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A REGIONAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE ROLE OF ELECTORAL POLITICS IN THE DECLINE OF AFRICA'S PUBLIC SECTOR.

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ABSTRACT:

The early post-independence periods saw Africa have efficient Public Sector Institutions. Over a decade, there seems to be a decadent in the public sector. The study examines the regional analysis of government effectiveness in Africa. The study uses data given by the World Bank's Governance Indicator from 55 African countries from 2002 to 2018. The study uses Panel Regression Analysis Model of Random Effects and Pooled Ordinary Least Squares to assess government effectiveness in the five regions of Africa. The findings indicate that Southern African countries performed best as compared to its counterpart regions, followed by North Africa. However, East, West and Central African countries had low scores on government effectiveness. The results imply that electoral politics and political interference hurt the performances of public institutions on the continent.

Keywords: *Electoral Politics, Public Sector, Government Effectiveness, Southern Africa, North Africa, East Africa, West Africa, Central Africa*

INTRODUCTION

The early post-independence period saw Africa have efficient Public Sector Institutions (Gyimah-Boadi & Mensah, 2003). In recent times, there seem to be a decadent in the sector due to the kind of political system run in most countries on the continent. The World Bank (2019) contends that government effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public service, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. The quest for measuring the performances or effectiveness of government by researchers and policy analysts in public management, public administration and public policy increased with universally adopted reforms in the last quarter-century (Ingraham & Moynihan, 2000). These reforms centred on bettering government effectiveness and enhancing public institutions (Whitford & Lee, 2012). In light of this, recent studies focus on government performances or effectiveness. In most developing countries, especially countries on the African continents, the sentiments of political parties under the whims and caprices politicians control public institutions. Appiah and Abdulai (2017) describe the political system run in various developing countries as "political clientelism". Political 'clientelism' is where political parties that are privy to the term of office they have would manage the public institutions and resources abysmally. The Human Development Report, 1997 asserts that efforts have been instituted by post-independence governments to ensure that the imbalances and inefficiencies in the Public Sector breached is amended (Kwasi-Ofori, 2012).

Stevens and Teggemann (2004) argue that the first wave of reforms in the Public Sector came immediately after the independence of many African countries. The indigenes replaced colonial masters who headed these public institutions. Besides, the colonial masters trained the earliest staff who replaced them. Also, vacant public service positions were merit-based and not on political appointments. It suggested that payment of salaries was on technical skills. Public institutions eliminated the class structures to ensure sanity in the system. It invigorated the moral standards in the public sector and serving in public offices also became a privilege to those who were appointed to such portfolios to serve with alacrity and integrity. However, the



function and efficacy of the Public Sector have become very weak and prone to political aversion.

Gyimah-Boadi and Daddieh, (1999); Gyimah-Boadi and Mensah, (2003) contend that the position that has led to the dwindling performance of Public Sector capacity is due to central government sole distribution of resources, the appointment of high public positions by a sole state actor and centralization of political power in many African countries. Appiah and Abdulai (2017) attributed this poor performance to lack of political parties' willingness to continue reforms when there is a change in government. Despite the many strands of literature on government effectiveness, analysis based on regions on the continent on government effectiveness and the role of electoral politics on public services is little. Therefore, this paper tends to fill the gap. The paper also tends to ascertain which region's governments have been more effective in terms of independence of their public and civil service from political pressures, interference and electoral politics. The study organizes the paper as follows: the next section presents the literature review and methodology. The following section presents the results and discussion of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Role of Electoral Politics in Africa

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) define public sector as general government and public corporations, including the central bank (OECD, 2004). The United Nations also defines it as general government, public corporations and not-for-profit institutions owned by the state (Aprea, 2003). Moreover, the International Federation of Accountants defines the public sector as national governments, regional governments, local governments and related governmental entities (Pina & Torres, 2003). Further, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) defines Public Sector as general government (central government, state/ provincial/ regional governments and local government) and Public Corporations (Financial corporations and non-financial corporations) (Audet, 2003).

Electoral politics in Africa inclined to partisan politics has its roots after independence (Asante & Gyimah-Boadi, 2004) which is one of the causative factors to government effectiveness on the continent. While some public institutions are making giant strides in government effectiveness, others still wallow in weak government effectiveness on the continent. For instance, World Bank (2019) asserts that countries like Botswana, Cape Verde, Mauritius Tunisia, South Africa and Namibia have somewhat strong government effectiveness as compared to the rest of the countries on the continent. However, in countries like Ghana, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Togo, government effectiveness tend to be weakly attributed to the politicization of public institutions (Saul, 2001).

Solingen (2012) argues that the ushering in of electoral politics in advanced countries has helped introduce social-political union, ideological solidarity, and national advancement at a deliberate pace proportionate with bureaucracy. However, electoral politics in developing countries centres on ethnocentric, and appointment of positions into public institutions have become partisan and ethnical, making the institutions ineffective. Harvey (2007) connotes that the advantages from the activity of this order for the most part or somewhat disproportionately, accrue to the ruling party, funders of political parties and grassroots supporters. Hence their bid to make sure their political parties stay in power and as well maintain their positions in the Public Sectors to mismanage the public sector and continue in its inefficiency unabatedly.

Government effectiveness captures the degree of independence of public and civil service from political pressures (Sacks & Levi, 2010). Less government effectiveness portrays a public service dominated by political pressures which have led to the poor performances in the Public Sector (Frempong and Aryee, 2001) and the decline of government effectiveness. For instance, Ghana's multiparty system has relentlessly collapsed the participatory approach in the public sector (Harnack et al., 2000). Newly elected governments discontinue projects of previous governments. Besides, appointments are on party faithful committed to implementing the agenda of the party disregarding individuals' competencies and special abilities.



Moreover, political parties' concentration on the next elections and how to manoeuvre its way to win the next elections has also become a contributor to public sector performances. The study argues that countries with high levels of political interference and electoral politics have weak government effectiveness. Specifically, the paper contends that the low performances in public institutions are due to the funding of political parties (Austin and Tjernstrom, 2003), spoil system of governments (Wantu, 2017), corruption (Montinola and Jackman, 2002; Montes and Paschaol, 2016) and centralization of political power (Hindriks & Lockwood, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

Sources of Data

The study uses datasets from 2002 to 2018 sourced from the World Bank's Governance Indicator, covering 55 African countries on government effectiveness (where -2.5 is weak, and 2.5 is strong). Additionally, this paper determines the average government effectiveness of individual countries over the 16 years. The study also shows the trends in government effectiveness across the five regions (Southern Africa, North Africa, East Africa, West Africa and Central Africa).

Economic Model

The research uses Panel Regression Analysis Model of Random Effects and Ordinary Least Squares to assess government effectiveness in the five regions of Africa. The study aims to carry out a regional comparison of government effectiveness in terms of political interference and electoral politics on public services in Africa. Therefore, the model of the Panel Regression Model will be as follows:

$$G_E_{it} = a_0 + B_1 R_O_{it} + E_{it} \quad \text{Eqn.....1}$$

Where:

G_E = Government Effectiveness (Political Interference and Electoral Politics on Public Services)

R_O = Regional Output

a_0 = Constant

B_1 = Co-efficient

u = Between entity error

E = Within entity error

Dependent Variable

The World Bank (2019) defines government effectiveness as perceptions of the quality of public service, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. In effect, government effectiveness, as discussed in this study, is political interference and the role of electoral politics on the public services of Africa.

Independent Variable

The independent variable is regional output where regional output means Southern Africa, North Africa, East Africa, West Africa and Central Africa. It is on this wise that the regional comparison will be on: to know which of the region's public sector is less of political influence, interference and electoral politics.

RESULTS

The data discusses the government effectiveness using OLS and Random Regression and Trends of government effectiveness of the five regions in Africa (North Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa, West Africa and Central Africa) to ascertain the independence of public and civil service from political pressures, interferences and electoral politics.



Time-invariant

Time-invariant variables like country code and region have positive between variation and zero within variation. However, G_E has more between variations (0.58) than within variation (0.17). The average G_E of individual countries ranged between -1.62 and 0.81 across countries but varied over the 16 years for each country over time.

Table 1: Time Invariant

Variable	Variation	Mean	St.	Min	Max
Code	overall	26.5	15.01736	1	52
	between		15.15476	1	52
	within		0	26.5	26.5
Year	overall	2009.5	4.612545	2002	2017
	between		0	2009.5	2009.5
	within		4.612545	2002	2017
G_E	overall	-0.71959	0.59514	-1.89	1.05
	between		0.575452	-1.61563	0.806875
	within		0.170366	-1.40834	0.058534
R_O	overall	2.326923	1.205222	0	4
	between		1.216249	0	4
	within		0	2.326923	2.326923

G_E is Government Effectiveness, R_O is Region Output

Trends Of Government Effectiveness Across Five African Regions

Figure 1 below shows the trends of G_E across five African regions and overall. Over the 16 years, South Africans recorded the highest G_E score, while the central Africans recorded the least G_E over the years. G_E for the East and West African countries were approximately stable over the years while North Africans recorded some drastic fall in G_E scores from 2010 till 2017 it starts to rise.

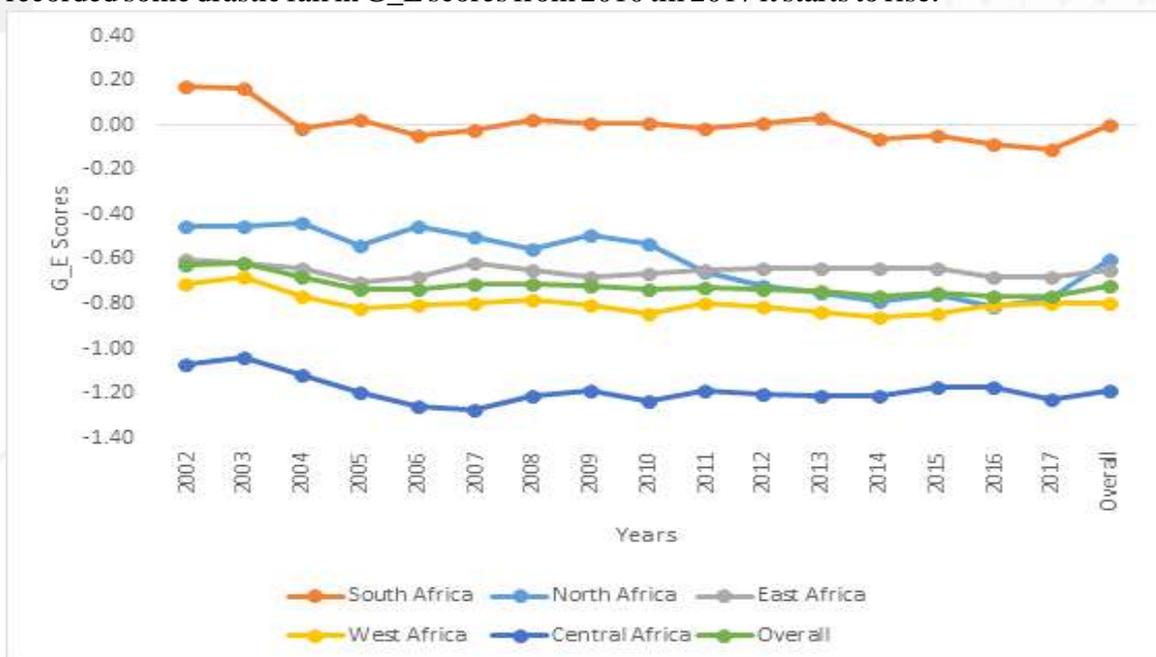


Fig 1: Trends in Government Effectiveness



Random Effects And Ordinary Least Squares Regression

Results show that countries in the east, west and central Africa had lower G_E scores compared to the North Africans. However, the South Africans recorded higher G_E score than the North Africans in all estimators. While the regions were overall significantly, predictive of G_E ($p < 0.001$) worked is significant for some estimators and not for others. The Breusch and Pagan Lagrangian multiplier test for random effects were significant ($P < 0.001$), indicating that random effect estimator is a better estimator than the OLS. 89% of the variation was explained by country-specific term while the rest was due to idiosyncratic error.

Table 2: OLS and Random Effects Regression Analysis on Government Effectiveness

	Pooled OLS regression	Between	Random effects
Region			
North Africa	ref	ref	ref
South Africa	0.61(0.46 , 0.76)***	0.61(-0.01 , 1.22)	0.61(0.01 , 1.21)*
East Africa	-0.05(-0.17 , 0.07)	-0.05(-0.54 , 0.44)	-0.05(-0.52 , 0.43)
West Africa	-0.19(-0.31 , -0.07)**	-0.19(-0.68 , 0.29)	-0.19(-0.67 , 0.28)
Central Africa	-0.58(-0.72 , -0.45)***	-0.58(-1.12 , -0.05)*	-0.58(-1.11 , -0.06)*
P-value	<0.001	0.0028	0.0008
R-sq:	0.26		
R2-within		0.00	0.00
R2-between		0.29	0.29
R2-overall		0.26	0.26
Theta			0.91
Sigma u			0.50
Sigma e			0.18
Rho			0.89

Discussion Of Findings

The results indicate that South African countries performed better than all the regions, followed by North African countries. East, West and Central African countries had lower scores on government effectiveness in that order. The findings suggest that there are less political interference and electoral politics in the public institutions of Southern African countries and North African countries than the rest of the regions. Reilley (2002) corroborates that electoral politics and political interference plays a vital role in public institutions. After elections, it becomes winner takes all, and the government appoints its followers and loyalist to occupy such portfolios to take decisions for public institutions thereby creating a massive dent in the performance of these public institutions (Philips, 2009). The reasons for the variations are funding of political parties (Farrel and Web, 2000; De Miguel, 2011; Gyampo, 2015), educational and training capacities (Mitlin, 2008; Levin, 2009), corruption (Mbako, 2000; Boaffo-Aurthur, 2008; Abdulai, 2009).

Gyampo (2015) inclines that democratization led to the emergence of various political parties across Africa. The formation of every political party in a country requires funds and public support to be successive in various elections. De Miguel (2011) adds that political parties are as the bosses of government since they perform development roles of government, preparing of leaders at the various levels of governance, and holding governments responsible when out of power. However, regions on the continent having a low score on government effectiveness advertently run parties as private organizations where individuals fund these political parties for them to fuel them into power as compared to regions with better scores on government effectiveness. Therefore, these parties who are explicitly sponsored by private financiers expect the party to appoint them into public positions. In most cases, some of these financiers are not competent enough to occupy these positions, thereby leading to inefficiencies.



Levin (2009) asserts that in public service, the academic experience is essential to holding a public office in most countries. A candidate with good academic background has the competencies and capabilities to hold public offices. Comparatively Southern African and North African countries base recruitments on merit as compared to the other regions. Employees in the regions with a low score on government effectiveness lack the rudimentary training to work in public institutions (Miltin, 2008). Besides, these bureaucrats have low creative ability to innovate, leading to an inefficient performance in the various public sectors.

Mbaku (2000) argues that in some African countries, people hail corrupt public officials. A gradual paradigm shift to the support of corrupt officials and hailing them as unsung heroes and heroines are detrimental to the quality of public institutions. Bofo-Arthur (2008) further adds that ethnocentrism and electoral politics drives corruption. Most of the people in different political parties would support their own even if the act has a ramification on the economy of a country. Thus corruption has led to weak state capacity of the public sector in some public institutions in other regions (East, West and Central African countries) on the continent as compared to other regions (Southern and North African countries).

The dwindling performance of government effectiveness in the public sector is due to central government sole distribution of resources, the appointment of high public positions by a sole state actor and centralization of political power (Gyimah-Boadi & Daddieh, 1999; Gyimah-Boadi & Mensah, 2003).

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION

Conclusively, the findings of the study reveal that political interference and electoral politics plays a significant role in the decline of the public sector in Africa. The decline is because of political parties privy to the term of office they have, manage the public institutions and resources abysmally. In addition to the above system, political interference contributes to the weak government effectiveness on the continent. Besides, the institutionalization of the multi-party system is a contributing factor to this menace which usually has its roots in political interference, lack of education and training, political parties funding and aftermath and corruption.

The results indicate that Southern African countries performed best as compared to its counterpart regions, followed by North Africa. However, East, West and Central African countries had low scores on government effectiveness. The results imply that electoral politics and political interference hurt the performances of public institutions on the continent.

In sum, countries must reconsider multi-party democratization as it breeds inefficiencies in public institutions. Africa needs a clear and straightjacket distinction between policymaking and policy implementation to ensure the smooth running of public offices. Thus in terms of appointments of public officials and as long as enacted laws do not strengthen the positions of public officials and bureaucrats, Africa will continue to have weak and ineffective governments. Further research should consider political finance and how funding political parties affect government effectiveness in Africa.

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