IMPROVING PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA: A PARADIGM SHIFT BETWEEN TRADITIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT
The New Public Management represents the culmination of a revolution in public management. Many governments have embraced the NPM as the framework or paradigm through which governments are modernized and the public sector re-engineered. The NPM reform is radically changing the traditional ways of delivery public services. Indeed, the NPM offers important lessons and analyses for public management throughout the world and Nigeria is no exception to the process of implementation of efforts aimed at achieving the outcomes embodied in the said NPM. This paper presents the efforts at improving public service delivery through NPM reforms in Nigeria. The paper states that in order to benefit from the NPM ideas, the public sector in Nigeria needs to develop sound bureaucratic principles that would become the foundation upon which the NPM principles can be progressively embraced and nurtured. It concludes that improving technical, managerial and leadership skills of government employees in various ministries is vital if Nigeria is to benefit from the administrative technology brought forth by the NPM ideas. This effort must further be supported by a strong ownership of reforms and political will.

Key word: NPM, Bureaucracy, paradigm shift, improving, public sector.

INTRODUCTION
Public administration has always been under constant review. The reforms from the late 1970s
have led to a revolutionary change not only in the manner of delivery of social services and accounting for government expenditures, but also in the structures of governance. These reforms towards marketisation, or the application of business management theories and practices in public service administration, came to be called, in professional parlance, the New Public Management (NPM) (Sowaribi, 2005).

In Africa, attempts to reform public sectors are sweeping across the continent. Generally, they are significantly different from those of the immediate post-independence period. The earlier reforms aimed at shaping a public administration that could spearhead national development, albeit in the mould of the colonial age. Current reform efforts aim to reduce the costs and refocus the activities of the public sector, to change the way it works, and to promote the role of the market and non-governmental actors both in service provision and in the economy at large. This time around, reforms are driven by pressures from economic crises and structural adjustment, donor imposition, domestic demands for change amplified by growing political pluralism, and emulation of reforms in other countries (Batley, 1999 Mkandawire and Soludo, 1999, Olowu, 1999). Most of the more recent reforms, under the influence of the New Public Management, have been driven by a combination of economic, social, political and technological factors, which have triggered the quest for efficiency and for ways to cut the cost of delivering public services. The focus of the NPM movement therefore, was on creating institutional and organizational contexts which are to mirror what is seen as critical aspects of private sector modes of organizing and managing (Economic Commission for Africa, 2004).

Tracing the origins of the New Public Management Gbargaye (2013) observed that NPM as a marriage of 2 different streams of ideas built on post World War II development of public choice, transaction theory and principal agent theory. Generated a set of administrative reform doctrines built on contestability, user choice, transparency and incentive structures (Gbargaye, 2013). The term New Public Management was coined in 1989 by Christopher hood to retrospectively characterise the “Quite similar administrative Doctrines” of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and (with a different emphasis) the United States of the 1970s and 1980s (O’Flynn, 2013). The NPM has spread around the world. NPM which is a separation of government into policy and execution functions is not exceptional. While the process of organisation change differs among countries and services, many studies for innovation in the public sector have considered the transition collectively, i.e. a change from traditional administration to public management (Yamamoto, 1999). The result of this as stated by Samaratunge and Hughes, (2002) has been a shift of emphasis to replace bureaucratic approaches with market forces as much as possible. As observed by Hood (1993) NPM shifts the emphasis from traditional public administration to new public management, pushing the state towards ‘managerialism’. The traditional model of organization and delivery of public services, based on the principles of bureaucratic hierarchy, planning and centralization, direct control and self-sufficiency, is apparently being replaced by a market-based public service management or enterprise culture.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
In this section, attempt will be made to briefly conceptualise Traditional Public Administration also known as Traditional Bureaucracy and New Public Management and to relate public choice theory to NPM as it affect service delivery in the public sector.

In a modern nation-state bureaucracy is the dominant form of organisation in the public sector. It has occupied a significant place in contemporary society. It fulfils many needs of society. Its activities affect social, political, and economic aspects of human life. Most of today’s societies and their governments have come to rely on bureaucracy to carry on administrative tasks (Naidu, 2004). Weber (1946) presented bureaucracy as both a scientific and generic model that can work in both the public and private sectors (Rainey, 1997). Weber’s bureaucracy consisted of the traditional way of thinking in public administration, which relied on the same “ingredients” to reform public administration based on the science of administration (Thompson, 2005).

According to Weber (1946), bureaucracy “is, from a purely technical point of view, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally that most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings”. Bureaucracy is the structure and set of regulations in place to control activity, usually in large organizations and government. It is represented by standardized procedure (rule-following) that dictates the execution of most or all processes within the body, formal division of powers, hierarchy, and relationships.

There is an argument that the concept of NPM has inspired the initiation of many reforms to improve public service delivery (Poladino, 1999). The underlining essence of NPM can be explained by the new trend in public administration to transfer some important insights and values from the private sector to the public arena, values like efficiency, effectiveness, flexibility, responsiveness, competition, result oriented management, more explicit and measurable performance standards, more active control based on preset output indicators, accountability etc. This should improve customer oriented services (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000). Separation of policy and execution functions is an integral part of the New Public Management which has been spreading around the world (Organisation for Economic and Cooperation and Development, 1995).

A key feature of the NPM is the concept of perceiving the citizens as “customer” of public services. It places emphasis on serving individual customer. In the context of public sector reform, efforts to make public service agencies more accountable to the public are have included the adoption of Citizen Charter. Citizen should be consulted about the level and quality of public services and, whenever possible, be given the choices of services (Economic Commission for Africa, 2007). It follows that serving the customer is more important than serving the organisation. This strategy has been the main focus of reforms in Malaysia, Namibia, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

Many theories have provided the theoretical underpinnings of NPM that have helped shape its ideas. Theoretically, the NPM is situated within neo-liberalism advocated by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) where market-led competition with regulated delivery of services is regarded as a panacea for development. The public service is viewed as the institutional, structural, managerial and environmentally influenced mechanism through which the state or governments, by virtue of public trust, administer and delivery services to the citizens (Yasin, 2005). We shall therefore examine service delivery model and public choice theory to explain the shift of emphasis from
traditional bureaucracy to NPM and its influence on improving service delivery in the public sector.

In the service delivery model, citizens participate in decision making processes, replacing the top-down process that characterizes too many governments. The ultimate focus is on effective and efficient delivery of government services. Such a citizen-centric and citizen-focused model will create new roles for citizens thereby replacing “Broadcast” democracy to a more intimate and immediate model. For this to happen, partnership must become a customary mode of operation, which would primarily mean, that there would be a real shift in traditional notions of accountability and governance. This would involve lots of challenges as sharing of power, decision making, and responsibilities are inherently counter-cultural to many government organizations (Mittal, 2004). In addition, O’Toole, and Meier (2012) identified five key areas of public service delivery approach. They are as follows:

- E-government
- E-governance
- E-participation
- E-Commerce
- ICTs

In the past government organisations have paid little attention to service quality or responsiveness to clients but NPM emphasized the partnerships among government, private sector and civil society. However, the growing demand of citizens is a shared phenomenon for government to take on a new method of doing business with its citizens (Hood 2012).

Public choice theory is a string variant of rational choice theory. The theory is concerned with the provision of so-called public goods that are delivered by government rather than the market, because, as with clean air, their benefits cannot be withheld from individuals who choose not to contribute to their provision. It assumes that political society is composed of self-interested individual who coalesce around organised interests (Ayee, 2008). This theory, which was formulated by James M. Buchanan (1919), assumes that civil servants pursue their self-interest rather than that of the public. The central tenet of public choice theory according to Boston, et al (1996) is that man is a rational being, acting or desiring to act autonomously, and seeking to satisfy his personal best interest; in short, homo economicus.

Public choice theorists criticized the Weberian model of bureaucracy as lacking cost effectiveness. It was argued that the growth and role of government and increasing taxation was inefficient and, consequently, pressures emerged to curb the expansion of government and shift towards privatisation to ensure cost effectiveness and efficiency (Hood 1995; Larbi, 2003). They contend that the public sector under-performs because state officials pursue their own narrow self-interests rather than the public interest. They give a case for downsizing of the public sector, contracts for public sector employees and contracting out services and exposure to competition amongst other measures (Hughes, 2003; Larbi, 2003). According to Jordan (1995), public choice is one of the NPM effective weapons. In public administration terms, this would mean that
services have to be targeted or varied (choice), and that the taxpayer would demand value for his money (‘more for less) and accountability (Sowaribi, 2005). Like the individuals in the private sector, civil servants are also rational maximizers of their own self-interest. One of the thrusts of this theory is that the uniform treatment of the citizenry has led to an ever widening bureaucracy as government tries to do everything. Further, in the view of Larbi (1999), adherents of this theory criticise the poor reward system of the public service, which promotes ineffective performance, giving rise to ‘waste of resources and an in-built tendency for expenditure to grow and for delivery to take precedence over productivity’. Since there have been inadequate discipline and control or accountability mechanisms, ‘government agencies oversupply collective goods because of budget maximization behaviour’.

This theory explains why clientelistic practices are rampant and how government policies create opportunities for rent-seeking (Das, 1998). The reform needs were, therefore, diagnosed as the need for efficiency and efficacy, with an automatic discipline mechanism— the market — just like in business. The solution was, consequently, the adoption of business-sector management processes in the public arena.

The importance of public choice theory according to Ayee (2008) include: First, it offers a coherent explanation for seemingly non-rational decision-making by governments. Second, it explains why “the public interest” is not achieved. Third, by focusing on the power of vested interests, it demonstrates the barriers to reform that are created by pre-existing policies, and by the political relationships that they engender. Also, it provides an explanation for the Willingness of public officials to respond to the pressures and imprecations of lobby groups and other types of special interests. In addition, it provide an explanation for policy choices that are detrimental to society as whole in both the short and longer term, and offer a way of understanding the constraints on policy change that develop over time.

TRADITIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT: THE PARADIGM SHIFT

The traditional model of public administration came through the application of private sector based ideas of scientific management to public administration. It introduced efficient operation methods based on standardisation of tasks, regarded as “one best way of fitting workers to tasks, and systematic control of tasks, processes, and workers” (Hughes, 1998). By the late 1970s there was increasing criticism by the Ner Right/Neoliberals of the size, cost and the role of government, and doubt about the capacity of government to rectify economic problems. The Keynesian welfare state was seen as a monopoly provider of services and as fundamentally inefficient. There was also little regard for customers and results (Larbi, 1999). It is the critique of the traditional model of public administration that has produced a reform model usually designated as “New Public Management” (NPM) (Olaopa, 2008). According to Minogue (1997), the traditional public administration was criticised on the following grounds:

First, in many systems, there is no clear separation between policy and administration, either in terms of decision-making process or the perspective roles of administrators and politicians, which are often fused together. Second, decision-making processes do not, in any case, conform to the rules of technical
and economic rationality, but are affected and shaped by processes of conflict, negotiation and exchange between interests, both internal and external, to the state bureaucracy. Third, hierarchy and centralisation combine with a formal, sometimes slavish, adherence to rules and procedures to produce defects (or bureaucratic pathologies) such as delay, inflexibility, unresponsiveness, and an arrogant disregard for the interests and concerns of citizens. Fourth, bureaucracies are characterised by a process of “top-down” implementation which frequently produces inappropriate policies and inadequate results. Lastly, the range of transactions within the modern system of state administration, both internally and with external organisations and interests, is so extensive that this produces a degree of complexity much greater than the model would suggest.

Following the changed role of the state and growing demands for good governance globally, the New Public Management paradigm emerged to implant a new approach into traditional public administration. It was geared toward enhancing efficiency, productivity, improved service delivery and accountability, and emphasizes a result-orientation as opposed to the process-orientation of traditional public administration. It calls for a reduction in the exclusive reliance on public bureaucracy for service delivery and advocates instead the increased use of private sector and non-governmental organisations as alternative mechanisms of service delivery (Dzimbiri, 2008).

NPM suggested empowerment of customers and empowerment of public employees; i.e., customer-driven government that met the needs of the customer, not the bureaucracy. This new emphasis challenged the traditional management and organisation of public services, which according to Steward and Walsh (1992) was built on:

a) The assumption of self-sufficiency — that where a public organisation was responsible for a function, it would normally carry out that function itself, directly employing the staff required to do so. The result has been very large public sector organisation;

b) The assumption of direct control — that control over the activities of a public organisation was best exercised through continuous supervision through an organisational hierarchy;

c) The assumption of uniformity — that where a service was provided it should be provided on a uniform basis within the jurisdiction of the organisation;

d) The assumption of accountability upwards — that the accountability of the public servant to those who received a service was through the political process;

e) The assumption of standardised establishment procedures — that staffing policies required the application of standardised practices throughout the service.

Hence, the NPM call for a new emphasis focusing on decentralisation, flatter hierarchies, funding projects, contracting out, and systems of co-production or public-private partnerships (Richards, 1989). As argued by Hood (1995) the establishment of agencies is part of a paradigm shift in public management, often referred to as New Public Management (NPM), which is
characterised by ideas of “lessening or removing differences between the public and the private sector”.

NPM shifts the emphasis from the traditional public administration to public management. NPM is pushing the state towards managerialism. The traditional model of organisation and delivery of public services, based on the principles of bureaucratic hierarchy: planning, centralisation, direct control and self efficiency, apparently being replaced by a market-based public service management (Walsh, 1995). It is characterized by cutting red-tape shifting from systems in which people are accountable for following rules to system which they are accountable for achieving results; putting customers first; empowering employees to get result, and producing better government for less (Hughes, 2003).

NPM advocates de-bureaucratization, offloading, downsizing or rightsizing of public bureaucracy, greater reliance on the private sector, service delivery through contracting out and outsourcing, public-private partnership, competition and reliance on market forces, the creation of an enabling environment for the growth of private enterprise. It advocates empowering rather than serving, decentralisation, public participation, citizens’ empowerments, innovation and the use of modern information and communication technology (ICT) and e-government (Dzimbiri, 2008). The claim of NPM as noted by Minogue (2000) is to transform traditional administration into a new species of public management, characterised by; a separation of strategic policy from operation management; a concern for result rather than process and procedure; an orientation to the needs of citizens rather than the interests of the organisation or bureaucrats; a withdrawal from direct service provision in favour of a steering or enabling role; and a changed entrepreneurial management culture.

The shift in public management styles consists of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organisations with the objective of getting them to run better (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). The central feature of NPM is the attempt to interest or stimulate, within those section of the public services that are not privatised, the performance incentives and the disciplines that exist in a market environment. The assumption is that there are benefits in terms of efficiency and effectiveness in exposing public sector activities to market pressures and in using markets to serve public purposes, and that government can learn from the private sector despite contextual differences (Metcalfe and Richards, 1990). The NPM as stated by Olaopa (2008) is based on the assumption that large state bureaucracies are inherently defective, and wasteful, and that the market is better equipped than the state to provide most goods and services. According to him, the radical changes needed to introduce a transformed and entrepreneurial model of public management would have to be established by; restructuring and reducing the public sector, particularly through privatisation; re-organising and slimming down the central civil services; introducing competition into remaining public services, especially through internal markets, and the contracting of the provision of public services to the private sector; improving efficiency and obtaining “value for money” through performance management and auditing.

THE CONCEPT OF THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
New Public Management (NPM) ideas and techniques have been introduced in several states in the western world during the 1980s and 1990s (Hood, 1991). The spread of NPM has been investigated by many scholars. In this connection, scholars have focused on the factors influencing innovation. For instance, government accounting researchers have analysed the trend to accrual accounting as a subsystem of NPM (Luder, 1994; Godfrey et al., 1999). In other words, the focus is on either the innovation of government as a whole or on the specific issues of NPM. However, when public sector reforms are analysed collectively, it ignores the important issue that organisational structure and management control system should and actually do differ among services (Ouchi 1980). In addition, the “subsystems” such as financial, personnel and performance systems within NPM are interrelated and may be complementary to one another (Pollitt, 1993). While NPM presumes that organisational performance is able to measure in quantitative terms, it is nevertheless difficult to measure performance of public services. Sometimes they are provided in combination of several activities such as education and research in universities.

The NPM represents the culmination of a revolution in public management that emerged in the 1980s. Rather than focusing on controlling bureaucracies and delivering services, public managers are now responding to the desires of ordinary citizens and politicians to be “the entrepreneurs of a new, leaner, and increasingly privatized government” (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000). The NPM can also be regarded as a normative reconceptualization of public sector management consisting of several inter-related components. It emerged in response to the economic and social realities which governments everywhere have had to face during the past two decades (Borins, 1995). Since the 1980s, the NPM has been entrenched in theory and practice across the world. Many governments and several international organizations have embraced the NPM as the framework or paradigm through which governments are modernized and the public sector re-engineered to “strengthen the connections between government and the mechanisms, both in government and civil society, that are responsible for how well government works” (Armacost, 2000).

New Public Management is a label used to describe a management culture that emphasizes the centrality of the citizen or customer, as well as accountability for results. It is a set of broadly similar administrative doctrines, which dominated the public administration reform agenda of most Organisations for Economic Cooperation and development (OECD) countries from the late 1970s (Hood, 1991). It captures most of the structural, organizational and managerial changes taking place in the public services of these countries, and a bundle of management approaches and techniques borrowed from the private-for-profit sector (Ridley, 1996).

The rise of NPM doctrines is gradually shifting the focus of control in public sector from input and process to performance based control. Several concepts such as management by results or management by numbers represent this new focus of control in public sector (Hood, 2007). This has also been described as a movement in control strategies from ex ante to ex post mechanisms (Kikert, 1995). According to NPM line of thinking, greater efficiency can be achieved in public sector if public managers are given managerial autonomy to allocate resources but only if they are held accountable for results. Tummers (2013) illustrates that NPM perceives weaknesses of traditional practices of administration by criticising the monopolistic forms of service provision. Instead, he refers to a wider range of service providers and some key components such as
involvement of ‘professional management, explicit standards and measures of performance, greater emphasis on output controls, disaggregation of units in the public sector, greater competition in the public sector, private sector style of management practice and greater discipline and parsimony in resource use’.

The NPM concept is centred on the proposition that a distinct activity-management-can be applied to the public sector, as it has been applied in the private sector, and that it includes a number of elements like: the adoption of private sector management practices in the public sector; an emphasis on efficiency; a movement away from input controls, rules, and procedures toward output measurement and performance targets; a preference for private ownership, contestable provision, and contracting out of public services; and the devolution of management control with improved reporting and monitoring mechanisms (Aucoin, 1990; Bale and Dale, 1998).

Hood (1991) in Edwin (2011) has listed NPM main elements from which much of the agencification ideas can be discerned. According to him the key NPM reform elements includes:

- **Hands-on professional management** in the public sector. This means letting the managers to manage. The typical justification for this is that accountability requires clear assignment of responsibility for action.
- **Explicit standards and measures of performance.** This requires goals to be defined and performance targets to be set. This sets out the basis for judging performance.
- **Greater emphasis on output controls.** It reflect the need to stress on results rather than administrative procedures.
- A shift to **disaggregation** of units in the public sector. This involves the breaking up of large entities into ‘corporatised units that are task focused.
- A shift to greater **competition** in the public sector. This involves ‘the move to term contracts and public tendering procedures.
- A stress on greater **discipline** and economy in public sector resource use (culting direct costs, raising labour discipline, limiting compliance costs to business).
- Stress on private-sector styles of management practice/ move away from traditional public service to more flexible pay, hiring, rules, etc) (Edwin and Gbaragaye, 2011).

One of the main elements in New Public Management (NPM) is improving service delivery and emphasizing the citizen as customer. The development of a customer or a user focus in the public sector in order to achieve a more responsive bureaucracy has become an emerging concern in many countries, and indeed the provision of public goods and services has invariably become a critical issue in current reform efforts (Pinto, 1998). Service quality and better customer care attract important support (Ranson and Stewart, 1994; Gaster, 1995). As Holmes and Shand (1995) point out, establishing a service delivery orientation has become a widespread reform target, and an emphasis on customer or user support in the public sector is now part of an overall focus on performance and on achieving a more responsive public sector.
The basic foundation of the NPM is the use of the economic market as a model for political and administrative relationships. NPM is aimed at fostering a performance-oriented culture in a less centralized public sector which according to Mathiasen (1999) is characterized by; a closer focus on results in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of service; the replacement of highly centralized, hierarchical structures by decentralized management environments where decisions on resource allocation and service delivery are made closer to the point of delivery, and which provide scope for feedback from clients and other interest groups; the flexibility to explore alternatives to direct public provision and regulation that might yield more cost-effective policy outcomes; a greater focus on efficiency in the services provided directly by the public sector, involving the establishment of productivity targets and the creation of competitive environments within and among public sector organizations; and the strengthening of strategic capacities at the centre to guide the evolution of the state and allow it to respond to external changes and diverse interests automatically, flexibly, and at least cost.

One of the targets of NPM has been to develop a ‘public service orientation’ focused on the public as clients, with demand-led services responsive to the needs of those being served. “Developing a customer focus requires a major change in mind set in many public-sector organisations, and all the difficulties in staff motivation and organisation this entails” (Holmes and Shand, 1995). The strong focus on NPM ideas and techniques made all other discussions about how to reform and control the state virtually non-existent. The managerial and organizational logic came totally to dominate the discussion.

The key components of NPM may be put into two broad strands — those that emphasize managerial improvement and organizational restructuring, and those that emphasize markets and competition. The basic foundation of the NPM movement is the drive for efficiency and the use of the economic market as a model for political and administrative relationships. In addition, the institutional aspects of NPM derive from the “new institutional economics” movement, which has a theoretical foundation in public choice, transaction cost and principal-agent theories. These generated public sector reforms themes are based on ideas of market, competition, contracting, transparency and emphasis on incentive structures as a way of giving more “choice” and “voice” to service users and promoting efficiency in public service delivery (ECA, 2004).

NPM comprises a range of reforms that most (western) governments have been implementing from the 1980s onwards. Following the NPM-logic, the structural disaggregation of units will improve public sector performance because interference by politicians is reduced. The adoption of new management techniques will make agencies more cost and customer aware, leading to higher efficiency and quality. And finally, agencies and politicians will each be able to focus on their core tasks; respectively, policy execution and policy development (Christensen & Laegreid, 2007; Majone, 2001).

NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA
Many governments have embraced the NPM as the framework or paradigm through which governments are modernized and the public sector re-engineered. Indeed, the NPM offers
important lessons and analyses for public management throughout the world and Nigeria is no exception to the process of implementation of efforts aimed at achieving the outcomes embodied in the said NPM (Hope, 2001).

The success of NPM in Africa is well documented; Olowu (2004) sums up the state of the art as follows:

...the New Public Management ... emerged in the 1980s especially in New Zealand, Australia and Britain and ii4 sister forms in USA... They ‘spread widely, especially in the 1990s, around many OECD countries and from them to lower income countries, not least in Africa, partly through promotion by the international agencies like the World Bank, Commonwealth Secretariat and management consultancy groups. At one stage NPM’s proponents claimed to have intellectually defeated the older public management and to be in the process of replacing it... NPM has done a lot to shake-up sleepy and self-serving public organisations, often by using ideas from the private sector. It provides many options for trying to achieve cost-effective delivery of public goods, like separate organisations for policy and implementation, performance contracts, internal markets, sub-contracting, and much more. But it has been spread somewhat like a religion; it was assumed to be modern, relevant and superior, so there was no need felt to prove that it suits the case concerned; to query this was held to show that you were outdated and reactionary... By now, NPM has much of its gloss, as experience mounts. In New Zealand, in many respects NPM’s furthest frontier, the cost of a too narrow approach to public management have been major and there is considerable backlash.

Nigeria have embarked on reforms that seek to modernize their public sector in order to enhance its efficiency (Samaratunge & Hughes, 2002). Most independent observers agree that public sector organizations in poor African countries, like Nigeria performs badly, even considering the difficult circumstances they operate in. To varying degrees they suffer from a number of well-known bureau-pathologies, inefficiency, centralization, fragmentation, poor leadership, lack of capacity, patrimonialism, rent seeking, corruption, and poor accountability and legitimacy. The need to improve efficiency and accountability is therefore obvious (Ayoade, 1988). This is in their quest to develop economies that will meet the expectations and aspirations of their citizenry.

In recent years like for many countries, there has been demand to undertake NPM reforms from the west through multilateral organizations, donor agencies and effects emanating from globalization (ECA, 2003; Marobela, 2008). As Mkandawire and Soludo (1999) write, the need to reform Nigeria administrative structures to ensure efficiency and reduce the likelihood of corruption is obvious.

Economic Commission for Africa ECA: (2003) notes that Nigerian Public Service have recognized that public sector modernisation is no longer an option, but a necessity to help governments respond to changing societal needs and maintain competitiveness in an ever
changing international environment. As a result, over the last three decades, there have been a number of New Public management (NPM) reform areas that Nigeria have embarked on with varying degrees in application and outcomes (Kiggundu 1998; Hope 2001).

NPM-type reforms have been, and are being, applied to Nigeria civil services because these civil services are seen as unprofessional, often lacking capacity to solve the tough new problems of their governments; too bloated in size in relationship to their outputs; suffering from dysfunctional rigidity; lacking in, and not caring about, measurement of their performance; preoccupied with their own rules and practices rather than promoting, protecting, and serving the public interest; and, generally, being too corrupt and intent on maintaining their own patrimonial and territorial interests.

Although some African governments, such as Nigeria government had, from time to time embarked on civil service reform, for the majority, the efforts became concentrated in comprehensive strategies that were included in the economic liberalization packages of structural adjustment that were facilitated by the World Bank and IMF. The basic thrust of the reform process was, and continues to be, to build a professional, meritocratic, and qualified public workforce to ensure effective and efficient delivery of public services and combat bureaucratic corruption.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It becomes evident and clear that the main vehicle in government is the public service and the bureaucrats who run it. Thus, mobilization and harnessing of this course is very critical. Building critical institutional capacities in Africa for good governance, economic growth and development is therefore a prerequisite. However, NPM policies should be carefully formulated, programmed and implemented, taking into consideration the specific needs, imperatives and circumstances of each country.

Many recent reform programmes, through NPM, aim at ensuring not only the adequate management of machineries of government, but also effective public service delivery through the building and strengthening institutional capacity, and by introducing results-oriented and total quality management techniques.

The new paradigm in the delivery of services in government calls for a business approach to running the affairs of state, and requires the application of marketing and production techniques to the field of public administration. To this effect, mechanisms such as decentralization, privatization and performance management are being adopted with a view to improving the responsiveness of governments to public concerns, improving the quality of public goods and services, increasing the efficiency of service delivery and promoting accountability and ethical values (ECA, 2004). That public service management and delivery in greater part of Africa is lethargic is stating the obvious. Therefore, achieving improved public service delivery in Africa requires going beyond the razzmatazz of traditional formal speeches and clinging of glasses. It requires that the public service which as elsewhere in the world plays a vital and indispensable role in planning and managing the state which they serve moves to the next level with regards to service delivery.
The NPM model gives priority role to management and emphasizes empowerment, entrepreneurship, effectiveness and a dynamic organisational culture modelled on private sector management. To reform the service using the NPM in Africa would require a thorough change in the culture of doing things which could occur simply by changing regulations, structures, processes and technology, but by changing the orientation of public servants through a robust competency-driven, competitive people-centred re-professionalization scheme. The use of different forms of service delivery such as corporation, agency, contracting out, and privatization are part of a NPM paradigm aimed at fostering a performance-oriented culture and a less centralized public sector (Kaul, 1998). However, from the analysis it emerges that the mere introduction of NPM-like organizations may not actually contribute to the success of the reform implementation and improvement of public service delivery unless the underlining requirements of NPM are met. The question remains, how appropriate is the application of NPM to African economies. Advocates of NPM like Hughes (1998) think that a new era in public administration evolved.’ with the advent of NPM. He believes that some machineries of NPM public choice or agency theory will provide explanation for some of the economic and fiscal crises in welfare state. According to Hughes, western countries right wing politicians believe that the state should become minimal in view of its huge scope, size and methods.

This paper has built on Guy Mhone’s procedural rationality, which is aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector institutions in Nigeria. Different countries through the world have experimented with various public sector reforms, such as improved service delivery, participation, human resource development, decentralisation, process reengineering, performance-based reward systems, accounting and budgeting systems, job evaluation and salary reviews, and performance measurement system among others (Dzimbiri, 2008). The application of NPM-type reforms in Nigeria despite their mixed results, has, from the point of view of this author, been mostly successful. Agreeably, there still exists such thing as extensive bureaucratic corruption, for example. Over the next few years, and assuming no policy reversals, there will be even further gains recorded as a result of the application of the second phase of NPM-type reforms. Consequently, the conclusion here is that there is an improving performance of the state in Nigeria which, in no small measure, is attributable to NPM-type reforms.

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