

*Which Way Forward? The New Public  
Sector Reform Agenda in Ghana: Path  
Destruction, Path Creation or Path  
Dependence*

*Paper Presented by*

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*Public Finance and Public Management in Africa Workshop*

*GIMPA, Accra*

*October 22-24 2018*

# Outline

- Aims of the Paper
- Path Destruction, Path Creation, Path Dependency
- Lessons from Past Reforms
- Review of the National Public Sector Reform Strategy
- Way Forward

# Some Issues - Ghana's Public Sector

- Poor institutional capacity of the various MDAs to formulate and implement policies for enhanced service delivery to citizens;
- Inadequate support from central agencies;
- Limited coordination between sector MDAs
- Weak organizational drive for performance
- Weak human capacity
- The absence of a results culture and capacity for monitoring at the upstream (center of government) level. (World Bank, 2018; GOG 2015; Ayee 2002)

# *Introduction & Research Questions*

- Why has it become difficult for government to effectively develop and implement a PSR agenda to revamp a public service that was deemed the best in Africa at the time of independence?
- Will this new agenda lead to a new path creation for the public sector in Ghana?
- In short, is it 'eureka' or just new wine in old bottle skin?

# *Aims of the Paper*

- To establish if the NPSRS seeks to:
  - ◆ destroy the path that the previous government attempted to establish; or
  - ◆ Simply a new way of creating a new path that subsequent administrations can follow; or
  - ◆ path dependency with incremental tweaking for which the government is following.

# ***Path Destruction***

- In Path destruction, attempts are made to erase traces of the previous path, which will then lead to the creation of a new path (Herring, 2003).
- Policy actors do not attempt to build on anything from the past but introduce new sets of ideas and new instruments to undertake a new venture or create a new institution.
- ‘Creative destruction’ – new combinations of existing resources’. Destruction is not about the eradication of the bureaucratic institution but about altering the structure to make it work better (Pfarrer & Smith, 2015; Schumpeter, 1942)

# *Path Creation*

- New institutions must be created due to societal dynamisms, which makes it difficult for one to follow an established path (Garud, 2001).
- Challenges the assumption of path dependency and provides an alternative for the development and creation of new institutions that then sets its own path subsequently.
- In PC, actors mobilize the past not necessarily to repeat or avoid what happened, but, instead, to generate new options

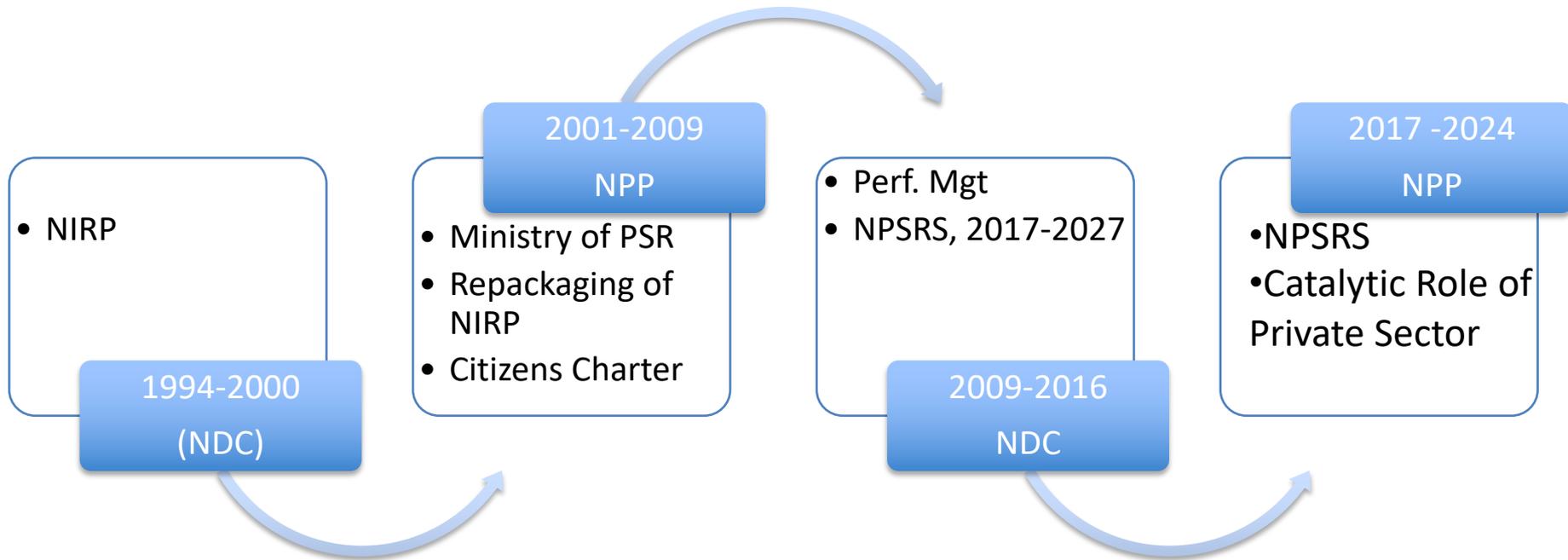
# *Path Dependency*

- History matters if one is to understand change and if one is to embark upon any successful change in the future (David 1985).
- PD characterizes historical sequences in which contingent events set institutional patterns with deterministic properties into motion (Djelic and Quack, 2007)
- New paths are not created in a vacuum isolated from existing paths (Hanseth, 2000) .

# Lessons from Past Reforms

- Lack of continuity in the implementation of public sector reforms
- Past reform initiatives had minimal linkage and integration with the planning and budgeting frameworks.
- Widespread apathy, resistance to change, indifferent attitude of public servants and the citizenry

# *PSR in the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic*



# ***The New Public Sector Reform Strategy in Perspective – 6 PILLARS***

**Citizens and private sector-focused public sector**

**A strengthened public sector regulatory framework**

**A capable and disciplined work force;**

**Modernized and improved work conditions;**

**Strengthened local governance structures;**

**Digitized public sector services and systems**

# *Analyzing the NPSRS*

- The agenda is neither a path destruction nor path creation but path dependence.
- A rehash of the old ways of doing things.
- The agenda should move beyond the traditional identification of previous problems and look at the core problems affecting the public sector.

# ***Fundamental Issues***

The reform does not tackle the fundamental problems, such as:

- bureaucratic insulation from political interference
- Create an embedded autonomy
- Address the principles of merit and the merit system,.

# ***What Needs to be Done in Public Sector Reforms***

- The various previous reforms, similar to this one, failed to identify the need to ‘bureaucratize enough’ the public service.
- The bureaucracy is over-politicized and its affecting professionalism
- The need to insulate the bureaucracy, which will lead to the creation of an embedded autonomous bureaucracy, which will enable bureaucrats work independently and effectively.
- The merit system- A careful look at rebuilding the bureaucracy through the merit system

# *Conclusion*

- PSR is path dependency, as it is ongoing
- However, if a path is not working, there is the need to create a new path, which then sets its own path dependence trajectories.
- This reform pads up the old reform path, which has not been working
- Thus, there is the need to disturb the existing path and create a new one for subsequent reforms

# ***The End of Presentation***

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