

## **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THEORY AND PRACTICE: ARE THERE CONGRUENT IN GHANA?**

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**Abstract:** *Based on a desk study this paper investigated the fit of public administration theories and paradigms with practice in Ghana. The evidence showed that there is a wide gap between prescription and reality in part because of the unquestionable application of foreign models in the characteristically different Ghanaian context. While these foreign approaches have their own limitations those are addendums to the contextual challenges that are encountered in their application in Ghana. Consequently, this has exacerbated the very ills that the models and reforms are meant to correct: poor service delivery; lack of accountability; irresponsiveness; red-tape; citizen alienation; and inefficiency and ineffectiveness. An unorthodox approach that taps selectively on a range of context relevant public management traditions will be more appropriate for Ghana than an approach to reform that is predicated on models that have evolved in the political and economic conditions of advanced industrialized countries. Such an approach would stress different elements from a repertoire of potential alternatives that offer “best fit” rather than “best practice” solutions. The Ghanaian case reinforces the debate about the applicability or otherwise of developed countries’ public administration models in the Third World.*

**Keywords:** *Ghana, Public administration, Theories, Practice, Match, Outcomes*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Public administration provides numerous services to the public and serves their interests in many diverse ways. It ensures the security and protection of life and property of the members of society by maintaining proper law and order. The day to day function of government and the economic, cultural and political development of society as well as national defense and the conduct of external affairs depend on the public administrative system. It is public administration that translates political intentions expressed in policies into public purposes. In other words, policies rely on public administration to be effective. Once choices are made, activity must be directed at achieving the intended objectives. This is the domain of administration, in which services are delivered, taxes collected, and laws enforced (Bridgman and Davis, 2004: 15). A government stands or falls on its policy choices. Characteristically this implies depending on bureaucrats or contractors who work for government. The work of public servants is driven by the policy priorities of the government of the day (Bridgman and Davis, 2004).

In the modern state the role and scope of public administration is ever expanding and all encompassing. The days of a minimalist government where the responsibility of the state was restricted to only the maintenance of law and order are long gone. The modern state which expects government to provide much more has seen the role of public administration change dramatically. The contemporary role and function of public administration can be traced to the changes that have occurred in human history in the last couple of centuries. The first important

change was the industrial revolution which led to the urbanization of the big cities of the world. The second was the shift in political philosophy from minimalist state intervention and individualism to social welfare (Bailey, 2004). The two World Wars together with the shifting international environment with new countries and organizations such as the UN coming on stream, and the increasingly complex, wicked and global nature of policy problems have prompted the need to reform the goals of public administration in society not just within a nation but also with respect to the world..

Accordingly, public administration has undergone several paradigm shifts since its birth. The most widely acknowledged paradigms are the traditional model of public administration; the new public management; and the new public governance. Each of these paradigms has been associated with one or more theoretical models about how the public sector should be organized and run to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. The most important theoretical principle of the traditional model of administration is Weber's theory of bureaucracy. This theoretical model of public administration is characterized by hierarchical organization of government agencies; permanency of staff; neutrality and anonymity of officials, motivated only by the public interest; a view of public administration as a special kind of activity that requires a professional bureaucracy; appointed officers serving any government party equally; and a dichotomy between politicians who are responsible for policy design, and bureaucrats whose work is merely to implement those policies decided by politicians (Hughes, 2003: 17).

In order to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in public service provision, public administration should be underpinned by theories of the world, models of cause and effect. Theories and models are necessary and useful in guiding the work of public administration. Models and theories help clarify and direct our inquiry on the tasks of public administration. They facilitate communication and suggest possible explanations for bureaucratic actions (Bridgman and Davis, 2004). To successfully carry out the mandate of public administration we need some guidelines, some criteria of relevance to focus our efforts and to prevent aimless search through seemingly infinite volume of data. Public administration theories give direction to our inquiry.

In many countries today the bureaucracy no longer commands the respect it once had due partly to a range of criticisms that have been directed against it, an attack that has led to radical public sector reforms commencing from the 1980s (Dunleavy et al 2006). A suspicion of bureaucracy is clearly not novel as it long predates Weber (Albow 1970) and continues in many forms. What may distinguish the current onslaught is that it comes from all sides: from the left for example, on the power of the civil service to frustrate the will of elected governments, and from the right on the entrenched ideology of the state machine, its inefficiency and above all its size (Dunleavy et al 2006; Gray and Jenkins 1985: 14).

The new public management (NPM) paradigm which was ushered in on the heels of the criticisms of the public sector is underpinned by profoundly different theoretical foundations of economics and private management. The tenets of NPM include: emphasis on results in terms of value for money, to be derived via management by objectives; the use of markets and market-like devices; competition and choice; and devolution to staff through improved alignment of authority; and responsibility and accountability (OECD, 1998: 13).

As a result of the conceptual and practical problems encountered with the old public administration and new public management approaches, the new public governance model was

developed. The New Public Governance (NPG) approach as proposed by Osborne (2006, 2010) adopts a very different starting point from the two earlier public management paradigms. Unlike the stress on bureaucratic hierarchy and administrative interest as the defining features of the old public administration and the managerial discretion and contractual mechanisms associated with NPM, the NPG approach places citizens rather than government at the center of its frame of reference (Robinson, 2015). It is much broader in that it is construed as the formulation and execution of collective action. Thus, among others, it encompasses the direct and indirect roles of formal institutions of government and government hierarchies, as well as the roles of informal norms, networks, community organizations, and neighborhood associations in pursuing collective action by defining the framework for citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision making, and delivery of public services (Robinson, 2015). The NPG approaches public management from the angle of democratic theory, premised on the notion of an active and involved citizenship.

It should be noted that a contemporary paradigm hardly completely supplants an earlier one. Undoubtedly, some elements of the erstwhile paradigm will normally persist alongside tenets of a current one. This is exactly the case with the public administration paradigms where some elements of the traditional model like hierarchy, neutrality and public interest motivation have transcended the NPM and NPG paradigms. Hughes (2003:3-4) agrees, arguing that paradigms change gradually – the decline of one school of thought occurs as a result of the rise of an alternative. These views tie in with Kuhn's statement that, 'the decision to reject one paradigm is always simultaneously the decision to accept another, and the judgment leading to that decision involves comparisons of both paradigms with nature and with one another' (Kuhn, 1970: 77). Paradigm shifts entail the comparison of theories, neither of which works perfectly (Hughes, 2003). So in investigating the congruence of public administration paradigms and theories on one hand, with practice on the other these dynamics need to be taken into consideration.

The public administration paradigms and theories that have been expounded upon above were a brain child of the developed countries. These industrialized countries developed them in response to the shifting circumstances pertaining to their contexts. Nevertheless, these paradigms and theories were imported into developing countries for application hook and sinker without modifications to suit their contexts. But the contexts of Third World countries are different and are expressed in such features as unstable social and political environments; poverty, malnutrition, ill health, illiteracy, low standards of living, low bureaucratic capacity unemployment and other common phenomena (Rashid 2014). This raises the question of: whether symmetric outcomes can attend the application of the developed world theories in developing countries' contexts. This question is asked because the unfavorable environmental conditions increase pessimism surrounding the appropriateness of using the developed world's theories to guide the conduct of public administration in developing countries. Specifically, the study asks the following questions: 1) Are paradigm shifts in public administration discernible in Ghana? 2) Are theoretical perspectives undergirding respective public administration paradigms discernible in Ghana? 3) Are the theories adequate or appropriate in guiding the conduct of public administration in Ghana? 4) What are the consequences of the junction or disjunction between the theories and the conduct of public administration in Ghana? 5) How can the theories be modified to more appropriately align with the conduct of public administration in Ghana?

This paper is organized such that after the introduction part two expounds on the paradigms of public administration and the associated theories. In part three the evidence of the application of the public administration approaches to the conduct of public administration in Ghana is presented. In the four part the implications of the junction or disjunction between the theories and conduct of public administration are distilled. The final part concludes with recommendations for creating a better alignment between the theories and the conduct of public administration in Ghana.

#### Paradigms of public administration and their theoretical underpinnings

There are numerous studies of public administration and public sector reforms in the first world. Models of public administration in the Third World have generally drawn on experience in advanced countries and public sector reforms have often mirrored reform initiatives originating in OECD countries. Several frameworks have been developed to classify and analyze different approaches to public administration and public sector reforms in developed nations. Most of these are concentrated on the transition from the Old Public Administration to the New Public Management that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. From 2000 there was a discernible trend towards an emerging model variously termed the “new public service”, the “new public governance” or the “post-New Public Management” (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994; Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000; Osborne, 2006). As mentioned earlier, each of these approaches to public administration is associated with a distinct philosophy and conceptual framework (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2011).

Many developing countries have followed a similar path of approaches and reforms to those in more advanced countries through broader governance agendas supported by development partners. Other approaches to public sector reform have also featured in these countries, particularly decentralization, pay and employment reforms, integrity and anti-corruption reforms and “bottom-up” reforms, designed to improve the development effectiveness of government agencies (Robinson, 2015).

This article limits itself to the broader shift in approach set out by Osborne (2006) who outlines three modes of public administration and management and, by association, their principal characteristics as follows: Public Administration (PA-statist and bureaucratic), New Public Management (NPM- competitive and minimalist) and New Public Governance (NPG-plural and pluralist).

## **THE OLD PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Informed by the thoughts of Max Weber, the dominant approach to public administration for much of the 20th century drew on a model of bureaucracy based on the twin principles of hierarchy and meritocracy. It was initially introduced as part of wide-ranging bureaucratic reforms in the United Kingdom and Prussia in the late 19th century to overcome patrimonial systems of administration where patronage and favoritism dominated government decisions and public appointments. This approach had a number of distinctive features. It relied on centralized control, set rules and guidelines, separated policymaking from implementation, and employed a hierarchical organizational structure (Hughes, 2003; Osborne, 2006). The maxims were efficiency and effectiveness in the management of budgetary and human resources.

This command and control model of public administration was the basis for bureaucratic systems spread across the globe under colonial rule and then after independence in most Commonwealth countries (Robinson, 2015). Other jurisdictions embraced variants of this model, chiefly basing on French and Japanese experience, where political factors influenced public appointments under a centralized bureaucratic model. This model was successful in a number of countries, particularly in Singapore where the post-independence political headship established a high quality and efficient civil service along these lines. A similar approach was followed in China in the context of a one-party state. But many post-colonial states suffered deterioration in the quality of governance and the effectiveness of public administration in subsequent years as neo-patrimonial tendencies turned into reality and state resources and public appointments were subject to the personal influence of political leaders and their followers (Bayart, 2009; McCourt, 2013).

Governance and public service reform efforts in many developing countries from the 1980s continued to adopt the centralized, bureaucratic model of public administration as the point of departure for effective development. Re-establishing the conditions for a top-down and hierarchical model of development following years of predation and neo-patrimonial rule was the desired goal for many public management reforms (Nunberg, 1992). This was not without justification: the quality of bureaucracy was positively associated with economic growth in the statistical analysis conducted by the World Bank in its 1997 World Development Report, identifying merit-based appointments and career stability for public servants as key factors in the effectiveness of public administration (Evans and Rauch, 1999).

## **THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT**

The New Public Management (NPM) refers to a series of novel approaches to public administration and management that emerged in a number of OECD countries in the 1980s. The NPM model emerged in response to the limitations of the old public administration in adjusting to the demands of a competitive market economy. While cost containment was a key impetus in embracing NPM approaches, infusing principles of competition and private sector management was at the core of the NPM approach (Robinson, 2015).

The ideological prepositions that underpin the NPM are public choice, agency theory, and contestability. Public choice assumes that individuals, whether they are acting in the public domain or operating in the market, are driven by self-interest that is, they try to maximize returns to themselves in whatever undertakings they are engaged in. Thus, providers, wholesalers, and retailers strive to maximize profits; consumers endeavor to obtain value for money from the goods and services they purchase; politicians work hard to optimize votes; voters want to see the promises of an improvement in their quality of life fulfilled by politicians; and bureaucrats are interested in increasing their department budgets and power as well as personal gains from surplus budgets (Mohammed, 2010: 958).

The implication of the public choice model for the public sector is that operatives if left unchecked will pursue their individual self-interest to the detriment of the public interest. Inefficiencies in public production and distribution of goods and services will occur as a result. So, since public agents are driven by self-interests, they should not perform the dual roles of

advisors on government policy directions and implementers of agreed policy (De Laine, 1997: 5; Ryan et al, 2000).

Agency theory is concerned with the economic costs of contracting. These are the problems of getting managers and employees of organizations to pursue the interests of their principals (Arrow, 1985; Ormsby, 1998; Shapiro, 2005). Agency theory is concerned primarily with incentive problems, and the design and implementation of contracts. According to Levinthal (1988), agency theory is an extension of the neoclassical theory of the firm in that it largely focuses on "the problems posed by limited information and goal conflict within organizations" (page 154). Principal-agent relationships are established with the hope that agents will pursue the interests of their principals. However, this expectation is difficult to meet in practice due to information asymmetry between principals and agents, and shirking, cheating, and so on from any of the parties (Arrow, 1985; Shapiro, 2005).

Accordingly, "the problem of introducing an agent to behave as if he (or she) were maximizing the principals' welfare is quite general" (Jensen and Meckling, 1976: 309); and although the purchaser-provider split may tackle some of these fears, it cannot settle all principal-agent problems within the public sector (Dollery et al, 2006: 221). Notwithstanding this shortcoming, agency theory agrees with idea that decoupling the provision of government services from their purchase is efficiency enhancing. In particular, the theory claims that contracts can be designed in such a fashion that it eliminates or decreases goal conflict at least between the bureaucratic purchaser and the provider and that this yields gains in productive efficiency.

Contestability proposes that public service delivery is more efficient where there is competition between public and private vendors (Boyne, 1998; Dunleavy et al, 2006; OECD, 1995). Vining and Weiner (1991, pages 1<sup>2</sup>) offer a normative framework for "understanding the efficiency consequences of alternative patterns of government supply." Their model is informed by the theory of contestable markets, which are defined by the absence of significant barriers to entry or exit (Baumol et al, 1982). Vining and Weiner (1991: 5) describe two forms of contestability: contestability of supply (which acts as a substitute for direct provision) and contestability of ownership (which describes the threat of transfer of ownership of an organization). They contend that, where contestability in both its forms is high, production will be more allocatively efficient, and X inefficiency is less likely to crop up. The implications from their model of contestable government production is that separating the purchaser from the provider is conducive to contestability in both its forms: first, the purchaser-provider split can be used to enforce contestability of supply; and, second, it increases the likelihood that an element of municipal government might be divested to the private sector, or even another level of government (Dollery et al, 2006). Accordingly, the purchaser-provider split is expected to enhance efficiency. The NPM advocates the use of the principles of these theoretical propositions to undergird public sector reform in order to improve that sector's efficiency and effectiveness.

The NPM approach took root in the UK, New Zealand, the USA and Scandinavia from the mid-1980s). NPM approaches were also embraced by a several non-OECD countries, often as part of public sector reform programs supported by international aid agencies, but their influence was uneven (Pollitt and Boukhaert, 2004). Despite claims of universality, few governments in developing countries implemented wholesale NPM reforms, but some

experimented with creating executive agencies, citizens' charters and performance management models (Hood, 1990). Prominent examples include the semi-autonomous tax agencies in Africa and Asia, several of which generated impressive results in terms of revenue targets and reducing corruption (McCourt, 2005). Contracting-out service delivery to private and not-for-profit providers in health, education and water and sanitation became fairly widespread but implementation was patchy and results were mixed because of problems of regulatory capacity, quality and access, resulting in a complex and fragmented medley of service provision (Batley and Mcloughlin, 2009).

In practice NPM reforms in developing countries were adopted very selectively, or is it dictated by donors, often alongside organizational structures embodying the old public administration (McCourt and Minogue, 2001; Hope, 2005; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004; Sarker, 2006; Cheung, 2011). Commentators questioned the appropriateness of NPM reforms in the context of weak capacity and political support, emphasizing the existence of supportive institutional and political conditions as a condition for success, and of building core public sector capacity as the priority for public management reforms (Nunberg, 1992). The consequences of NPM were extensive, providing a long-lasting and steady agenda for reform, but with a mixed record of success and failure (Hood, 2004; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004).

## **THE NEW PUBLIC GOVERNANCE**

Due to the challenges presented in the implementation of the principles of the traditional public administration and new public management approaches a number of theorists have generated novel perspectives of public management that diverge from previous models. These alternatives cannot yet be wrapped together neatly as a coherent paradigm and their premises vary, although some junction points are discernible which distinguish them from previous approaches and provide the basis for a coherent alternative (Robinson, 2015).

The New Public Governance (NPG) approach as proposed by Osborne (2006, 2010) adopts a very dissimilar starting point from the two earlier public management traditions. As opposed to the accent put on bureaucratic hierarchy and administrative interest as the cardinal principles of the traditional model of public administration, and the managerial discretion and contractual mechanisms associated with NPM, the NPG approach put premium on citizens instead of the government at the core of its analysis. Likewise, Bourgon (2007) advocates a New Public Administration theory that is predicated on the concepts of citizenship and the public interest, stated as the common interests of citizens instead of the sum total of individual interests developed by elected officials or market preferences. The importance of citizens as joint-makers of policies and the delivery of services basically distinguishes the New Public Governance approach from both the statist approach predicated on the traditional public administration and market-based NPM approaches, rather than simply offering a new paradigm of public administration (Robinson, 2015; Shah, 2006).

The NPG embraces several elements of this developing literature: the state is both plural because public service delivery is undertaken by multiple inter-dependent actors and pluralist in that multiple processes and inputs shape policy making. In this respect, Bourgon (2011) draws attention to the fragmentation of the policy space with the emergence of multiple actors and jurisdictions alongside growing interdependence between actors operating at local, national and

global levels. The state is seen as just one of numerous players participating in policy deliberation and service delivery and is no longer regarded as the only or principal actor determining public policy and implementation (Weber and Khademian, 2008). This new view of public management is put succinctly by Denhardt and Denhardt (2000L.553), when they state that ‘the policies that guide society are the outcome of a complex set of interactions involving multiple groups and multiple interests ultimately combining in fascinating and unpredictable ways’.

The NPG approach stresses inter-organizational relationships and the governance of processes, in which trust, relational capital and relational contracts serve as the core governance mechanisms, instead of organizational form and function (Osborne, 2006). From this vantage, NPG is at logger heads with orthodox approaches to public administration, which tend to emphasize intra-organizational processes within the realm of government as opposed to inter-organizational processes between government and private and non-profit actors (Osborne, et al, 2013). Adoption of this approach requires re-orientation in which public administrators learn to broker, negotiate and resolve complex problems in partnership with citizens rather than controlling or steering (Robinson, 2015: 10). Because there are many strands of NPG only the United States and a few OECD countries have become its point of reference.

## **CONGRUENCE OF THEORETICAL MODELS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION WITH PRACTICE IN GHANA**

Evaluation of any policy cannot simply take account of the stated objectives for change (Chapman et al 1997: 208). In this connection, the criteria that are used to evaluate the congruence of public administration theories with practice in Ghana derived from arguments that had advocated changes in public administration philosophies and paradigms in the literature. In this connection, the elements of the traditional model of public administration represented by the bureau and public enterprise; the features of the NPM underpinned by the ideological prepositions of public choice, agency theory and contestability; and the tenets of the NPG reflected in democratic theory, that have transcended overtime are used as yardstick for assessing the junction or disjunction between public administration theories with practice in Ghana. These elements are: politics-administration dichotomy; permanency in office; political neutrality; meritocracy in appointment and career progression; impartiality; and motivation only by the public interest. The others are efficiency; service delivery; competitive tendering; contracting-out; contestability; representation; participation and accountability;

### **PERMANENCY IN OFFICE**

The civil service is expected to ensure the continuity of government and its services to the people. Regardless of changes in information and composition of the government, civil servants are expected to remain in office without any fear of being sacked or fired unless found guilty of any offence contrary to the ethic of the office (Hughes, 2003). The essence of this feature is that it promotes the societal welfare and stability and more importantly, it provides the government with officers with adequate experiences and administrative sophistication.

There is, however, a disjunction between this principle and the reality in Ghana. The usual job security in the public service is being substituted with short-term appointments predicated on short-term contracts, and the convention of assured promotion is being challenged by the hiring of skilled private sector managers for top positions (Glover-Quartey, 2007; Wereko, 2008). Some ministers, for instance, have engaged consultants for the same works which are the traditional mandates of bureaucrats. A change of government entails an overhaul of the top echelons of the public administrative hierarchy to bring in new faces (Peters, 2001). The Head of the Civil Service and Chief Directors (the administrative heads of government ministries) had either lost their jobs or redeployed with a change in government since the return to democratic rule in 1993. For example, in 2009 under the then newly elected NDC government of President Atta Mills there was a case of the transfer of the Northern Regional Police Commander to Accra for allegedly leaking sensitive information to the media. The police boss was subsequently ordered by the Regional Minister to leave a meeting of the Regional Security Committee (RegSec) (Aye, 2009). Similarly, when in the December 2016 elections the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government under ex-president Mahama lost power to the Nana Akuffo-led New Patriotic Party (NPP) administration, many top ranking bureaucrats either lost their jobs or were transferred to less glamorous positions or environments. The dismissals that have generated much heat and discourse in the media and other public forums are the firing of the Communication Director of Ghana Gas, Mr. Alfred Ogbamey, Controller and Accountant General, Mr. Seidu Kotomah and the Medical Director of the Ridge Regional Hospital, Dr. Thomas Anaba (The Al-hajj, 2017). The Medical Director of the Ridge Hospital filed a writ in court challenging his dismissal, but nothing has been heard about it.

In total 13,000 public sector workers most of whom were hired during the eight year rule of the NDC, have been dismissed in the first five months (January to June, 2017) after Nana Akuffo Addo assumed government (Al-hajj, 2017). Some of the organizations that have been affected by the dismissals included the National Service Scheme (205 employees); COCOBOD (110 middle level employees); Ghana Police Service (265 recruits); National Security (525 personnel); National Health Insurance Authority (200 staff); Youth Employment Agency (216 employees); and Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (100 employees) (Al-hajj, 2017). This is akin to the dismissal of some 568 selected public servants by the NPP administration's for bear government of Prime Minister Busia (Asante, 2005). Mr. Sallah, then a manager of the Ghana National Trading Corporation and one of the 568 dismissed public servants challenged the legality of his sacking in the Supreme Court. The court ruled against the dismissal and ordered the government to re-instate the dismissed workers but the government refused (Asante, 2005).

These dismissals are undoubtedly not only an inconsistency with the Ghanaian socio-cultural arrangement, but also an administrative culture which has been developed since independence. Successive governments either while in office or when they came to office developed the predilection for firing bureaucrats for several reasons such as the public administrators not supporting their programs and being accused of being too bureaucratic and supporters of the previous government (Haruna, 2003; Wereko, 2008).

This is reminiscent of the experience of some jurisdictions where politicization of the civil service has transpired through the proliferation of short-term contract positions. In the UK, there has been a striking rise in the number of personal ministerial advisers since the early 1980s. In Italy, political senior civil servants posts have been endowed with internal fixed-term contracts

since 1993. In Australia, the creation of “ministerial advisers” in the late 1980s has provided a means to avoid politicizing senior jobs along the US model while reinforcing political control over career activities of civil servants. In most Latin American countries, government political advisors are recruited on a contractual basis (Rouban, 2007).

The implication of this is that there is a climate of insecurity of tenure in the public service which is not conducive to long-term policy formulation and implementation. The turnover of personnel in the public service has also created an experience and expertise vacuum, which has tended to affect the capacity and capability of the public service to deliver its core, mandates (Antwi et.al, 2008; Ohemeng, 2010). It has often destroyed their esprit de corps and removed the glue in group cohesion. Each employee is increasingly distrustful of the other while some see the future as bleak. A permanent and impartial public service is predicated on politicians and public administrators regarding themselves as allies and motivated by a sense of public duty and genuine desire to act in the public interest (Ayee, 2013)

### **POLITICAL NEUTRALITY AS OPPOSED TO POLITICIZATION**

Another feature of the traditional model of public administration is that the civil service and its officials are expected to be politically neutral. They should remain neutral, loyal and dedicated to any government in power. In the discharge of their normal duties, they should be non-partisan. They must act without fear or favor of any particular individual or group of individuals (Ayee, 2013). This feature is important in that it guarantees public confidence in governmental administration.

According to Peters and Pierre (2004:2) politicization is ‘the substitution of political criteria for merit-based criteria in the selection, retention, promotion, awards, and disciplining of members of the public service’. It therefore denotes not only making of appointments and dismissals on party political grounds, but also personnel decisions which smacks of the politicization of the public service where newly elected governments expect to replace the senior public administrators appointed by the previous regime with appointees of their own (Self, 1972). It also involves patronage, where appointment or promotion is based on party affiliations or sympathies; and political intimidation, where public administrators are in fear that their future is in jeopardy, unless they say what pleases their political bosses (Peters, 2001; Rouban, 2003).

Politicization is seen as the opposite of political neutrality and has two features which contradict two aspects of neutrality. These are:

- (1) the use of the public service for party purposes (in contrast to the principle of neutrality that public administrators should not be used for party purposes; and
- (2) the appointment, promotion and tenure of public administrators through party political impudence (in contrast to the principle of neutrality that appointments, promotion, and tenure should be independent of party political impudence) (Weller, 1989).

There are three dimensions of politicization:

- Politicization as participation in political decision making in the sense that all public administrators are “political” because they are called upon to carry out political decisions, adapt to them, and explain them. In other words, bureaucrats are required to carry out a task of a political nature that clearly is not limited to the mere application of legal or economic rules. The fact that public administrators are thinking beings precludes considering them as robots having

no freedom of judgment. In the actual management of public affairs, senior public administrators are professionally involved in political decision making. Reality in administration therefore repudiates neutrality (Self, 1972);

- Politicization as partisan control over the bureaucracy involves the subjection of the appointment and career of public administrators to political will. In this case, politicization means that not only a public administrator's activity, but also his or her career depends more on political than professional norms defined by the administration and ruled by law; and

- Politicization as political involvement which denotes the degree of public administrators' political involvement as citizens and voters. In other words, is the public service a political force? Public administrators as a group have their own aims and interests. Like any other interest group in society, public administrators are actively involved in the political process in pursuit of class interests (Aberdach, et al 1981; Haque, 2001; Peters, 2001).

There are advantages and disadvantages to the politicization of the bureaucracy. One inevitable consequence of public administrative work is that in delivering a public service to the citizens bureaucrats unavoidably participate in the political role of "deciding who gets what" from the public sector (Christensen and Laegreid (2004). Moreover, the merit principle is counter-productive as it implies the appointment of value-free bureaucrats who will administer public policies regardless of their impact on society, and thus may be apathetic and hostile to the programs of a political party in power (Cameron, 2010).

The downsides of politicization are that: it undermines the merit-based systems of employment, promotion and efficiency, professionalism; it weakens trust among actors in the external environment; it ensures loyalty to the government of the day only, it leads to loss of expertise; it erodes morale among existing public administrators; and it widens the gap between senior public servants and rank and file (Aberbach and Rockman, 1994; Cameron, 2010).

Despite the limitations of the politicization of the civil service Ghana's experience seem to favor it against the stipulations of the constitution. Several provisions of the 1993 Constitution and other enactments prevent public administrators from engaging in partisan politics. These are stated hereunder:

- Article 94 (3b) of the 1992 Constitution identifies three categories of persons who are not eligible to become Members of Parliament (MPs). Apart from members of the Electoral Commission and chiefs, the other category of those who are ineligible to be MPs are members of 13 services, namely, the Police Service, the Prisons Service, the Armed Forces, the Judicial Service, the Legal Service, the Civil Service, the Audit Service, the Parliamentary Service, the Statistical Service, the Fire Service, the Customs, Excise and Preventive Service, the Immigration Service, and the Internal Revenue Service. Conspicuously, missing in the list are the Education, and Health Service, and Value Added Tax (VAT) Services even though the VAT Service was not created before the coming into force of the Constitution. This notwithstanding, their exclusion does not mean that the members of those services should engage in partisan politics because the public services of Ghana as stipulated in Chapter 14, Article 190 (1a-d) identifies four categories of public services, namely, the 14 listed including the Health and Education Service, public corporations other than those set up as commercial ventures, public services established by the Constitution, and such other services as Parliament may by law prescribe.

- The non-engagement of public administrators in partisan politics is implied in Article 191 of the Constitution which protects them against “victimization, discrimination, dismissal, removal, reduction in rank and punishment without just cause.” If they engage in partisan politics, then they are undermining their own protection. In spite of this, the practice of intense partisan politics under the Fourth Republic has made it more difficult for some public servants to retain their reputation as being “above party.” They do not see themselves as servants of the state but rather those of politicians.

- Public administrators are guided by the Constitution, rules and regulations in the discharge of their responsibilities. Consequently, under Chapter 24 of the Constitution, public administrators as public officers should not put themselves in a position where their personal interest conflicts or is likely to conflict with the performance of their functions of their offices. This means that being a public administrator and, at the same time, engaging in partisan politics has the potential of creating a conflict of interest situation (Ayee, 2013). In this connection, the Civil Service Code of Conduct enjoins civil servants to exhibit a sense of fairness, and justice, and take decisions solely in the interest of the public.

Even though in Section 69 (1) of the Civil Service Law, PNDC Law 327, 1993 stipulates that “a civil servant may form or join any association,” at the same time Section 69 (2) debars a civil servant from forming or joining an “Association where such membership conflicts with the performance of his duties as a civil servant.” Therefore, joining a political party and campaign in its platform create the avenue for conflicts (Ayee, 2013).

Despite these constitutional and legal provisions excluding public administrators from partisan politics, there has been a steady increase in the number of public administrators in partisan politics since the return to democratic governance in 1993. In 2009, for instance, there were 68 Members of Parliament as against 32 in 1993, whose last employment was in the public service. The figures may seem negligible, but the worry is that high-profile public administrators either actively campaigned for political parties or stood for primaries without resigning their positions thus compromising their positions as public administrators and giving the public service a negative image and reputation (Ayee, 2013). Occasionally, depending on who was in power, they were either asked or forced to resign before they contested the elections. Some of the high profile public administrators who engaged in partisan politics included the Chief Director of the Ministry of Finance; Director, Ministry of Mines and Energy; Director-General, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC); Chief Executive, Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital; Executive Secretary, Revenue Agencies Governing Board; Chief Executive, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority; Executive Secretary, Food and Drugs Board; Deputy Governor, Bank of Ghana; and Chief Director, Ministry of Health. There were also public administrators from the universities: Education, Health, Internal Revenue, VAT, and Judicial Services. In addition, on August 6, 2012, K.B. Amisshah-Arthur, the immediate past Governor of the Bank of Ghana—the central bank, was sworn in as Vice President of the country following the elevation of the then Vice President, John Mahama as President after the unexpected death of President John Mills on July 24, 2012 (Ayee, 2013: 446).

The Ghanaian practice can be compared with the experiences in other jurisdictions across the world to determine whether they are in line with Ghana or in congruent with this important tenet of Weber’s bureaucratic model. Some countries, like France, permit partisanship whereby public administrators can contest elections and if they succeed they resign their positions. In

Spain and Italy, however, public administrators are permitted to take leave of absence to contest elections, but may be allowed to return if they are unsuccessful. In some cases, public officials are appointed because they are sympathetic to their government's policies. In some countries like India and South Africa even though it is stipulated that public administrators who want to engage in partisan politics must resign, the provision has not been enforced because of patronage and the poor enforcement of some policies and regulations in these countries. This is reminiscent of the Ghanaian experience (Ayee, 2012).

In the United Kingdom, industrial and junior public administrators are allowed to participate in politics, senior public servants may join a party; but no public administrator is permitted to stand for election to the legislature until he/she has resigned from the public service. The implication is that, as in Ghana, a career in the public service is an alternative to and not a preparation for entry to party politics (Ridley, 1986). The extreme experience of partisanship, however, is in the United States and China where being a public administrator is not considered incompatible with a political career. In other words, one must have some political sympathies and affiliations before being appointed to a public service office.

It is crucial to learn that access to senior positions in administration in the United States, Japan and France allows public administrators later to become chief executive officers of major private corporations. This is known as "parachuting" of the upper echelon public administrators into important and lucrative positions in the private economy (Peters, 2001; Peters and Pierre, 2007).

## **POLITICS-ADMINISTRATION DICHOTOMY**

The enunciation of the notion of separation between politics and administration has been attributed to Woodrow Wilson (1887). Wilson opined that while policies were to be debated and decided by politicians, they were to be carried out by a politically neutral, professional bureaucracy. In this way, the everyday conduct of government would be isolated from the potentially "corrupting influence" of politics (Denhardt, 1995). The decoupling has been advocated on the grounds that the 'dichotomous division of labor and authority between elected and administrative officials increases the democratic accountability and planning ability of public administrators' (Demir and Nyhan, 2008: 81).

The politics-administration dichotomy has been one of the most disputed theories of public administration since the days of Woodrow Wilson with some scholars describing it either as a "myth" or "aberration" (Maynard-Moody, 1998; Svara, 2001; Overeem, 2012). Most of the academic discourses have focused on the interactive relationships between politics and administration as well as on the impact of political interference into democratic government operations (Demir and Nyhan, 2008; Overeem, 2012).

In Ghana, from 1957 until the end of the first republic in 1966 and, even, since then, the relationship the politician and the bureaucrat was viewed as one of master and servant (Appiah, 2006; Ayee, 2013). The politician had a stranglehold on both policymaking and public management, however, and this has continued till today. For example, it is well documented that bureaucrats were, and continue to be, shut out of the policy making process (Kpessa, 2010; Ohemeng, 2005; Omaboe, 1966).

The quest for rapid national development and the reorientation of the bureaucracy toward political freedom fostered a hostile relationship between elected officials and the civil service (Amonoo, 1981; Omaboe, 1966). Politicians became policy developers (makers) as well as implementers, and were ahead of civil servants in all spheres of both (Omaboe, 1966). Distrust characterized the relationship between the Convention People Party (CPP) government and bureaucrats during this period, and this particularly explicates the quick pace with which politicians wanted to achieve development, not to mention the ideological underpinning of such projects (Amonoo, 1981; Gyimah-Boadi and Rothchild, 1990). Extreme politicization of the bureaucracy ensued, with the senior bureaucrats replaced as heads of institutions by party loyalists (Appiah, 2006). Commenting on the period, Gyimah-Boadi and Rothchild (1990: 233) note that President Nkrumah vowed that 'he would see to it that there were no 'civil masters' as under colonial rule but 'servants' carrying out the policy decided by the cabinet'. They asserted that 'senior officers were regarded with suspicion' and this led to questioning of their loyalty. The government thus did all it could during this period to assert political control over the bureaucracy (Amonoo, 1981, Ayee, 2001).

The period from the end of the Nkrumah's regime to the emergence of the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) (1966-1981) saw significant fluctuation in the relationship between the bureaucracy and elected officials. Government changed often, mainly through military coups, except from late 1969 to the early part of 1972 and from September 1979 to December 1981, when there were civilian administrations. The turbulent political environment of the period also saw a number of reforms of the civil bureaucracy that undermined its smooth functioning and alienated it from the policy making process because political leaders suspected their opposite numbers in the service (Asante, 2005).

Nevertheless, the bureaucracy enjoyed some relational dividends during this period. Of the relationship between politicians (military and civilian) and the bureaucracy prior to the PNDC days, Gyimah-Boadi and Rothchild (1990) observed that 'the various military and civilian regimes ruled in close collaboration with their civil service advisers, and not, surprisingly these senior cadres gained additional influence from this association, being viewed as experts' (Gyimah-Boadi and Rothchild, 1990:243). For example, the National Liberation Council (NLC), the military junta which overthrew Dr. Nkrumah tried to establish a cordial relationship with senior civil servants by replacing politically appointed regional and district commissioners with administrators who were career civil servants (Gyimah-Boadi and Rothchild, 1990). In regard to economic policy making, bureaucrats were involved alongside the business community in the regime's National Economic Council, which had control over economic policies. The NEC included five senior civil servants and two financial professionals. According to Kosack (2012), 'the NLC and the NEC ruled in a fashion similar to the British: bureaucrats were at the center and governed the local level through alliances with tribal chiefs and through central appointed administrators'

Similar to the NLC, in the short-lived Busia civilian regime (1969-1972) there was a collaborative enterprise between politicians and bureaucrats, Technocrats dominated the government's economic team, for example. Like its predecessor regime, however, these technocrats had come from outside the civil service, as they had worked for the World Bank or the IMF (Libby, 1976). What is obvious, however, is that the policy making process became the

bona fide arena for politicians and technocrats from International Governmental Organizations, resulting in the external co-optation of the policy making process in Ghana (Libby, 1976).

The profound change in the politics-administration relations occurred when the Provincial National Defense Council (PNDC) military government established revolutionary organs: the People's Defense Committees (PDCs) and Workers' Defense Committees (WDCs) in various cities, towns, villages, and workplaces, including the civil service. The WDCs were established with the goal of helping formulate government policy. They enforced price controls and curfews, supported rent controls, and investigated mismanagement in both government and business (Adarkwa and Ohemeng, 2015). On the other hand, the PDCs were formed under the directorate of a coordinating committee made up of representatives from all the progressive political organizations. This institution was part of the plan by the government to incorporate new groups into the planning and implementation of state programs, and thereby decentralize the government structures. The PDCs had the goal of organizing development programs in factories, banks, institutions, and universities, while acting as watchdogs for the government (Opoku-Dapaah, 1992). In other words, the establishment of the revolutionary organs created an unnecessary layer or countervailing authority to the bureaucracy. This pronounced the dichotomy between politicians and public administrators and made their relationship bitter.

In the new democratic dispensation that commenced since 1993 to date, the President is empowered to appoint directors for ministries and departments. The strangest thing about this power is that under the civil service structure, directorship is attained through career progression in the service. The overall effect of the reforms of the 1990s and the constitutional requirement for appointment is the over politicization of the top personnel of the civil service. This, according to Ayee (2009), has led to a situation where some civil servants either campaign on the platforms of political parties, or stand for parties in their primaries or parliamentary elections, or take up top posts without resigning their positions. The negative effect of this trend on the supposed neutrality of the civil service and its work cannot be overestimated. It has created possible avenues for conflict of interests especially when the Civil Service Code of Conduct enjoins civil servants to exhibit a sense of fairness, selflessness, and justice and take decisions solely in the interest of the public (Ayee, 2009).

## **EFFICIENCY**

Efficiency defies a single definition. In one sense it denotes allocative efficiency – meaning ‘maximizing the use of resources at least cost’-which represents the economies of scale argument or by utilizing the concept of ‘X efficiency’ or dynamic efficiency (Wolf 1989; Dollery et al, 2006). ‘X efficiency’ emphasizes the benefits made by ‘streamlining organizational improvements’ (Wolf 1989: 18), meaning ‘efficiency is not only gained from economies of scale’ (see Chapman 1995: 12). Efficiency gains from scale economies can be determined in two ways. The first computes it by administrative cost, while the second compares the quality and range of services (Haward and Zwart, 2000). The MPM approach emphasizes both values and the assessment here will pay attention to them.

Democratic governance conditioned the implementation of a market-driven mode of governance often referred to as the new public management (NPM), which is characterized by trust in market forces, and reorienting state policies towards deregulation, privatization, and

liberalization. The introduction of NPM features into public sector reforms in Ghana has diminished the “publicness” of public servants. The major impetuses and objectives of these public sector reforms have been to overcome public sector inefficiencies, reduce monopoly, minimize budget deficits, relax trade protection, streamline public expenditure, withdraw subsidy, generate revenue, expand competition, encourage foreign investment, improve service quality, and increase customer satisfaction (Antwi et al., 2008).

In addition, there forms were meant to correct the inherent obstacles to the public nature of the public service, including its accumulation of excessive power, lack of accountability, and representation, indifference towards public needs and demands, official secrecy and inaccessibility, and role in depoliticizing the public sphere (Haque, 2001). In short, the new public management (NPM) reforms championed a vision of public managers as the entrepreneurs of a new, leaner, and increasingly privatized government, emulating not only the practices but also the values of business (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000).

However, the NPM business-like reforms in governance have been seen to have diminished the publicness of the public service in terms of its institutional and normative identity, composition of recipients, pattern of socio-economic roles, degree of accountability, and level of public trust. In other words the reforms have “resulted in negative trends—the erosion of public-private distinction, the narrow composition of service recipients, the weakening role of the public sector, the worsening problems of accountability, and the declining level of public trust” (Haque, 2001: 67). In spite of the rationale of political leaders that public sector reform or reinvention can reduce people’s anti-government sentiment and revive their confidence in government, there is an increasing degree of public distrust or cynicism toward public governance, which implies its “diminishing publicness” (Haque, 2001; Wereko, 2008).

Following the introduction of the NPM in Ghana the performance of the public service particularly its service delivery capacity has largely been judged as unsatisfactory. For instance, late President Mills in his first State of the Nation Address, while acknowledging that the governance institutions have performed relatively well, was quick to concede that ‘they are under resourced, their leaders and staff poorly motivated and their institutions thinly spread, such that ordinary citizens in remote areas are unable to access many of their services’ (Republic of Ghana, 2009: 4). Similarly, the Advisory Group setup by the New Patriotic Party government in 2004 to guide the redesigned agenda of the Public Sector Reform program, identified the following weaknesses of the public service: ineffective leadership, weak management, lack of vision, low morale, excessive bureaucratic delays, low capacity for planning and implementation, pervasive image of corruption, fear, lack of discipline, poor working conditions and low remuneration, and excessive and erratic politicization (Republic of Ghana, 2006).

Key public services such as water, electricity, sanitation, and prevention of environmental degradation have been poorly performed. For instance, the basic function of sanitation which is the responsibility of metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies (MMDCs) has become a big problem, especially in the cities—so much that Zoomlion Ghana Limited, a private company, has been contracted to tackle the problem (Owusu, 2006).

As a result of its unsatisfactory performance since the advent of democratic governance, the public service and public administrators have received a bashing from political leaders. They are seen as inefficient, incompetent, unresponsive, secret, and isolationist. This assault on the public service has become an effective means to justify radical pro-market reforms, including

downsizing the public sector and transforming the public service in the image of business enterprise, thus facilitating the expansion of political control over public administrators (Aye, 2013: 449).

## **COMPETITIVE TENDERING AND CONTRACTING-OUT**

Privatization, competitive tendering and contracting-out are instruments of the NPM that have been applied in Ghana to spur efficiency, economy and effectiveness in the conduct of public business. However, practice has curved away from the dictates of these instruments. For example, competitive tendering is to allow the vying of myriad contractors for government works in a way that will permit selection of the most competent candidate for the job. This procedure promises cost savings, professionalism, and good quality and enhanced results. In practice in Ghana, the bidding process is fraudulent to the extent that competent contractors are by-passed in favor of those who are government party contractors. A case in point is when a school building project in Kpandai Senior High School in the Northern Region was awarded to the NDC Regional Chairman of the NDC who although had received a chunk of the contract sum failed to progress the work with impunity (TV3, News, 2017).

Similarly, the Auditor General (2004, 2011) revealed serious contract management irregularities by local governments. Sections 59 to 63 of Part IX of the Financial Memoranda for MMDAs, 2004 states that no contract should be awarded without tendering. Section 68 of Part IX of the Financial Memoranda also prohibits alterations to existing contract without the recommendation of the District Tender Board and approval by the local government. While Section 69 Part IX of the Financial Memoranda stipulates that 'No advance payment shall be made to a contractor unless provided for in the terms of contract and shall in no case exceed 15 percent of the contract'. Furthermore, Section 70 (6) of Part IX of the Financial Memoranda also obligates the contractor to enter into a bond with securities for the payment of the initial advance. The aim in this section is to determine whether local governments have complied with these provisions in law.

Contrary to these contract management provisions, 2001-2004 recorded the highest number and types of contract management breaches by local governments. These breaches included: award of contracts without formal agreements; award of HIPC contracts without prior approval by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; award of contracts without tendering; unauthorized contract variations; excessive contract advances and lack of bonds; abandoned contracts/unutilized projects; and overpayment of contractors. An average of 9 local governments were engaged in each type of breach which culminated in a total financial loss of GH¢480,290.00. In 2005-2007 five different types of infractions involving an average of 6 councils per breach were recorded. The breaches which were the second highest during the period under review included: award of contracts without approval; contract payments without certificates; unauthorized revision of contract sums; payment of mobilization advance without surety; and failure to sign awarded contract agreements. These irregularities resulted in a total loss of GH¢108,210.00. For 2012-2014 only one breach, which is namely failure to update contract register, was recorded. This infraction translated into a loss of GH¢479,719.70. The grand total loss due to contract management infractions stood at GH¢1,068,219.70 (Auditor General, 2004, 2010, 2011).

Some ministries and departments have over relied on sole sourcing and selective tendering instead of competitive tendering for public procurement and the award of government contracts. For example, in late 2011 and early 2012 a problem with a contracting-out arrangement cropped up which has become known as the Woyome Case or Scandal. It involved one Alfred Agbesi Woyome a known financier of the then ruling party, the NDC, who was paid by the state GHC51 million (about USD26,153, 846 [GHC1.95=USD1]) as judgment debt without any basis in contract or other legal right. This case led to the resignation of Betty Mould Idrissu, Minister of Education, who authorized the illegal payment as Attorney General and Minister of Justice in 2010 and the dismissal of Martin Amidu, the immediate past Attorney General and Minister of Justice for alleged insubordination and disrespect at a cabinet meeting held over the matter (Ayee, 2013). The Woyome Case, which is being heard at the High Court (Commercial Division), has become the most popular and durable discourse in Ghanaian society with all sides of the political divide adducing historical evidence to buttress claims that illegal judgment debts had been made by both the NDC and NPP while in power to some of their supporters or sympathizers without recourse to due process (Amidu, 2012).

## **DEMOCRACY**

Democratic theory which undergirds the NPG approach places premium on traditional democratic values that fully embrace “access, “accountability”, “representativeness” and “responsiveness” and better governance (Lyons and Lowery, 1989; Newton, 1982). This theoretical underpinning of NPG implies support for collaborative or pluralist processes of reform rather than top-down mechanistic policy intervention that takes precedence over citizens’ opinions (Aulich, 2005).

Political theories of democracy posit that people have the right to be informed and consulted and convey their views on matters which affect them to decision-makers (Tosun, 2000). In modern democratic government, elected representatives have, however, failed to represent grassroots and at least significant segments of communities have feelings of alienation towards governmental decision-making (Tosun, 2000). This is the reason why there is increased demand for public participation in national affairs in Ghana as elsewhere. Such demands have led to an increase in the number of participatory processes in solving public problems. In Ghana over the past two decades, a number of major national exercises were conducted, to promote public participation in policymaking. Between 1993 and 1994, the government held a series of regional and sub-regional forums to formulate a long-term plan for the social and economic development of the country. The result was a national document, Ghana: Vision 2020, which envisioned transforming the country to a middle-income economy by the year 2020 (International Monetary Fund, 2010; Thompson, 2005). In 1997, a National Economic Forum, based on nationwide public hearings, was held in Accra, the national capital, to review the general direction of the national economy and initiate policies to strengthen Vision 2020. In the same year, the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review Initiative was launched. And in 2001, a national economic dialogue was held within a similar participatory framework, culminating in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) Paper (see Ayee 2002; Institute for Democratic Governance 2007; Thompson 2005). Participatory processes were also employed in the design and implementation of the Renewable Natural Resources Strategy as well as the Pension

Reforms (Kpessa 2011; Vordzorgbe and Caiquo 2001). More recently, in 2010 an elaborate consultative process to review the 1992 Constitution was launched at the behest of the late President Atta Mills (see Daily Graphic 2010).

Yet, proponents of the elite approach insist that involving the public can be disruptive, costly, time consuming, and inefficient, owing to the fact that they are not capable of participating effectively. The disadvantages of the participatory decision making approach, as enunciated above, most likely influenced rejection of it by the one-party and military regimes in Ghana. For example, the amendment of the 1957 Constitution and the promulgation of the 1960 Constitution, which converted Ghana from a multiparty system to a one-party rule, as well as conferred life tenure on President Nkrumah, were conducted in an exclusionary manner (Frempong 2007). Among other things, the changes were meant to stifle dissent and ensure an executive controlled legislature (Frempong 2007). Another example was the enactment of the Prevention Detention Act by the same government under which persons could be detained without trial (Frempong 2007). The Union Government concept (a combination of military and civilian-appointed government) that was proposed by General Acheampong's military government was implemented without public consultation (Frimpong 2007; Institute for Democratic Governance 2007). Mass opposition to the concept forced the military junta to allow a referendum to determine the proposal's fate. Unsurprisingly, the concept was defeated in the process. The Economic Recovery Program, formulated under the Rawlings military rule, was enacted with little, if any, public involvement (Gyimah-Boadi 2001; Vordzorgbe and Caiquo 2001).

The outcomes of these examples of exclusionary policy making in Ghana point to the fact that the elite decision-making model has considerable drawbacks. For instance, with respect to the Union Government concept, the initiating government was myopic in its outlook and failed to consider important communities and points of view. The Acheampong government was oblivious of the fact that Ghanaians were tired of many years of military reign that curtailed civil liberties and stifled civic activism (Gyimah-Boadi 2010; Institute for Democratic Governance 2007). In contrast, public participation in decision making is seen as a formidable pillar in modern democracy, and it is critical to active citizenship (Woodford and Preston 2011).

Such governance deficits have also been witnessed at the sub-national level in Ghana. Although local governments are required to demonstrate fiscal accountability and transparency in all revenue mobilization and expenditure decisions, this is not the case in reality. Citizens in order to hold local governments to account for the services they provide need information. The information should pertain to what decisions local governments are taking and how public money is being spent. Councilors as representatives of the people are required to share information from council with the electorates. However, studies show that local governments do not disclose quarterly receipts even with the citizens' representatives let alone to the citizens themselves (Development Partner/Ghana Government, 2007). Without knowledge of internally generated funds, citizens are incapable of monitoring the utilization of local governments' funds. This undercuts one cardinal principle of transparency which is that usable information should be made available in good time to permit analysis, evaluation and engagement by relevant stakeholders.

Sharing information about revenue receipts can help manage expectations of citizens. The residents of Dalan in the Kunbungu District, for instance, have refused to pay rates to the local government because they believe that although the local authority generates a significant percentage of its total revenue from sand wining in the community, the council does not account to them for revenue received (Development Partners/Ghana Government, 2007). These minutiae mean that GNP tenets are often being violated in the conduct of public business in Ghana.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study set out to investigate the congruence of public administration theories with practice in Ghana. The evidence has shown that a considerable gap exists between prescription and reality largely because the models were imported from the developed world without tailoring them to suit the Ghanaian context. The context in Ghana, as elsewhere in the developing world, has unfavorable factors that increase the chances of misalignment between the theories and practice of public administration. The lesson to be learnt here is that public sector management and reform efforts should be sensitive to context and draw on various approaches. This is because no single model of public management offers a magic bullet to resolve problems of public administration.

One of the gaps is that there is growing politicization of the public service and that this is not new because the trend has been there since independence in 1957. The politicization of the public service has become more or less a norm because of the country's constitutional and legal framework, the culture of patronage, and global influence such as the experiences of the United States and the OECD countries. This has made public administrators vulnerable because there is a sense of insecurity that has affected their capacity for long-term policy design and implementation.

Another disjunction is that there is blurring of the separation line between the political and administrative worlds with the line being skewed towards the former. This is because positions that hitherto would have been unthinkable as candidates for political game play are now glaringly open to political control and appointments.

The concurrent stress on decoupling and protection of bureaucrats from political interference, on one hand, and interaction and incorporation of administrative input in the design and implementation of public policy, on the other hand, is no longer tenable. Consequently, civil servants in Ghana must come to grips with the reality that apolitical public administration is a mirage since it is part of the move towards securing their greater responsiveness and accountability and effective service delivery.

The presence of accountability, transparency and efficiency and contract administration deficits point to the wide discrepancy between the theory of the new public management reforms and its practice in Ghana. This is especially true in relation to competitive tendering, contracting-out, and fiscal accountability and transparency and service provision. Some high-performing countries, like Singapore and Malaysia in East Asia, and Chile and Brazil in Latin America, possess the political direction and administrative capacity to enable them to design and manage complex multi-agency forms of public service delivery (Ayee, 2013; Robinson, 2015). This is not the case in Ghana. A whole-of-government perspective can mitigate the risks of incoherence,

fragmentation and opaqueness associated with Ghana's public administration approach and digital governance offers the potential to increase efficiency and transparency simultaneously.

An unorthodox approach that taps selectively on a range of public management traditions will be more appropriate for Ghana than an approach to reform that is predicated on models that have evolved in the political and economic conditions of advanced industrialized countries. Such an approach would stress different elements from a repertoire of potential alternatives that offer "best fit" rather than "best practice" solutions. This would make a case for a hybrid approach to public sector reform that embraces adaptive responses to complexity, wicked problems and the global dimension, and emphasize the significance of motivations and incentives, and privileges the interests and needs of citizens as the primary focus of public service reform. While recognizing the importance of maintaining an efficient and capable core public service. For such an approach to work, Ghana needs to eschew patrimonial politics in favor of galvanizing a buy-in from citizens to work collaboratively with state actors and reform-minded others to achieve a very different image of public administration.

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