

## PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS AND COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC SERVICE ETHICS IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENTS OF KENYA

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### Abstract

*Public sector reforms were intended to change public service to be more responsive to citizen needs and ensure ethical service delivery. The aim of this paper is to discuss the impact of public sector reforms on compliance with public service ethics at the devolved County Governments of Kenya. The study is based on systematic review methods to discuss the rationale, drivers, achievement, challenges and the general lessons learned and whether the reform has any effect on public service ethics compliance. Results showed that in the last thirty years, many countries especially in Africa adopted reforms with varied outcomes and impact on public service ethics compliance. The reviewed literature has also revealed that implementation of public sector reforms is considered more important for reengineering the public service than compliance with public service ethics. Moreover, several barriers including the changing reform paradigm are well documented globally, regionally and nationally. In Africa and Kenya in particular literature on reforms is generally inconclusive on the impact of reforms on compliance with public service ethics. In addition, the review has identified some important theoretical, conceptual and methodological drawbacks in previous studies that restrict generalization of results to particular contexts such as County Governments. The recommendation is made for further research focusing on the relationships between strategic leadership and reform implementation and employee commitment to public service ethics compliance.*

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

## Introduction

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

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

Public values are the norms and standards of behavior that bind public service when carrying out activities of government while public service delivery is the benefit emanating from government business (Dickson, 2015; Bryson, Crosby & Bloomberg, 2015). Public service values are part of the wider ethical expectations that are integral to public service delivery. They are the broad norms that delineate how public servants as agents of the state and as members of a profession should exercise judgment and discretion in carrying out their official duties (Engida & Bardill, 2013). Ethics is important since as Lawton (1998) argued, people working in the public service needed to realize that they work in organizations that exist to fulfil social and ethical purposes. Indeed, Terry (2015) asserted that the purpose of public official profession is to carry public service delivery with the same moral burden expected in a free society that is shared by all citizens. The Government of Kenya (GOK, 2015) has stated that the core ethical values that should guide the work of public servants in Kenya is to fulfill their lawful obligation to government with professionalism and integrity; perform their official duties honestly, faithfully and efficiently respecting the rights of the public and their colleagues ensuring they do not bring the government into disrepute through their private activities (GOK, 2015). The extent to which public sector reforms influence compliance with ethics in government agencies such as County Governments of Kenya is therefore a theme of interest not only to citizens but public sector leadership and research as well. The issue of ethics with regard to the relationship between government and citizens is extensively explained in theory spanning different disciplines (De Graaf & Van der Wal, 2017).

## Theory and Public Sector Reforms

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

## Methodology

The empirical objective of this study was to explore from previous research the effect of public sector reforms on compliance with ethics particularly at lower levels of the public sector. The methodology involved purposive searching and selection of available prior research on reform experiences in the Western, Eastern Europe, Asian, African Countries and Kenya. The selected literature was then subjected to a systematic review that enabled categorization into three main areas synthesizing the rationale for introducing public sector reforms, achievements and lessons learnt from their implementation. Each thematic area was then analyzed and its effect on compliance with public service ethics in the various regions evaluated. The results of the literature review were discussed showing how governance after reforms influenced compliance with ethics at global and regional levels including Kenya's County Governments. Importantly gaps in literature were identified justifying the recommendations made for further research.

## Public Sector Reforms and Compliance with Ethics

Reviewed literature indicates exposition of profoundly divergent positions on the outcomes of public sector reforms. The divergence represented the differing experiences of the specific country or region with regard to factors such as the changing theoretical framework underpinning the reform efforts, drivers of reform, achievements of reforms with regard to changed role of government, decentralization, marketization, performance management and employment relations. Table 1 shows some of the legal instruments used in Kenya to ensure compliance with established public service ethics.

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

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

Source: GOK (2017).

## Changing Theoretical Framework and Public Service Ethics Compliance

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the guiding principles that define the public service including reforms has kept on evolving. This evolution is markedly in four stages namely; old public administration, new public management, new public governance and new public service (Knies, Boselie, Gould-Williams & Vandenabeele, 2017; Torfing & Triantafyllou 2013). Under public administration Government business was based on compliance with orders and a model of serving citizens. The public administration model was based on hierarchy and meritocracy as foundational principles to ensure government services were ethical.

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

The theoretical and paradigmatic underpinnings of reform did not completely replace management paradigms but are still evolving as countries continue implementing reforms. Rather than seeking a firm framework, government instead manage the resulting hybrid arrangements comprising features of all the different paradigms in defining and managing issues of staff competency, organizational values and de-centered governance that include citizens (Dickson, 2015). This imperative was captured well by Ventriss, Perry, Nabatchi, Milward and Johnston (2019) when discussing the growing distrust of public institutions, political polarization, and rising support for populism, particularly in the United States. Ventriss et al showed that the trends had contributed to a diminished sense of public duty including erosion of public values which public service had to repair and strengthen. In concurrence Bryson et al., (2019) stated that the new approach is a public service that is networked, multisector, no-one-wholly-in-charge system with world values beyond coherence where values such as democracy are prominent. However, Bryson insisted that Government still has a special role to play as a guarantor of public values with citizens as well as businesses and nonprofit organizations considered important and active public problem solvers.

The apprehension regarding the negative impact of reforms on public administration is well documented. Public sector management is invariably unique and reforms needed to consider the complex nature of public service in order to effectively tackle unethical issues such as corruption that was constantly growing in sophistication (Yeboah, 2016). During implementation reforms tended to oversimplify public service complexities such as those brought about by politics which caused difficulties (Roman, 2015; Kuipers, Higgs, Kickert, Tummers, Grandia & Van der Voet, 2014). According to Kellis and Bing (2015) the focus of NPM-inspired reforms on outcomes and hierarchical authority had created an environment in which administrative evil could occur. This was observed in South Korea where Kim and Han (2015) studied administrative reforms and found that the old form of bureaucracy had not weakened as anticipated largely because the bureaucrats themselves had to design and manage administrative reform leading to resistance. Similarly, Glinka (2017) after conducting a study in Poland found that constant reforms had negative impact on public servants.

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

The contextual elements of historical background, administrative capacity, governance and ethical culture affected reforms in particular jurisdictions with most of the success registered in the Western economies. For example, Lynn (2006) examined the evolution of managerial structures, practices, and values in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and United States of America and concluded that public sector reform in any country was inevitably shaped by that country's history. In the USA for example, Hijal-Moghrabi and Sabharwal (2018) conducted an historical analysis of the US public service and observed that the service maintained values after NPM-based reforms because of US history of compliance with ethics. Calogero, (2010) noted that Italy had successfully changed from a bureaucratic to managerial model of governance after implementing reforms.

Although Lynn (2006) had further concluded that NPM was inappropriate to developing countries on account of historical problems of low administrative capacity and corruption reforms were billed as necessary. Dan and Pollitt (2015) for example averred that though reforms in the Central and Eastern Europe were not always successful to the extent expected and promoted, there was enough evidence to show that some of the central ideas in NPM had led to improvement in public service. In the same vein Islam (2015) noted that the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm had replaced the old public administration and improved public service delivery and accountability in Bangladesh and other developing countries in Africa. Despite the positive outcomes of public sector reforms across the world, Engida and Bardill (2012) based on the study of NPM reforms in Sub-Saharan African Countries cautioned that the new approach might not be a cure and recommended careful adoption. Guma (2013) noted that even without reforms officials in Uganda were motivated and faithfully implemented policies decided by the political class within the old bureaucratic administration.

The reluctance to fully embrace reforms in Africa was mainly due to failure of the approach to consider unique contexts. Studies in the continent indicate that reform models were generalized and ignored African cultural norms upon which

ethics depended (Sebola, 2014). Ethics includes practicing integrity as a cultural behaviour based on personal conviction (Okiri, Ngugi, & Wandayi, 2019; Robinson et al. 2018; Marang'a, Ouma & Kosimbei, 2018; Knights, 2016). After analyzing why major solutions to tame judicial corruption in Kenya had failed, Okiri, Ngugi, & Wandayi (2019) found the linear approach to offering solutions was to blame. Okiri et al., (2019) observed that corruption is not only a legal issue but also a moral concern and recommended including promotion of integrity as a better approach of ensuring compliance.

### **Drivers of Reforms and Public Service Ethics Compliance**

Although the New Public Management (NPM) based reforms were globally a paradigm shift from the old bureaucratic administration, the rationale for adoption of reforms differed from region to region. The western governments conscious of the unsustainable economic realities of the welfare state ideology adopted new approaches informed by the economic-neoliberal political thought (Hood, 1991). Neo-liberals advocated for decreased government involvement in society to cut expenses on welfare programmes (Bryson, Barbara & Laura, 2019). These ideological changes favoured private sector governance such market approaches which became the main reason for adopting reforms in the West. In other countries public sector reforms were adopted for different reasons. Unlike in the West, the need for efficiency and effectiveness in public services were the main drivers of reform in the developing countries of Africa and Asia (Hope, 2014). Reforms were for example, expected to provide solutions to challenges of crippling public debt, fiscal problems and high rate of unemployment Kenya was experiencing (GOK, 2018; Chemengich, 2013). In Kenya as was many other developing Countries reforms were introduced as a package of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAPs) sponsored the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The SAPs engineered reforms suffered bad timing due to government unpreparedness, while using external agencies and experts who rarely had detailed knowledge or long-term commitment for reforms hampered success. The SAPs which had neoliberal political agenda lacked ownership in many developing countries with different political orientation leading to failure (Marobela and Boy, 2012). The World Bank (2001) itself admitted that the application of NPM reforms in countries like Kenya needed to take context into account.

Despite the differing rationale for introducing reforms, globally, extant literature is replete with examples of extensive application of public sector reforms aimed at reducing government role and improving public sector performance. Reforms entailed changing the role of government; dispersing and decentralization to lower units; marketization of public services, emphasis on performance management and changing employment relations (De Vries & Nemec, 2013). They meant changed structures with dispersed and decentralized governance agencies that gave more freedom to managers and employees to re-define their vision, mission, core functions and objectives focusing on core functions and reducing employees (Hope, 2014).

### **Changing Role of Government and Public Service Ethics Compliance**

The reviewed literature revealed that the most outstanding impact of public sector reforms was the change of government role from regulation and control to facilitation. Under public sector reforms many countries attempted to redefine the role of government by separating functions into different agencies and downsizing to create leaner and more rationalized organizational structures, systems and processes. The operation of government business changed tremendously from highly hierarchical systems to different forms of dispersion and decentralization. Under NPM-based reforms the UK, Australia and New Zealand created executive agencies and granted them autonomy to manage while in Korea and Singapore service boards were set up under similar terms (Dickson, 2015).

Other countries like Kenya created executive agencies out of existing ministries. While implementing reforms, the Country created specialized agencies known as Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAs) that were given administrative leeway while the parent Ministry maintained policy control, (GOK, 2018). As another measure of dispersion, the country established the integrated one-stop service model known as "Huduma Centers" that provide government services under one roof. Considered more flexible and responsive mode of service delivery the services are mainly driven by electronic systems in line with the Country's digital revolution (Ndemo & Weiss 2017). The other fundamental change in governance was brought about by decentralization which granted substantial autonomy to lower levels or County Governments in Kenya.

The implementation of reforms in Kenya heralded the weakening of central government control and rise of local nationalism that is blamed for escalation of conflicts. After studying the persistent conflict situation in Marsabit County, Scott-Villiers (2017) concluded that ethnic conflicts escalated into small wars after devolution. Government and civil society reports indicate that Kenya's sporadic intra and inter-ethnic skirmishes have been frequent since devolution was established in 2013. These include ongoing conflicts in Mandera, Wajir, Baringo, Narok, Tana River and inter-county

disputes between Meru and Isiolo, Meru and Tharaka Nithi, Elgeyo Marakwet and Turkana, Kisii and Narok, Kisumu and Kericho, Laikipia and Baringo and Rift valley and Western regions, (Sahgal et al, 2019; Cannon & Ali, 2018; Emase, 2017; Rohwerder, 2015; Abdi, 2014)

### Decentralization and Public Service Ethics Compliance

Decentralizing management within public agencies mean reducing the management role of the centre and giving responsibility and freedom to top management at the lower level to manage (Wagana, Ivaro & Nzulwa, 2015). Decentralization is another aspect of reforms that could influence compliance with public service ethics. As a governance principle under public sector reforms, decentralization was attractive to developing countries especially in Africa where over thirty out of fifty-four Countries practiced some form of decentralization in public service delivery (Mookherjee, 2014; Juma, Korir & Mulongo 2014). After trying different methods since independence, Kenya's decentralization initiatives crystalized into devolution upon promulgation of the new constitution (GOK, 2010). Devolution generated a lot enthusiasm and several frameworks to enforce ethical standards were developed. The most comprehensive was developed by the Public Service Commission of Kenya [PSCCK] (2015) to operationalize the constitutional and other legal and regulatory provisions to enforce ethical standards in the public service.

Studies have shown that decentralization can help promote compliance with public service ethics since devolved units have delegated powers of a sovereign state to govern and can be held accountable at the local level (Bojanic, 2018; Muigua, 2018; Balunywa et al., 2014). In Uganda Balunywa et al., (2014) found that decentralization improved financial accountability. Devolution in Kenya had the immediate benefit of improved equity since public resources hitherto concentrated at the center were channeled to all 47 County governments leading to expanded services to the whole Country (Korir, Rotich & Bengat, 2015). However, Wagana, Iravo and Nzulwa, (2015) described Kenya's devolution as partial decentralization since many responsibilities were shared with national government. With respect to financial management for example, the Public Finance and Management Act (2012) gave national treasury inordinate power to disburse funds to Counties.

The Kenyan decentralization scenario had mixed results and the extent to which devolution shielded County Governments from unethical behaviour has been put to question. For example, Oketch (2017) found a mismatch between allocation of resources for universal health coverage and actual planning for equitable service delivery. D'Arcy and Cornell, (2016) tended to agree and indicated that devolution did not reduce unethical character of Kenya's public service of ethnic patronage politics. Findings of a study carried out by Kimathi (2017) indicated that devolution was actually to blame for the deteriorating service delivery and corruption at the County governments in Kenya.

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

Reform Milestones	Year	Major Activities	Achievements
Civil Service Reform Programme 1	1993	Definition functions of ministries, departments, staffing and pay issues, rationalization	Right-sizing of the civil service. Largely failed for ignoring social impact.
Economic and Recovery Strategy	2003-2007	Attempts at improving management of wage bill.	Set back due to post-election violence (PEV) disruption
Public Service Reform Strategy	2008	Government was expanded after Peace Accord defeating reform goals.	Strenuous issues of a divided government hampered implementation
Public Sector Transformation Strategy	2010 -2014	Service and Openness; Coordination and Cooperation; Effectiveness & Accountability	Excellent planning and paperwork with less than optimal implementation

**Table 2: History of Strained Public Sector Reform Programme in Kenya (cont...)**

Reform Milestones	Year	Major Activities	Achievements
The new Constitution	2010	National Values and Principles of Governance	Low reform interest. Devolution led to increased unethical conduct
Public Sector Reforms Vision 2030	2013-2017	Elaborate plan for RBM (Performance Contracts)	Virtual all MDAs except Counties on PCs by 2015
Mwongozo	2015	Stare corporation management	Bold guide to parastatals that was not implemented
Public Service Kenya Framework	2015	Consolidated Framework	Partial evaluation excluding County Governments

### Marketization and Public Service Ethics Compliance

The NPM emerged as a new approach to address the inflexibility of the old public administration in adjusting to the demands of a competitive market economy. Under NPM reforms, governments should separate funding from provision of services by emphasizing use of market mechanisms. In practice this meant that governments provide finance for services, but not necessarily the service but contract-out to the private sector using instruments such as franchising, vouchers, contracting out and instituting internal markets user fees (O'Flynn, 2007).

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

Another manifestation of market orientation was privatization or sale of government stake or shares in whole or part to commercial interests (Kalimullah, Alam& Nour 2012). Since the 1990s, privatization became popular with Africa and development partners as a key principle of managing public resources to ensure expanded access to services. Privatization has since metamorphosed to co-creation, which involves a practice where the public service and citizens cooperate to offer a public service. The co-creation characteristics include supplementing or supplanting practice of governance, more interaction between policy makers, citizens and other actors and acting in accordance with context (Torfing, Røiseland & Sørensen, 2016). In Australia and New Zealand, Butcher and Gilchrist (2016) observed that due to financial and social contingencies governments adopted a collaborative approach by incorporating Not-for-Profit organizations in public service delivery. The mix of players brought about challenges of ethics compliance in several countries. In the UK there were attempts to cure this by applying the same ethical requirements to public service and private sector agencies offering public services (Carmel, & Harlock, 2008).

Marketization in Kenya involved privatization which is based on specific law. Under the law government entered into joint ventures or contracted out government service to be offered by the private sector and introducing user fees in services such as health, water and education(GOK, 2018). The legal provisions notwithstanding, Kimathi(2017) found that in Kenya, monitoring and accountability became problematic due to system weaknesses leading to abuse and loss of revenue to hospitals through corruption.

### Performance Management and Public Service Ethics Compliance

Performance Management is another major plank of public sector reforms that countries adopted for the potential to improve production in both developed and developing countries. Performance management systems have been defined

as processes designed by management and imposed on employees mainly in an attempt to link performance to reward (Korir, Rotich & Bengat, 2015). The introduction of results based management [RBM] had different outcomes. Nõmm and Randma-Liiv (2012) analyzed Estonian government documents and performance audits and results indicated there were difficulties in introducing performance measurement tools. The Kenya performance measurement was very successful at pilot stage where state corporations put on performance contracting returned highly improved results in absolute terms, (Obong'o,2009). At present almost the entire public service is under performance contracting epitomizing (GOK, 2017)

### Employment Relations and Public Service Ethics Compliance

Performance management requires managers to work on performance targets, indicators and output objectives. Shifting to output-orientation called for greater emphasis on output controls in resource allocation and rewards linked to measured performance, use of performance agreements and performance-related pay. The experience with performance management differed from country to country. In some, performance management did not yield meaningful results due to a number of factors chief among them the government lukewarm commitment to performance improvement related to pay. Reforms required that fairness and objectivity is upheld, that performance targets and criteria are clearly stated, and that performance measurements and rewards are based on actual work performed (Hope,2014). This expectation in many countries remains a mirage.

According Rauh, (2018) New Public Management only shrunk the number of government employees but increased the size of government spending. In Africa, Engida and Bardill (2013) observed that outcomes of some aspects of public sector reform such as downsizing, retrenchment, employment freeze, cost-sharing though important to maintain the size and lowering cost of public sector were unpopular. Another challenge is the discrepancy in remuneration between the highly paid senior staff and other employees who are lowly paid. Attempts at harmonization have remained just an agenda with the Salaries and Remuneration Commission [SRC] and Public Service of Kenya [PSCCK]. For example, the PSCCK *Guidelines for Implementation of Performance Rewards and Sanctions* intended to address the equity gap among other issues remains just a draft. This failure to adequately address issues of equity in pay and benefits resulted in unprecedented labour unrests in County health services of Kenya (Oketch, 2017).

### Conclusions

Review of previous research reveals that there exists a relationship between public sector reforms and public service ethics especially in the western world where the reforms originated. The study also revealed extensive adoption of reforms. Kilelo (2015) averred that rather than abandoning the NPM-based public sector reforms that were widely used in Africa, the system could be refined to fit contexts and for reforms to address leadership issues in the public sector. and a substantial corpus of research on reforms.

Research showed that public sector reforms led to fundamental change in running government probably more than any other event in recent history. The role of government changed substantially, while decentralization of government services became the new norm. The idea of marketization continued to evolve from simple government divestiture to co-creation. Although performance management meant adoption of other pertinent aspects of private sector practices for efficiency and effectiveness, important accompanying practices for effective human resource management were lacking. For example, in Africa reduction of staff through retrenchment though necessary to tame the ballooning wage bill was roundly criticized for being anti-social. Although retrenchment initially reduced staff numbers, after devolution this was quickly reversed when County Governors used their power liberally to employ new staff leading to exponential growth of the public service.

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

Another important aspect that needed adequate consideration when introducing NPM-based reforms was country context. Public sector reforms emerged for different reasons in different jurisdictions. Whereas reforms were intended to solve the challenges of meeting expenses of the welfare based public services in the West, the developing countries needed to improve administrative capacity. Kenya's reform journey started in earnest in the 1990s but gained traction

after 2010 with devolution, arguably the most important reform achievement other than passing of the constitution itself.

The enactment of the Constitution of Kenya (GOK, 2010) heralded a transformation of Kenya's governance structure with two independent levels of Government. County Governments are required by the constitution (GOK, 2010) to develop strategic plans known as County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP). The review found a substantial corpus of research on public sector reforms and performance but evidence of the use of reforms to influence observance of public service ethics is scant. Whereas the nexus of reforms and performance is apparent, Julia (2018); Masungu, Marangu, Obunga & Lilungu, (2015); Korir et al. (2015), this is not so for public sector reforms and compliance with public service ethics.

### Gaps Identified from Literature

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

### Recommendations

There is need to sequence reforms in such a way that they fit contexts and engage in further research to generate evidence to inform implementation. For instance, it may be advisable to sequence reforms with regard to available local resources ensuring that reforms service community interests such as compliance with ethics. Also some education and publicity of new systems may enhance understanding and acceptance of reforms key stakeholders.

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