Rebranding the Ghana Civil Service for Sustainable Governance: The Effective Collaboration between Political Appointees and Bureaucrats in Leadership and Management

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#### Context & Background

- Civil Service effectiveness is central to national progress (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).
- Persistent challenges: politicisation, inefficiencies, weak accountability (Bryson, Crosby & Bloomberg, 2015).
- African civil services face corruption, low responsiveness, and capacity constraints (Nzamba & Oğuz, 2025).
- Collaboration between political appointees and bureaucrats is essential for effective governance (Nyarko et al., 2019).



What is the Problem???

- Despite reforms such as the Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme (CSPIP), inefficiencies persist (Agbevade & Koduah, 2020).
- Political patronage disrupts continuity and reduces morale (Nyarko et al., 2019).
- Parallel advisory structures create accountability gaps (Fobih, 2020).
- There is limited empirical focus on collaboration dynamics within the GCS.
- Persistent issues: Politicisation, inefficiency, weak accountability.
- There a need for collaboration between political appointees and bureaucrats.

# Objectives of the Study

- To assess the current state of collaboration between political appointees and career bureaucrats within the GCS.
- To identify the key barriers hindering effective collaboration between political appointees and bureaucrats in the GCS.
- ☐ To ascertain the strategies for rebranding the GCS through enhanced collaboration between political appointees and bureaucrats, aimed at achieving sustainable governance.

#### Theoretical Framework

- ☐ Hybrid Model: The study integrates NPM's principle and Collaborative Governance theory (Christensen & Laegreid, 2020).
- New Public Management (NPM) emphasizes on efficiency, performance, and accountability (Hood, 1991; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).
- Collaborative Governance Theory focuses on trust, inclusion, and shared accountability (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012).

# Methodology

- Philosophy: Interpretivist
- Design: Qualitative case study.
- ☐ Sample: Political appointees & career bureaucrats from selected ministries.
- □ Data Collection: Semi-structured interviews.
- Analysis: Thematic analysis.

#### 1. Collaboration is uneven but evolving

"A political appointee from the private sector transformed HR by introducing new initiatives, and another appointee from PWC revamped internal audit with new policies and templates" (Civil Servant 3).

# 2. There is initial mistrust giving way to mutual adaptation and synergy

"Initially, there were tensions and lack of trust on both sides, with political appointees not trusting the bureaucrats and vice versa. Over time, bureaucrats realized that some political appointees were professionals bringing good ideas, and appointees recognized the expertise of civil servants, leading to better collaboration" (Civil Servant 2).

- 3. Bureaucrats bring institutional memory; political appointees introduce reforms
- Bureaucrats use their institutional memory to ensure reforms are realistic, legal, and sustainable.
- Appointees ensure that government does not become stagnant or overly rigid, they push for progress and new ideas.

4. Trust-building improves long-term policy implementation

It promotes cooperation, reduces resistance, ensures continuity across political cycles, and strengthens voluntary compliance.

#### Findings- Barriers to Effective Collaboration

#### 1. Lack of trust and mutual suspicion

"Politicians often do not trust civil servants and bring their own people as special assistants. Some civil servants are also politically affiliated, which complicates trust" (Civil Servant 1).

#### 2. Political interference and Partisan Assistants

"We sometimes bring people we trust politically, but this creates friction with the civil servants who feel excluded. It is not always the best approach, but it is a reality of politics." (Political Appointee 1).

# Findings- Barriers to Effective Collaboration

#### 3. Bureaucratic inertia and resistance to change

#### Civil Servant 1

"Politicians often do not trust civil servants and bring their own people as special assistants. Some civil servants are also politically affiliated, which complicates trust"

### Political Appointee 3

"Sometimes, bureaucrats slow down processes, either intentionally or because of the bureaucratic culture. It feels like we are pushing change uphill."

#### Findings- Barriers to Effective Collaboration

#### 4. Weak capacity and poor incentives

"Politicians operate on short-term electoral cycles, while bureaucrats prioritize long-term stability and adherence to procedure. Without alignment, this divergence undermines collaboration." (civil servant 2)

#### 5. Role ambiguity and overlapping duties

"Sometimes we do not know where our role ends and where the civil servant's begins. This overlap delays decision-making and creates unnecessary competition" (Political Appointee 1).

#### Strategies for Rebranding the GCS

- □ Build trust and institutionalize collaboration (orientation, role clarity).
- Strengthen professional capacity building and merit-based recruitment.
- Leadership training, performance incentives, and communication reforms.
- Publicize achievements to rebrand the GCS image.

#### Policy & Practical Implications

#### Policy:

Reforms should go beyond piecemeal initiatives and instead focus on creating durable structures that promote mutual respect, accountability, and effective collaboration.

#### Practice:

- Adoption of hybrid reform model to ensure sustainable governance.
- For practitioners, measures such as structured orientation programmes for political appointees, improved supervision mechanisms, and investment in leadership development.

#### Conclusion & Recommendations

- Collaboration between political appointees and bureaucrats in the GCS is essential for effective governance.
- Political interference, mistrust, weak institutional capacity, and inadequate compensation continues to be a concern.
- Collaboration between appointees and bureaucrats is vital for sustainable governance.
- Challenges: mistrust, partisanship, weak capacity, and poor incentives.
- Adopt hybrid model i.e. combining NPM and Collaborative Governance principles should be vigorously pursued.
- Focus on meritocracy, leadership training, and professional branding.
- Rebranding the GCS is both a governance and developmental issue.

# thank you