Factors important to the establishment, renewal or rehabilitation of the civil service

Rapid literature review
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1. Overview

The terms ‘civil service’ and ‘civil servant’ are mired in ambiguity; there is no universal agreement about what constitutes ‘the’ civil service or who ‘a’ civil servant is. The civil service is highlighted as the machinery that governments rely on to design, formulate and implement its policies, strategies and programmes and to discharge the routine functions of state. Weber’s definition of an ‘ideal’ type of bureaucracy is pervasive, and deviance from this model tends to be characterised as failure. Domestic and donor efforts to improve the quality of governance have often sought to reproduce the formal structures of governance found in developed countries. These efforts have largely ignored the importance of bureaucratic heritage and the multidimensional nature of administrative traditions influenced by geography, history and culture.

This rapid literature review seeks to place the emergence of the civil service within its historical context, and highlight the role it has played in state-building. The civil service has helped the state to penetrate peripheral territories, standardise physical and psychological space, and accommodate competing sources of power.

The review notes the expansion of the administrative role of the state, and its role in enabling governments to implement policies and programmes. This is a key dimension of development and central to the functioning of effective states.

There is a growing consensus that to be effective, civil service reform programmes need to move away from an international ‘best practice’ model towards ‘best fit’. Programmes need to be informed by a strong understanding of the complex socio-economic and political realities of the countries in which they are taking place. However, many analyses and reform programmes have failed to pay sufficient attention to colonial legacies and the socio-historical heritage of administrative structures.

Far from seeing the result of this as pure imitation, this historical experience has its own logic culminating in the adaptation of imported structures of European models of bureaucracy during colonisation. The adaptation and reconfiguration of these structures is context-specific and driven by tensions between the importing culture, the imported model and the recipient state. The concept of ‘hybrid political orders’ indicates how some states have combined formal Weberian state institutions with more ‘traditional’ ones. This has helped promote more effective state–society relations, and facilitated the incorporation of peripheral regions into the state.

Findings from a number of case studies highlight the following success factors in the establishment, renewal or rehabilitation of a civil service:

- an understanding of the historical context and bureaucratic heritage;
- recognition of the role informal institutions can play in developing an emerging civil service, and acknowledgement that hybridity is not failure;
- incremental reforms targeting marginal gains and supporting continuous improvements such as developing the capacities of civil servants;
- a focus on the development of bridging structures (the ‘missing middle’) that manage tensions and foster dialogue between the ‘formal centre’ and ‘informal periphery’, particularly in regions where the state may be contested.
2. Defining the civil service

The terms ‘civil service’ and ‘civil servant’ are mired in ambiguity; there is no universal agreement about what constitutes ‘the’ civil service or who ‘a’ civil servant is. Commentators commonly define the modern civil service as a subset of persons employed to provide a public service (Evans 2008; Girishankar et al. 1999; McCourt and Sola, 1999). However, they disagree on two aspects (Rao, 2013):

- which public service employees are considered civil servants;
- the contractual, legal and managerial arrangements under which civil servants are employed.

Attempts to arrive at a universal definition of the civil service are complicated by the myriad forms that it can take and the diverse range of public service employees that can be included.

In this report, the civil service is defined as the permanent administrative arm of government. That includes officials working in government ministries, departments and agencies: personnel who advise on, develop and implement government policies and programmes and manage day-to-day activities. Some authors extend this definition to include the wider public service, such as the military, police, teachers, health workers and public enterprises, but the ‘core’ civil service outlined above is the focus of this report (Stevens, 1994; Rao, 2013: 15).

The primacy of the Weberian model

Weber’s conceptualisation of a hierarchically organised civil service has influenced many aspects of modern bureaucracies. Minogue (2001) identifies the main features of the Weberian model as:

- a separation between politics and elected politicians on the one hand and administration and appointed administrators on the other;
- continuous, predictable and rule-governed administration;
- administrators who are trained professionals, appointed on the basis of qualifications;
- a functional division of labour and a hierarchy of tasks and people;
- resources that belong to the organisation, not to the individuals who work in it;
- public servants who serve public rather than private interests.

For Weber, a bureaucracy was not a generic collection of state officials but an organisational structure. This conceptualisation suggests that a bureaucracy is essential for modern societies, and constitutes the most rational way to organise human activity, maintain order, maximise efficiency and eliminate nepotism (Antler, 2014). Weber contrasted ‘traditional’ modes of authority, such as patrimonial forms of association, with modern state institutions that would be increasingly based on rational-legal authority with legitimacy emanating from a legal order and the laws enacted therein (Antler, 2014).

This ‘ideal’ type of bureaucracy has become a dominant concept, championed by organisations such as the World Bank, OECD and IMF. The civil services of most OECD member countries and some developing countries are viewed as broadly conforming to the Weberian model (Silberman, 1993; Bekke et al., 1996).

A number of authors have challenged the primacy of the Weberian model, and have criticised the way it has been exported to developing countries without attention to each context (Woodward, 2006; Brown 2002). Evans and Rauch (1999) note how deviation from this model has often been viewed as indicative of failure.
Origins of European civil services

Weber lists several pre-conditions for the emergence of modern bureaucracies: population growth, complex administrative tasks, and a monetary economy requiring a more efficient administrative system. Rising levels of education may be added to this list.

The term ‘civil service’ was first used in designating the British administration of India and linked to the establishment of the East India Company College to train and examine administrators of the Company’s territories. The college and its examinations for the Indian civil service were heavily influenced by the meritocratic principles underlying the examination system of imperial China, which had been praised by individuals such as Thomas Meadows (Britain’s consul in Guangzhou, China).

More broadly, the origins of the ‘modern’ civil service have been traced back to the state and nation-building processes taking place across Europe and America between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, which involved the development of modern bureaucracies (Tilly, 1975; Longo, 2001). According to Raadschelders and Rutgers (1996: 67-68) the first civil service arrangements were closely associated with the decline of feudalism and the growth of nation states. The civil service is seen as having evolved in most developed countries gradually in tandem with their political development and the requirements of state- and nation-building.

Box 1: The military, taxation and the development of bureaucracies

The establishment of government bureaucracies and civil services is primarily a ‘political’ process related to the expansion of state power, and is often focussed on those areas that political leaders deem important. In particular, bureaucratic organisation is required as state power is extended into diverse areas of society and the state takes on a larger role.

In Europe, modern bureaucracies expanded in conjunction with the rise of the state and the emergence of state military forces. Given the often tenuous nature of central power and the many countervailing sources of authority, states invested heavily in the establishment and maintenance of military force that would buttress authority and solidify the state’s monopoly over the use of violence.

In France and Prussia, early state bureaucracies grew partly to provide training, supervision and logistical support for a military force. As militaries expanded, areas under state control were taxed to help meet the expanding costs. This in turn required the employment, training and deployment of tax collectors, and the development of administrative systems for monitoring tax collection.

Van de Walle and Scott (2009: 13), drawing on Rokkan (1975), suggest that the civil service was developed and adapted as a means for the state to pursue the goals of penetration (territorial consolidation and the integration of peripheries), standardisation (increased predictability of the rules and bureaucratic expression of the state) and accommodation (including pacification, buying loyalty and power-brokering). The civil service played an integral part in both the consolidation of states and, subsequently, the psychological integration of elements of states into nations (Midgal 2001).
Processes of penetration

In his discussion of ‘state-making’ Tilly (1992: 54; 1999: 181) refers to a coercive process of penetration as internal rivals are attacked, eliminated and neutralised. This process of penetration requires the state to supersede or control alternative sources of authority that are, or could become, challenges to its supremacy. The use of the terms ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ in state- and nation-building literature is of particular importance as it denotes a relationship of subordination of the periphery to the centre (Gottmann, 1980: 17). Jacoby (1973: 175) and Grindle (2010) highlight the role of merit-based bureaucracies in curtailing the power and privileges of other dominant groups, particularly those based on patrimonial principles.

Box 2: The civil service, state building and identity

Civil services have historically played a pivotal role in the development a sense of belonging to state and nation. Anderson (1983) conceptualises nations as socially constructed communities, imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of a cohesive group. Anderson’s (1983) notion of imagined communities implies that the process of nation-building involves the establishment of a legitimate ‘us’ versus an illegitimate ‘other’.

The European state and nation-building projects were accompanied by explicit attempts to construct, standardise and institutionalise particular ‘national’ identities, often via the enforced primacy of certain ethno-linguistic markers (for example French language laws from the 1800s onwards). Official acts and policies together with census categorisations have been central to the institutionalisation of particular conceptualisations of national identity. The census, for example, has been far from a passive register of social facts: it has also been a tool for managing tensions. The civil service has helped establish symbols of national identity, whether via the development of national education systems (including the establishment of a language of education or curricula content), the delivery of services (both the mechanisms of delivery and assessment criteria), or the development of narratives of national belonging (such as public holidays and commemorative events).

For Butler (1999), identities are constructed and enacted into existence. They depend on the construction of meaning through the selection of insignia of belonging, alongside shared action and experience. Nationhood is actively constructed through, for example, the re-telling of narratives of belonging, the celebration of events and the development of symbols of us and them. Alternative sources of identity such as ‘traditional’ leaders may be included in the state- and nation-building project or overridden. In Mozambique, for example, ‘traditional’ leaders were recognised and granted the dual role of assisting the state whilst representing rural communities. Since 2002, chiefs have been formally recognised as legitimate rural community authorities and delegated extensive administrative tasks (such as tax collection, judicial enforcement, policing, registration and census, land allocation and rural development) as well as civic-educative functions (fostering a patriotic spirit, basic hygiene, legal awareness). They support the state and are viewed as representatives of an authentic Mozambique state authority (Kyed and Buur, 2006). This is a two-way process: the state and ‘traditional’ leaders legitimise each other, to mutual benefit.

Processes of standardisation

The processes of standardisation are of particular importance as they contribute to the creation of a common culture and the development of similar and identifiable bureaucracies and public services (Van de Walle and Scott, 2009: 11). This is accomplished through the adoption and enforcement of common administrative procedures – for example, the use of identification documents (Torpey, 2000) and the
development of statistical systems for the classification of citizens, groups and territories (Scott, 1998). These processes attempt to establish the state as the dominant source of authority and involve the suppression of alternative autonomous power centres or identities (Migdal, 2001; Wang, 2003; Van de Walle and Scott, 2009).

**Processes of accommodation**

The final process discussed by Rokkan (1975) is that of accommodation, in which the state and nation co-opts powerful elements, such as by appointing them to positions in the state bureaucracy. It offers one means of “binding critical elements of the population to the state” and acts as a safeguard against the development of competing centres of power (Migdal, 2001: 75-77). This process is particularly relevant to the emergence of hybrid regimes.

Rokkan’s (1975) analysis demonstrates that the origins of modern bureaucracies and the emerging civil service was not apolitical, but was directly related to the establishment of a monopoly of authority and the management of countervailing sources of power.

**Organisational principles of the civil service**

The principles of merit, competence, continuity, political insulation and accountability underpin civil service structures in many OECD countries where the Weberian model is considered the norm (Silberman, 1993; Bekke et al., 1996).

Evans (2008: 4-5) summarises the logic of these principles:

- A merit-based system ensures that civil servants are appointed by a public authority according to merit. Once appointed, civil servants are granted job security.
- Job security promotes political neutrality, ensures continuity of programme administration, and protects employees from patronage and arbitrary political actions.
- Merit, competence, continuity and political insulation grants considerable power to civil servants. Standardised rules and enforcement procedures define civil servants’ function and circumscribe their discretion, to uphold the legality and propriety of administrative action and to ensure accountability.

Schick (1998) identifies a number of pre-conditions that must be in place for the model to produce the results Weber anticipated. These include a culture in which rules are followed, rather than undermined by patronage.

**Organisational structures of the civil service**

The structure of civil service systems derives from the nature of state – federal, unitary, confederal or *sui generis*. Silberman’s study of the rise of the rational state (1993: 4) defines office-holding as a matter of public law, and the office-holder as accountable to formal rules “rather than to the informal and unregulated rules governing patron-client relations”. In the academic literature there is agreement that the basic model described above has been institutionalised to some degree in civil service law and other regulations that define the main components of a civil service – the personnel included, employment conditions and management systems (Bekke et al., 1996).
In the table below Painters and Peters (2010: 19-30) provide a useful, if incomplete, overview of groups of countries sharing some common administrative features. This highlights the importance of bureaucratic heritage and the influence of geography, history and culture on civil service formation.

**Figure 1: Administrative traditions in comparative perspective**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-American</td>
<td>The Anglo-American tradition of public administration is concerned with management and policy, not the law. Despite the absence of a separate constitutional status for the civil service, a doctrine evolved advocating the separation of politics from an 'expert' and 'neutral' administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napoleonic</td>
<td>Closely bound to the law with a complex hierarchy of constitutional laws, statutes, regulations, administrative notes and circulars defining the scope and content of administrative action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germanic (Rechtsstaat)</td>
<td>An example of a statist view of governance with a body of public law governing the administrative sphere, where legal training is a prerequisite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavian</td>
<td>This model combines Napoleonic features with Germanic traditions and a strong state-welfare orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin American</td>
<td>Latin American countries have been influenced by Spanish and Portuguese conquest. Following independence, elites looked to replicate elements of a unitary Napoleonic state. A type of bureaucratic rule evolved combining legalism and formalism and the selective dispensation of ‘personal’ favours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postcolonial South Asian and African</td>
<td>Influenced by models from nineteenth century European colonialism and the adaptation of local institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asian</td>
<td>Varied administrative legacies are the product of a complex process of layering local traditions and imported foreign models (influenced by modernisation and development).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soviet</td>
<td>A combination of one-party rule with a unitary bureaucratic state. In some post-communist European states this tradition has collapsed, and in some institutions overlap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic</td>
<td>To the extent that there is a common Islamic tradition, it stresses a hierarchical, centralised state, with bureaucracy often central to political rule.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Painter and Peters (2010: 19-30)*
The importance of the civil service

There is a burgeoning interest in the role of state institutions as determinants of development and democracy (Evans et al. 1999; North, 1990). Effective institutions are seen as prerequisites for building a functioning and stable democracy (Wang, 2003). Rodrik, Subramanian and Trebbi (2004) argue that institutional factors are a key determinant in cross-country differences in development. A variant on the theme of ‘bureaucratic quality’ is prominent in a range of seminal studies (Mauro, 1995; Knack and Keefer, 1995; Della Porta et al., 1999). Evans and Rauch (1999) have contributed to this discussion by assembling data on the ‘Weberian-ness’ of bureaucratic structures in 35 countries. They explore three dimensions: meritocratic recruitment, internal promotion and long careers, and competitive salaries. They find a significant correlation between meritocratic recruitment and good scores on several bureaucratic quality indices.

Pritchett, Woolcock and Andrews, 2010) identify the expanding administrative capability of the state as a key dimension of development. The civil service is the machinery that governments rely on to design, formulate and implement its policies, strategies and programmes. They argue that good government is often synonymous with an efficient and effective civil service, where such a service promotes an enabling environment for social, political and economic development.

Schiavo-Campo and Sundaram (2001) outline six reasons for the importance of the civil service:

- **Governance**: A necessary, but not sufficient, condition for good governance is a skilled, motivated and efficient civil service with a professional ethos. An ineffective or inefficient civil service is sufficient to produce bad governance.

- **Public goods and services**: Access to public services and their quantity and quality largely depend on the skills and motivation of the civil servants who provide or oversee the services.

- **Economic policy improvements**: The implementation of some reforms in this area depends particularly on competent and motivated civil servants.

- **Management of public expenditure and revenue**: The civil service is critical for the responsible management of public expenditure and revenues. This requires the provision of sustainable employment opportunities for competent and motivated personnel.

- **Fiscal sustainability**: The civil service can help maintain the sustainability of public finances. A well-chosen combination of measures affecting the number of employees and their salaries can improve the effectiveness of the government apparatus, while also reducing its cost.

- **Institutional development**: This is a move from a less efficient to a more efficient set of rules and incentives. An example could be better implementation of regulatory frameworks: a skilled and motivated civil service can work with external organisations to help them better interact with the relevant regulatory frameworks and entrench better ways of working.

The Brinkerhoffs (2002; 2005) have emphasised the importance of public institutions, including the core administrative arm of government, in contexts of state fragility. They argue that rebuilding and creating governance is a key step toward stabilisation, reconstruction and ultimately the transition to socio-economic recovery and growth (2002).

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1 A parallel argument is made with regards to Human Resource Management (HRM) and its impact on organisational performance (McCourt, 2006).
3. Colonial and post-colonial influences on civil services

It is widely acknowledged that context matters (Leftwich, 2011; Rocha Menocal, 2014; Fritz et al., 2014). Political economists advocate the grounding of development interventions within an understanding of the prevailing political and economic processes of society – the incentives, relationships, distribution, and contestation of power between different groups and individuals (Mcloughlin, 2014). However, there has been reluctance, if not a failure, to engage with the historical origins of the modern civil service, and the bureaucratic heritage of administrative regimes inherited by many developing countries in the wake of colonialism.

Colonial legacy

Experiences of colonialism have had a profound influence on the evolution of public administrations and emerging civil services in developing countries. The consequences of colonialism, decolonisation and state formation have included (Unsworth, 2007):

- a weak sense of political community or national identity
- weak state legitimacy
- a dominant political elite and exclusion of certain groups
- language barriers
- political divisions
- a lack of broadly based interest groups that could challenge the private use of public power.

Whilst there are socio-historical variations regarding the origin of colonial rule (French, British etc.), the nature of this rule (direct or indirect), and pre-existing bureaucratic structures and customary forms of legal or administrative control, it is the experience of 19th century colonialism and how this produced unique manifestations that is of interest.

The resilience of public institutions in Africa and South Asia has been markedly different. The literature attributes this to the nature of colonial rule, the existence of pre-colonial bureaucracies and the interaction with local, often informal, institutions. Lange (2005) shows that ‘direct rule’ colonies, which relied less on customary law, tended to fare better in the post-independence era because of their more systematically imposed and ‘modern’ set of institutions.

In many African countries there were few, if any, precolonial state institutions. Instead, a mosaic of non-state traditions deeply affected the way colonial and post-colonial states operated (Hyden, 2010). In contrast, in South Asia the colonising power adapted pre-existing bureaucratic structures. In India, for example, the Zamindari system developed by the Mughals used locally appointed district officials for revenue collection, and this was co-opted and adapted by the British for their own needs (Bjorkman, 2003).

Despite significant differences, in both instances the formation of colonial states’ administrative apparatus interacted with pre-existing institutional features. These features, rather than being static, were significantly influenced by colonial power structures. As Painters and Peters (2010) illustrate, the development of administrative systems by the colonial powers has been influenced by experiences of adaptation to local institutions and inheritances derived from European systems of rule. Further, Hyden (2010) demonstrates that institutions are themselves products of underlying social forces and structures, and that analysing their origins can help in understanding how they can be reformed, renewed or
rehabilitated. He contrasts this approach with New Public Management reforms that focus on technical or managerial issues, ignoring historical heritage.

**Post-colonial evolution and adaption**

Decolonisation has involved various groups competing for pre-eminence in state- and nation-building. Co-opted ‘traditional’ elites, usually grounded in regional hierarchies, competed for influence with western-educated and urban-based anti-colonialist elites and ethnic nationalists (Duffer and Frey, 2011: 3). Anti-colonial movements represented a diverse range of interests, united only by their common goal of independence. What form independence should take and how power would be geographically demarcated was open to question.

Decolonisation often involved the adoption of European models of governance. In the decades following the Second World War a host of independent ‘nation states’ came into being. Both the political elites of the new states and the international community welcomed this newly achieved statehood, conflating declarations of independence with state formation. Critically, many of these new states had no history of pre-colonial unitary rule or tradition of national identification (Boege et al., 2008: 5), and few shared a common language and culture. Moreover, most colonies had been ruled in an authoritarian manner with little preparation for sustainable statehood.

‘Traditional’ leaders were often discredited in the post-independence era because they had been co-opted to prop up colonial rule. Post-colonial political elites attempted to portray them as anachronistic and reactionary forces of the past. The transplantation of European state institutions was often not accompanied by the development of the economic, political, social and cultural structures and capacities that had provided the basis for a functioning political order in Europe. The re-emergence of ‘traditional’ elites in some post-colonial countries is indicative of their continued influence in the absence of a robust centre.

Given the ethno-linguistic heterogeneity of many post-colonial states, there is much discussion of the role federal arrangements can play in managing diversity and mitigating centrifugal tendencies. Proponents draw attention to the success of Canada, Switzerland, and more contentiously India, in managing ethnic diversity. Critics highlight the failure of multinational federalism in post-communist Eastern Europe. The Nigerian federation has managed to sustain itself whilst experiencing civil war and sporadic military dictatorship. The literature suggests there is some correlation between institutional design and the ethnic violence in these diverse societies. Federalism has been regarded as a viable solution for multi-ethnic societies to guarantee power-sharing and political accommodation. Federations, however, vary in form (governance, institutional design) and function. The experience of African federations, namely Nigeria and South Africa, suggests that states can respond to the challenges of ethnic diversity without institutionalising ethnic divisions. Here a pragmatic approach to the territorial division of power has been accompanied by a degree of commitment to the rule of law and human rights.

The Indian experience of federalism is equally pertinent, described by Stepan (1999) as a ‘holding together’ federation, not a ‘coming together’ federation. Varshney (2013) suggests that nation-states tend to remove or deny ethnic or cultural diversity. In contrast, Varshney (2013: 46) develops the concept of the state-nation whose policies work on two levels: creation of a sense of belonging to the wider political community (in this case, India), while simultaneously putting in place institutional guarantees for safeguarding politically sanctioned diversities, such as language, religion and cultural norms. He notes that in India, institutions (including the civil service) have played a role in generating a sense of loyalty to India. Indian Administrative Service officers, for example, are part of both central and state
Factors important to the establishment, renewal or rehabilitation of the civil service administration, selected by Delhi but assigned to a state cadre. Their incentives are structured in such a way that whilst they represent state interests, they maintain a sense of commitment to Delhi. This discussion of the ‘success’ of Indian federalism should be tempered by an analysis of protracted secessionist movements in India’s periphery. Similarly, tensions between majority and minority communities in many states persist, and identity has been used to secure access to social, political and economic resources.

External influences

Myrdal (1972) attributes the weakness of state structures in the postcolonial period to their external origins. As Kaplan (2009) argues, the state in much of Africa is artificial, suspended above a society that would never have produced it and did not demand it. These artificial structures were not designed to support the economic development of the colonised territories. The European Report on Development (2009: 50) highlights the following legacies of the formation of state institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa:

- **Artificial character**: colonial states were unrelated to the social, institutional and cultural characteristics of the colonised territories.
- **Extractive nature**: the structure of state institutions was designed to transfer resources to the colonial power, not to foster local development.
- **Inherent extraversion**: the state was politically and economically linked with the colonial power.
- **Indirect rule**: a system of colonial administration initiated in the British Empire, and also used in Belgian and French colonies.

As Badie (2000) asserts in his analysis of imported bureaucratic regimes, the contemporary administrative structures of ex-colonial African and Asian states have been heavily influenced by colonialism and European models. This adaptation and subsequent elaboration is context specific and driven by tensions between the importing culture, the imported model and the recipient state.

Hybridity, ungoverned spaces and bureaucratic heritage

Transplanted colonial administrations interacted with pre-existing institutional features (formal and informal), which encouraged the reinterpretation of both. Hybrid political orders developed that relied on ‘local/traditional’ institutions to extend the power of the state into regions where this was often absent, limited or contested.

Customary law, societal structures (extended families, clans, tribes, religious brotherhoods, village communities etc.) and ‘traditional’ authorities (such as village elders, headmen, clan chiefs, healers, religious leaders) have proved profoundly adaptive and resilient to the incursion of colonial rule and post-independence state- and nation-building projects (Anten, 2009). These structures have, and continue to, determine the everyday social reality in many developing countries, particularly in rural and remote areas. Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2004) argue that African populations in localised ‘ungoverned’ spaces are able to cope with the problems of weak statehood. As Scheye (2009) comments, in his study of the delivery of state services, local, or ‘traditional’ non-state institutions often have greater legitimacy and effectiveness. This is not to idealise them, but to acknowledge that colonisation, decolonisation and state-building have been led by elites, whilst the experiences of the majority continue to depend on local institutions.

Boege et al. (2008), in their critical review of state-building literature, introduce the concept of ‘hybrid political orders’ to indicate how some states combine formal Weberian state institutions with more
‘traditional’ ones. They argue that these hybrid models may be one means of providing a legitimate, effective and resilient political order. Statelessness in these contexts does not mean anarchy, nor does it imply absence of governance and institutional structures.

The literature suggests that, in certain contexts, one way to make state institutions work is by using kin-based and other ‘traditional’ networks (Boege, 2011). In these instances, the state’s ‘outposts’ are mediated by informal institutions, which follow their own logic and rules within broad state structures. Governments have come to rely on the strength of ‘traditional’ authority in the face of weak state institutions, and have increasingly sought to incorporate rather than to suppress it (Kyed and Buur, 2006). In a number of African states (Namibia, South Africa, Ghana, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Cameroon), legislation, has “(re)incorporated traditional leaders officially into state hierarchies in recognition of their ongoing influence as local players” (Kyed and Buur 2006, 2). Whilst at times this may be performative, it is also pragmatic and can contribute to a resurgence of customary rule, albeit in different forms and with new functions.

Buur and Kyed (2006: 847) argue that portraying ‘traditional’ authority as either a ‘genuine’ African form legitimised by ‘traditional’ beliefs and practices, or as a form of power ‘corrupted’ by colonial rule, is an inadequate explanation of the current situation.

Politics and neo-patrimonialism

Contrasting experiences of colonialism and post-colonialism have led academics to explore factors that explain the divergence between Africa’s patrimonial or neo-patrimonial political culture and South Asia, where the ‘developmental state’ model has been adopted (Leftwich, 1994; Anten, 2009; Painter & Peters, 2010). Africa’s vast territories and generally low population densities have been seen to pose a challenge to the establishment of central authority (Herbst, 2000). Similarly, the scope of public bureaucracy has also been seen to be uneven – often focusing on cash crops or mineral extraction, which rulers exploit to maintain their power (Boone 2003; Reno, 1995).

The literature suggests the African political context is characterised by patronage, and “neo-patrimonial elites living off the economic ‘rent’ extracted from import/export taxes on minerals and primary commodities” (Crook, 2010: 488). It is suggested that “there is little or no political constituency for reforming the public services to make them more effective and efficient” (Crook, 2010: 488). The most extreme views suggest that there is no escape from a patrimonial logic and that political elites have an interest in perpetuating the existence of a parallel, informal, or ‘shadow’ state (Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Bayart et al. 1999; Reno, 1998). Such states have their own rules of personal loyalty and redistribution based on the appropriation of public resources. The parallel state operates within a formally legal-bureaucratic system, but undermines it. Explanations of public service reform failure are often based on the claim that this is the way ‘Africa works’ (Chabal and Daloz, 1999). This leads to the deviation of state institutions from the Weberian type that is often characterised as failure (Boege, 2011).

Reno’s (2000: 458) notion of ‘shadow states’ reflects contexts in which corruption is central to political control. Here, corruption is defined as “behaviour on the part of political authorities in contravention of notions of reciprocity or obligation”. Reno (2000) defines the core features of a ‘shadow state’ as a form of personal rule where decisions and actions are taken by an individual ruler and do not conform to a set of written laws and procedures. ‘Shadow state’ rulers manipulate access to both formal and clandestine markets by exploiting global recognition of sovereignty and are thereby able to undermine formal government institutions. Central to the establishment of a ‘shadow state’ is the systematic weakening of
bureaucratic structures and manipulation of markets in order to enrich those in power and/or control others.

This kind of a structure is more common in contexts where the authority of the state is tenuous, often lacking a sustained mandate of popular or elite support. In such contexts rulers are more likely to turn to ‘shadow state’ strategies, acknowledging that short-term challenges to their power outweigh the benefits of appealing to popular support or of investing in the delivery of public services. The civil service is undermined to ensure that it cannot function as a balance to the excess of shadow state leadership. The ‘shadow state’ is a precarious balancing act, which necessitates a policy of divide and rule to ensure that no group acquires the power or resources to contest central authority. Reno’s (2000: 442) view of the ‘shadow state’ as a “matter of degree” rather than an “all or nothing” phenomenon suggests that a ‘shadow state’ need not lead to state collapse. Funke and Solomon (2002) assert that civil society, particularly associational forms including cultural organisations and township groupings, can facilitate a gradual transition from ‘shadow state’ to a more accountable government. As ‘shadow states’ tend to focus on the maintenance of authority, the functioning of the informal sector is often left to either ‘traditional’ institutions, structures or civil society organisations. As has been seen to be the case in Somaliland and Bougainville, one means of supporting the re-establishment of a functioning bureaucratic system may be via support to informal institutions that have filled the void left by absentee state authorities.

A more moderate view suggests that rent-seeking politicians can be interested in developing a competent and effective state (Van de Walle, 2001). Sandbrook (1985) notes that African presidents can and have played a positive role, while Engelbert (2000) recognises that neo-patrimonial African states vary in their effectiveness. As Crook (2010: 489) suggests, the neo-patrimonial argument cannot explain, for example, why ‘developmental patrimonialism’ succeeded in Cote d’Ivoire under Houphouet-Boigny or why Botswana is a successful state whilst others such as Sudan, Eritrea and Burundi are not.

To explain this divergence, Medard (2000) has developed a model of the degree to which ‘neo-patrimonial’ regimes differ in their types of regulation, from most redistributive to most predatory. Engelbert (2000) goes further in developing a typology of the variations in the effectiveness of neo-patrimonial African states, based on the degree to which they have inherited pre-colonial authority structures. However, as Kelsall and Booth (2010) note, his model fails to offer a plausible escape route from the more detrimental effects of neo-patrimonialism. They develop a model based on variations along two dimensions: the degree to which rents are centrally controlled, and the degree to which rents are invested for long-term as opposed to short-term gains (Kelsall & Booth, 2010).

**Beyond the negative rhetoric of neo-patrimonialism**

Crook (2010) makes three observations: (1) patronage can be used constructively or destructively; (2) neo-patrimonialism cannot explain all that is wrong in African politics and administration; and (3) political and social forces, particularly citizen activism and mobilisation, can counter patrimonialism, albeit slowly. She comments, “if all African states are ‘neo-patrimonial’ and therefore subject to the same systematically destructive logic, then how can one explain why some African states have done better than others?” (Crook, 2010: 489).

States can function in a number of ways and need not conform totally to the Weberian model. In Botswana and Tanzania, for example, a type of ‘developmental patrimonialism’ has emerged in which regimes support effective public bureaucracies in sectors they regard as crucial to development (Crook, 1990; Pitcher et al. 2009).
Problems of African governance arise from many factors, including neo-patrimonialism, colonial institutional legacies, the logic of political economies and the impact of continuing economic and fiscal crises caused by global relationships, including the role foreign aid has played in sustaining weak states (Leonard & Strauss, 2003; Therkildsen, 2005). Efforts to establish or renew the civil service therefore require understanding of the state’s limits, including its internal organisation and links to society – what Evans (1995) refers to as "embedded autonomy".

Grindle’s (2004, 2007) concept of ‘good enough governance’ suggests that not all governance deficits need to (or can) be tackled at once and that institutions and capacity-building evolve over time. Weaker states provide more difficult environments in which to introduce governance reforms and have less capacity to address implementation challenges. Change must be approached incrementally. Acharya (2004) stresses the importance of local agents’ ability to reconfigure reform objectives to better fit local institutions. As Grindle (2007: 218) comments, “there are no magic bullets, no easy answers, and no obvious shortcuts towards conditions of governance that can result in faster and more effective development and poverty reduction”.

Civil service reform

There has been much discussion of the mixed, if not poor, record of attempts at reforming, renewing and rehabilitating civil service systems. However, there is no single globally-recognised conceptual framework for civil service reform, so reforms often lack an explicit theory of change (World Bank 2011; Scott 2011). Civil service reform activities have included efforts to make government more organised, affordable, accountable, and responsive; to bring government closer to the grassroots; and to make government perform and deliver better.

Domestic and donor efforts to improve the quality of governance have not led to substantive improvements. Instead, according to Pritchett, Woolcock and Andrews (2010), they often end up reproducing the formal structures of governance found in developed countries, but with little of the function. Common to most reform challenges is a realisation that civil service models and practices are context-specific and will not necessarily succeed if transplanted elsewhere (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000). Boege (2011: 2) argues that discussions of state fragility and state-building policies have been orientated towards a western-style Weberian state model. Yet this form of statehood hardly exists beyond the OECD. Often, it has been the developing countries with the weakest capacity that have been exposed to the heaviest transplantation of experience and ideas from donor countries. For example, there is only limited evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of New Public Management reforms (Joshi 2008).

The literature on civil service reform in developing countries suggests common challenges and traps are:

- Insufficient attention given to the influence of politics. Understanding the particular context’s political economy dynamics is likely to be crucial to effective reform. Patronage is often a particularly important challenge (Unsworth, 2007; Grindle, 2010 and Scott, 2011).
- Attempting to transplant one country’s organisational structures and practices to another without due consideration of contextual differences (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Joshi, 2008).
- Over-emphasising downsizing and cost-cutting. An excessive focus on cost-cutting can undermine government effectiveness and fail to produce lasting savings (Schiavo-Campo and Sundaram 2001; Reid, 2006).
- Failing to integrate reform activities into a wider policy and organisational framework (McCourt and Sola, 1999).
Factors important to the establishment, renewal or rehabilitation of the civil service

McCourt (2013) notes the continued influence of the idealised Weberian model in attempts at public administration reform and capacity-building in the wake of independence movements in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. More broadly, recent approaches to civil service and administrative reform have been delineated as follows (Repucci, 2012; Evans, 2008; Crook, 2010):

- First generation, 1980s – neo-liberal economic policies aimed at reducing the role of the state in the economy
- Second generation, 1990s – reorientation in light of policy failings of the 80s, restructuring of civil service focused on management systems, performance management and budget/financial management and marketisation of service delivery referred to as New Public Management
- Third generation (present) – based on the premise that having a responsive and legitimate state is crucial for sustaining an effective market economy.

Civil services continue to be measured against a model seen to exist in many OECD countries that is regarded as the model stable state – a liberal constitutional democracy based on an industrialised market economy. Other examples are presented as deviant cases, evaluated according to the degree to which they conform to Weberian benchmarks (Hameiri, 2007: 138).

4. Summary of case study findings

The establishment of a functioning civil service is neither a linear nor a harmonious process. In Europe, the development of a civil service has been associated with the penetration of peripheral areas, the standardisation of physical and psychological space and the accommodation of competing sources of power. A functioning civil service is considered central to the effectiveness of the state, influencing its ability to develop policy, deliver services and manage tensions.

The international community’s effort to build functioning states has often involved the expansion of central government control and the development of bureaucracies that aim to replicate European models. The literature suggests a growing consensus that effective civil service and public sector reform programmes need to move away from this practice towards ‘best fit’. Programmes need to be informed by a better understanding of the complex socio-economic and political realities of the countries in which they are taking place (Blum et al., 2012; Lewis, 2011; Unsworth, 2002; World Bank, 2012). Despite increasing focus on specificity of context, many analyses fail to pay sufficient attention to colonial legacies and the socio-historical heritage of administrative structures.

Findings from a number of case studies reflect this shift, and highlight the following success factors in the establishment, renewal or rehabilitation of civil services:

- An appreciation of the **historical context** and understanding of **bureaucratic heritage**
- Recognition of the role **informal institutions** can play in developing an emerging civil service, and acknowledgement that **hybridity is not failure**
- **Incremental reforms targeting marginal gains** and supporting continuous improvements, such as developing the capacities of civil servants
- A focus on the development of structures (**the missing middle**) that manage tensions and foster dialogue between the ‘formal centre’ and ‘informal periphery’, particularly in regions where the state may be contested.
Historical context and bureaucratic heritage

The case studies highlight the importance of historical context. This includes the influence of bureaucratic heritage (i.e. of colonial administrative traditions inherited by post-colonial leaders) and the nature of the colonial project (i.e. direct or indirect rule, and how far colonial structures penetrated peripheral areas). It is suggested that attempts to build or renew a civil service need to be more closely grounded in an analysis of these factors.

The failed incorporation of north (British) and south (Italian) Somaliland into a united Somalia is an example of how colonial modes of administration continue to influence attempts at post-colonial state-building. The differences in British and Italian rule meant that the administrative structures, organisation and interests of post-colonial elites in Somaliland were very different. Following years of civil war, an autonomous Somaliland has been formed (broadly synonymous with British North Somaliland) that has re-established British administrative mechanisms and paired these with resilient local traditions such as a Council of Elders (Guurti).

Similarly, Bougainville provides an example of the legacies of colonialism, the limited extent of state-building and the general distrust of transplanted forms of governance. Efforts to establish state control and develop an emerging civil service have faced widespread apathy. The Bougainville Constitutional Commission noted “a patronising view that the colonial approach must be better”. An incipient civil service has been developed that, given the limited penetration of state power into the periphery, co-opts existing structures of local rule to administer state functions.

The case of Tanzania suggests that reform will be most successful when building on past reform success, and cannot be foisted on countries or departments of government that are not ready or receptive. Tanzania is an illustration of the incremental renewal of existing civil services structures rather than the transplantation of a foreign model. Even during the period of one-party rule, a high level of internal party democracy contributed to a sense of inclusion and participation. Approaches to capacity and performance improvement favoured the reform of existing public sector organisations rather than the creation of new ones.

Finally, the Ugandan context highlights the role historical factors play in the extension of state power and the renewal of a civil service. The ethno-religious diversity of Ugandan society has had significant implications. Poor communications infrastructure, a predominantly agrarian economy and continued use of local languages have maintained tribal loyalties at the expense of a pan-ethnic Ugandan identity. Civil service reform has been co-opted to eliminate rivals or buy off competing sources of authority through the exchange of positions of power. Civil service reforms of the 1980s and 90s replaced supporters of Amin and Obote with supporters of Museveni.

Hybridity does not necessarily mean failure

Governments and the international community need to ensure that state-building processes are based on partnership with existing forms of local governance. Engaging with these structures of authority may provide one means of supporting more effective state–society relations as well as the incorporation of peripheral regions into the state.

The Somaliland and Bougainville examples illustrate the role that ‘traditional’ authority can play in peace processes and the establishment of government authority. In situations of limited state legitimacy and capacity, both the government and international donors should consider building on existing non-state institutions rather than attempting to impose those which are new or transplanted. By using the council
of elders in Bougainville and the Guurti in Somaliland, the emerging state has been able to penetrate the periphery, co-opt potential spoilers and collaborate to deliver services and ensure a degree of stability.

The Tanzanian case illustrates that in contexts where the state is more established and stable, efforts to reform the civil service to make it more reflective of the Weberian ideal need to be undertaken in an iterative and responsive manner to avoid reform fatigue. In Tanzania the civil service used to be subordinated to the needs of the TANU party. Reforms have been successfully rolled out in a sustained manner that works with existing structures. The transition from hybridity can be successful but must be approached sensitively.

Finally, Uganda’s experience illustrates the political nature of civil service reform and how perceived success can quickly turn to failure. During the 1980s and 90s, internationally supported reforms were implemented and Musenveni lauded for his support. By the mid-90s, it had become clear that the reform process had been used to purge elements of the Amin and Obote regime. Subsequently, Musenveni has co-opted the civil service and used it to dispense political privilege. Politicisation has constrained civil servants’ ability to act independently.

The importance of incrementalism and marginal gains

Evidence from Somaliland illustrates the importance of training civil servants. Here the importance of education has been stressed. Ethiopian educational institutions have provided sustained support in the absence of a functioning domestic tertiary education sector. Tanzania presents a similar example, where international donor support has been leveraged to develop training institutions that can equip civil servants to fulfil their responsibilities and contribute to a more effective civil service.

In contexts where the authority of state may be limited or contested, it is important that the institutions of state are not imposed on areas where they may be unwelcome or resisted. In both the Somaliland and Bougainville contexts, the authority of state is being extended incrementally in collaboration with local actors. This gradual process co-opts competing sources of authority and, where appropriate, allocates state functions to local power brokers who are better able to deliver services.

In the Tanzanian context as has been shown above, initiatives have been adopted that seek to mitigate reform fatigue. Reforms have been sustained over a number of years. National stakeholders have used the international language of reform, e.g. that of New Public Management, and pragmatically leveraged international finance to effect changes they deem important. Attempts have been made to manage perceptions among public servants of being the targets of continual reform measures since the 1990s.

Finally, the Ugandan context illustrates that the renewal/reform of the civil service is never complete. It needs to be sustained over an extended time frame to ensure momentum is not lost.

The missing middle

In instances where an emerging civil service is being created, government and donors could consider supporting institutions that create or reinforce links between state and non-state actors at the district and provincial levels (Anten, 2009).

Evidence from Somaliland and Bougainville suggests that reform efforts have been more successful where they have supported the development of this ‘missing middle’. Here links have been forged between a weak centre and the periphery, where a range of local actors have legitimacy. In the
Bougainville example, the Council of Elders has been established as a sub-national structure to mediate between the periphery and centre. The Guurti in Somaliland performs a similar function.

The Tanzanian case involved the development of a civil service structure that mediates between the potentially dictatorial one-party state and a range of stakeholders. The civil service was praised for its development of egalitarian social policies in the 1970s and 80s that successfully addressed grievances that persist in neighbouring countries.

Uganda, in contrast, has seen the proliferation of a centralised political bureaucracy. There has been a failure to develop structures at a sub-national level that could act as neutral interlocutors between Kampala and peripheral areas that may view with alarm the imposition of central authority.

5. Case studies

The selection of case studies is indicative of a range of contexts.

Somaliland

Context

Somaliland represents a post-conflict fragile state that has set about re-establishing the civil service. Somaliland is a self-declared state internationally recognised as an autonomous region of Somalia. The government of Somaliland regards itself as the successor state to the former British Somaliland protectorate. The British Protectorate was united in 1960 with the Trust Territory of Somaliland (the former Italian Somaliland) to form the Somali Republic.

Although a single nation was forged, the north (formerly the British protectorate) and south (formerly a colony of Italy) were effectively two separate countries, with different administrative, legal, and education systems and languages. The respective elites of the north and south also had divergent interests which contributed to the Somali Civil war.

The Somali Civil War is a protracted conflict that grew out of resistance to the Siad Barre regime (1969-1991) during the 1980s and evolved into a multifaceted power struggle between various armed factions. Somalia has been designated a “failed/fragile state” and considered one of the longest-running instances of complete state collapse in postcolonial history and “the world’s foremost graveyard of externally sponsored state-building initiatives” (Menkhaus, 2006: 74).

The civil war culminated in the collapse of the Somali state and the breakup up of its institutions (ICG, 2008). Despite this, a functioning, effective and legitimate political order has emerged in Somaliland over the past 15 years (Menkhaus, 2006). This political order is seen to combine ‘traditional’ institutions (for example councils of elders known as Guurti) alongside modern state institutions such as a parliament and a president, based on free elections. The political system of Somaliland combines both Western style and ‘traditional’ institutions in a way that has delivered some stability (Forti, 2011).

Nature of reform, renewal or rehabilitation

The (re)-establishment of both government and the public administration from 1991 to 1997 faced a number of challenges, including obsolete managerial, technical and administrative cadres, the disruption of academic institutions, emigration of skilled human resources due to repression by the military
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government and a protracted civil war (Jhazbhay, 2010). Further to this, there has been tension between clans over power sharing.

The (re)-establishment of public institutions has involved limited international engagement, achieved primarily through a series of ‘traditional’ conferences that sought to establish political institutions with which to govern and deliver stability. These institutions have proved resilient and survive to date (Eubank, 2010; Forti, 2011; Ibrahim and Terlinden, 2008). The political structure that emerged from these ‘traditional’ conferences consists of a two-tier parliament including an upper house that incorporated both ‘traditional’ and Western-style forms of government and helped Somaliland to build bureaucratic state institutions (Medhane, 2002; Hoehne, 2011).

To respond to the twin challenges of socio-economic development and nation-building a series of administrative reforms and modernisation initiatives have been undertaken. The Somaliland Civil Service Institute was established in 2005 with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Public sector reform is a government priority and has accordingly received strong and sustained political support in order to improve the quality of public sector management, to generate responsible public servants and to improve the quality of services offered.

Factors contributing to success

Authors have suggested that the success of these peace and state-building initiatives in Somaliland was to a large extent due to the involvement of ‘traditional’ actors and institutions that are rooted in ‘traditional’ clan based Somali society (Seifert, 2007; Hoehne, 2006; Menkhaus, 2006, 91-93; Hagmann and Hoehne, 2007).

These authors have identified the decisive role played by clan elders and their councils in the peacebuilding process, utilising ‘traditional’ forms and mechanisms of conflict resolution. Following this constructive participation in the peace process clan elders and councils have been accommodated and indeed co-opted into the state-building process and embedded into a political system modelled on western tenets yet accommodating their ‘traditional’ forms of power that carry greater local legitimacy. The Parliament’s Upper House, the Assembly of Elders (Guurti) has thus been instrumental in maintaining Somaliland’s fragile peace (Forti, 2011; Gorkha, 2011; Moe, 2010).

Ethiopia has provided extensive help to Somaliland in its attempt to rebuild the administrative capacity of government and train civil servants. Under the funding of the Ethiopian Government, senior officers from different public institutions in Somaliland frequently engage in training programs at various civil and military universities in Ethiopia. (Ali, 2014).

Phillips (2013) suggests that Somaliland is an example of a successful emerging state, reflecting a hybrid political order, because it was primarily a domestically motivated and funded peace process that encouraged dialogue amongst elites and resisted the temptation to identify a pre-determined institutional end point. These processes have emerged and been led from below rather than being imposed through a ‘top-down’ process. The government “does not hold the monopoly of violence and... security in Somaliland is dealt with in a decentralized manner and is largely guaranteed by local politicians and elders” (Hagmann and Hoehne, 2007: 24). The result is a type of statehood that “amalgamates customary, Islamic and statutory norms and practices” (ibid. 25) and enjoys high levels of legitimacy. Due to a successful process of political reconciliation and subsequent restoration of peace, Somaliland has undergone a remarkable political transformation by adopting an interim constitution which sets out a schedule for the legalisation of political parties and democratic elections.
According to Ali (2014), by strengthening the central structures of state and its political circuits the government has been able to extend its influence deeper into society. This has prevented a return to violence and has managed structural and latent conflicts. In this way the government has established authority, maintained security, facilitated service delivery and pursued development activities through a hybrid political system and via the incorporation of ‘traditional’ elders has managed pressure for change emanating from the grassroots.

Uganda

Context

Uganda is a post-conflict state that has set about renewing the civil service. The territory, today known as Uganda, was formed in 1894 when the British amalgamated a number of independent kingdoms as a protectorate. The British subsequently set about extending administrative law across the territory, aligning with existing power structures such as the kingdom of Buganda. Uganda attained its independence from Britain in 1962 but has experienced sustained and protracted conflict thereafter, most recently, a lengthy civil war involving a range of actors.

Uganda was widely acclaimed in the late 1980s and early 1990s as an example of successful post-conflict development because of its perceived achievements in adopting a series of macroeconomic reforms to deliver poverty reduction and political stability following years of civil war (Robinson, 2006; Langseth, 1995). Progress was attributed to a succession of governance reforms, including a programme of civil service restructuring, the creation of a series of semi-autonomous public agencies, reforms in public expenditure management, decentralisation, innovations in service delivery and legal and institutional measures to combat corruption (Langseth, 2005).

The National Resistance Movement (NRM), who led these reforms, came to power in 1986 after being involved in conflict with the regimes of Amin (1971-1979) and Obote (1979-1986). The NRM government brought together a range of representatives from different political parties and ethnic and religious groups in a bid to overcome historic divisions (Robinson, 2006).

One pressing challenge facing the NRM government was the re-establishment of a functioning civil service. In the 1980s Uganda’s civil service had been portrayed to be incapable of performing basic service delivery or policy implementation functions (Robinson, 2006; Langseth, 1995). The state of the civil service was considered to be product of years of political strife and civil war, which had contributed to economic chaos (Langseth 1995).

Nature of reform, renewal or rehabilitation

A Public Service Review and Reorganisation Commission (PSRRC) was established in 1989, which was charged with reviewing the structure and functions of the civil service. The report was completed in 1990, and provided the blueprint for the government’s civil service reform agenda. Its wide-ranging remit covered the performance of the civil service, work methods and probity, accountability, value for money, corruption and its relationship to the NRM (Langseth, 1995).

The most radical civil service reform initiatives were implemented in the late 1980s and early 1990s as part of the structural adjustment package supported by the World Bank and IMF. The Uganda Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP) received political approval in 1993 and launched with World Bank loan support. Expatriate advisers and government technocrats, who received salary increments by way of performance incentives, staffed a semi-autonomous Civil Service Reform Secretariat to manage the
change process. An emphasis was placed on cutting costs through downsizing and rationalising the bureaucracy. By the early 2000s the emphasis shifted to enhancing performance through results-oriented management with consolidation of pay and pension reforms (Robinson, 2006).

The implementation of the reform agenda began with the merger of the Ministries of Finance and Planning and Economic Development. The number of ministries was reduced from 38 to 21 in 1992 through a series of mergers and closures. A radical downsizing plan was prepared with the objective of reducing the total public service to 150,000 by 1995. Substantial donor funding was provided for technical assistance and voluntary severance packages for civil servants and soldiers (Langseth 1995).

Since the late 1990s, the momentum of the reform process is considered to have slowed. Compared to the early success in downsizing the civil service, the results in terms of pay reform and efficiency gains were much less impressive. The presidential commission’s target of achieving a minimum living wage for civil servants by 1996 was not achieved. Public sector salaries remain well below the private sector despite progressive salary increases averaging 42 per cent of comparable jobs in the private sector (Kiragu and Mukandala 2005: 281).

Kiragu and Mukandala (2005) suggest that there has also been a marked growth in recent years in the political bureaucracy comprising officials and advisers in State House (Office of the President), the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the Movement Secretariat, central government ministers etc. Numerous development programmes are managed by these organs of state. There has been a large expansion in the number of presidential advisers, estimated to be 72 in 2004 (Robinson, 2006).

The number of ministers has grown considerably from 21 in 1995 to a 60 in 2004 (Robinson, 2004). Similarly, the number of MPs has grown to 305, up from the 284 seats mandated in the constitution with the result that Uganda has the largest number of MPs per head of population in Africa. Many of the appointees to statutory and ad hoc commissions and autonomous agencies are known supporters of the Movement with strong kinship ties to the president.

**Factors contributing to success and failure**

The Ugandan CSRP shared many of the standard features of similar initiatives elsewhere in Africa, but was distinguished by sustained political commitment at the highest level throughout the 80s and early 90s, for example through the creation of the presidential commission to investigate reforms (Langseth, 1995 and Robinson, 2006). President Museveni in particular was considered to be supportive of the reform agenda for both technical and political reasons: the pressing need to rebuild the state apparatus in pursuit of the NRM’s political project, and to weed out civil servants appointed under the Amin and Obote regimes who could be a potential source of opposition to reform and thus undermine progress on other fronts (Langseth, 1995; Kiragu and Mukandala 2005: 266).

The ethnic and religious diversity of Ugandan society has had significant political implications. First, poor communications infrastructure in rural areas, predominantly agrarian economic relations, and continued use of local languages have kept tribal loyalties alive at the expense of a pan-ethnic Ugandan national identity. Secondly, while these affiliations are often genuine, elites have also been able to instrumentalise them, producing ethnic animosity and pressure for federalism.

The personal commitment of President Museveni to improving governance in Uganda facilitated the introduction of reform initiatives. Responsibility for designing the reforms was given to a small technocratic elite in key government departments, agencies responsible for implementation were
granted a degree of autonomy. These mirror the institutional ingredients that account for the successful implementation of the economic reform agenda, centring on the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MOFPED), with strong presidential backing and high levels of capacity and insulation (Harvey and Robinson 1995). These features are considered to be central aspects of successful developmental states in East Asia, reflecting a deliberate attempt to cultivate comparable institutions in the Ugandan context (Piron and Norton 2004).

Since 1995, reform has slowed and Uganda is considered to have returned to a neo-patrimonial form of government. Democratisation appears to have reinforced elements of neo-patrimonialism (Rakner, 2003), resulting in clientelist politics and abuses of state resources to win votes. From the mid-1990s, Museveni began to “look increasingly like ... a neo-patrimonial ruler ... at the helm of a clientelist state” (Barkan et al., 2005).

Tanzania

Context

Tanzania is a post-colonial state that has set about reforming the civil service. The regions that now constitute Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika and Zanzibar) were conquered by the Germans in the late 19th century and incorporated into German East Africa. Following German defeat in World War I the area became a British Mandate. British rule came to an end in 1961, and in 1962 Tanganyika became a democratic republic under an executive president, renaming itself Tanzania in 1965. Tanzania’s post-independent political environment has been characterised by relative civic peace, unity and stability and the dominance of a single party (Kiragu and Mukandala, 2004). Power was concentrated in the ruling party, originally the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), which later became the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). CCM’s policies of equity, social justice, and electoral competition enjoyed broad popular support, which outlasted the socialist era. Following the introduction of multiparty elections, the CCM continued to win the majority of votes, increasing its share between 1995 and 2000 in both parliamentary and presidential elections. According to Morgan and Baser (2007: 6), the evolution of the Tanzanian public sector can be divided into five overlapping phases.

Nature of reform, renewal or rehabilitation

- The colonial phase up to Independence in 1961 produced a bureaucratic structure that was, and still is, smaller and less complex than those in neighbouring countries. Under its mandate, Britain invested less in Tanzania than it did in colonies of greater political or commercial interest.

- The phase of growth and politicisation began in the late 1960s and saw the public service subordinated to TANU. It led to the strengthening of the centralised Tanzanian state and the rapid expansion of the bureaucracy to implement ambitious development plans. Over time, policy control began to flow through TANU party committees and organisational structures, leading to a reduction of direct citizen participation and accountability. Local government was abolished in 1972. The size of the public service increased by about 350%, with the number of employees reaching a total of 295,000 in 1980.

- A period of public service stagnation and decline began in the early 1980s characterised by declining levels of service and a collapse in discipline, training, salaries and other incentives. Corruption grew as a result.

- The phase of retrenchment, beginning in the early 1990s, was based on a conventional cost containment and downsizing strategy. The Government and international funding agencies
Factors important to the establishment, renewal or rehabilitation of the civil service

worked to reduce the core functions of government, reset the boundaries between the public and private sector, and tried to make the system more accountable. In pursuit of these goals, many public organisations were either privatised or turned into executive agencies. Total staff numbers fell from 355,000 in 1992 to about 270,000 in early 2000, a reduction of about 35%.

- The latest phase of reform began in 2000 with the PSRP focusing on building capacity and performance. The previous emphasis on retrenchment had been effective in terms of rebalancing costs and scope, but it had not contributed enough in terms of improved service delivery, a pattern common across most African states.

The idea of collective public action and social cooperation retains legitimacy within Tanzania. Egalitarian social policies in the 1970s and 1980s addressed a number of grievances that remain evident in neighbouring countries. Even during the period of one-party rule, a high level of internal party democracy contributed to a sense of participation. The composition of the political elites has also changed over the years as ministers and members of the National Assembly have been voted out of office. Morgan and Baser (2004) assert that Tanzanians have a familiarity with the idea of social and institutional change in support of a governing ideology that is accepted by the country as a whole.

Tanzania has a relatively homogenous population distributed between 200 small tribes and ethnic groups. No one ethnic group has the size, wealth or the geographic base to capture individual ministries or the entire Government. The military does not play a dominant role in political decision making. Regional differences in economic and political power are much less extreme than those of neighbouring states. Tanzania has a widely spoken national language that facilitates collective identity, interregional communication and shared understanding. Levels of social capital and a sense of personal security amongst different ethnic groups appear to be higher than in many other African states.

Factors contributing to success

There were several contextual factors that have enabled civil service reform in Tanzania (Barkhan, 2000):

- a supportive context for reform,
- a relatively homogeneous population with no one dominant ethnic group,
- the demands of foreign investors and the international development community which encouraged improved performance from the public service.

Tanzania has made significant strides to depoliticise its policy making and to create space for ministries and departments to craft and manage reform programmes with politicians supplying general oversight (Lawson and Rakner, 2005).

However, the acceptance of reform by Tanzanian civil servants for large-scale change has been mixed. Many staff have welcomed the opportunity to improve their individual and collective performance, but many civil servants see themselves as being the targets of continual reform measures since the early 1990s (Morgan and Baser, 2007).

In the late 1990s the Government, with international support, opted for the wholesale adoption of a set of reform measures collectively known as 'New Public Management' (NPM), much of which was being applied internationally under the sponsorship of agencies such as the World Bank and DFID. This preference for foreign models had implications in terms of the transfer of organisational practices, absorptive capacity and a heavy reliance on technical assistance (Repucci, 2014).
At the same time, the Tanzanian approach to capacity and performance improvement favoured the reforms of existing public sector organisations rather than the creation of new ones. The government tried to build both long- and short-term goals into the implementation of the PRSP. It also recognised the need for 'soft' changes such as cultural and attitudinal change, alongside more fundamental changes to systems and structures.

A number of factors appear to have come together to produce the direction and energy needed to make progress in Tanzania in public service reform. In particular, the President’s Office and Public Service Management’s space to develop its identity, capacity and confidence permitted government managers to pursue positive approaches to public service reform (Repucci, 2014; Morgan and Baser, 2007).

The Tanzanian public service reform strategy’s reliance on a transplantation approach as opposed to a more organic, evolutionary process customised for Tanzanian conditions is noticeable. Two explanations are presented by Morgan and Baser (2007: vi):

- institutional structural adjustment, complete with its own standard package of prescriptions, seems to have replaced economic structural adjustment as the latest universal solution in development cooperation.
- many Tanzanian officials supported the application of a 'new public management' (NPM) approach out of intellectual conviction.

The stress on improving service delivery and empowering citizens resonated with senior officials. The NPM was promoted as international best practice and a symbol of modernisation and globalisation.

In the Tanzania case, a combination of political support, low levels of political conflict, some skilled Tanzanian managers, an absence of bureaucratic resistance, some historical resonance, funder patience and some key domestic constituencies contributed to the success of PRSP (Morgan and Baser, 2007).

**Bougainville**

**Context**

Bougainville is a post-conflict autonomous region that has set about establishing an emerging civil service. Between 1989 and 1998 the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea (PNG) experienced widespread conflict, prompted by the negative social and environmental impact of the Panguna mining project. Local clans sabotaged the mine in late 1988 and established the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). Fighting between the BRA and the security forces of the PNG government, spread across the whole island. The BRA adopted a secessionist stance calling for independence for Bougainville (Boege, 2010). The conflict has been portrayed not just as a war of secession, but rather a complex mixture of politics and localised sub-wars between various clans, lineages or villages (USAID, 2013).

After ten years of conflict a stalemate developed and peace talks opened in 1997. Bougainville has undergone a comprehensive process of peacebuilding, and currently has entered a phase of state formation including the development of government bureaucratic institutions (USAID, 2013).

Efforts to-date are viewed positively (USAID, 2013, Boege et al., 2008). The success of this emergent state-building is attributed mainly to a conscious decision to work with, not against, the hybrid political order, and to allow these processes to be driven by stakeholders and institutions both from the realm of the state, but also from ‘traditional’ forms of association and civil society.
The Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) was signed in August 2001 and a new constitution was adopted for the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in November 2004 culminating in the formation of an Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) in June 2005.

**Nature of reform, renewal or rehabilitation**

The development of administrative structures and an emerging civil service cannot be separated from the experiences of state collapse, conflict and the subsequent peace process. During the decade-long conflict, the state and its institutions had largely withdrawn from areas in Bougainville leading to statelessness. Local institutions filled this void and experienced a significant resurgence (Boege, 2012). Elders and chiefs assumed responsibility for regulating conflict, administering localities and delivering services, primarily with reference to ‘traditional’ norms and ways of operating (Boege et al., 2008).

These local sources of power became increasingly prominent during the peace process. Local ‘peace committees’ or ‘district reconciliation steering committees’ were formed, and local ‘peace treaties’ were developed (Richmond and Mitchell, 2011). These processes were not static; local peace processes took over, adapted themselves utilising external assistance, and have appropriated knowledge where relevant. As Richmond and Mitchell (2011) note in their analysis of hybrid peace processes, training led by the NGO Peace Foundation Melanesia involved several thousand participants, with hundreds of village leaders trained as facilitators and trainers.

Bougainville’s formal institutions and systems were enshrined in the Bougainville Peace Agreement (BPA) and subsequent 2004 Constitution. The BPA paved the way for the Autonomous Bougainville Region (ABR) and Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) to be established, and a constitution to be drafted. Despite the limited capacity of the ABG and the transfer of power to Bougainville being slow, the pillars of governance are considered to be functional (USAID, 2013). Bougainville has responsibility for establishing its own public service, police force and judicial system and laws, with PNG retaining power over defence, foreign relations, immigration and central banking (Boege, 2013). Bougainville has also developed revenue mechanisms to achieve fiscal independence.

The process of state-making in Bougainville has relied heavily on the experiences of the peacebuilding phase. Local institutions have been co-opted as part of the current process of state formation and extension of the authority of state into the periphery (USAID, 2013). In part, necessitated by distrust of western style centralised government structures and processes. The Bougainville Constitutional Commission (BCC) contains an explicit criticism of forms of governance transplanted by colonial powers:

“we feel that kastom has often been the missing ingredient from past governments imposed on Bougainville, and from the laws of PNG that have applied in Bougainville. This probably happened because our various colonial masters were suspicious about things they did not understand. There was also a patronising view that the colonial approach must be better. As a result during those times there developed an undue reliance on colonial approaches and the style of laws and enforcement used in the homelands of the colonisers”

(Bougainville Constitutional Commission 2004, 117 cited in Braithwaite et al., 2010).

The focus of the peace process has also evolved over time to address the necessity of building new state institutions (Richmond and Mitchell, 2011). The framework for this is provided by the Bougainville Peace Agreement of August 2001 which included two core provisions:
- the establishment of the ‘Autonomous Region of Bougainville’ as a special political entity within the state of PNG,
- a referendum on the future political status of Bougainville, either complete independence or autonomy within PNG.

The 2010 presidential and parliamentary elections were widely acclaimed for being free, fair and peaceful (USAID, 2013). An observer team from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat found the elections to be “conducted in line with generally accepted democratic principles and practice,” and commended the “professional and cooperative provision of security during the elections” (PIFS, 2010)

The basis for this model has become enshrined and institutionalised in Bougainville’s 2004 constitution. According to Article 13 (2), “The roles, responsibilities and authority of traditional chiefs and other traditional leaders shall be recognized at all levels of government” (The Constitution of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville). The constitution includes multiple references to ‘traditional’ forms of governance acknowledging the limited extent of the penetration of state institutions, the lack of legitimacy of these and a recognition that the majority of people in rural communities live under ‘traditional’ rather than formal systems of government.

The Council of Elders (CoEs), a formal sub-national structure comprising traditional leaders, fills the role of an emerging civil service mediating between state and society and ensuring that relations are based on a more equal footing. Regarded as one of the more promising governance institutions below the ABG, the CoEs are highly representative, governed by their own constitutions and fulfil their taxation and spending responsibilities efficiently (Boege, 2008). The institution provides customary leaders an opportunity to participate in and shape political developments in their communities.

The hybrid model can also be seen in the development of a justice system and law enforcement institutions which fuse formal and informal forms of justice and law. As USAID (2013) highlight, the establishing of a formal court system has been slow marking a deliberate strategic decision to allow space for customary law and ‘traditional’ means of dispute resolution.

**Factors contributing to success**

As noted, years of conflict had seen the collapse of weak state institutions. ‘Traditional’ authorities emerged to fill the governance and rule of law void, with elders and chiefs assuming responsibility for regulating conflicts and administrating community life (Boege, 2010). These ‘traditional’ authorities have also been tasked with overseeing BRA reconciliation efforts (USAID, 2013). These reconciliation processes were an essential factor in the ongoing resilience to violence and maintenance of social order and the reestablishment of state authority.

Political order in Bougainville today comprises of elements of the Western model of statehood (a constitution, a president and a parliament, free and fair elections, a civil service etc.) and elements of ‘traditional’ governance (village assemblies, councils of chiefs, councils of elders, customary law). By combining formal and informal institutions, the emerging state has been able to extend its reach into areas where it has been absent or was not welcome.

The literature suggests the strength of this model is the intersection of formal and ‘traditional’ structures and processes which has allowed the development of and functioning political system. Commentators have highlighted the deliberative policies of exchange, accommodation, and negotiation, with formal and
informal governance structures and actors sharing power and sovereignty in a manner that works in the Bougainville context (Boege, 2010; USAID, 2013).

However, it remains a balancing act between the formal and informal complementarities and synergies, but also frictions and incompatibilities (Richmond 2009). Customary institutions have proven to be remarkably resilient and of major significance.

**Cases warranting further investigation**

**Botswana**

The civil service in Botswana has expanded gradually, both in staffing numbers and remit. At independence (1966) the civil service numbered circa 6,000 growing to over 60,000 by the mid-90s (Modisi, 1996). Modisi (1996) has argued that reforms to the civil service have been pursued pragmatically with new services developed when relevant and affordable. The civil service has also been insulated from political interference through the establishment of a civil service commission.

Westcott (1999: 12) argues that civil service reforms in Botswana since the 1970s are “part of a clearly formulated vision of change, which has strong citizen participation in its formulation and implementation. The strategy has been one of constant, incremental improvements on many fronts”. The reforms have sought to minimise corruption and improve human resource management systems to recruit, reward and retain outstanding civil servants. International donors (e.g. UNDP, Netherlands Trust Fund) have supported capacity building at the University of Botswana, the Institute of Development Management for training in inventory management and the Botswana Institute of Public Administration and Commerce for training in accountancy supervisors.

Factors important to building an effective civil service in Botswana:

- Donor support, providing inputs and advice when needed.
- Insulation from political interference.
- A strategy of incremental improvements on several fronts.

**Rwanda**

It is generally agreed that the Government of Rwanda has undertaken impressive and sustained public sector reform (Wyatt et al., 2008). This commitment is reflected in a number of policy documents. Between 1998 and 2009, the Rwandan Ministry of Public Service and Labour led reforms that reduced the number of staff in central ministries by about 90%, tripled salaries for those who remained and decentralised basic service-delivery functions (Hausman, 2011).

In 2007, the Public Sector Commission was established to oversee recruitment and to curb clientelism and nepotism. Hausman (2011) has noted that by 2010, civil servants reported that the changes had improved overall staff quality, decentralisation improved service delivery and that the Public Service Commission recruitment system was increasingly based on merit. However, Hausman (2011) reported that challenges remained. Ministries had too few people to carry out essential functions and some local administrations were overstretched.

Factors important to the renewal of the civil service in Rwanda:

- The role of political leadership, particularly that of the president.
- The insulation of civil service recruitment from political interference (Public Service Commission).
**Cambodia**

The rebuilding of the civil service in Cambodia was launched in 1979 and has been ongoing since. The Council for Administrative Reform (CAR) was established in 1999 and now leads national public administration reform to improve public services (UNDP, 2012).

The Cambodian civil service was considered to suffer from inadequate numbers of personnel in areas such as health care and education. Civil servants lacked education and salaries were low. Frequent absenteeism and corruption were widespread resulting from low pay and inflexible and constraining promotion structures based on time in service rather than performance (UNDP, 2012). Civil service reforms in Cambodia have attempted to address these issues holistically (UNDESA, 2010). The CAR has achieved some success (the integration of civil servants into a more coherent system, quadrupling of the average wage) and has launched the National Programme for Administrative Reform (NPAR) 2010-2013. The Royal School of Administration (RSA) has emerged as a key body responsible for providing education and training to civil servants.

Factors important to the renewal of the civil service in Cambodia:

- Sustained and incremental reform, working with not against existing bureaucratic structures.
- Support to the education of civil servants.

**Vietnam**

The Vietnamese government launched the Public Administration Reform (PAR) Programme 2001-2010 citing as its goal, "successfully building a democratic, strong, clean, professionalized, modernized, effective and efficient public administration system which operates in line with the principles of the socialist ruled-by-law State under the leadership of the Party" (Thanh Can, 2013). Hausman (2011a) reports that by 2009, the Ministry of Home Affairs had standardised and devolved recruitment and promotion exams to ministries and provinces, doubled civil service wages, expanded the enrolment of the National Academy of Public Administration and merged six ministries. However, he goes on to suggest that recruitment continues to be driven by corruption, that training was rarely relevant to civil servants’ work, and that tasks continue to be duplicated in most of the merged ministries. Despite these criticisms, PAR has promoted a degree of economic reform, democratisation, international economic integration, consolidation and maintenance of political stability (Thanh Can, 2013).

Whilst international donors (UNDP, the Asian Development Bank) have played a significant role in setting the public administration reform agenda, Hausman (2011a) suggests that the primary motivation for reform was a domestic demand for economic change and frustration with government corruption. Hausman (2011a) concludes that the pace of change is likely to be slow.

Factors important to the renewal of the civil service in Vietnam:

- Public demand for change.
- Effective government leadership.
- Working with not against existing structures.
References


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