

# **The (Non-)Implementation of Performance Management Policies: Mapping 30 Years of Reforms in Ghana and Zambia**

**Martin J. Williams and Liah Yecalo-Teclé**

**November 2020**

## **Abstract**

Many countries have made repeated efforts to introduce individual-level performance management policies into their civil services, but most evidence about such policies' effectiveness focuses on specific cases rather than on their repeated introduction and abandonment. We address this gap by developing a method of longitudinal reform mapping to systematically document the universe of performance-oriented reforms in Ghana and Zambia since the late 1980s. These reforms include 12 efforts to introduce individual-level performance-linked incentives. We analyze the design and actual implementation of these reforms through interviews with key officials in each country and an extensive review of project reports, academic studies, and government archival documents. We find a stark pattern: there are no examples of governments systematically linking individual performance to meaningful rewards or sanctions. However, some of these schemes have achieved positive results through measurement and dialogue, even in the absence of hard incentives. Our longitudinal reform mapping methodology and findings complement case studies of specific reform efforts which have documented challenges in implementing performance management policies; our results suggest these may be the norm rather than aberrations. We connect our findings to the broader and largely OECD-focused literature on individual-level performance management policies.

Word count: excluding references 10,683; including references 11,994

---

Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. Corresponding author email: [martin.williams@bsg.ox.ac.uk](mailto:martin.williams@bsg.ox.ac.uk). We gratefully acknowledge funding from the International Growth Centre and Global Challenges Research Fund. We are indebted to conversations, comments, and support from Nana Agyekum-Dwamena, Augustina Akonnor, Nana Akua Anyidoho, Angie Bautista-Chavez, Kunda-Chibale Chima, Dennis Chiwele, James Dzansi, Yanilda Gonzalez, Shivani Haria, Mai Hassan, Marja Hinfelaar, Dan Honig, Peace Medie, Anand Rajaram, Pia Raffler, Daniel Rogger, Twivwe Siwale, Henry Telli, seminar participants at Oxford, MPSA 2019, and APSA 2020, staff of Ghana's Public Records and Archives Department, excellent research assistance from Bashar Hobbi and Allan Kasapa, and the numerous individuals who generously gave their time to be interviewed. We are especially grateful to the late Mr. Felix Ampong. This project was approved by the Blavatnik School of Government Ethics Committee (SSD/CUREC1A/BSG\_C1A-19-02). All opinions and any remaining faults are the authors' responsibility.

# **The (Non-)Implementation of Performance Management Policies:**

## **Mapping 30 Years of Reforms in Ghana and Zambia**

### **1. Introduction**

Individual-level performance management policies that aim to link civil servants' performance to rewards and sanctions have been widely adopted by many governments in recent decades. An extensive literature in public administration and economics has attempted to study the impacts of such policies by evaluating specific instances of such policies using both quantitative and qualitative methods, with mixed findings (e.g. Perry *et al* 2009; Radin 2006; Weibel *et al* 2010; Georgellis *et al* 2011; Bawole *et al* 2013; Hasnain *et al* 2014; Bellé and Cantarelli 2015; Ohemeng *et al* 2015, 2018). The divergent findings of these case studies have led to calls to broaden the evidence base by conducting more evaluations, particularly on core civil service (as opposed to frontline) roles and in non-OECD countries, in order to better understand the potential for individual-level performance management policies to improve public officials' performance.

In this article, rather than attempting to estimating the impacts of a specific case of a performance management policy, we instead aim to systematically document *patterns* in the adoption, design, and actual implementation of performance management reforms through *longitudinal reform mapping*. To do so, we combine a systematic process of reform identification and mapping with data on each reform from a wide range of primary and secondary sources. This allows us to produce comprehensive histories of efforts to adopt and implement performance management reforms in each of our two study countries across multiple waves of reform. Our aim is not to causally identify whether each reform had a

positive or negative impact on performance, but rather to identify systematic patterns in how such policies actually operate across their life-cycle. Identifying these patterns is crucial for understanding the potential for such policies to be effective ways to improve bureaucratic performance. Focusing on patterns within the universe of efforts to implement these policies rather than relying on a handful of high-profile cases also provides a more representative picture and reduces concerns about case- and site-selection bias (George and Bennett 2005; Allcott 2015).

We conduct our systematic mapping of performance management reforms in Ghana and Zambia, two countries which have undertaken extensive reforms aimed at improving public sector performance over the past three decades. For each country, we compile comprehensive timelines of all large-scale civil service reform episodes undertaken during this time period by both governments and donors. This allows us to examine patterns of reform both within and across countries, rather than relying on isolated case studies of individual reforms. To do so, we draw on four types of sources: 1) 177 government and donor reports on specific reforms; 2) 113 academic studies, most of which are case studies of single reform episodes or analyses of a specific aspect of public management in one of the countries; 3) interviews with 27 individuals who were directly involved in designing or implementing each of the reforms, and 31 rank-and-file civil servants whose work should have been affected by the reforms; and 4) in Ghana, original scanned material from public records and archives of internal government plans, discussions, and reports. Triangulating across this rich array of data allows us to examine the mechanisms of designing and implementing civil service reform in unusual breadth and depth.

Over 30 years in both countries, we find a cumulative total of 12 distinct efforts to introduce performance management policies that attempt to link individual performance to some form of reward or sanction. Each reform was an effort to create an annual cycle of target setting, performance assessment, and differentiated incentives. Roughly half focused on bureaucratic leadership and managers (in the form of performance contracts or agreements) and half focused on rank-and-file civil servants (in the form of incentive-linked annual appraisal systems). However, we find no instances in which governments actually succeeded in delivering differentiated incentives sustainably across multiple cycles. To explain this, we develop and apply an analytical framework to understand the contextual prerequisites for successful implementation of these policies and analyze the observed mechanisms of non-implementation. We relate these patterns to accounts of implementation challenges with performance management policies in both the public and private sectors (e.g. Beer and Cannon 2004; OECD 2005), and provide further evidence that governments should consider such implementation difficulties as the norm rather than as aberrations.

However, we also show that some of these reform efforts did yield some benefits, despite the absence of the incentives which were intended to be their driving force. Interviews with senior leadership and rank-and-file civil servants alike provide evidence that the mere acts of discussing responsibilities, setting targets, and assessing performance help them do their jobs better – even without the associated carrots and sticks. Since the promise of rewards and sanctions undermines the extent to which officers are willing to engage openly and honestly in target-setting and assessment, this suggests that governments might be able to create more effective performance management systems by *not* linking them to incentives. Our findings thus build on studies that focus on the role of goal-setting and performance dialogue as key

mechanisms for performance management in various contexts (Radin 2006; Moynihan 2008; Gibbons and Kaplan 2015).

In addition to our substantive findings, this study makes a broader methodological contribution to qualitative research in public administration. Ospina *et al* (2017) and Nowell and Albrecht (2019) note that qualitative research in top public administration journals is relatively rare, and what does exist tends to rely on case study methods. Our longitudinal reform mapping approach allows researchers to comprehensively document reform histories that can be used to identify patterns in combination with carefully triangulated observational data. Taking this longitudinal perspective on reform efforts, especially across multiple country contexts, helps reveal patterns of reform adoption and implementation that complement and provide context within which to interpret more focused case studies and impact evaluations as well as cross-national surveys of practice (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004; OECD 2005; Hammerschmid *et al* 2019). This is similar in spirit to other efforts to construct narrative histories of the use of performance management policies in specific countries (e.g. Ingraham 1993; Ayee 2001; Perry *et al* 2009; Ohemeng 2011; Donadelli *et al* 2020), but using a structured framework and comprehensive reform identification process is likely to have advantages of comprehensiveness, comparability, and consistency that help public administration scholars tackle the broad, big-picture questions of reform that are so often overlooked within the discipline (Van Slyke 2010).

The remainder of this article proceeds as follows. Section 2 defines the paper's scope and situates it within existing literature on individual-level performance management policies. Section 3 introduces longitudinal reform mapping as a research approach, presents our research questions, and describes our empirical reform mapping methodology and original data

collection. Section 4 constructs brief but rich narrative histories of civil service reforms in each country. Section 5 analyzes the adoption, design, and (non-)implementation of individual-level performance management policies. Section 6 discusses the unintended benefits derived from some of the reforms, and Section 7 concludes.

## **2. Scope and existing literature**

Our article focuses on individual-level performance management policies, which we define for the purpose of our study as personnel policies that aim to systematically link individual public servants' performance to some form of reward or sanction. This definition includes policies that operate at the levels both of senior leadership (e.g. performance contracts or agreements with managers) as well as rank-and-file civil servants (e.g. annual performance appraisal systems). We consider rewards and sanctions in their broadest sense as any incentive that aims to link extrinsic benefits and costs to individuals' measured performance, potentially ranging from explicit pay-for-performance schemes to performance-linked salary increments or promotion and/or termination decisions. Empirically, we focus on core civil service bureaucrats in central government policy and administration roles such as staff at national sector ministries, and exclude frontline civil servants (e.g. teachers, health workers, tax officials) and officials in sub-national levels of government. However, we exclude organization-level policies such as organizational performance management, payment-by-results, and performance budgeting from our scope. For the remainder of the article, all references to "performance management" schemes should be read as applying exclusively to individual-level performance management.

Within this definition, there exist numerous studies of the implementation, effectiveness, and correlates of individual-level performance management policies in public administration and

adjacent disciplines (e.g. Radin 2006; Perry *et al* 2009; Georgellis *et al* 2011; Bawole *et al* 2013; Bellé and Cantarelli 2015; Ohemeng *et al* 2015, 2018). While a full review of this literature is beyond the scope of this paper, systematic reviews by Weibel *et al* (2010) and Hasnain *et al* (2014) provide excellent summaries of the existing literature. They each find decidedly mixed impacts of performance management systems on bureaucratic performance at the individual-level, and each note important limitations in the rigor and coverage of the literature, particularly with respect to core (as opposed to frontline) civil servants.

But while the existing literature on individual-level performance management has provided numerous important insights, its usefulness as a guide for policy ultimately depends on whether the specific cases of reform or policy introduction on which it rests are representative of the full universe of governments' efforts to introduce such policies. The set of policies that get researched and evaluated (and thus appear in the literature) could potentially be unrepresentative for a number of plausible reasons: if research tended to focus on high-profile successes and/or failures; if cases for which more data exists are more likely to be evaluated, and data availability is also correlated with policy success; if impact evaluations conducted with researchers' participation are more likely to be implemented with high fidelity or better designed; or if research tended to focus more on cases which actually proceeded to full implementation and thus "got off the ground" long enough to be evaluated. These issues are not specific to the performance management literature and are not shortcomings of these studies themselves, but rather are common concerns of case selection and site-selection bias that exist with all qualitative and quantitative case-based research (George and Bennett 2006; Allcott 2015). Importantly, if there is bias in the selection of cases for research, then even aggregating these findings across cases through systematic reviews and meta-analyses may not

yield an accurate picture of the distribution of outcomes that result from introducing individual-level performance management policies.

### **3. Longitudinal reform mapping**

#### *3.1 Theoretical basis and research questions*

Longitudinal reform mapping is the systematic process of identifying and describing the universe of efforts to introduce public management reforms over time within a given context. Rather than seeking to infer the effectiveness of a particular policy by studying its impacts in a specific case, longitudinal reform mapping instead seeks to document and analyze patterns in the adoption, design, and implementation of public management reforms over time, based on the universe of efforts to introduce such policies in a given country. This approach can remedy some of the shortcomings of case-based methods, by ensuring that inferences are drawn based on the full set of efforts to introduce a policy in a given context and by examining whether variations in policy design or time-variant aspects of context affect reform outcomes (holding constant time-invariant aspects of country context).

Longitudinal reform mapping's focus on breadth, consistency, and comprehensiveness of evidence across many reforms means that it aims to simultaneously analyze multiple reform cases with different levels of available data, implementation success, and counterfactuals. This makes it better suited for generating descriptive evidence than causal evidence. Such descriptive evidence is perhaps more useful for studying the design and implementation of reforms than their impacts. Since reforms' actual implementation often differs significantly from their *de jure* design, effective implementation represents a necessary mediating step between policies' introduction and their impact, so documenting patterns in design and implementation is valuable. While researchers can still seek to analyze reforms' impacts using

the cases identified and data gathered as part of the longitudinal reform mapping process, the inconsistent historical availability of credible counterfactuals and data necessary for rigorous impact evaluations means that claims about the effectiveness of reforms will typically need to be carefully moderated.

Although theoretical and methodological approaches for the longitudinal study of specific organizations have been elaborated (e.g. Pettigrew 1990), we are unaware of frameworks for the systematic longitudinal mapping and study of public administration reforms. There exist numerous descriptive cross-country studies of public administration trends (e.g. Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004; Hammerschmid *et al* 2019) which also help to contextualize specific case studies within a broader context, but these rarely take reform introduction as their unit of analysis, are selective in their coverage of reform trends, and are often cross-sectional in nature.

Given our goal of identifying patterns in the actual design, implementation, and outcomes of reforms, we adopt a primarily inductive approach to our enquiry in which we use patterns in our data to develop and probe a theoretical framework (Ashworth *et al* 2019). We are guided in this by insights from the existing literature on individual-level performance, but do not pre-define hypotheses to be tested. Our data collection and analysis are guided by a set of research questions aimed at searching for and probing such patterns. These questions are both descriptive and analytical. First, how often have governments sought to introduce performance management reforms that seek to link individual performance to some form of reward or sanction? Second, how have these policies been designed? Third, to what extent have these policies been implemented as envisioned, and why (or why not)? And finally, to what extent and in which ways have these policies actually influenced the day-to-day behaviors and attitudes of the individual civil servants at whom they are targeted?

### *3.2 Empirical methodology for longitudinal reform mapping*

Our longitudinal reform mapping approach consists of four main steps. First, we define the definition and scope of reforms that will be included and excluded from the mapping. These may differ from study to study according to theoretical interests and research questions. Second, as wide a range of data as possible is gathered using a combination of systematic search of secondary data as well as targeted primary data collection, in order to identify the universe of reform efforts within the pre-defined scope, geographic or institutional context, and time period. Since data availability varies widely over time, the relevant set of data sources is also likely to vary from study to study; what is crucial is to gather as rich and credible a body of data as possible from a range of sources. Third, this data is used to construct a comprehensive timeline of reform efforts and to describe the reforms' content and processes of adoption, design, implementation, and (to the extent possible) impacts. Finally, based on this identification of the relevant units of analysis (i.e. reform efforts) and triangulating across the multiple data sources, more analytical research questions can be studied – in our case, revolving around the mechanisms underlying the implementation and effect of performance management policies. The remainder of this section describes our first two steps of scope definition and data collection, the following section describes how we construct reform histories for our two country contexts, and Sections 5 and 6 contain our analysis of the dynamics of performance management reforms.

For our purpose, we define a *reform* or *reform episode* as a strategic and intentional structural or managerial change to the internal administration of civil service organizations, whether *de jure* or *de facto*, aimed at improving bureaucratic performance or efficiency. This broader list of reforms includes individual-level performance management reforms as well as a broader

range of reforms such as the establishment of client service charters, organizational performance improvement plans, or cross-government coordination reforms. Individual-level performance management policies are thus a sub-set of this broader group of reforms. We exclude reforms that take place within a single organization; reforms that are exclusively customer-facing or affecting frontline workers only; and exclusively fiscally oriented reforms, although some reforms with a fiscal impact (e.g. pay reform) are included if improving performance was a significant objective of the reform.

We gather four different types of qualitative data on these reforms.<sup>1</sup> Due to space constraints, we briefly summarize the key features of this data collection here, and present full details in Appendix A. First, we conducted extensive reviews of publicly available donor and government documents on reforms in each country, using a comprehensive database of over 1.5 million donor projects (Tierney *et al* 2011) to help us conduct targeted internet searches for official government and donor policy documents bearing on relevant reforms. Altogether we were able to collect 103 such documents for Ghana and 55 for Zambia.

Second, we conducted an extensive literature review of existing research on civil service reform and related topics in Ghana and Zambia, using a combination of targeted search (based on information from the previous step) and systematic keyword searches in various databases. Altogether we identified 113 relevant articles.

---

<sup>1</sup> We gathered these data for all performance-oriented reforms implemented in each country, but in this article we focus mainly those sources that bear on the individual-level performance management reforms that comprise our scope.

Third, we conducted a set of semi-structured interviews in both countries with two sets of individuals: those who were personally involved in designing, implementing, and/or evaluating civil service reforms during the study period, often in senior roles within the civil service or as key donors or consultants; and rank-and-file civil servants who were *not* directly involved in designing or implementing reforms, but whose work should have been affected by the reforms (according to their intended design). This provided us rich insight into the design and implementation of the reforms as well as the extent to which they actually influenced day-to-day practice within government bureaucracies. Interviewees were offered a choice of whether their interview was reported anonymously or non-anonymously, and only a small number of interviews were audio recorded. Altogether we were able to interview 27 senior-level reform designers and 33 rank-and-file civil servants, roughly evenly split across each country. Appendix A discusses further details of interviewee selection, steps taken to ensure data quality and avoid biased responses, and data reporting, and Appendices C and D reproduce the interview guides we used.

Fourth, in Ghana we received permission to conduct research in the archives and public records of the Office of the Head of Civil Service (OHCS), comprising dozens of boxes of documents from the 1980s to the present. These records provide a unique window on internal discussions, plans, and information contemporaneous to reform design and evaluation across this time period.

Each of these data sources has obvious strengths and limitations, and we triangulate across them in order to assess the accuracy, biases, and perspectives of each. Altogether, they provide us with an exceptionally rich window onto the design, implementation, successes, and failures of civil service reforms in our two study countries. The following sections draw on this body

of empirical evidence to first present information on the broader patterns of reforms in each country to establish the context within which individual-level performance management policies were implemented, then focus in to analyze the design, implementation, and outcomes of individual performance management policies more specifically.

#### **4. Mapping 30 years of civil service reform in Zambia and Ghana**

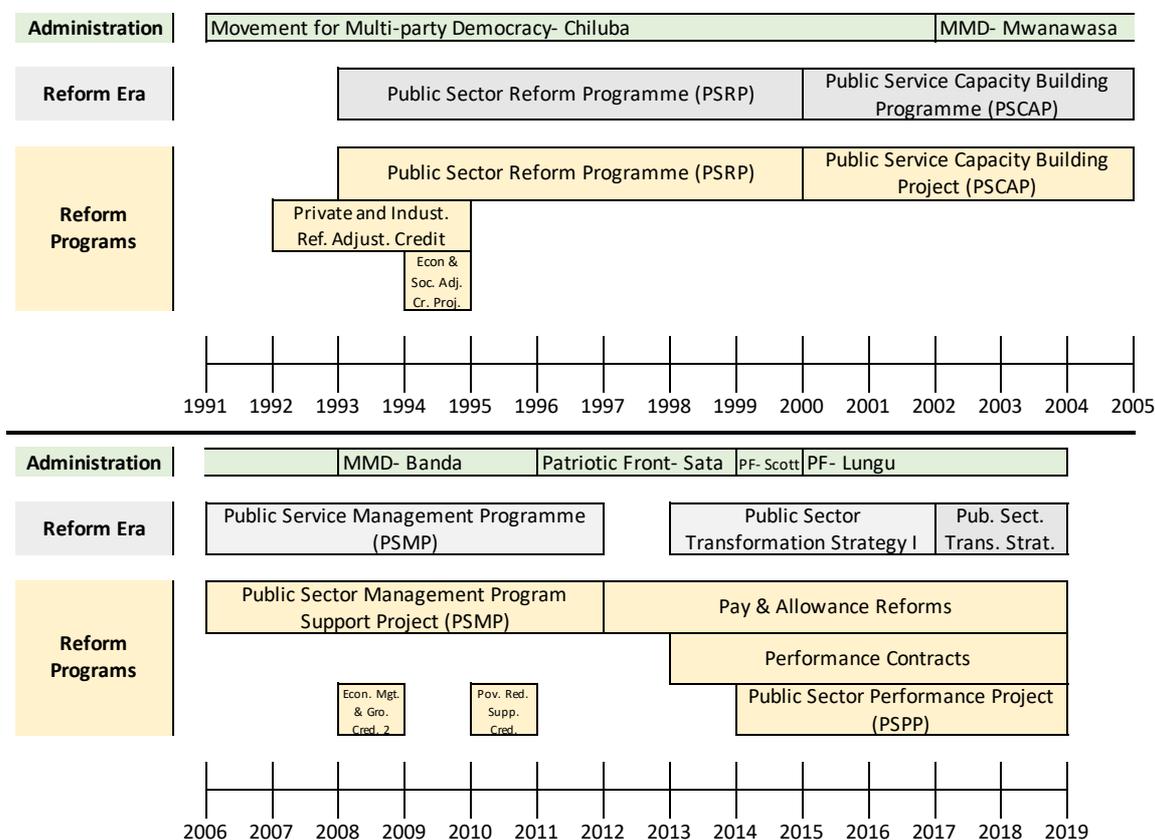
We start our mapping in the late 1980s for Ghana and early 1990s for Zambia, which was the period when an era of economic crisis gave rise to political and economic liberalization and launched the modern history of performance-oriented civil service reforms in each country. Both countries are mid-sized anglophone states in Africa that inherited British administrative traditions from the colonial era which persist in many ways but had also evolved during a series of post-colonial reforms. Importantly, both countries have a separation between political and bureaucratic career tracks, which Dahlstrom and Lapuente (2009) argue increases the likelihood of performance-linked incentives being successfully used. Both countries have been competitive multi-party democracies since 1991 (Zambia) or 1992 (Ghana), and both countries started the period classified as low-income countries but transitioned to lower-middle income status in 2010 (World Bank 2020).

The remainder of this section provides a rich description of the history of civil service reforms in Zambia and Ghana, with a focus on the individual-level performance management components of these reforms. The final part of this section synthesizes the observed instances of individual-level performance management policies into an encompassing theoretical framework to guide the following section's analysis of the implementation and outcomes of these reforms.

#### *4.1 Zambia*

Zambia's modern history of civil service reform includes five instances of individual-level performance management reforms: three efforts focused on introducing incentives into the annual appraisal cycle for rank-and-file civil servants, and two efforts focused on establishing performance contracts for organizational leadership. This history began with the Public Sector Reform Programme (PSRP), which was instigated by the 1991 transition from a single-party state to a multi-party democracy. The new government faced the dual challenges of making significant budget cuts to cope with a fiscal crisis (under an IMF programme), and professionalizing and depoliticizing a public service which had become bloated and patronage-ridden. The PSRP comprised three components: 1) downsizing of staff and organizational restructuring; 2) performance management of staff; and 3) decentralisation (Litula 2001; Interview ZAM11, May 2019; Ndashe Yumba, Interview, May 2019). While the overarching emphasis of PSRP was on the reduction of staff numbers (Madimutsa 2016), alongside this, the Performance Management Package under the second component introduced a new Performance Management System, the most notable element of which was a shift from the longstanding Annual Confidential Report (ACR) system of staff appraisal to the more modern Annual Performance Appraisal System (APAS) (Madimutsa 2016, Leonard Hikaumba, Interview, May 2019). Whereas the ACR consisted solely of a supervisor scoring each subordinate without discussing their performance with them, under APAS subordinates and their supervisor jointly undertook work planning and target setting at the start of the year and assessment of performance at the end of the year (Kiragu 1998; Chandiwira Nyirenda, Interview, May 2019; Leonard Hikaumba, Interview, May 2019). The more transparent APAS system was thus envisioned as the mechanism through which staff activities would be linked to organizational plans (through target setting) and incentivized (by linking performance appraisal to career progression and pay increments).

**Figure 1: Timeline of Civil Service Reforms in Zambia**



Source: Authors’ synthesis based on document review and interviews.

The second wave of reforms took place from 2000-05 under a successor project to PSRP, the Public Service Capacity Building Program (PSCAP), backed by a World Bank project of the same acronym. Whereas staff performance management under PSRP had been focused on structures and processes, PSCAP focused on the “capacity” of individuals and organizations to deliver as the lack of logistical and financial resources was increasingly perceived as a major barrier. In addition, PSCAP saw the first effort to put Permanent Secretaries (the bureaucratic heads of ministries) onto performance contracts (Valentine 2002; Interview ZAM7, May

2019). These performance contracts were seen as the primary means of performance management for Permanent Secretaries, who were not covered by the APAS appraisal system. At the same time, the development of a new pay policy placed an emphasis not only on issues like raising salaries, cost control, and decompressing the payscale, but also on establishing performance linked incentives such as selective acceleration, rewards, and sanctions (Valentine 2002). While PSCAP had initially been formulated with a long 13-year time horizon – seen as necessary to mobilize the requisite scale of funds and embed cultural change – an unfavourable mid-term assessment led to the programme being curtailed in 2005.

After a lull in performance management reforms from 2006-12, civil service reform was then revitalized in 2013 by two successive Public Sector Transformation Strategies (PSTS I, 2013-17; PSTS II, 2018-22). The PSTS was an internally developed and driven reform programme originating from the Cabinet Office under Secretary to Cabinet and Head of Civil Service Dr. Roland Msiska. In addition to reiterating the importance of staff performance management through APAS – lamenting the lack of “effective rewards and sanctions” that had been attached to the results of APAS (Republic of Zambia 2012) – the PSTS saw the re-introduction of performance contracts for Permanent Secretaries. Part of a renewed emphasis on strategic management, these contracts were couched in the National Development Plan and later in the Balanced Scorecards introduced for each institution. These performance contracts began to be cascaded down to Directors in 2018, with the aim of eventually cascading them down to all levels of staff so as to achieve a harmonized performance management and appraisal system through the civil service (Felix Mushubati, Interview, May 2019) – a direct echo of the initial vision of the PSRP’s Performance Management Package in the 1990s.

**Table 1: Summary of Individual Performance Management Initiatives in Zambia**

<b>Reform era</b>	<b>Individual appraisal &amp; performance management</b>	<b>Performance contracts for bureaucratic leadership</b>
Public Sector Reform Programme (PSRP), 1993-99	APAS introduced	
Public Service Capacity Building Project (PSCAP), 2000-05	Pay Policy started development	Performance contracts for Perm. Secretaries (first effort)
Public Service Management Program (PSMP), 2006-11		
Public Service Transformation Programme I & II (2013-present)	Reinforcing use of APAS; aim to introduce incentives	Performance contracts for Perm. Secretaries (second effort)

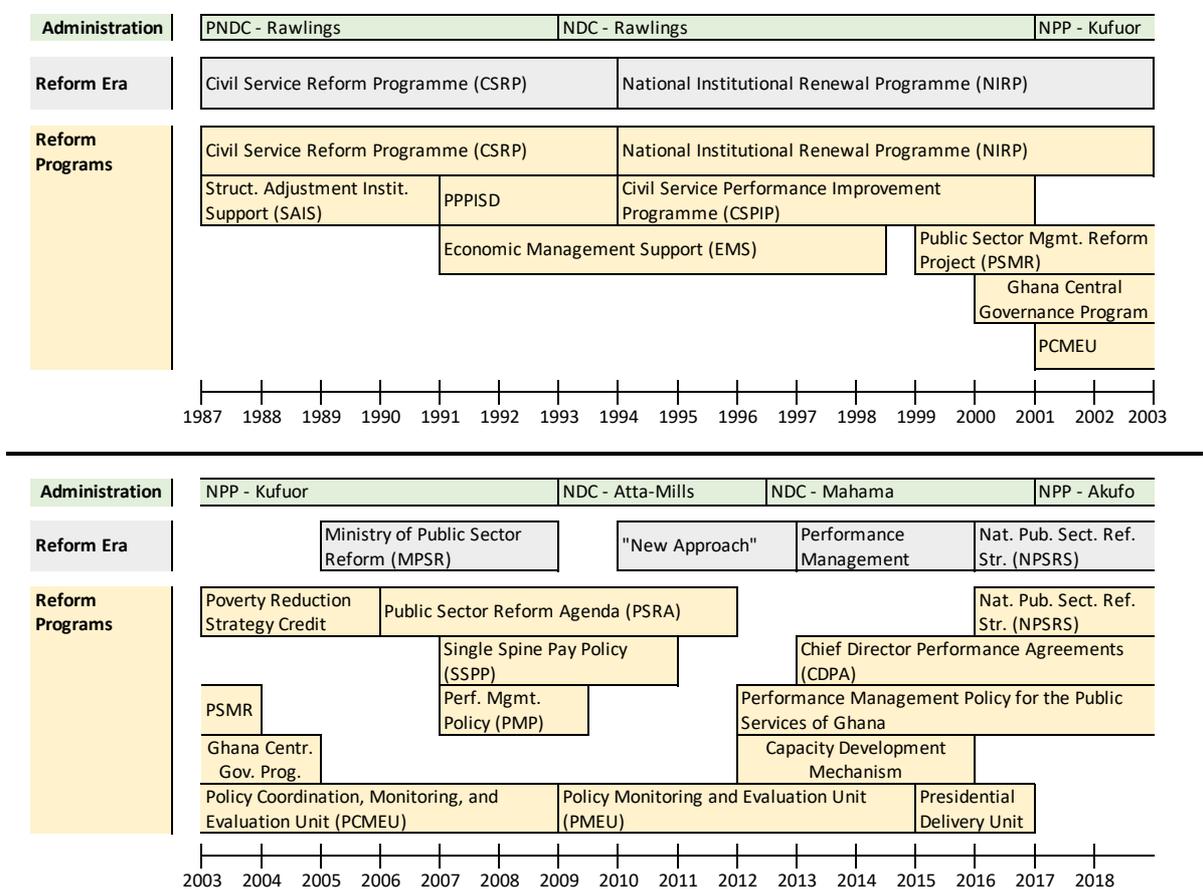
Source: Authors' synthesis based on document review and interviews.

#### 4.2 Ghana

Ghana during this period saw even more frequent reforms than Zambia, with a total of seven performance management reform efforts. The first instalment in Ghana's modern civil service reforms, the Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP), was a near-identical predecessor to Zambia's PSRP. Running from 1987-93, the CSRP was a World Bank-imposed reform programme (Office of the Head of Civil Service 1995a) which aimed to reduce the size of the public sector through retrenchment of staff. While primarily fiscally motivated, this reform also aimed to improve performance and modernize performance management (World Bank 1987; Adei and Boachie-Danquah 2002). As with the PSRP, the improvement in performance was intended to arise mainly through the staff appraisal system, as the traditional Annual Confidential Reporting System was replaced in 1992 by a more interactive Performance Evaluation System (PES) (Public Services Commission N.D.). This new appraisal system comprised joint target-setting and assessment by supervisors and their subordinates, and was intended to provide an objective basis for linking performance to rewards and sanctions. This

performance management system was intended to provide an objective basis for increasing pay for the remaining (and hopefully better-performing) civil servants after fiscal space had been created by staff reductions (Nana Agyekum-Dwamena, Interview, December 2018), with organizations being directed to set aside 10 percent of their personnel budgets for merit-linked cash awards starting in 1992 (Office of the Head of Civil Service 1991).

**Figure 2: Timeline of Civil Service Reforms in Ghana**



Source: Authors' synthesis based on document review and interviews.

As CSRP wrapped up, a team of civil servants within the Office of the Head of Civil Service (OHCS) led by Head of Service Dr. Robert Dodoo began to plan a successor reform in which performance improvement would be the main focus, rather than an afterthought to cost-cutting. The resulting Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP) was a “homegrown” reform that was pitched to and funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), although it was couched within the public sector-wide National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP) which was aimed more at making fiscal savings through structural reforms to subvented agencies. While CSPIP also included components focused on organizational performance diagnostics and a performance improvement fund (like Zambia’s PSCAP), it also instituted a Performance Agreement System (PAS) as a performance management tool for Chief Directors (the bureaucratic heads of organizations equivalent to Permanent Secretaries) (Public Services Commission N.D.). As with individual-level (PES) appraisals, this started with the definition of a schedule of targets at the start of the year (albeit with more detail and structure than the PES) which were intended to correspond to the organization’s workplan and which would be evaluated at the end of the year – again, with the intention of using these as the basis for allocating rewards and punishments. CSPIP began to wind down by 2000, when the expiration of the five-year DFID grant coincided with a transition in presidential regime and the subsequent departure of Dr. Dodoo (William Kartey, Interview, December 2018).

Presidential elections in 2000 were won by the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), which spent its first years in power focusing on economic growth and poverty reduction through Ghana’s first Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan. Civil service reform came back on the agenda in earnest in 2003, when the Public Sector Reform Secretariat (PSRS) was created under the Office of the Senior Minister and commissioned a team of consultants to review NIRP

(Ohemeng and Anebo 2012). In 2005, a Ministry of Public Sector Reform (MPSR) was created under the Office of the President. The MPSR created a five-year Public Sector Reform Agenda (PSRA). Much of the PSRA continued CSPIP's work programme of organization-focused interventions, but the most salient component of MPSR's work was the harmonization and rationalization of payscales and negotiating processes across the public service through the Single Spine Pay Policy (SSPP) that would be administered by the newly created Fair Wages and Salaries Commission (FWSC) (Annan-Prah and Ohemeng 2015). The SSPP was seen both as a financial management reform as well as a step towards performance-linked pay, as reflected in FWSC's dual mandate: first, payscales would be harmonized and increased, and then salaries would be linked to performance. This agenda also brought the issue of staff performance management back to the fore, and from 2007 the Public Services Commission began the development of a new Performance Management Policy to revisit the appraisal process – although the goals remained substantially the same (Kwame Adorbor, Interview, December 2018). In 2008, however, the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) won the presidency, as a result of which the MPSR was downgraded back to a secretariat (PSRS) and the performance management policy as well as the other activities of MPSR lost steam.

After several years in which few new administrative reforms were launched, from 2012 the public sector reform agenda came to be dominated not by reforms driven by political leadership or sweeping donor programs, but by the revitalization of performance management programmes driven from within by bureaucratic leadership. The Public Services Commission began developing a new Performance Management Policy for the Public Services of Ghana (Commonwealth 2016). The new Policy introduced a new annual appraisal template and slightly more elaborate process, but maintained the same approach to improving individual productivity by combining annual target-setting and assessment as the basis for allocating

rewards and punishments. At the same time, in 2013/14 the Office of the Head of Civil Service began working to re-introduce Chief Director Performance Agreements (CDPAs). The CDPAs were rolled out initially with French and Canadian donor support but subsequently funded from the general budget (Interview GHA7, December 2018). This was consciously modelled on the performance contracting system that had been created under CSPIP but fell away after 2000 – unsurprisingly perhaps, as now-Head of Civil Service Nana Agyekum-Dwamena was a junior member of the CSPIP design and implementation team during the 1990s – with even the three

**Table 2: Summary of Individual Performance Management Initiatives in Ghana**

<b>Reform era</b>	<b>Individual appraisal &amp; performance management</b>	<b>Performance contracts for bureaucratic leadership</b>
Civil Service Reform Programme (CSRP), 1987-93	PES introduced to replace ACR	
Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP), 1994-2000		Performance agreements for Chief Directors (first effort)
Ministry of Public Sector Reform (MPSR), Public Sector Reform Agenda (PSRA), & Single Spine Pay Policy (SSPP), 2006-11	Linking pay to performance the second step in the Single Spine Pay Policy, after regrading and decompression	Performance contracts nominally part of PSRA
Perf. Mgmt. Policy (PMP), 2007-09	Revised performance management policy stemming from MPSR/ PSRA reforms	
Performance Management Policy for the Public Services of Ghana, 2012-19	Revised and simplified performance management policy	
Chief Director Performance Agreements (CDPA), 2013-19		Performance agreements for Chief Directors (second effort)
Nat. Pub. Sect. Ref. Str. (NPSRS), 2016-19	New national public sector reform strategy maintains emphasis on performance-linked pay for staff and leadership	

Source: Authors' synthesis based on document review and interviews.

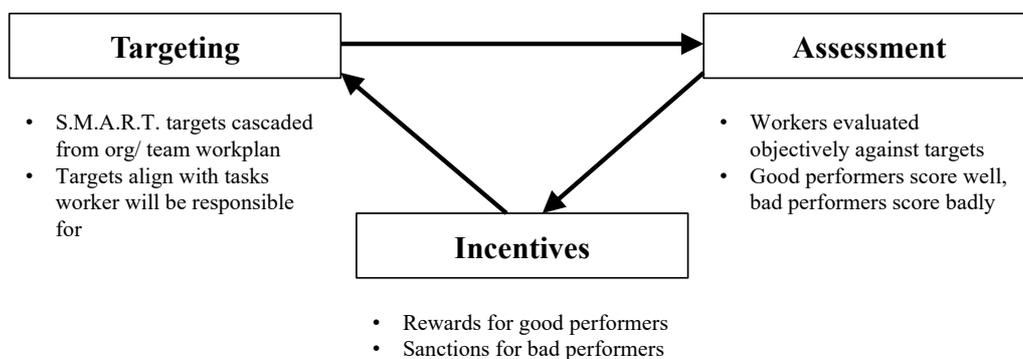
sections of the template (institution-specific deliverables, general requirements, and personal development) remaining the same. The revitalization of these two key performance management systems complemented a range of other incremental revisions to promotion and training procedures (GHA\_INT1). At their core, though, they still shared the vision that “every individual including Heads of the Public Services Chief Executive Officers/Chief Directors, Heads of Departments and Directors are to have annual performance targets whose attainment will be enforced by appropriate combinations of incentives and sanctions.” (Public Services Commission N.D., 3) Both initiatives were still ongoing at the time of research for this article.

The most recent wave of reform in Ghana was triggered by the government’s 2015 approach to the IMF for a programme loan in the face of a worsening fiscal situation, which coincided with a latent demand from a range of stakeholders for improvements in the effectiveness of public service delivery (Samuel Abu-Bonsrah, Interview, December 2018). However, the IMF left the details of the administrative reforms to be developed by the government (Kodjo Mensah-Abrampa, Interview, December 2018). The resulting National Public Sector Reform Strategy (NPSRS) was initially developed and approved by Cabinet in 2015/16, but after the 2016 change in presidential administration the NPSRS was subsequently reviewed and some details revised (while retaining the thrust of the original document) (Kodjo Mensah-Abrampa, Interview, December 2018). At the time of research, the idea of instituting 360-degree evaluation had been mooted as part of the NPSRS reforms (Kodjo Mensah-Abrampa, Interview, December 2018) and the goal of developing performance-related pay was reiterated (Government of Ghana 2017), but the cross-sectoral internal administrative reform agenda aspects of the NPSRS for the most part were drawn from previously defined work programmes in the public sector that were ongoing during the design of the NPSRS.

### 4.3 The design of performance management reforms

Performance management reforms have been central to almost every episode of civil service reform in both Ghana and Zambia for the last 30 years. While these performance management systems have differed in their details, they have shared a dominant underlying model. This model, represented in Figure 3, views performance management as an annual cycle of three components. First, at the start of the year, officers and supervisors jointly agree targets for the year, which should align with the responsibilities or tasks the officer will actually undertake during the year. These targets should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART), so that they can be evaluated objectively. At the end of the year (potentially after mid-year interim reviews), officers are then assessed on their performance against these targets. This assessment is intended to differentiate good performers from bad performers. Finally, the model assumes that some type of incentives should be linked to the assessment results. These incentives could include any combination of rewards and sanctions, which could be financial, non-financial, or related to career progression. The expectation of these incentives being linked to their performance is seen as a necessary tool to get civil servants to exert effort.

**Figure 3: Dominant Model of Performance Management in Ghana and Zambia**



Source: Authors' synthesis based on document review and interviews.

This model of how performance management systems aim to improve productivity is enshrined in formal policy statements (e.g. Public Services Commission N.D.). For instance, Zambia's 2002 Medium-Term Strategy for Enhancing Pay and Conditions of Service stated that "The newly articulated pay policy should as much as possible, aim at explicitly linking pay to performance, signalling a major change in the incentive system and in performance expectations. Rewards and penalties are both vital for a well functioning incentive regime ...Meaningful performance incentives are a must" (Valentine 2002, 92). Similarly, Ghana's 2017 National Public Sector Reform Strategy aimed to "Introduce a performance-related pay based on a well-designed performance contracting system" (Government of Ghana 2017, 31). Even more importantly, this mental model is also widely internalized throughout both Zambia's and Ghana's civil service, at both senior and junior levels. As one civil servant in Zambia explained, "if I do not perform then the Permanent Secretary will not perform. I do not want to see my permanent secretary fail. That is why we set goals and targets, we need to show if we met the target. We need to prove we shine...It is about time people realised they are being paid for something" (Interview ZAM22, May 2019). Another attractive feature of this model is that it allows targets to be cascaded down from national plans to organizational workplans to leaders' performance contracts to individual appraisals, neatly nesting individual performance management within strategic management. This unified vision is summarized by one individual involved in these reforms in Zambia as "we're trying to create a line of sight from the PS down to the last person." (Interview ZAM14, May 2019)

This model represents the ideal-type performance management system envisioned in these waves of successive reform efforts in Zambia and Ghana. Of course, the actual implementation

of reforms often leads to results that do not match what these model systems intended. The next section documents what actually happened when these reforms were implemented.

## **5. The implementation of performance management reforms in Zambia and Ghana**

To what extent did these reforms succeed in their goal of implementing performance management systems that combine target-setting, assessment, and incentives? We find that while the systems were formally adopted and used at least to some extent, *in no case did they succeed in delivering performance-linked incentives*. Even without the promised incentives there is some evidence that the systems proved useful in some cases, due to improved communication and clarity – and in the case of performance contracts for leadership, greater public scrutiny of their records. However, the failed attempts to link hard incentives to performance may have undermined these “softer” benefits of the systems. We discuss this first for the case of the annual appraisal system for rank-and-file civil servants, and second for the case of performance agreements or contracts for senior leadership.

### *5.1 Annual staff appraisals and performance*

The annual appraisal systems of both Ghana and Zambia share the common goal of providing an objective basis for incentivizing performance. Since the creation of these modern annual appraisal systems in both countries in the 1990s, however, instances of actually administering rewards or sanctions based on the appraisals are extremely rare. In Zambia, for instance, external reviews in both 2005 (University of Zambia 2005) and 2008 (Universalia 2008) reported that in practice there were no rewards or sanctions attached to the results of the APAS appraisal, contrary to the policy’s design and reformers’ intentions. This sentiment was echoed in the interviews conducted for this study (in which interviewees typically referred to the more immediate past), with nearly all interviewees agreeing that the appraisals were simply a

formality required to be eligible for promotions, confirmation of positions, and annual pay increments – without any linkage to performance. For example, one senior officer remarked of APAS that it “was not taken seriously. If you have an appraisal, you need incentives,” (Interview ZAM7, May 2019) while another stated “APAS would make sense if there was something actually done as a result, it is just seen as a formality,” (Leonard Hikaumba, Interview, May 2019), and another commented “APAS has mainly been used for administrative convenience...I have never seen someone be demoted due to bad performance.” (Interview ZAM17, May 2019) Only one interviewee reported seeing any type of sanctions applied during their time in the public service – the demotion of three officers – although it is unclear whether these demotions were actually based on the APAS itself (Interview ZAM24, May 2019). The situation in Ghana is similar, with no reports of appraisals being used as the basis for rewards or sanctions, both with respect to the initial usage of the PES system and associated merit pay introduced by the CSR (Office of the Head of Civil Service 1995b), the renewed efforts to link pay to performance under CSPIP (Dodoo 1997) and to the more recently revised appraisal systems re-designed by the Public Services Commission (Nana Agyekum-Dwamena, Interview, December 2018; Interview GHA12, December 2018; Government of Ghana N.D.).

In addition to failing to incentivize performance, governments’ failure to deliver rewards and sanctions also works to undermine the setting of targets and appraisal of performance. The setting of targets at the start of the year is supposed to be an interactive process in which officers and their supervisors not only set targets for the purpose of providing an objective basis for evaluation, but also to guide their work and allocate responsibilities. Yet due to the lack of consequences for setting targets that are not “SMART”, an evaluation of Zambia’s performance management system in the mid-2000s concluded that there “seems to be an attitude that whatever is written will be accepted” and a “[l]ack of a sense that the process is

really important other than as a means of getting an increment approved” (Universalia 2008, 26).

Many interviewees expressed the view that the lack of incentives undermined the seriousness with which the end-of-year assessment process was approached by supervisors and subordinates alike, with some officers simply filling it out themselves without any discussion with their supervisor, only filling it out immediately before promotion procedures, or not filling it out at all (e.g. Interview GHA9, December 2018; Interview GHA17, January 2019; Interview ZAM17, May 2019; Interview ZAM21, May 2019; Interview ZAM26, May 2019). In both countries there is a large range of variation across organizations, supervisors, and time in how commonly and seriously the process is undertaken. But although formal compliance with the process is the norm, the evaluation of Zambia’s performance management system explained:

“As time has passed the real purpose of the APAS report has become the justification of pay increments and promotions. This has led to the a [sic] view that completion of the form is a necessary evil to which one should devote as little time and thought as possible. The result in many instances is a report replete with inconsistencies, contradictions and very little assessment of performance that bears little relation to a real work plan and virtually none to the organisational and strategic plan.” (Universalia 2008, 27)

When it comes to actually assessing officers’ performance, there is a tendency in both countries for nearly all officers to be rated highly – regardless of their actual performance. For example, one officer in Ghana lamented that “the appraisals demand a lot of collaborative work. You need to sit with your boss but that is not actually done. If you give me the opportunity to fill in

my own scoresheet, you would give yourself 98% but we know that it cannot be that.” (Interview GHA17, January 2019) Similarly, interviewees in Zambia expressed their view that “every appraisal form is above target” (Interview ZAM17, May 2019). This pattern undermines not only the possibility of using the scores to administer incentives – since rewarding nearly everybody would be prohibitively expensive – but also their informational value for measuring performance or guiding career progression. As one senior civil servant in Ghana lamented, “I cannot rely on this instrument to tell me anything...Everybody is very very good, but you and I know that when it comes down to productivity, not everybody is excellent.” (Interview GHA13, December 2018).

Similarly, supervisors naturally find it hard to be strict in their assessments when many planned activities contained in officers’ workplans are called off due to factors outside their control. This may be due in part to the inherently unpredictable nature of much civil service work. As the Zambian evaluators noted, “The best laid work plans can be de-railed when urgent and pressing work duties displace work plan targets. This displacement often results in the work plan being compromised, and in some instances, rendered useless as a planning document. Political directives from above, and outside of the scope of the work plan, must be recognized as part of the working culture...” (Universalia 2008, 31) In addition, though, civil servants in both countries have to cope with the effects of unexpected budgetary shortfalls or non-releases of budgeted funds. One architect of Zambia’s PSCAP reform explained that individual targets were usually taken from organizational workplans, but since the Ministry of Finance would frequently give ministries budget ceilings of only 65 percent of the cost of these workplans it was inevitable that many activities would never be completed – how, then, could an individual be blamed for not meeting their targets? (Chandiwira Nyirenda, Interview, May 2019) With vague and incomplete targets, the expectation that the results are merely a formality needed for

bureaucratic reasons, logistical and financial shortfalls, and the potentially discouraging effects of poor reviews for individuals and team dynamics, it is little wonder that few supervisors assign appraisal scores that correspond to individuals' actual performance.

### *5.2 Performance contracts for leadership*

The implementation of performance contracts for bureaucratic leaders has followed a similar pattern as the implementation of staff appraisal systems: despite multiple attempts to introduce them as a way to link performance to incentives, in neither country have rewards or sanctions been consistently applied as envisioned. However, as with individual appraisals, there is suggestive evidence that some of the intended benefits can be derived even without the application of incentives by promoting communication and influencing organizational culture.

In Zambia, the initial institution of a performance contract system was done under PSCAP in the early 2000s. While technocratic reform design process proposed a comprehensive performance contracting system, what ended up happening was that Permanent Secretaries were put onto fixed-term three-year contracts (rather than the permanent and pensionable civil servants they had been), but without meaningful setting of targets, assessment, or incentives. (Interview ZAM7, May 2019) Permanent Secretaries were willing to accept the temporary contracts because it promised to be a lucrative three years prior to retirement (Interview ZAM7, May 2019), and the arrangement was also “user-friendly” to politicians in that it gave them greater discretion and leverage over Permanent Secretaries (John Kasanga, Interview, May 2019). However, Permanent Secretaries lacked not only annual targets but also basic job descriptions, so in practice there was no formal linkage between performance and incentives. (Interview ZAM11, May 2019)

The more recent effort to introduce performance contracts in 2015/16 addressed these shortcomings by creating clearly delineated schedules of targets each year. While the technocratic designers of the performance contracting scheme also proposed complementary measures such as meritocratic appointment and guaranteeing resources to achieve these targets, only the target-setting component was actually adopted (Interview ZAM11, May 2019). These targets were largely extracted from the ministry's work plan, which in turn came from the National Development Plan (Felix Mushabati, Interview, May 2019; Interview ZAM11, May 2019). However, since the National Development Plan itself is too ambitious, each Permanent Secretary's target was unrealistic, and so almost everyone scored poorly (Interview ZAM7, May 2019). To address the issue of resource sufficiency, the contracts now also state the obligations of the Government to the Permanent Secretary and discharge them from their responsibilities if these obligations are not met (Interview ZAM14, May 2019), but in a context where resource availability is frequently unpredictable, this may also make the contracts harder to use as an objective basis for evaluation. An even deeper issue is the question of the credibility of this contract, when the Presidency holds the ultimate say over Permanent Secretaries' appointments: if Permanent Secretaries' loyalty is to the appointing authority rather than the contract, then how can the performance contract be more than symbolic? (Moses Kondowe, Interview, May 2019)

In Ghana, the performance contracts introduced in the late 1990s under CSPIP made a promising start. Unlike in Zambia, Chief Directors were already non-permanent civil servants who were appointed and could be dismissed by the President (with formal checks by the Public Services Commission), so the termination or non-renewal of their contracts was an obvious tool. Indeed, one Chief Director's contract was not renewed during this area due to poor performance (Interview GHA7, December 2018). However, the contracting system fell victim

to political turnover after the 2000 election and contracts were not upheld, and the contracting system itself fell into intermittent use (Public Services Commission N.D., 1). After being reinstated in 2013/14, performance contracts have been consistently implemented in terms of target setting and assessment – with evaluation even conducted by external consultants – but no sanctions have yet been applied. In an illustration of the credibility problem the government faces in trying to follow-through with sanctions, in one instance when OHCS actually tried to terminate a poorly performing Chief Director’s contract, the Chief Director went behind their backs to the Office of the President and was able to secure a contract renewal (Interview GHA7, December 2018). Similar issues of limited resource availability also limit the government’s ability to sanction poor performers in Ghana, as Chief Directors are rightly able to effectively demand “address my financial problems and if I’m not meeting my targets then you can fire me” (Interview GHA7, December 2018). Otherwise, the only incentive attached to the exercise is the circulation of results (to a limited group within the Civil Service, not the general public) with prizes for the top scoring Chief Directors.

### *5.3 Explaining the non-implementation of reforms*

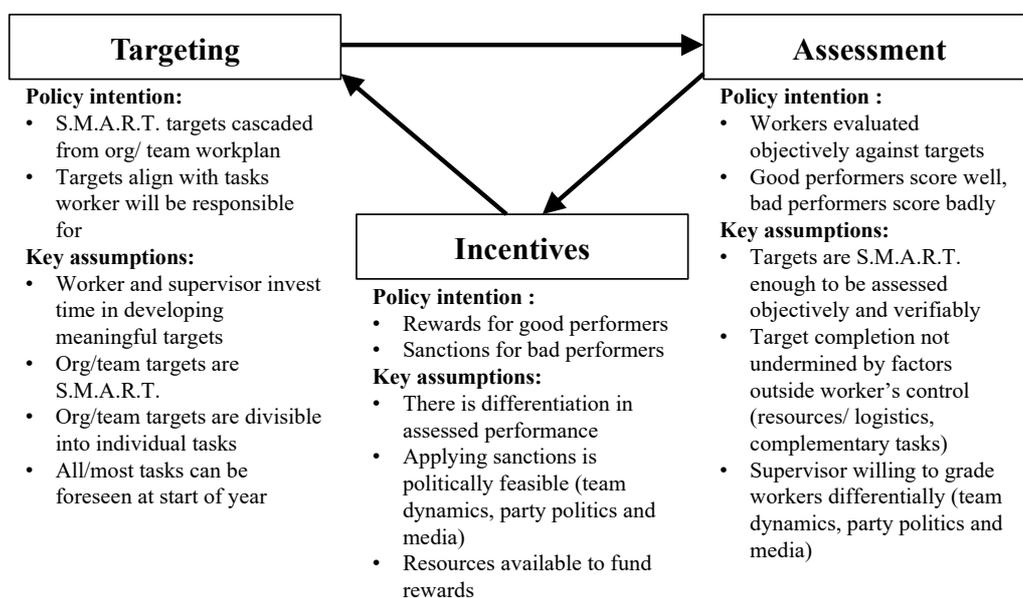
The key finding of this paper is that 30 years of performance management reforms in Zambia and Ghana have not led to any successful instances of systematizing the link between performance and incentives – either for bureaucratic leadership through performance contracts or rank-and-file bureaucrats through annual appraisals. To explain why the record of actual policy implementation differed from what was intended, we adapt Williams’s (2020) “mechanism mapping” approach. This method is based on juxtaposing the policy’s intended mechanism against a set of contextual assumptions that must hold in order for each step of the policy’s causal chain to hold, then comparing these contextual assumptions to the actual realities of the context.

Figure 4 summarizes the results of our analysis. Panel (a) contains the simplified model performance management cycle that these reforms aimed to create (based on Figure 3 above). To this model we have added a set of key assumptions which underlie the steps that were supposed to be taken at each point in the cycle, based on the evidence we present in section 4. Below this in panel (b), we have mapped out what actually tended to happen in both countries under these performance management systems.

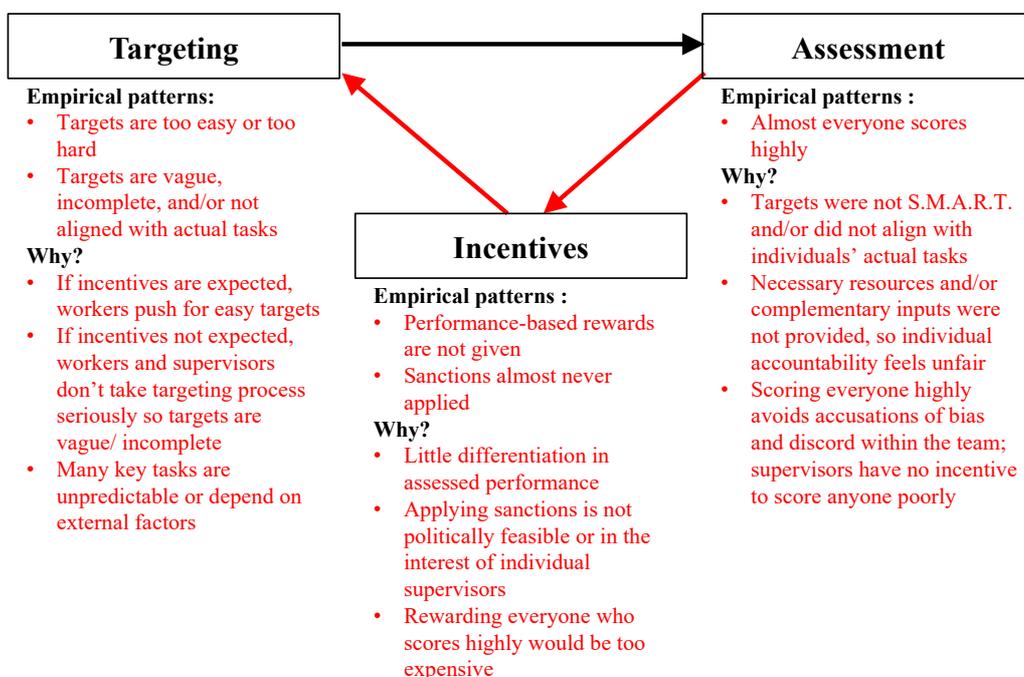
At the targeting stage, in order for workers to be set SMART targets aligned with both their workplan and the tasks they will be responsible for during the year, the following conditions must hold (panel [a]): workers and supervisors must both invest adequate time in developing meaningful targets; the organizational or team targets from which the individual targets are derived must themselves be SMART; organizational or team targets must be divisible into individual tasks, so that lines of responsibility can be clearly defined; and all or most of the key tasks that individuals will undertake during the year must be able to be foreseen at the start of the year. However, in reality (panel [b]), most workers ended up with targets that were vague, incomplete, or disconnected from their actual duties. In most cases this was because the promise of incentives was not credible – particularly after they had failed to be delivered before – and so workers and their supervisors did not think it was worth investing time into developing a meaningful set of targets. In the rare cases when the promise of incentives was credible, workers then had an incentive to set up relatively easy targets that would be easy to overperform on. Furthermore, the work of most civil servants is difficult to predict in a comprehensive fashion, and so workers and supervisors found it necessary to retain some degree of ambiguity in order to accommodate unexpected tasks.

**Figure 4: Intended versus Actual Performance Management Cycles**

**a. Intended performance management cycle**



**b. Actual performance management cycle**



Note: Authors' synthesis. Red indicates areas of significant divergence between observed patterns and intended process.

At the assessment stage, the overwhelming trend in most cases was that almost everyone scored very highly – with the exception of performance contracts for Permanent Secretaries in Zambia, where everyone scored poorly. Both outcomes arguably arise from failures at the target-setting stage: since targets were not SMART they could not be objectively evaluated, and the dependence of many civil servants’ tasks on external factors like budget availability or stakeholder cooperation made it obviously unfair to penalize civil servants for many of their failures to meet their targets. Supervisors’ path of least resistance was therefore typically to score (nearly) all workers as performing well, to avoid bad feelings, accusations of bias, and discord within their teams.

These failures at the targeting and assessment stages had knock-on effects that made it impossible to allocate meaningful incentives. Since everybody scored well and there was little differentiation in performance, rewards would be prohibitively expensive or infeasible and sanctions would be unfair. Even in the rare cases when there was strong evidence that an individual was performing poorly, both governments found it politically difficult to actually punish people. This was both due to individual managers’ hesitancy to get involved in messy and time-consuming fights, as well as to political interventions and the desire to avoid accusations of bias or politicization. This absence of incentives then undermined the next year of the cycle, since officers and their supervisors had even less incentive to invest energy into developing meaningful targets – and so on. This has led to some degree of scepticism around the impact of these reform efforts: “We’ve done performance management reforms, the project came, we’ve trained people on the instruments and so on, but have we got our money’s worth? I’d say not.” (Interview GHA13, December 2018).

The cyclical and self-reinforcing nature of annual performance management further reinforces the importance of the contextual assumptions that support the systems' intended functioning. Bureaucratic agents being evaluated form forward-looking expectations based on backward induction from subsequent stages of the process, so distortions or expected implementation failures at later stages of the process (e.g. in incentive delivery or year-end assessment) can also lead to distortions in earlier stages of the process (e.g. in assessment or target-setting). And because the process is cyclical and repeated, agents' expectations about how the system will work in the current or future years is also shaped by their observations about how the system functioned in previous years, generating self-reinforcing of dynamics of implementation failure.

As designed, these performance management policies therefore set up systems in which each step of the cycle needs to function correctly in order for others to also function directly, and each step depends on a set of contextual assumptions that must each hold. These systems are thus fragile, in the sense that the failure of any of these assumptions – including but not necessarily limited to the key assumptions specified in Figure 4 – could undermine the entire system. This fragility perhaps helps explain the persistent pattern of similar implementation failures observed in Zambia and Ghana in this paper and other case-based literature on performance management in these contexts (Bawole *et al* 2013; Ohemeng *et al* 2015; Ohemeng *et al* 2018), as well as the frequent implementation problems (Beer and Cannon 2004; Spano and Monfardini 2018) and “misfit between expectations and practice” (Radin 2006, 3) documented in OECD countries.

The key assumptions identified in Figure 4 also provide clues to the generalizability of these findings, and to contexts where performance-linked incentives might be more feasible. Contexts in which it is likely that these underlying assumptions are all fulfilled are those in which performance management policies with this design are more likely to succeed, and vice versa. For example, actually applying differentiated incentives might be more likely to occur in countries with greater resource availability, stronger financial management, and more developed administrative law systems (which would all make it more difficult for governments to renege on paying out scheduled incentives), but could be particularly challenging in contexts of weaker rule enforcement or with clientelist political settlements that characterize many low- and middle-income countries (Abdulai and Hickey 2016; Bertelli *et al* 2020). These variables identified through the mechanism mapping process thus help to identify dimensions along which the external validity of our findings for Ghana and Zambia might vary – although the widespread reports of implementation challenges with individual-level performance management policies suggest that our empirical findings share a broader relevance.

## **6. Discussion: impact without incentives**

While this historical record of implementing performance management systems has been grim in both countries, there is some evidence that these systems can be useful even in the absence of incentives. This can be seen first in how civil servants speak about the effects of the modern participatory systems replacing the old confidential systems. While one goal of these new systems was to provide a more objective basis for providing performance incentives, another was to improve communication and planning between supervisors and subordinates. The design of the appraisal process focused on “collaboration, dialogue and inclusiveness. It is, in theory, a radical departure from the old annual Confidential Reporting System...At its core, it

encourages communication between manager and subordinate at all levels” (Universalialia 2008, 24).

This aim was, to some extent at least, borne out in reality in both countries. In Ghana, “the confidential one was the old one where there was no start target set, staff did not meet their supervisors for discussions for all of that. But with the new one there was a complete change. That was also a major challenge because there was a cultural shift in people sitting down to talk to their director. This was something new.” (Nana Agyekum-Dwamena, Interview, December 2018) Similarly, in Zambia one interviewee exclaimed that “that Annual Confidential Report was so confidential you wouldn’t even know what is in it!” (Interview ZAM21, May 2019), while another explained that under the more participatory APAS system “there has been a one on one interaction which has helped with understanding what gaps people have. It has helped me to understand at what level they are supposed to operate because at the end of the year, we find out if that has been met.” (Interview ZAM27, May 2019)

More recently, in Ghana many civil servants praised the new appraisal process which was introduced in 2015. Although this new system retained the key features of the existing system, it introduced a simplified template and put greater weight on the importance of the appraisal as a tool for communication and planning rather than as a precursor to allocating rewards or sanctions (although this formally remains a goal of the system). One interviewee explained that prior to 2015 “we would write our own appraisal and the boss signs it. Now we sit down with the bosses. If I say I will achieve four meetings there should be four meeting minutes. Now you can measure performance. Now you can set targets. This is from the chief director and down. If I fail, everyone fails.” (Interview GHA11, December 2018) Another echoed: “Previously you had to set targets and most targets were weak. You have to set it with a

supervisor. Now there are smarter targets and they have improved performance. Staff are more aware of their performance and we were taken into training regarding that. Before starting work you need to set targets in terms of outputs and training.” (Interview GHA10, December 2018)

Similarly, another civil servant stated:

“The system gives everyone a specific focus and I benefit from that. I know what I am expected to do by the day, month and year. It makes me stay focused and more efficient. It makes me want to deliver and gone are the days where I sit about waiting for the work to come...Before, there was no mutuality or participation...Now you sit with your supervisor...Before you would set [targets] and there is no assessment until the end of the year...there is no way to see what has happened, [but] now there is a way to review. The old annual appraisal was sparingly used, only when people were due for promotion. Now there is care behind it. [Formerly the] head of department that would do [the assessment], now it is the one you are working with who will do the appraisal.” (Interview GHA32, January 2019)

While officers in Ghana still receive no rewards or sanctions for their performance, and the actual assessment scores are still undifferentiated and almost always positive, civil servants evidently derive utility from the process of communication. The appraisal process thus achieves (some of) its aims not by providing incentives, but by sparking conversations that would not otherwise have happened. While there is still significant variation within Ghana’s Civil Service in the extent to which these conversations are actually happening (Interview GHA17, January 2019), these positive reviews nonetheless suggest that the communication aspect of the appraisal process can be very important.

There is also suggestive evidence that performance agreements with managerial staff can have an effect by focusing attention on performance and changing work cultures. One observer remarked of Ghana's recent Chief Directors Performance Agreement system that "it's gingering the Chief Directors to get to work", particularly in delivering basic things like holding required management meetings, trainings, and so on (William Kartey, Interview, December 2018). One public servant who had been a part of the evaluation team for the performance agreements gave an example of a case where a Chief Director had signed an agreement but his Directors had not taken it seriously and so his performance was poor. The next year, however, the Chief Director applied pressure to his Directors and other middle management to make sure they delivered on their work that fed into his targets (Interview GHA13, December 2018). This illustrates the potential suasion that carefully designed, meaningful, semi-public assessment can have even in the absence of hard incentives. As one interviewee remarked "if I'm CEO, I won't sit there and be made chopped liver because my Directors aren't doing their jobs" (Interview GHA13, December 2018).

Even some lower- and middle-level civil servants believe that they see positive effects from these performance agreements. For example, one interviewee remarked "I think Chief Directors were doing whatever [before the CDPAs], but now they ensure they provide resources to [you to] to do what you need to do" to achieve your targets (Interview GHA9, December 2018). At least some rank-and-file civil servants have started to internalize the idea that their performance matters because it is connected to their leaders' performance: "The director's key result areas derive from their performance agreements. You realise what you do is indirectly linked to the director. If I deliver, then the chief director is able to satisfy what he has to do. if I do not then my director and chief director are affected" (Interview GHA10, December 2018).

This finding parallels insights from the literature on organization-level performance management, which emphasizes the potential impacts not from formal rewards or sanctions at the organizational level but of participatory goal-setting, processes of interactive dialogue, learning routines, and culture change, and professionalism (Radin 2006; Moynihan 2008). It also echoes insights from the use of performance management schemes in the private sector, where performance assessment tools like the Balanced Scorecard are understood as means to spark conversations rather than deliver incentives (Gibbons and Kaplan 2015), and pay-for-performance policies may work more by “communicating the importance of the goals” than “by the rewards themselves” (Beer and Cannon 2004, 11).

## **7. Conclusion**

This article has introduced a method of longitudinal reform mapping and applied it to document the universe of cases of the introduction of individual-level performance management policies in the civil services of Ghana and Zambia over the past three decades, based on extensive primary and secondary data collection. Despite a dozen efforts to introduce performance management systems to deliver performance-linked incentives to senior leadership and rank-and-file officials, we found no instance in which differentiated incentives were actually delivered systematically or sustainably. We nevertheless found cases where public servants found value in the dialogue routines introduced by these policies.

While we are cautious to not over-extrapolate our substantive findings from our two country contexts, the civil services of Ghana and Zambia do share many common features of public administration in many other low- and middle-income countries (Bertelli *et al* 2020), and similar patterns of implementation challenges have been widely reported in other contexts

(Beer and Cannon 2004; Spano and Monfardini 2018). These findings pose a substantive question for reform design: if linking these performance management systems to incentives is unlikely to succeed and risks distorting or distracting from the parts of the system that do create benefits, is it still worth trying to implement incentive systems? And if not, how might this enable performance management systems be re-designed to maximize the benefits of communication, conversation, and culture change?

Methodologically, longitudinal reform mapping is likely to have broader relevance as a systematic way to document and study patterns in any type of reform, which avoids many of the potential biases of focusing research only on cases that are high-profile or for which implementation and data are adequate for a full impact evaluation. Of course, the trade-off for achieving comprehensive coverage of reform efforts is less depth on each reform and the lack of clean counterfactuals for most policy introductions, so longitudinal reform mapping should be understood as complementary to quantitative impact evaluations and qualitative case studies in establishing a clearer picture of patterns of policies' implementation and effectiveness.

## References

Abdulai, Abdul-Gafaru, and Sam Hickey. (2016). "The politics of development under competitive clientelism: Insights from Ghana's education sector." *African Affairs* 115(458): 44–72.

Adei, Stephen and Yaw Boachie-Danquah. (2002). "The Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP) in Ghana: Lessons of Experience" Paper presented at the 24<sup>th</sup> AAPAM Annual Roundtable Conference on the African Public Service in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century- New Initiatives in Performance Management, 25<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> November.

Allcott, Hunt. 2015. "Site Selection Bias in Program Evaluation." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*: 1117-1165.

Annan-Prah, Elizabeth and Frank L. Kwaku Ohemeng, 2015. "Improving Productivity through Performance Management in Public Sector Organizations in Ghana- Is Change Management the Answer?" Paper prepared for XVII annual meeting of the International Research Society for Public Management (IRSPM), University of Birmingham, UK. 30 March – 1 April 2015

Ashworth, Rachel Elizabeth, Aoife Mary McDermott, and Graeme Currie. (2019). *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 29(2): 318–333.

Ayee, Joseph, R.A, 2001. "Civil Service Reform in Ghana: A Case Study of Contemporary Reform Problems in Africa" *African Association of Political Science*, 6(1): 1-41

Bawole, Justice, N, Farhad Hossain, Kwame Ameyaw Domfeh, Hamza Zakaria Bukari and Francis Sanyare, 2013. "Performance Appraisal or Praising Performance The Culture of Rhetoric in Performance Management in Ghana Civil Service" *International Journal of Public Administration* 36(13):953-962

Beer, Michael, and Mark D. Cannon. (2004). "Promise and Peril in Implementing Pay-for-Performance." *Human Resource Management* 43(1): 3-48.

Bellé, N. and P. Cantarelli. (2015). “Monetary incentives, motivation, and job effort in the public sector: An experimental study with Italian government executives.” *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 35(2): 99-123.

Bertelli, Anthony M., Mai Hassan, Dan Honig, Daniel Rogger, and Martin J. Williams. 2020. “An agenda for the study of Public Administration in Developing Countries.” *Governance* 33: 735-748.

Commonwealth, 2016. *Key Principles of Public Sector Reforms Case Studies and Frameworks*. Commonwealth Secretariat, December.

Dahlström, Carl, and Victor Lapuente. 2009. “Explaining Cross-Country Differences in Performance-Related Pay in the Public Sector.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 20: 577-600.

Dodoo, Robert, 1997. “Performance Standards and Measuring Performance in Ghana” *Public Administration and Development*, 17:115-121

Donadelli, Flavia, Bruno Q. Cunha, and Mauricio Dussauge-Laguna. (2020). “‘Post-NPM’ by force or fiat? A comparison of administrative reform trajectories in Brazil and Mexico.” *Public Administration and Development* : 1-20.

George, Alexander L, and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Georgellis, Y., Iossa, E., & Tabvuma, V. (2011). Crowding out intrinsic motivation in the public sector. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 21(3), 473-493.

Gibbons, Robert, and Robert S. Kaplan. (2015). "Formal Measures in Informal Management: Can a Balanced Scorecard Change a Culture?." *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings* 105(5): 447-451.

Government of Ghana. N.D. "Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme: The Way Forward."

Government of Ghana, 2017. "National Public Sector Reform Strategy 2018-2023" Office of the Senior Minister

Hammerschmid, Gerhard, Steven Van de Walle, Rhys Andrews, and Ahmed Mohammed Sayed Mostafa. (2019). "New Public Management reforms in Europe and their effects: findings from a 20-country top executive survey." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 85(3): 399-418.

Hasnain, Z., Manning, N., & Pierskalla, J. H. (2014). The promise of performance pay? Reasons for caution in policy prescriptions in the core civil service. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 29(2), 235-264.

Ingraham, Patricia W. (1993). "Of Pigs in Pokes and Policy Diffusion: Another Look at Pay-for-Performance." *Public Administration Review* 53(4): 348-356.

Kiragu, Kithinji, 1998. "Civil Service Reform in Southern & Eastern Africa, Lessons of Experience" Report on Proceedings of a Consultative Workshop held at Arusha, Tanzania March 4-8 1998

Litula, Brighton, 2001. "An Evaluation of Public Service Reform Programme [PSRP] being Implemented in Zambia's Public Service" The Copperbelt University, School of Business, Department of Postgraduate Studies, MBA Class 2000/2001

Madimutsa, Clever, 2016. "Implications of Public Sector Reform for Public Sector Unions in Zambia: A Case Study of the Civil Servants and Allied Workers Union of Zambia in Lusaka District" PhD Thesis, School of Government, University of Western Cape

Moynihan, D. P, 2008. "The Dynamics of Performance Management: Constructing Information and Reform." Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

Nowell, Branda, and Kate Albrecht. (2019). "A Reviewer's Guide to Qualitative Rigor." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 29(2): 348-363.

Office of the Head of Civil Service. 1991. "Introduction of Merit/Performance Award System in the Civil Service." Circular Ref. No. PNDC/SCR/A.08/15, OHCS Archives.

Office of the Head of Civil Service. 1995a. "Minutes of the Special Chief Directors Meeting Held on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 1995." OHCS Archives.

Office of the Head of Civil Service. 1995b. "Merit/Performance Award Scheme in the Civil Service." Circular Ref. No. OHCS/GEN/BC98/231/01, OHCS Archives.

Ohemeng, Frank, L. Kwaku, 2011. "Institutionalizing The Performance Management System in Public Organizations In Ghana" *Public Performance and Management Review*, 34(4):467-488

Ohemeng, Frank, L. Kwaku, 2011. "Institutionalizing The Performance Management System in Public Organizations In Ghana" *Public Performance and Management Review*, 34(4):467-488

Ohemeng, Frank L. Kwaku and Anebo, Felix K., 2012. "The Politics of Administrative Reforms in Ghana- Perspectives from Path Dependency and Punctuated Equilibrium Theories" *International Journal of Public Administration*, 35(3):161-176

Ohemeng, Frank L.K., Hamza B. Zakari, and Augustina Adusah-Karikari. 2015. "Performance Appraisal and Its Use for Individual and Organizational Improvement in the Civil Service of Ghana: The Case of Much Ado About Nothing?" *Public Administration and Development* 35: 179-191.

Ohemeng Frank L. Kwaku, Emelia Amoako-Asiedu and Theresa Obuobisa-Darko, 2018. "The Impact of Employee Perception on the Successful Institutionalisation and Implementation of Performance Management Systems in Developing Countries- The Perspective from Ghana's Public Service" *Public Administration Development*, (38):75-86

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2005. *Performance-related Pay Policies for Government Employees*. Paris.

Ospina, Sonia M., Marc Esteve, and Seulki Lee. 2017. "Assessing Qualitative Studies in Public Administration Research." *Public Administration Review* 78(4): 593-605.

Perry, J. L., Engbers, T. A., & Jun, S. Y. (2009). Back to the future? Performance-related pay, empirical research, and the perils of persistence. *Public Administration Review*, 69(1), 39-51.

Pollitt, Christopher, and Geert Bouckaert. 2004. *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Public Services Commission Ghana N.D. "Performance Management Policy for the Public Services of Ghana".

Radin, B. (2006). *Challenging the performance movement*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Republic of Zambia, 2012. "Strategy for the Public Service Transformation Programme for Improved Service Delivery 2013-2018" Public Service Management Secretariat, Management Development Division

Spano, Alessandro, and Patrizio Monfardini (2018) "Performance- Related Payments in Local Governments: Do They Improve Performance or Only Increase Salary?" *International Journal of Public Administration* 41:4, 321-334.

Tierney, Michael J., Daniel L. Nielson, Darren G. Hawkins, J. Timmons Roberts, Michael G. Findley, Ryan M. Powers, Bradley Parks, Sven E. Wilson, and Robert L. Hicks. 2011. "More Dollars than Sense: Refining Our Knowledge of Development Finance Using AidData." *World Development* 39 (11): 1891-1906.

UNZA report "The Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) and the Public Service capacity Building Programme (PSCAP) Impact Assessment , 15 April 2005", in Universalia, 2008. "Assessment of the Current Performance Management System Final Report" Legend Consulting Services Ltd and Universalia

Universalia, 2008. "Assessment of the Current Performance Management System Final Report" Legend Consulting Services Ltd and Universalia

Valentine, Theodore R., 2002. "A Medium-Term Strategy for Enhancing Pay and Conditions of Service in the Zambian Public Service" Crown Consultants International

Van Slyke, David M. (2010). "Making Public Administration Scholarship Matter". In R. O'Leary, Van, S. D. M., & Kim, S. (Eds.). *Future of public administration around the world : The Minnowbrook perspective*, Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 249-254.

Weibel, A., Rost, K., & Osterloh, M. (2010). Pay for performance in the public sector—Benefits and (hidden) costs. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 20(2), 387-412.

Williams, Martin J. (2020). “External Validity and Policy Adaptation: From Impact Evaluation to Policy Design.” *World Bank Research Observer* 35(2): 158–191.

World Bank. 1987. “Staff Appraisal Report: Republic of Ghana Structural Adjustment Institutional Support Project.” 20 March, 1987.

World Bank. (2020). World Bank Country and Lending Groups, <<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups>>, accessed 12 November 2020.

## **APPENDIX A: Data Sources and Methodology**

This appendix presents full details of our data collection methodology and sources, as summarized in Section 3.2 of the main paper.

First, we conducted extensive reviews of publicly available donor and government documents on reforms in each country. To undertake this, we used AidData's Research Release 3.1 database of over 1.5 million donor projects (Tierney *et al* 2011). For each country, we extracted a list of all projects that fell into the relevant DAC-CRS codes for civil service reform projects. These are codes 15110 and 15111. Projects coded 15110 are defined as: "Public sector policy and administrative management. Institution-building assistance to strengthen core public sector management systems and capacities. This includes macro-economic and other policy management, co-ordination, planning and reform; human resource management; organisational development; civil service reform; e-government; development planning, monitoring and evaluation; support to ministries involved in aid co-ordination; other ministries and government departments when sector cannot be specified. (Use specific sector codes for development of systems and capacities in sector ministries.)" Projects coded 15111 are defined as: "Public finance management. Fiscal policy and planning; support to ministries of finance; strengthening financial and managerial accountability; public expenditure management; improving financial management systems; budget drafting; inter-governmental fiscal relations, public audit, public debt. (Use code 15114 for domestic revenue mobilisation and code 33120 for customs)." We retained projects that were coded as either 15110 or 15111 in either their CRS purpose code or AidData purpose code. Most projects coded 15111 ended up not fulfilling our inclusion requirements and being excluded from the study.

For Ghana we identified 698 projects going back to 1987, and for Zambia 615 projects since 1981. We then conducted Google searches based on the name of each of these projects, augmented by other project information such as the name of donor as necessary, and downloaded all available documents on the project. Using the information in these documents, we then excluded projects that did not mean the definition of reform above, and organized the remainder by program. While our search included projects across the full range of donors included in the AidData database, the vast majority of projects for which we were able to find documentation (particularly for older projects) were World Bank projects. Although this differential availability of documents across donors could raise concerns about the representativeness of the documentation, such concerns are of minimal consequence because our focus is not on identifying differential trends across donors and the World Bank is the main donor for administrative reform in both countries. Altogether we were able to collect 103 documents for Ghana and 55 for Zambia.

Second, we conducted a systematic literature review of all available academic research and policy research (“grey literature”) on civil service reform and related topics in Ghana and Zambia. We began by searching for literature on reforms whose names we were aware of, through the document review above as well as prior background research. We searched first using Google Scholar, then through the University of Oxford’s SOLO system that aggregates the universe of scholarly databases to which the university subscribes, then through Google’s main search function. We then used citation-tracing in these articles to identify other relevant articles, which we then searched for. We repeated this citation-tracing process until all citations referred to a source already in our database. Finally, we conducted Google Scholar searches for a range of general terms (e.g. “Ghana” + “Civil service reform”, “Zambia” + “public administration reform”) and institution names (e.g. “Ghana” + “Office of the Head of Civil

Service”) to identify any other more general articles. Altogether we identified 113 relevant articles; a full list of these is contained in Appendix C.

Third, we conducted a set of interviews in both Zambia and Ghana with individuals who were personally involved in designing, implementing, and/or evaluating civil service reforms during the study period (1987-present for Ghana and 1991-present for Zambia, based on the timing of the initial wave of reforms in each country). These individuals were identified through a combination of being referred to us by a government institution or donor, being identified in documents or existing research, snowball sampling through other interviewees, and prior connections. The individuals were predominantly present or former public servants, but also included donor officials, consultants, and others. Most had played major roles in reforms and held high-ranking positions, such as Heads of Civil Service, Chief Directors, Permanent Secretaries, Directors of Performance Management, and key consultants. One or both of the authors interviewed each individual during the period December 2018 – January 2019 (Ghana) and April – May 2019 (Zambia). Interviewees were offered a choice of whether their interview was reported anonymously or non-anonymously, and only a small number of interviews were audio recorded. Interviews were semi-structured and focused on the relevant experience of the interviewee, loosely following the interview guide contained in Appendix B. Altogether we were able to interview 17 of these reformers in Zambia and 10 in Ghana.

In addition, in each country we interviewed an additional set of civil servants who were *not* directly involved in any reforms, but worked in rank-and-file civil service roles which should have been affected by policies introduced in various reforms, such as staff appraisal systems, pay reforms, or leadership performance contracts. The purpose in including these middle- and lower-ranked officers was to assess the extent to which specific reforms, processes, or practices

introduced by reforms actually impacted the day-to-day work of normal civil servants – at least in ways of which they were aware. These individuals were selected from a common set of ministries and functions in each country to maximize comparability. In Ghana, the ministries involved in our research were: the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Youth and Sport. Within these ministries, participants came from two divisions: Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME) and Human Resource Management (HRM). In Zambia, the ministries involved were: the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Transport and Communications, and Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development. The divisions involved were: Human Resource and Administration (HRA); Planning and Policy (P&P) and; Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). These interviews followed a more structured format and were undertaken after the above data collection had taken place, so that the interview guides were able to ask specifically about policies that had been implemented by one or more prior reforms. The interview guides for each country are contained in Appendix C. These interviews were undertaken anonymously, and none were audio-recorded in order to reassure interviewees that their words would not be publicly linked back to them. Since these interviews were not recorded, quotes in this article from anonymous interviews are usually close paraphrases. However, all quotes presented from non-anonymous interviews are verbatim. Altogether we interviewed 11 rank-and-file civil servants in Zambia and 22 in Ghana.

Fourth, in Ghana we received permission to conduct research in the archives and public records of the Office of the Head of Civil Service (OHCS), comprising dozens of boxes of documents from the 1980s to the present. Due to the volume of information and lack of detail in the indexing, we were not able to pursue a systematic study of these records, but instead examined boxes that seemed most relevant to our research based on the documentary and interview

evidence we had already compiled. These records provide a unique window on internal discussions, plans, and information contemporaneous to reform design and evaluation across this time period.

## **APPENDIX B: Reformer Interview Guide**

### INDICATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Note: This interview guide is indicative as to the topics and phrasing of questions, as interviews will be semi-structured. However the flexibility in interview conduct will be with regards to the interviewee's involvement in specific reforms, and will not be directed towards sensitive topics (except as discussed in the study protocol). Note also that sections 1 and 6 of the interview will occur once for all interviewees, while sections 2-5 will be repeated for each reform the interviewee was involved in.

1. Interviewee background
  - a. When did you join the public service, and what was your motivation for joining?
  - b. Please describe your career trajectory, i.e. which organizations you worked in and in what positions.
  - c. Thinking back on your career, what were the major reform episodes or efforts you witnessed or participated in? [Clarify definition of reform if needed.]
    - i. Were the others significant efforts to improve performance that may not have been called reforms but were nonetheless important?
    - ii. Were there reform ideas that were discussed or planned but never got off the ground?
  - d. Could you describe your personal role in each of these reform episodes?
2. Reform content
  - a. What was the reform trying to achieve? [Probe for detail.]
  - b. Were the changes all formal (i.e. in written structures/processes), or were some also more informal and/or practice-oriented?
  - c. Why did the reform aim to make these changes?
  - d. Are there any published or unpublished documents that would have more detail on this?
3. Reform process
  - a. How did the idea for the reform originate? Which individuals or institutions were key?
  - b. Once the idea was created, how did it then get turned into a detailed reform program? What role was played by:
    - i. civil service leadership
    - ii. non-senior civil servants
    - iii. civil service unions
    - iv. donor organizations
    - v. consultants
    - vi. political leadership
    - vii. media
  - c. What stakeholder consultation was done on this detailed program? Did the input actually affect the design of the reform, and how?
4. Reform outcomes
  - a. To what extent was the reform actually carried out? Did all of the changes that were planned actually get made? Which did and did not, and why?
  - b. To what extent did these changes actually affect how civil servants carry out their work on a daily basis? How do you know? Was this measured in any way? Can you give me examples?
  - c. What happened to the reform's legacy and impacts over time?

- d. Was any evaluation of the reform's impact conducted?
5. Reform politics
  - a. Returning to the key stakeholders discussion, why did each of these groups/individuals push for the reforms? Did they have different visions of what they wanted to happen?
  - b. How was the reform shaped by the actual or perceived views of political leadership? Did electoral politics play any role in shaping the reform's design and implementation?
  - c. To what extent did the actual or perceived views of civil servants themselves and/or civil service unions shape the reform's design and implementation?
  - d. Did the reform have an effect on the politics of the public service after the reform period itself was over?
- Comprehensiveness check
  - a. Can you think of any other examples of efforts to improve performance in the civil service that we haven't discussed? Even if these weren't necessarily formal programs?
  - b. Who else can we talk to in order to learn more about any of these reforms?
  - c. Are there any published or unpublished documents that would have more detail on this?
6. Wrap-up
  - a. Which of these reforms would you say was most influential in a positive way, and why?
  - b. Which of these reforms would you say was most influential in a negative way, and why?
  - c. What could have been done differently to improve the implementation and impact of public service reform in the country?
  - d. Who else can we talk to in order to learn more about any of these reforms?
  - e. What advice would you give to future reformers in this country, based on this history?
  - f. What can other countries learn from this history of reforms in this country?

## APPENDIX C: Rank-and-File Interview Guides

### MDAS INDICATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE- GHANA

#### 1. Introduction

- a. Background: how long have you been in the service?
- b. Please describe your career trajectory, i.e. which organizations you worked in and in what positions.

#### 2. Changes in work practice

- a. In the past, what changes have affected the way you do your work? For example:
  - i. Formal rules, structures, or processes that have been put into place
    1. To what extent have these actually be implemented in practice? Do they actually affect your performance and how you do your work?
  - ii. Other unwritten practices, processes, or managerial behaviors
- b. To what extent are your work practices and performance affected by [probe below categories based on what was not covered in open-ended section above]:
  - i. Changes in processes/structures/rules/systems across the whole Civil Service?
  - ii. Changes in processes/structures/rules/systems specific to your organization?
  - iii. Changes in leadership of the government and/or civil service (e.g. new President, new Head of Civil Service)?
  - iv. Changes in leadership of your organization (e.g. new minister, new chief director)

#### 3. Specific reforms

- a. Are you aware of any of the following reforms? If so, to what extent did it affect how you do your job and your performance, and why (not)?
  - i. New annual appraisal system (around 2014) and performance management policy
  - ii. Chief Directors/Directors Performance Agreements
  - iii. Client service units
  - iv. Service charters
  - v. Pay restructuring and regrading (e.g. Single Spine [impl. 2010], earlier regrading in 2001)
  - vi. Cross-government policy coordination (Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit [Mills] or PCMEU [Kufuor] or Min of M&E [Akufo Addo])
  - vii. Organisational Performance Improvement Plans (CSPIP - late 1990s)

#### 4. Staff reactions and politics

- a. Thinking about these various reform efforts, what has been the perception and attitude of staff towards these changes? How has this affected their implementation and impact? Can you give examples?
  - i. Were these attitudes mainly due to individuals' personal feelings, or was there any kind of organized or collective action? Did unions, the media, or other stakeholders get involved?
- b. Were there any specific reforms that you were opposed to or in favor of? Why?
- c. Aside from those we have already discussed, have there been any other reforms or changes in the Civil Service that have been especially influential in either a positive or negative way?
- d. In your view, what is the main reason why past efforts to improve performance in the Civil Service have not had a greater impact than they did?
- e. is there anything you would like to add?

## MDAS INDICATIVE INTERVIEW GUIDE- ZAMBIA

### 1. Introduction

- a. Background: how long have you been in the service?
- b. Please describe your career trajectory, i.e. which organizations you worked in and in what positions.

### 2. Changes in work practice

- a. In the past, what changes or reforms to your MDA have affected the way you do your work? For example:
  - i. Formal rules, structures, or processes that have been put into place
    1. To what extent have these actually be implemented in practice? Do they actually affect your performance and how you do your work?
  - ii. Other unwritten practices, processes, or managerial behaviours
  - iii. What sort of staff development opportunities have been made available particularly around performance and productivity?
  - iv. Have you ever received training connecting to the civil service centred on productivity and performance-improvement?
    1. If so, what sort of training did you receive?
    2. What impact, if any, did the training have upon returning back to your duties?
- b. To what extent are your work practices and performance affected by [probe below categories based on what was not covered in open-ended section above]:
  - i. Changes in processes/structures/rules/systems across the whole Civil Service?
  - ii. Changes in processes/structures/rules/systems specific to your organization?

- iii. Changes in leadership of the government and/or civil service (e.g. new President, new Head of Civil Service?)
- iv. Changes in leadership of your organization (e.g. new minister, new chief director)
- v. Changes in ICT practices or processes that involve technological/computer usage?

### 3. Specific reforms

- a. Are you aware of any of the following reforms? If so, to what extent did it/does it affect how you do your job and your performance, and why (not)?
  - i. Annual performance appraisal (APAS)
    - 1. How seriously do officers tend to take it? Is it completed every year by everyone, or only intermittently?
    - 2. Do the scores reflect actual performance, or does almost everyone score highly?
    - 3. Has it been linked to any form of rewards or sanctions, whether financial or non-financial?
    - 4. Has it had any other positive effects? For example, has it been a useful way of getting direction and feedback from supervisors?
  - ii. Performance contracts for permanent secretaries
    - 1. How does it affect your work, as someone who is not a permanent secretary?
    - 2. Would performance contracts for staff below permanent secretary level also be beneficial for performance? What types of implementation challenges do you foresee with these?
  - iii. Service charters for the ministry
    - 1. Has it improved people's understanding of what the ministry does? Has it also changed actions and/or performance? How sustainable have such changes been?
    - 2. How closely aligned are the service charter outputs with the objectives of the ministry?
  - iv. Organizational reviews or performance improvement plans (under PSMP – 2006-11)
  - v. Pay reforms (including changes in allowances)?
    - 1. Have the overall pay reforms improved productivity and motivation? Which aspect of them? Why?
    - 2. Has there been any attempt to link pay or career progression to performance? What has happened to those efforts?

### 4. Staff reactions and interests

- a. Thinking about these various reform efforts, what has been the perception and attitude of staff towards these changes? How has this affected their implementation and impact? Can you give examples?
  - i. Were these attitudes mainly due to individuals' personal feelings?
  - ii. Was there any kind of organized or collective action? Did unions, the media, or other stakeholders get involved?

- b. Were there any specific reforms that you were opposed to or in favor of? Why?
- c. Aside from those we have already discussed, have there been any other reforms or changes in the Civil Service that have been especially influential in either a positive or negative way?
- d. In your view, what is the main reason why past efforts to improve performance in the Civil Service have not had a greater impact than they did?
- e. Is there anything you would like to add?

5. Donors

- a. How would you describe the role and impact of donors with respect to civil service reforms?
- b. Have you noticed any differences in reaction and uptake toward reforms that are government led versus donor led?
- c. Are there any improvements that can be made with respect to government and donor relations concerning civil service reforms?