonialism. First, a fallacy has been spread by successive colonial regimes that Africa was a mere "waste land" or unpopulated geographic space where no semblance of culture, development or civilisation existed (Arowolo, 2010:1). Obviously, this was part of the propaganda machinery of the colonisers to gain control of the "subject peoples" (Arowolo, 2010:1). Second, a careful analysis of the historical records of Africa before slavery and colonisation reveals that Africans had their own civilisations and public administration systems which were subjugated during slavery and colonialism. Third, the introduction of Western systems of administration, which largely ignored indigenous African public administration varieties that existed hitherto, produced resentment among local populations and in some instances resulted in violence and wars (Basheka, 2012). However, the enforcement of such models by the colonisers' resulted in grudging acceptance of the "new" public administration systems. Thus, over the years, whether it was Public Administration as a subject, practice or its later developments, it can safely be assumed that such models were almost always accepted reluctantly owing to their association with the military conquest of Africans by the colonisers. In fact, to-date, many African countries still grapple with the uneasy co-existence of "modern" public administration with different varieties of "traditional" African leadership or "chiefs" whose status has long been emasculated during slavery and colonialism. In some African countries (especially Francophone and Lusophone), the system of indigenous or "tribal" authorities has virtually been assimilated into "modern" public administration; but where it still exists we now have a largely watered down or adulterated version of the once powerful and effective indigenous authority system which remains heavily overshadowed by its western counterpart.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this article was to demonstrate that the

movement from one theory of public administration to the other over the past 134 years (1880s-2014) is a result, not of faulty theories, but of the way those theories were applied in the public sector during each era. The application of each of the above theories has generally had mixed results in the public sector and in the African context in particular. This article argues that contradiction between theoretical postulations and actual results in terms of socio-economic development during the old/traditional public administration era (1887-1970s) was a result of the fact that the principles on which the old public administration were based were not designed for the public sector. Apart from Woodrow Wilson's contribution (introduction of public administration as an independent science from politics and law), the majority of the principles on which the practice of public administration were based emanated from the private sector, as in the case of Frederick W. Taylor's scientific management which focused on manufacturing and construction industries. Furthermore, the POSDCORB acronym was based on Henri Fayol's theory of private business – not government - administration. However, they did not bother to conduct appropriate experiments in government environment- before claiming universal applicability of the POSDCORB. By the 1970s, the idea that policy could be implemented in military precision and that success could be achieved by strict planning; organizing, directing and controlling through list-checking had dismally failed. However, the failure of the old/traditional public administration does not mean the POSDCORB principles failed. The POSDCORB still describes the core functions of managers in both governments and private sectors. What led to the failure of the Old/Traditional public administration are the rigid application of the POSDCORB and other scientific management approaches of this era as well as the failure on the part of its proponents to acknowledge that government cannot be run as a mining, production or manufacturing industries. The proponents of the old/traditional public administration also failed to appreciate that, complex problems and environmental uncertainties require that the problem not only get defined and redefined, but also that a policy be interpreted and reality checked throughout the policy lifespan (Alesch and Petak, 2001: 2-3). All attempts to apply the cybernetic paradigms were bound to fail if applied in a non-industry-like process (that is, state) (Hofstede, 1978).

Unfortunately, the proponents of the NPM were not different either. As the article has shown, the first and foremost weakness of the NPM debate was that its proponents marketed it as a new and different approach of running government. However, this article found that the NPM was not able to establish visible 'public service ethos' or the 'civil service culture' which are distinct from those of the Old/traditional Public Administration it sought to replace. For example, it maintained the bureaucratic structure of government (Manning, 2001:302) and went

on to apply the private business management principles (similar to the POSDCORB) in the management of the state. The only difference being that it was so blatant on its emphasis on privatization than the old/traditional public administration. Secondary, while the NPM sought to replace the Old/traditional Public Administration, it was not able to create a neutral and depoliticized bureaucracy (Manning, 2001:302). This article has shown that one of the NPM weaknesses was its failure to consider the socio-economic environment context in which government operates. For example the NPM was abandoned in some countries discussed in this article because citizens raised concerns about its lack of democracy, lack of accountability and high costs of goods and services resulting from the NPM reforms.

Finally, this article finds considerable differences between the interpretation of the term governance as envisaged by the IFIs (such as Banks) and non-IFIs such as UNDP, Human Rights Watch etc. There is ample evidence to suggest that a number of IFIs such as the World Bank and AFDB have deliberately and explicitly excluded issues of social justice, democracy and human rights in their definition of the term governance and in the principles which govern their financial lending practices. The fact that organizations with financial muscles such as the IFIs differed with human rights and environmental organizations on the content and meaning of 'governance' has had a major impact on the acceptability, practice and ultimately success of governance. This is because, while the IFIs could use their financial muscle to force governments needing loans and financial support to adopt governance (including democratic, human rights and social justice issues), these IFIs seldom do so. The IFIs have made it clear that the proceeds of any of their loans must be used with due attention to considerations of economy and efficiency and without regard to political or other non-economic influences or considerations. Because of this guarantee, governments such as the one in Rwanda have no incentives to promote human rights and democracy etc. It is on the basis of the challenges identified by this research that this article concludes that the failure of the theories of public administration to live up to their expectation has been a result of the way they were introduced, interpreted and applied in the public sector – but not that they were faulty. The problem seems to be that policies that are originally designed to achieve individualistic private business interests and objectives have been transported into the public sector, often without prior experiment. Based on the argument of this article, it can therefore be safely concluded that after the 'current theory of governance' new theories are needed to help explain the new dynamics within which public administration as a discipline and practice now has to grapple with. However new or future theories will also have to address the failure of the theory of governance to explain contemporary phenomena such as the trade-offs between human rights violation and economic growth

which are the direct consequences of the World Bank/IMF's Articles of agreement. This is particularly in view of the fact that the sustainability of any theory depends on its ability to adapt to changes in a changing environment in which governments operate and Public Administration is practiced.

### Conflict of Interests

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