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祝小宁 主编



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**Part One** 

**Roles of Governments and Markets** 



# The BRIC Experience with Civil Service Reform: Lessons for Developing Countries and Fragile States

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- 1. Interactive Learning, Australia
- 2. Policy Compliance Edge, USA

**Abstract** The long-term economic influence of Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC countries) relies on a public service culture that adapts and/or withstands political change while consistently providing reliable administrative services to their societies. This presentation identifies fundamental characteristics of functioning civil service institutions, concluding that the BRIC countries, are solid, notwithstanding market based criticisms. The paper authors go on to identify from the BRIC experience with civil service reform the key learning points for developing countries that impact on the effectiveness of administrative independence through the lens of the experience of Timor-Leste. The lessons can provide guidance to less economically developed nations in their quest for development. **Key words** Civil service reform, BRIC, Developing countries, Fragile states

#### 1 Renewing civil service reform in the BRICs

The experience of civil service reform in the BRIC countries offers significant lessons to developing countries and fragile states. Coined by Jim O'Neill in the Goldman Sachs publication, Global Economics Paper Building better global economic BRICs<sup>[1]</sup>, the term BRICs refers to the relatively undervalued developing economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China. Using purchasing power ranking, the size of BRIC economies were re-valued significantly above their GDP ranking. In both demographic and economic terms, these countries are among the largest in the world, and in financial terms they dominate the emerging market economies<sup>[2]</sup>. The term has been expanded by economists<sup>[3][4][5]</sup> to potentially include other large, developing economies with a significant manufacturing base including Indonesia, South Korea, South Africa, Mexico and Turkey.

The impact of the global financial crisis of 2008 and current concerns with government debt to liquidity ratios in the Eurozone have significantly impacted on the ability of BRIC nations to pursue rapid export oriented economic development. However their performance has at least maintained parity with and in most cases exceeds that of G-7 block nations because of strong domestic demand. Indeed, in "The Growth Map: Economic Opportunity in the BRICs and Beyond", O'Neill states that the average annual real GDP growth rate of all the BRIC countries has exceeded almost all of the G-7 countries between 2000 and 2011<sup>[6]</sup>.

Rodrik<sup>[7]</sup> asserts that high economic growth is linked to the development of an institutional framework, particularly civil service reform. Data from the World Economic Forum<sup>[8]</sup> however indicates that this journey is far from complete for BRIC nations and there are concerns about remaining inefficiencies that have a dampening effect on economic development.

This paper examines ideal civil service models from the perspective of "fragile states". While BRIC countries clearly have government administrations that generally function in a consistent and effective manner, the pace of civil service reform is uneven. Through the prism of the authors experience in fragile states we provide comment on key issues that if redressed with BRIC countries civil services may assist in moving the reform process along.

While the larger political and economic dramas unfold related to the global economic crisis, people in government and among the general populace need basic functions of government – roads, communications, health, security, justice, markets, education and other fundamentals. Thus, public service must be stable and productive in the face of political change, even while undergoing its own pressures of evolution. Analysis of current and future growth factors<sup>[9][10]</sup> suggests that effective and efficient public administration is also key to facilitating the development of robust and mature BRIC economies. The experience of similar reform in fragile states, where the majority of donor funds are directed towards strengthening effective governance, in turn provides insight on how the process of

public sector reform may be made more effective.

Both the authors have worked on business development and civil service reform programs in BRIC countries (China, Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa) and fragile states (Timor-Leste, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq) for almost 20 years. Donors have been encouraged by multilateral agencies<sup>[11][12][13][14]</sup> to direct the vast majority of their support in fragile states to strengthening and improving government systems and processes. In the case of Timor-Leste, where both authors currently work on governance support programmes it has been calculated that up to 80% of donor funds are directed towards attaining independently functioning government agencies<sup>[15]</sup>. Exploration of these lessons starts here with identification of critical civil service characteristics.

A functioning civil service requires several factors well identified by Huntington and others:

- ① Breadth of support from both the political class and citizenry.
- ② Adaptability of the institutions to the shifting needs for public service.
- ③ Sufficient organizational complexity that will support the ability of the organization to function and survive in the face of budget and/or political attacks that may reduce the size or operations of the institution.
- ④ Organizational independence sufficient to permit the organization to stay "on target" in the face of political pressures.
- ⑤ Coherence of the organization that keeps the individuals and leadership operating as a team in the face of challenge<sup>[16]</sup>.

Looking more specifically at the issue of civil service organizations in fragile and conflict affected states, Brinkerhoff has suggested that the institutions may survive and continue productivity if they:

- ① Develop the capability to self-organize and act. (e.g., are able to mobilize resources while the political environment shifts.)
  - ② Generate development results by producing substantive, sustainable outputs.
- ③ Establish supportive relationships by managing linkages, building legitimacy, and dealing effectively with politics and power differentials.
- 4 Adapt and self-renew, for example by adapting plans based on monitoring and developing resilience.
  - ⑤ Achieve coherence, for example by developing shared strategies<sup>[17]</sup>.

In many ways, the characteristics of civil service success (institutional survival and productivity) identified by Huntington and Brinkerhoff are similar.

Burma, et al., seems to share this opinion but further distils the two lists above to three characteristics of effective government institutions:

- A. It is able to deliver positive results with respect to its core mandate.
- B. It possesses broad legitimacy within the country.
- C. Its operation is durable and resilient<sup>[18]</sup>.

The authors agree wholeheartedly with Burma. Our own work in the governance sector in developed, developing countries and fragile states suggests that one of the most common failure points is "A" due to a fundamental disagreement among the civil service employees about their role and responsibilities in fulfilling the purpose of the institution. Encompassed within this characteristic are two important concepts.

- ① The idea that there is a core mandate of the institution and that mandate is the guiding purpose for the activity of all staff in the organization.
- ② The idea that the people within institution are responsible for delivering results production of measurable and tangible results.

Using the characteristics of successful civil service intuitions identified by Burma, et.al., we see that the BRIC countries and Indonesia offer successful models for developing countries and fragile states.

A. All of the BRIC countries have the ability to deliver positive results with respect to its core mandate.



B. The civil service in each of the BRIC countries generally possesses broad legitimacy within the country.

C. The civil service in each of the BRIC countries is generally durable and resilient, although in most cases the reform process has stalled and needs to be restarted, probably with a focus on good enough rather than best practice governance.

A brief survey of the civil service reform process across the major BRIC countries consistent support for greater market liberalization by multilateral agencies<sup>[19][20][21][22]</sup>. Further emphasis has been placed in both BRICs and fragile states on professionalising the civil service, introducing merit based recruitment and performance management procedures related to agency objectives, some decentralization of authority over budgets and agency functions, development of a customer service aspect to service delivery and greater interagency cooperation<sup>[23][24][25][26]</sup>. The general thrust follows the work unit professionalism and accountability approaches of New Public Sector Management with an increasing role for the leadership and process driven Good Governance approach. The following snapshot provides an overview of the reform process in BRICs and key challenges.

While the New Public Management initiatives of the 1990's have been slowly implemented in Brazil<sup>[27]</sup>, innovations have occurred through the disbursement of public funds through government agencies. Bolsa Familia is the most notable of government sponsored poverty reduction programme using conditional cash payments<sup>[28]</sup>.

Russia underwent a series of civil service reforms in the mid 1990's that coupled with financial deregulation led to a significant restructuring of the size of the civil service. While strongly advantaged in terms of an educated workforce, significant room exists for the reorganisation of the civil service.

India's civil service reforms, advocated by the World Bank in association with World Trade Organisation membership have improved the ability of private sector entrepreneurs to establish and expand venture capital activities citizens have however generally not seen a change in day to day service delivery with government staff and inefficient bureaucracy is considered a stumbling block to further economic development<sup>[29]</sup>.

China is also undergoing significant social/government change in nearly every corner of its society<sup>[30][31][32][33]</sup>. The change from a highly centralized economy to one of 'capitalism with a socialist face' has required significant changes in the role of the party and consequently the civil service. State agencies are using their access to capital and trained workforces to provide fee for service businesses with benefits flowing to those within the watershed of their corporate responsibilities. Within the civil service a significant shift has been from control to lighter touch regulation and dealing with citizens as customers rather than dependents.

A consistent theme in BRIC country literature is the need for further strengthening of the civil services and national institutional capacity as part of the creation of strong, resilient economies<sup>[34]</sup>. It is important to reinforce and positively acknowledge that each of the BRIC countries have large, generally effective and increasingly responsive bureaucracies. Bangura and Larbi<sup>[35]</sup>, Goel<sup>[36]</sup> and Jensen<sup>[37]</sup> note that reform has occurred at the national level but has not filtered down through Ministries to lower level work units. Reform therefore continues at an uneven pace and the experience of fragile states in this area can be used to throw light on how to move the process along.

#### 2 BRICS are not without problems

Although the civil service in the BRICs is generally satisfactory as measured against the characteristic in Huntington, Brinkerhoff and Burma above, they are not without the need for improvement. Following Burma, as described above, and Pritchett<sup>[38]</sup>, the experience of the authors is that that the most common failures to implement civil service reform are due to difficulties staff have in identifying and implementing the agency core mandate and the ability of staff to take responsibility for delivering measurable and tangible results. On this line of thinking, Bangura and Larbi have noted that the majority of civil service reform efforts in emerging markets has focused on senior level strategic planning and efforts to move government away from service delivery to regulation<sup>[39]</sup>. Tackling the need for change below the executive level has been slow to take off.

Within ministries and in particular departments, the authors believe that the following areas



deserve priority to help implement the core mandate and to assist staff to deliver results to citizens.

The authors write as practitioners from the field and the view is necessarily subjective and based on experience. While both have been engaged in the development of national level public policies on organizational protocols to reduce corruption, human resources development programs and public sector fiscal reform the experience of both is that policy which lacks commitment and resources at the operational level does not translate into meaningful change in organizational practice. These areas of greatest concern to the authors are:

- ① Establish clear, written descriptions of organizational functions
- 2 Write polices related to functions
- ③ Implement policy
- 4 Disseminate and connect policy with staff roles
- ⑤ Train managers
- 6 Build work teams
- 7 Depoliticize civil service operations and hiring.
- Establish clear descriptions of organizational functions

There is value in ensuring that the core mandate is reflected in a statement of the key organizational functions and tasks of the agency. Too often mandates are implied or are an imperfectly edited version of the organic law and related legislation. The legal style often only provides a bare outline of the agencies actual work and misses the relationship between the agency and its core mandate and deliverables.

When there is a lack of clarity about an agency's key functions and deliverables, there is a risk that the organization becomes inward looking and self-serving and weakens institutional and state legitimacy. In Afghanistan the civil service reform commission has attempted to ensure that aspects of government human resources functions are embedded in law<sup>[40]</sup>. For example there is a recently introduced procedure for annual performance review. Without commenting on the quality of the approach, all ministries now have a clear and unambiguous duty to carry out staff appraisals as part of the core functions of each agency. The downside of that approach is that any minor change, including alterations to forms, has to be passed by an Act of Parliament and therefore risks becoming unresponsive to workplace needs.

In Timor-Leste, the directorate of water services requested assistance with organizational re-design specifically to establish certainty among the staff about the core mandate. Part of that process involved defining the functions and responsibilities of each department. As a direct consequence of that activity managers have built a more comprehensive description of their agency functions and are using this to organize work, measure outputs and write job descriptions which connect all staff to the agency functions.

#### 2.1 Need for written policy related to functions

Where policies are not written for basic government administration, civil service organizations will fail<sup>[41]</sup>. In modern civil service, there are policies and procedures for each aspect of administrative life. In developing countries, such as South Sudan and Timor-Leste, it is common to find that there are no policies. The absence of policy creates opportunities for misuse and corruption. If, for example, there are not policies written establishing parameters for the use of government vehicles—vehicles will be misused. Where policies are not written for use of government fuel for vehicles—fuel will be misappropriated. Where policies are not written prohibiting contract kickbacks and conflicts of interests with senior government officials—money will go to unauthorized individuals.

Indeed, the lack of written policies is the single largest opportunity for corruption in any institution and in any country—developed or otherwise. Corrupt officials know this and actively work to prevent laws, policies and procedures from being developed that prohibit their wrong behavior.

Worse, without written policies, there is no basic decision as to the proper course of conduct and civil service becomes a "paycheck factory" supporting people that may have no idea what the institutions are to be doing or how to accomplish its goals.

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