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# Editorial

D Nel-Sanders

Chief Editor

With the advancement of information and communication technology (ICT), the implementation of electronic initiatives in South Africa plays a key role in how the government delivers services. In **'E-government Strategies in South Africa: A Plausible Attempt at Effective Delivery of Services'**, A Jakoet-Salie states that, while the literature strongly indicates that South Africa has implemented departmental e-government strategies, this model is ineffectual without effective implementation. As such, the author argues that use of e-government initiatives remains a challenge. Based on the literature review, Jakoet-Salie argues that the successful implementation of e-government strategies depends on a positive relationship between citizens and the government. As such, it is recommended that the government improves its ICT infrastructure, creates e-government initiatives for citizen participation and improves public-service delivery.

V T Samo and M H Kanyane, in their article, **'Ethics and Accountability in BRICS Countries: Analysing Critical Issues'** report on ethics and accountability in the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa). These emerging economies have various mutually beneficial bilateral trading agreements. To this end, their article reflects on how the BRICS countries have addressed issues of ethics and accountability as important prerequisites for good governance. The extent of an ethical culture and accountability was explored from a political and economic point of view.

The authors argue that, while the BRICS countries differ in accountability levels, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index highlights that they are all inherently corrupt. The findings suggest that there is a strong link between ethics and accountability – a high ethical environment yields high accountability, while the opposite also applies. According to the authors, "...BRICS countries need to pay attention to ethics and all types of accountability at both regional and country level".

In **'Inner-city Decay and Problem Buildings in Major South African Cities Two Decades into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Is Effective Programme Management by City Governments Feasible?'**, H F Conradie, J D Taylor and W E Shaidi evaluate the programme management of inner-city decay and problem buildings by selected South African city governments to determine whether policy objectives are being achieved. The article commences by providing the international context, followed by theoretical perspectives on public sector programme management.

The importance of project management principles is emphasised, culminating in an integrated public sector programme management framework in which the *Project Management Body of Knowledge* principles are incorporated. The legislative context for city governments' mandate to deal with the owners of problematic properties is also described. "Corruption and incompetence of city governments is a significant risk factor, with a seriously negative impact on potential inner-city turnaround programmes," state the authors. To this end, the article extrapolated the findings into a normative model for an inner-city turnaround strategy. Furthermore, recommendations for improved programme management in relation to inner-city decay and problem buildings are provided.

G S Cloete, in his article **'The Complexity and Limitations of Strategic Governmental Policy Change Initiatives in South Africa: 1986–1988'** critically assesses the five-year route of strategic policy decision-making in South Africa, from the Rubicon speech of former President P W Botha in August 1985 to the start of the post-apartheid era. The author takes on a critical participant-observer perspective to analyse unpublished internal government documents and three case studies that reflect government's failed strategic policy decision-making attempts.

The research findings highlight that former President P W Botha's leadership style dominated his Cabinet to such an extent that they did not have the courage to break ranks with him. According to the author, senior political and bureaucratic government officials lacked the resolve and commitment to overcome their fundamental policy differences. Notably, the assessment illustrates the complexity and limitations of democratic policy change processes and provides important strategic lessons for political change management initiatives.

In **'Local Economic Development and the Fourth Industrial Revolution: A Match or Mismatch?'**, X C Thani exposes the advantages and disadvantages of local economic development (LED) and the 4IR as an avenue to ensure more responsive local government structures. Notably, the author explores whether LED and the 4IR can address complex LED challenges and enhance economic growth. More specifically, the article investigates whether well implemented LED strategies depend on local municipalities embracing the 4IR. The literature overview presents the following two main arguments: While certain authors are in favour of the 4IR, other scholars raise concerns over whether Africa, and South Africa in particular, is ready to embrace this revolution. The research revealed that South African local municipalities' readiness for the 4IR plays a key role in addressing local economic challenges. However, certain shortcomings in terms of Africa's readiness for the 4IR were exposed. In conclusion, the article provides a set of literature-based best practices on how the South African government can successfully implement future-focused, sustainable LED and 4IR strategies.

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged government and society's resilience on various levels. South Africa's national leadership response was to declare a

state of disaster and a national lockdown to slow down the country's infection rate. According to L van der Merwe and G van der Waldt, in their article **'City Government Resilience: Perspectives on post-Covid-19 Recovery'**, "...this challenge is widely experienced as *terra incognita*, having no frame of reference or map to guide policymakers towards resilience". The authors highlight that "the deployment of effective resilience strategies will be required to help cities recover from the severe socio-economic impact of the pandemic". According to the authors, the basis for recovery lies mainly in the resilience capability of cities that function as economic growth hubs, centres of political power and nuclei for social welfare programmes. In conclusion, the article provides recommendations on how to recover from the impact of the pandemic, such as capitalising on high-leverage areas and designing resilience strategies for organisations.

In **'The Impact of the Mandela-Castro Medical Collaboration Programme on Health Care Service Delivery in the Frances Baard District Hospitals, Northern Cape Province'**, O L Motsumi and T van Niekerk reflect on whether the Mandela-Castro Medical Collaboration Programme (MCMCP) helped promote health care service delivery in the district hospitals in the Frances Baard District Municipality (FBDM), Northern Cape Province. The late-Presidents, Nelson Mandela of South Africa and Fidel Castro of Cuba signed a bilateral agreement in 1996 to address the critical shortage of medical doctors in these rural areas. The findings show that an overwhelming majority of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that MCMCP-trained medical doctors had a positive effect in the FBDM district health care facilities. However, the research revealed that the cost of training Cuban doctors is three times the average cost of medical training in South Africa. Therefore, it is recommended that the National Department of Health focuses on training local medical students.

In **'Good Governance Index Towards Responsive Urban Land Administration: Empirical Evidence from Ethiopia'**, H Gebreselassie Gebrihet and P Pillay argue that existing literature fails to provide adequate evidence of how land administration is measured from a good governance perspective. To this end, a good governance index is generated in this article to help countries and cities measure the performance of urban land administration from a good governance perspective.

Methodologically, a case study design was adopted. A top-down approach was utilised, where an initial comparative analysis of various studies on the principles of good governance was conducted. Hereafter, a bottom-up approach was followed to weigh the level of significance of the principles of good governance. In this regard, 399 respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique from the urban land lease auction list of Mekelle Municipality. The findings demonstrate that accountability, transparency, rule of law, and public participation matter the most in urban land administration and can improve service provision, control corruption, fairness and equality. Social media provides

a viable and low-cost platform for the government to connect with citizens and address their needs.

In **'Social Innovation During the Covid-19 Pandemic in South Africa'**, C Joel and D Nel-Sanders argue that social innovation can provide effective solutions to the challenging social and environmental issues. The article highlights several barriers to social innovation in the South African context, such as the lack of a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem, insufficient policy development and implementation, lack of funding and lack of management capacity.

The findings of this qualitative, desktop-based study were that social innovation provides novel, more suitable approaches to meeting social needs and development challenges than prevailing approaches. To this end, the authors recommend that South Africa adopt a 'Fivefold Helix' approach to cooperation, co-creation, partnership, capacity building, leadership and collaboration, for increased social innovation. According to the authors, "This approach entails a network of the following actors: government, business, universities, civil society and communities working together to solve social problems".

In **'Exploring Social Media Initiatives to Increase Public Value in Public Administration: The Case of the Department of Communication and Information System (GCIS)'**, I Naidoo and N Holtzhausen explore the utilisation of social media to increase public value. More specifically, the article focuses on the Department of Communication and Information System (GCIS) and its utilisation of Twitter – particularly the South African Government Twitter account, @GovernmentZA. Social media is discussed within the context of public administration, as well as its role in Government 2.0 and the 4IR.

The study found that GCIS endeavours to produce public value and acknowledges Twitter to create and bolster public value. However, the authors argue that "the GCIS can enhance its utilisation of Twitter by listening and responding to citizens on a more regular basis, particularly when they are dissatisfied with government". To this end, the article concludes by providing recommendations on how the GCIS can enhance its use of Twitter to increase public value.

In **'A Conceptual Model for Public Budget Formulation for East African Countries to Enhance Participation of External Stakeholders in Budget Formulation Decision-Making'**, J Barngetuny and D B Jarbandhan investigate the role of decision enhancement in public sector budget formulation (PSBF) by looking at three selected East African countries (EAC), namely Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The purpose of the article is to determine how decision-making for PSBF can be enhanced to promote participatory budgeting in these countries. More specifically, the authors critically assess the likely impact of this approach on transparency, accountability, and budgetary decision-making.

With regard to public budget formulation in these countries, the study found severe fiscal constraints, complex budgetary decision systems, weak vertical



accountability and transparency and the poor prioritisation of programmes and projects. In line with this, the research recommends that an integrated approach to participatory budgeting processes be formalised, IT applications in participatory budgeting be improved, and regulatory policies related to participatory budgeting be implemented to enhance decision-making relating to public budget formulation.

In Africa, centuries-old indigenous knowledge regarding the management of societal affairs, has been overshadowed by colonialism, neocolonialism, global capitalism and the promotion of Western organisational management/leadership practices. In **'Contextualising the Regeneration of Africa's Indigenous Governance and Management Systems and Practices'**, B C Basheka and C J Auriacombe remind contemporary public administration analysts and policymakers of the need to position indigenous governance management systems and practices within mainstream intellectual discourse.

Based on the research findings, the authors argue that indigenous societies were diverse and had various governance and management systems. According to the authors, "These societies had useful systems and practices that need to be espoused and used in modern public administration discourses". The article concludes by arguing that African scholars should show a renewed interest in theories and models for advancing indigenous governance and management systems and practices. The authors highlight that, "While the article does not argue that these indigenous systems and practices are flawless, the societies under study exhibited important features that can provide a lens for understanding contemporary challenges surrounding public administration and theorisation".

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# E-government Strategies in South Africa

## A Plausible Attempt at Effective Delivery of Services

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### ABSTRACT

With the advancement of technology, the implementation of electronic initiatives in South Africa plays an integral role in how the government delivers services using the universal model of electronic government (e-government), according to the South African Constitution (1996). The literature strongly indicates that South Africa has departmental e-government strategies; however, in the absence of effective implementation, this model is ineffectual, and the use of e-government initiatives remains a huge challenge in South Africa. This article notes that the existence of a digital divide and information and communication technology (ICT) skills shortages are well known challenges. However, after conducting a systematic review, it is, therefore, the primary recommendation of this article that government needs to improve ICT infrastructure and create an environment that will enable all citizens to engage with the rewards of e-government initiatives in attempt to share in the design and delivery of services.

### INTRODUCTION

Poor service delivery has become the order of the day in government and this has subsequently placed significant pressure on rendering effective services to communities. Nkosi and Mekuria (2010:3) concur that among the service delivery challenges facing South Africa are, *inter alia*, "...slow response rates to citizens' requests, lack of customer service orientation from public sector staff, limited and

inconvenient hours offered by government institutions and long distances to reach government offices". As a result, violent protests have become the dominant channel of communicating with government or compelling government to pay attention to the grievances of the citizenry, and they are increasingly taking place at the level of basic service delivery. In 1996, a Presidential Review Commission (PRC) was established by the late President Mandela to examine the structures and functions of the public service and in particular explore alternate ways to optimise service delivery in a post-apartheid state (Landsberg & Graham 2016:102). For example, an alternate mode of service delivery is identified in the field of ICT, which allows for possible e-government strategies to improve such service delivery. With the advent of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution (4IR), the technological advancements hold great possibilities for assisting government in addressing service delivery challenges.

After a systematic review of related government strategies, articles in academic journals and the applicable content of legislative prescriptions, this article contends that improving current technology and communication channels between government and communities will ensure an improvement in service delivery. Bovaird (2007:836) suggests that policymaking is no longer seen as a purely top-down approach, but rather as negotiation among many interacting systems. Similarly, services are no longer simply delivered by professional and managerial staff in government, but they are co-produced by users and communities. This article raises significant issues for consideration and provides possible remedies in addressing the challenges associated with e-government strategies as a tool to enhance service delivery. Although it has been suggested that e-government may not be necessary in rural areas and that people are in fact fine with the way the system works, the article argues that if the same services can be delivered more effectively, why not introduce those in all areas, such as a phased-in approach so that we can narrow the digital divide.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE**

Today, the internet is changing the way people live. This implies that more and more people will rely on the internet for information. According to Noveck (2015:239), modern technologies can empower millions of citizens around the world and help them to enjoy a better quality of life. In January 2019, South Africa had 31.18 million internet users, of which 28.99 million were mobile internet users (Statista 2019).

Information technologies have become ever-present in the public sector and today it is difficult to think of public problems or government services that do

not include them in some meaningful way. Here, electronic government (e-government) is defined as consisting of actions to produce and deliver government services to citizens, not in the traditional face-to-face manner, but instead using ICT (McNabb 2009:176). Naidoo (2012:63) states that e-government is evaluated through public participation and facilitation; therefore, increasing transparency and augmenting citizen involvement is fundamental to e-government. The concept behind e-government is that it enables participatory democracy and allows citizens to actively engage and debate with the government on issues that directly affect them. Often, when one deliberates about greater engagement between government and communities or citizens, one refers to the feedback received from citizens about the services provided by the government.

According to Gil-Garcia, Dawes and Pardo (2017), from a public management perspective, e-government should be considered as an “essential aspect of innovation, co-production, transparency, and the generation of public value”, yet research that attempts to understand the role of e-government practice is scarce. Gil-Garcia *et al.* (2017) add that “today, at all levels and in all branches of government we find tools, applications, and emergent technologies being applied to the needs of citizens, service users, public servants, and political leaders” and technology has become embedded in the working environment of government by means of mobile applications, social media, technical networks, data analytics, and more. The phenomenon of e-government involves, among others, new styles and thinking of leadership, re-imagined decision-making processes, unique ways of organising and delivering services, and redefining concepts of citizenship (Gil-Garcia *et al.* 2017). The transformation and the alternate ways of providing services to citizens are now of paramount importance.

An important question of how the digital divide might undermine service delivery in the coming years is asked as governments now encounter alternative ways to alter and deliver services to citizens, can make use of social media to share information and possibly encourage support, and have access to cooperative platforms that facilitate crowd sourcing. This capitalising of evidence can also guide policy interventions from internal administrative operations, as well as citizens’ and governments’ digital activities. However, at the same time, we experience new balances in control and power that is manipulated by digital data flows, which frames “the digital age and the frantic pace of information exchange it facilitates as a driver of short termism, information control and a politicization of the public service” (Clarke, Lindquist & Roy 2017). This is seen by the recent rise in concern over fake news, filters and political bots that further complicate the digital divide (Clarke, Lindquist & Roy 2017).

Considering the case of South Africa, the Batho Pele (People First) White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery published on 18 September 1997 include eight principles: consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information,

openness and transparency, redress and handling of complaints, and value for money (Batho Pele White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery). An information-based web portal titled *Batho Pele Gateway* provides information on government services and relevant legislative and policy documents. These initiatives are fundamental to ensure that the enshrined democratic principles of the South African Constitution (1996), are adhered to, as it instills in officials a high standard of professionalism and impartial and unbiased delivery of services.

## **SYSTEMATICALLY REVIEWING E-GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES**

In attempt to understand the role of South Africa's e-government strategies, a systematic review was used to collate empirical evidence which suited pre-specified eligibility criteria. The review used explicit, systematic methods that were selected to minimise bias, and thus provided more reliable findings from which conclusions and recommendations were drawn. The key characteristics of the systematic review were: a clearly stated set of objectives with pre-defined eligibility criteria; a systematic search that attempted to identify all studies that met the eligibility criteria; an assessment of the validity of the findings of the included studies; and a systematic presentation, and synthesis, of the characteristics and findings of the included studies. The below steps, as adapted by Higgins and Green (2008:6), were followed while conducting the systematic review:

STEP 1: Preparing the topic and framing the question of how the role of South Africa's e-government strategies can be understood. This step involved looking through journals, articles, legislative prescriptions, and databases for what should be and what should not be a part of the topic. Here, inclusion and exclusion criteria become clear and defined. The process includes, but was not limited to, seminal texts, seminal texts per author, most cited texts, and most cited texts per author.

STEP 2: Search for the studies and identifying relevant publications. This included articles, grey literature and unpublished papers based on the first step, search terms, types of data, scope of study, any other specifications. This was conducted to capture as many relevant citations as possible.

STEP 3: Screen the studies and assess the study quality. Although the reporting of outcomes should rarely determine the eligibility of studies for a review, the third key component of a well-formulated study is the delineation of outcomes that are of interest. This step involved the review and possible removal of literature not needed, such as research methods and theories not used.

STEP 4: Extract the data and summarise the evidence. This step involved the prioritising of the particular outcome and selected the main outcomes of relevance

to the review question and potential recommendations, such as what will answer the research scope and how to systematically analyse and combine the data.

STEP 5: Analyse and synthesise the evidence. This included the categorising of data according to its similarities, and common or recurring themes identified. The data was analysed through reading, re-reading and coding of the data notes, in order to reflect on what is read and organising those analysed concepts (codes, nodes, memos, categories, classifications, commonalities, differences).

STEP 6: Report and interpret the findings. This is the results section of a review that words the findings in a clear and logical order and explicitly addresses the objectives of the review. The evidence summarised in this review is likely to be as good as it will get in the foreseeable future. While reporting the findings it is also necessary to link the data to the underlying theoretical framing of shifting from New Public Management (NPM) to Digital Era Governance (DEG).

## **POLICY AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT FOR E-GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1994**

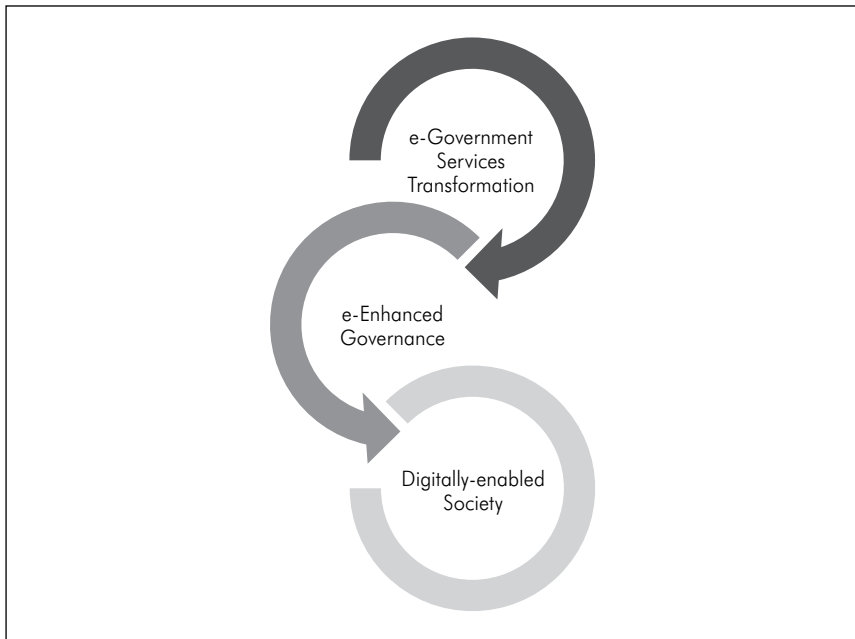
Scholl (2018:1) defines e-government as an attempt to produce and modernise government by fostering participation and improving services by means of technology and communications. The main objectives of e-government are to serve and to build long-term relationships with citizens by being an open, transparent, and transformational government through social media, policy and services. As so aptly stated by Mawelaa, Ocharab and Twinomurinz (2017), that even with multiple strategic policies and plans, there remains minimal success in the implementation of e-government projects in South Africa and these need to be adapted to account for factors such as, among others, the digital divide, illiteracy, and weak infrastructure.

In post-apartheid South Africa, access to public services is no longer regarded as an advantage accessed by privileged community members, but as a right of all residents, particularly those who were previously disadvantaged. Therefore, among the integral indicators in assessing the transformation of government are the perceptions and experiences communities have of service delivery in their daily lives and, more specifically, whether there has been an improvement in the services delivered to them. The legacy of apartheid impacted the transition from a racial to a non-racial dispensation, heralding the start of a transformation era within local government. As a result of the former apartheid government's policies, certain communities were denied the opportunity to participate in government matters. Subsequently, technology has changed the manner in which citizens are engaging in the affairs of government. Van der Waldt *et al.* (2014:92) acknowledge that in an effort to improve service delivery and enhance participatory governance, in

2001 the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) drafted South Africa's first document on e-government entitled Electronic Government, The Digital Future: A Public Service IT Policy Framework. The DPSA is responsible for the development and coordination of the e-government strategy.

The State Information Technology Agency (SITA) has indicated that "...e-Government seeks to render services utilizing technology as an enabler through partnerships with stakeholders" (SITA 2002:9). According to the Department of Communications, e-government in South Africa has gained significant developments in the usage of e-government networks to simplify government procedures. These will ultimately improve access to information by citizens and enhance service delivery, thereby strengthening transparency and accountability in government. The concept behind e-government is that it enables participatory democracy and allows citizens to actively engage and debate with the government on issues that directly affect them. The Batho Pele website, the South African Revenue Service (SARS) e-filing system, the Department of Transport's Electronic National Administration Traffic Information System (e-NATIS), the South African Social Security Authority's (SASSA) electronic processing of grant applications from remote sites, and departmental information websites are examples of ICT

**Figure 1: National E-government Framework**



Source: (The Government Gazette: National E-government Strategy and Roadmap 2017:21)



in the public sector (Thornhill & Cloete 2014:355). The government should be acknowledged for putting the structures in place; however, it does not adequately incorporate citizens' opinions and experiences in its intervention or improvement programmes (Davids *et al.* 2005:63).

The Government Gazette: National E-government Strategy and Roadmap (2017) states that at the beginning of 2016, Cabinet approved a National Integrated ICT Policy White Paper which supported the development of the National E-government Framework (Figure 1).

The South African government recognised that there was a need for adopting a holistic programme approach that embraced a common vision and strategy that guided the several e-government initiatives adopted by the government. The purpose of the National E-government framework is to revolutionise South Africa into an all-encompassing digital society where all citizens can benefit from ICT opportunities to improve the quality of their lives. Though South Africa is unique, much can be learned from international experience in terms of designing and delivering services whereby both the citizens and the public sector contribute towards effective service delivery. Aikans and Krane (2010:88) state that the use of internet technology has "proven to have great potential to improve government-citizen relations by producing fertile ground for reinvigorated civil society". Therefore, it is significant that officials are held accountable for services rendered and a more delivery-focused approach, implied by the principles of Batho Pele, needs to be implemented.

## **BATHO PELE AND E-GOVERNMENT**

The PRC argued for a more delivery-focused approach by officials and this resonated with the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery which introduced the concept of "people first" in public service delivery (Landsberg & Graham 2016:107). As noted before, the Batho Pele Gateway is implemented through the Batho Pele principles. It is an initiative to encourage public servants (officials) to be service orientated, to strive for excellence in service delivery and to commit to continuous service delivery improvement. The Batho Pele Gateway portal will ensure access to much-needed public services and will debunk ICT services as not only being a tool of the privileged communities, but an instrument for social development and cohesion. The Batho Pele White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery published on 18 September 1997 states that a transformed South African Public Service will be judged by one criterion above all: its effectiveness in delivering services which meet the basic needs of all South Africans.

The Batho Pele Principles are linked to e-government as they aim towards the implementation of a proactive, transparent and service delivery orientated approach. The eight principles aimed at service delivery include the following:

**Table 1: The Batho Pele principles**

<p><b>Consultation</b></p>	<p>Citizens should be consulted about the quality of the service standards they receive. In terms of e-government and service delivery, citizens should be consulted online and asked to respond to possible new programmes and policies. Citizens will be able to give their view and opinion at any time and when it is convenient for them.</p>
<p><b>Service standards</b></p>	<p>Communities should be informed about what level and quality of service they will receive so that they know what to expect. Service standards can be provided online, and citizens will be able to access them anywhere and anytime. E-government improves access since if services are provided by making use of e-government access will be more accessible and improved.</p>
<p><b>Access</b></p>	<p>All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled. Citizens will be able to use their mobile phones to log faults or suggestions for improvements to provide equal access to services. The rendering of government services and information to the public using electronic means, allows government to deliver services to citizens when they need them.</p>
<p><b>Courtesy</b></p>	<p>All members of the community should be treated with courtesy and consideration. Citizens would be able to log grievances online and will have a municipal representative respond in a polite manner to gain trust in the community. "Customer" satisfaction polls could be distributed within these online platforms.</p>
<p><b>Information</b></p>	<p>Communities should be given full and accurate information about the public services to which they are entitled. Making use of e-government initiatives could deliver updated information to the communities at any time, and members could access this information at their convenience.</p>
<p><b>Openness and transparency</b></p>	<p>Citizens should be informed on how local authorities function and the information to which they are entitled. E-government can be used to provide accountability, security and transparency in government decision- making processes in allocation and distribution of resources. Citizens will have full access to this on their mobile phones.</p>
<p><b>Redress and handling of complaints</b></p>	<p>If community members do not receive promised services, they should be entitled to a full explanation and to a speedy remedy. The use of e-government will assist to promptly identify which services are not met and then strategies can be implemented to remedy these timeously.</p>
<p><b>Value for money</b></p>	<p>Services should be provided economically to provide citizens with the principle of the best value for money. E-government programs can enhance its value as a driver for efficiency and effectiveness, while sustaining ongoing service delivery by corrective actions and in the reallocation of funds as needed (Batho Pele Handbook – A Service Delivery Improvement Guide).</p>

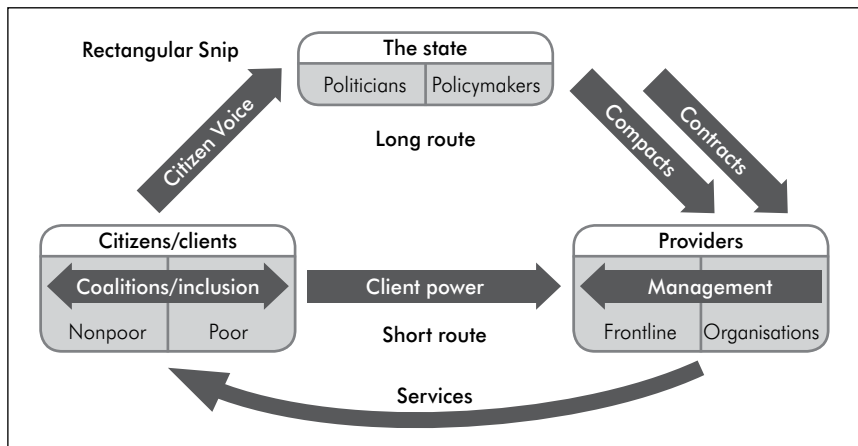
Source: (Adapted from Batho Pele White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery 1997)

If communities are aware of their rights and that the services produced will uplift their standard of living, the actual implementation of the Batho Pele Gateway will ensure that all citizens receive the services to which they are entitled. The Batho Pele Gateway portal should instil a culture of accountability by public officials, which will eventually result in service excellence and continuous service delivery improvement between citizens and service providers. The World Development Report 2004 developed a framework that identified three different accountability relationships among citizens, politicians/policymakers, and service providers. These relationships form two routes to accountability, a long one and a short one as illustrated in Figure 2:

- The political process citizens try to use to influence politicians is called ‘citizen voice’, the long route’s first ‘leg’. This is regarded as political accountability.
- The relationship between politicians/policymakers and service providers is the second leg of the long route, ‘the compact’. Many of the government’s current initiatives to improve accountability focus on this leg.
- The short route, the third leg, considers how much the citizens, now acting as clients of public services, can directly pressure the service providers to ensure effective service delivery, namely ‘client power’.

Citizen engagement in the provision of public services is expected to be altered by the increase in digitisation, computational power and ongoing austerity policies of modern ICT (Linders 2012; Clark, Brudney & Jang 2013; Noveck 2015). It is a known fact that nobody knows better which public services are most important for their own welfare than the service users (citizens) themselves and the

**Figure 2: Triangle of accountability relationships: Conceptual framework**



Source: (World Development Report 2004:162)

communities in which they live. Therefore, it relates logically to a conceptualisation of governance as a facilitative and cooperative partnership rather than to a government as a controlling hierarchy.

According to Radnor, Osborne, Kinder and Mutton (2014:403), an important debate within public management goes to the heart of both effective public service delivery and the role of public services in achieving societal ends, such as social inclusion or citizen engagement. Bovaird (2007:844) states that this idea strengthens the central task of all public services by doing the following:

- Recognising people as assets because people themselves are the real wealth of society;
- Valuing work differently, to recognise everything as work that people do to raise families, look after people, and maintain healthy communities, social justice and good governance;
- Promoting reciprocity; giving and receiving because it builds trust between people and fosters mutual respect; and
- Building social networks because people's physical and mental well-being depends on strong, enduring relationships.

However, Bovaird and Loeffler (2012) have acknowledged that systemic obstacles exist, such as the digital divide and illiteracy, and include political and professional reluctance to lose status and control, lack of mechanisms that local communities can use and lack of motivation or self-confidence on the part of local communities (Pestoff *et al.* 2015:48). These obstacles can be regarded as threats to the effective implementation of e-government services.

Brandsen, Steen and Verschuere (2018:116) state that a new wave of technology-induced practices has recently emerged around the globe. According to the Government Gazette: National E-government Strategy and Roadmap (2017), e-government is defined as "...the innovative use of communications technologies (including mobile devices), websites, and other ICT services and platforms to link citizens and the public sector to facilitate collaborative and efficient governance". In this document, it is stipulated that e-government includes the following:

- Government-to-government programmes (G2G): These are concerned with the interaction between different levels of government and collaboration with government agencies;
- Government-to-citizen programmes (G2C). These involve an interaction between government and citizens;
- Government-to-employees programmes (C2G). These refer to the relationship between the government and its employees. As a result of this relationship, it is believed that employees will connect with each other and share knowledge; and

- Government-to-business programmes (G2B). These are related to government supporting business opportunities (Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services 2017).

In addition, the Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services (DTPS) states that the e-government process needs continuous input and feedback from the “customers”, the public, businesses and officials who use e-government services as it is their voices and inputs that will make e-government services work. In agreement, Bovaird and Loeffler (2003:198) state that it is important to clarify at the outset what the parameters of engagement are as one of the major reasons for citizens’ unwillingness to engage is widespread scepticism about whether governments and public services are willing to respond to public opinion. The Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME 2013) explicitly states that citizens’ experiences and opinions must be included in the government’s monitoring system. That is, there is a need for the responses of stakeholders’ opinions to be well established in law and policy of e-government strategies.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF E-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES**

In the past communication used to be via public meetings, printed media, radio and television, however, today, the use of the internet has become a popular mode of accessing information. The use of internet technology is believed to hold great promise to enhance citizen participation by allowing citizens to access public information and has the potential to improve G2C relations. Thus, the provision of government services and information to the public via electronic channels allows/enables the government to implement service delivery when citizens need these services (Aikans & Krane 2010:87). In South Africa, the DPSA is responsible for the development and coordination of the e-government approach and municipalities should actively develop ways to leverage resources and investment from both the public and private sectors to meet development targets. In ensuring that this happens, trust in government will increase as public officials will consider that citizens’ needs have changed and, in line with the principles of Batho Pele, these needs should be redressed and addressed accordingly. That is, e-government relies on the use of internet technologies to enable citizen participation through communication channels such as online citizen surveys, online comment and feedback forms and online platforms whereby citizens can engage in discussions on government initiatives. In addition, Fox and Meyer (2008:109) postulate that citizens are the best source of knowledge about their own needs and preferences as well as local conditions, and increased knowledge of local government affairs encourages a sense of social cohesion.

## Successful e-government initiatives in South Africa

E-government initiatives in South Africa were implemented as a means to possibly advocate social cohesion and encourage rigorous contact between citizens and government. Lindquist, Vincent and Wanna (2013:106) state that citizen engagement through technology is more about policymakers being informed by citizens about what they need rather than the government merely providing them with a service. Table 2 represents successful e-government initiatives that have been implemented in South Africa to advocate citizen involvement by strengthening communication, interaction and discussion between citizens and government officials.

Nonetheless, Naidoo (2012:64) states that despite South Africa's significant investment in ICT infrastructure, policy and regulatory framework to effectively roll-out e-government services, the country still faces several challenges, including problems of poverty, inequality, corruption, insecurity, illiteracy and skills shortage. As a result of these challenges many people are discouraged from using e-government platforms and this further fuels the discontent among citizens.

## Challenges of e-government in South Africa

The South African Constitution (1996) states that it is the primary duty of the state to create an environment in which people can gain access to social and economic rights and to alleviate any barriers or challenges these environments face. Landsberg and Graham (2016:171) state that engagement between the community and local government could hold various advantages, including the following:

- Improving the quality of policy interventions by allowing local government to tap into wider information and knowledge systems, perspectives, and potential solutions in order to meet community challenges;
- Meeting the challenges of the emerging information society to prepare for greater and faster interaction with citizens;
- Integrating community input into the policymaking process in order to respond to the community's expectations that their voices are heard and their views are considered in decision-making;
- Becoming more transparent and accountable in the face of increasing public and media scrutiny of municipal actions (and inactions); and
- Strengthening community trust in government and reversing the low voter turnout trends in local elections and declining confidence in municipalities.

South Africa as a developing country is still faced with many challenges that hinder the optimal provision of e-government services. According to Murenzi and Olivier (2017:144), "...as more government information and services are moved online, there is an increasing concern that a significant portion of the population,

**Table 2: Successful e-government initiatives in South Africa**

Initiative	Purpose
Presidential Hotline platform (17737)	This platform is used when all attempts to obtain assistance from a government department, province, municipality or state agency have failed. This deals with complaints about unresolved service delivery issues. This e-government system also serves as a forum where citizens are able to call and communicate their opinions or provide resolutions to the challenges in their community.
Crime Stop	A 'tip-off' service that has been in existence since 1992, whereby those citizens who are aware of information that can assist in exposing people involved in illegal activities are able to share this information anonymously. Geoghegan and Van der Walt (2019:144) state that within the community policing perspective, community policing involves "...not only increased police involvement with the public, but promotes partnerships, co-operation and involvement where the local community can identify and participate in solving issues related to crime." Simultaneously, there is no longer a need for direct or even indirect participation by police officials in providing the service to citizens because of the presence of technologies.
South African Revenue Services (SARS)	In 2003, SARS launched its online submission of tax returns as a replacement for the manual submission of tax returns. This free service allows individual taxpayers, tax practitioners and businesses to register and submit tax returns and make any SARS-related queries within a secure online environment. The number of individuals registered for income tax increased to 21.0 million on 31 March 2018 from 20.0 million in the previous year (SARS 2020).
Department of Home Affairs	Implemented an electronic identity verification system to verify the identity of prospective and current clients using their fingerprints. This initiative promotes the vision of reinforcing the relationship between government and citizens (G2C). Furthermore, this will improve service delivery as citizens will no longer be required to complete detailed forms or stand in long queues as the smartcard identity document will enable citizens to confirm their identity by simply placing a finger on a biometric reader which will read the fingerprint against the Home Affairs database. Through its Home Affairs National Information System (HANIS) project, citizens will be able to access birth and death registration forms online. This will eliminate the frustration of having to spend many hours at the Department of Home Affairs.
Department of Communications	The National Department of Health, the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the National Health Information Systems Committee on South Africa (NHIS/SA) have developed a strategy that is aligned with the World Health Organisation (WHO). This e-Health strategy covers areas that include electronic health records and computerised registrations.
Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)	In collaboration with cellular phone service providers, the IEC has made it possible for voters to text their identity numbers and receive feedback on their eligibility to vote at their assigned voting stations (Farelo & Morris 2006:6). This will alleviate the problem of voters standing in long queues at the wrong voting stations.

Source: (Author's own construction)

especially the poor and rural population, will be shut off from government information and services and therefore, shut off from opportunities of employment, tenders, bursaries, health care, education and other services". Despite the progress that has been made in terms of the legislation and policies that have been adopted for the successful implementation of e-government initiatives, some challenges still remain and include the digital divide, ICT skills shortage and high levels of inequality and digital illiteracy.

## **The digital divide**

Srinuan and Bohlin (2011) argue that the disparity in access to ICT is the gap dividing those who have access to new and multiple forms of information technology (IT) from those who do not. This disparity is referred to as the digital divide. Ruggeri and Maram (2012:1) contend that the digital divide constitutes "a market failure considerable enough to warrant government interventions. Policies must be implemented in various areas of the political system simultaneously in order to narrow the digital divide". In addition, Henry (2019) sees the digital divide widening through e-government initiatives by the uneven development between urban and rural areas in most developing countries. South Africa has to deal with multiple challenges to bridge the digital divide before it can even comprehend any initiatives for e-government. Similarly, Thornhill and Cloete (2014:350) concur that the skills needed to access electronic information go beyond simple literacy and that "...access to government information is often beyond the reach of the majority of citizens, particularly those residing in rural areas".

## **ICT Skills shortage**

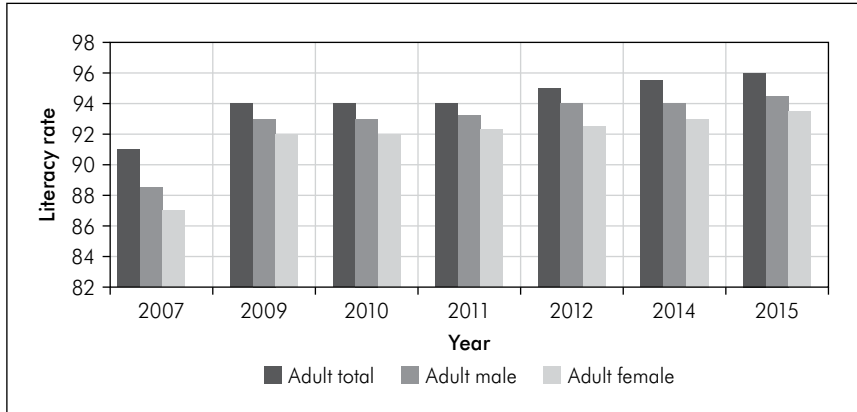
The South African government cannot be oblivious to the fact that South Africans with skills are leaving the country. Statistics from the Department of Home Affairs showed that in 2017, eight South African professionals left for every skilled foreigner who entered the country. The report estimated that over half a million South Africans had emigrated between 1989 and 2003, with the numbers growing by about 9% a year thereafter. In an article by Murenzi and Olivier (2017:145), it was stated that one of the key challenges is the shortage of skilled ICT graduates in South Africa. This has been intensified by the 'brain drain' to countries such as Australia and Germany and as a result there is a shortage of skilled IT staff in the public sector.

## **High levels of inequality and digital illiteracy**

According to the World Bank indicators (2017), the rural population in South Africa was reported at 34.7% in 2016. Naidoo (2012:64) states that "...there is a lack of



**Figure 3: South Africa: Literacy rate from 2007 to 2015, total and by gender**



Source: (Statista 2015)

equal access to all citizens especially people residing in rural areas, shortage in the skills necessary to use the internet and ICT infrastructure is far less developed than in urban areas". Citizens must be aware of how ICT services can empower them to co-produce and contribute to the effective implementation of G2C programmes.

Implementing successful e-government programmes to citizens who live in poor and remote rural areas can be a cumbersome task. According to Statista 2014, South Africa has a total literacy rate around 94.37%, which means almost 95% of all South Africans can read and write (Figure 3). However, a large portion of the population still lives in rural areas where the infrastructure and quality of the ICT services are minimal compared to the ICT infrastructure found in urban areas. Naidoo (2012:64) states that people residing in rural areas are still dependent on 'word of mouth' as a medium of communication and it is therefore of great importance that information is shared by utilising platforms such as mobile devices and the internet.

Despite the high literacy rate among adults, basic digital literacy still remains a problem in South Africa. Many schools are opting to go the digital route when it comes to learning and teaching methods. However, as a result of the historical imbalances that exist, such as inadequate resources and insufficient access to digital technologies, it is almost impossible to expect all learners and educators to access educational portals. Ultimately, this will have a severe effect on the type of education these learners are exposed to and will negatively impact their future. Johnson, Jacovina, Russell and Soto (2016) suggest that a smooth and effective integration of new educational technologies is challenging since the acquisition of new technology equipment and its adaptation to curricula and teaching techniques is unable to occur at each level of school systems.

In his State of the Nation Address, 2019, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that all school learners would be equipped with tablets over the next six years, e-learning would be introduced in schools and renewed efforts would be put into encouraging digital skills development. Also, President Cyril Ramaphosa, stated that,

*...over the next six years, we will provide every school child in South Africa with digital workbooks and textbooks on a tablet device. We will start with those schools that have been historically most disadvantaged and are located in the poorest communities, including multigrade, multiphase, farm and rural schools. Already, 90% of textbooks in high enrolment subjects across all grades and all workbooks have been digitised.*

For the government to effectively address the challenges it is currently encountering, public policymaking processes need to be explored.

## **THE SHIFT FROM NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT TO DIGITAL ERA GOVERNANCE**

During the past two decades, many governments embraced NPM as the underlying framework through which they are modernised and the public sector re-engineered and imagined (Hope 2001). The NPM is based upon the creation of a market-system in public service and the introduction of competition and public choice into service delivery (Botha, Brand, Engelbrecht & Van Eijbergen 2016:49). Indeed, the NPM offers important lessons and analyses for public management, which involve:

- Disaggregation: splitting up large public sector hierarchies in order to achieve wider, flatter hierarchies internally; and prespecifying information and managerial systems to facilitate this different pattern of control.
- Competition: introducing provider separation into the public sectors to allow multiple forms of provision to be developed and to create competition among potential providers.
- Incentivisation: shifting away from involving staff and rewarding their performance in terms of a diffuse public service, professional ethos, and moving towards a greater emphasis on specific-based performance incentives (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow & Tinkler 2006).

The NPM adopted a business-like approach to the public service and proposed that public officials should not concern themselves with red-tape bureaucracy and rather focus on the outcome of their actions by improving the effectiveness

of public service delivery (Thornhill, Van Dijk & Ile 2014:19). Cloete, De Coning, Wissink and Rabie (2018:115) believe that despite the NPM being adopted globally by governments to improve the effectiveness of its programmes, it does not always meet citizen expectations. However, the article agrees with the case “that a range of connected and information technology–centered changes will be critical for the current and next wave of change, and [the] focus on themes of reintegration, needs-based holism, and digitization changes” (Dunleavy *et al.* 2006). Here, the movement that involves these new shifts is towards DEG, “which involves reintegrating functions into the governmental sphere, adopting holistic and needs-oriented structures, and progressing digitalization of administrative processes” (Dunleavy *et al.* 2006). DEG offers a unique view to create self-sustaining change despite the digital divide, in a wide range of closely connected technological, organisational, cultural, and social effects. However, there are multiple situations as to how far DEG can be used as a coherent framework and implemented successfully for effective service delivery, such as a shared orthodoxy. That is, the development and use of a flexible, user-centred design for e-government initiatives through the procurement of a data-driven decision-making platform should be based on a service-delivery approach (Clarke 2017). This is expressed in the following recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To enable a digital society, where the digital divide is minimised and open to all citizens, as proposed by the National E-government Framework, the following recommendations could be considered:

### **ICT/Digital literacy**

In the interest of developing ICT skills from an early age, it is recommended that the government should channel funding into investing in the quality of primary and secondary education to prepare learners and equip them with the necessary basic ICT skills that could possibly result in their choosing a career in ICT and replace those that are lost to the “brain drain”. Citizens should also be offered the necessary training opportunities that will ensure that they are equipped with the essential skills to operate a computer and access the internet.

### **Improving ICT infrastructure in rural areas**

South Africa still embodies huge inequalities that aggravate the digital divide. It is therefore recommended that the infrastructure and technology that are required

to ensure that e-government takes place effectively are improved and made accessible to all citizens. Thornhill *et al.* (2014:362) state that many people in developing countries are poor and cannot afford access to electronic services. Moreover, the problems of illiteracy and lack of skills are predominant in rural areas where citizens do not have access to ICT infrastructure. Furthermore, Thornhill *et al.* (2014) state that technology-based services pose the threat of malfunctioning and it is this malfunctioning that is often blamed for poor or lack of services.

### **“Rome was not built in a day”: Accept that change will be slow**

Acknowledging that complete digitisation of services is not going to happen overnight is the first step in the right direction. In order for G2C initiatives to be successful, it is important that the South African government addresses the imbalances of the past and reduces the inequalities by promoting citizen-focused service delivery.

### **Improve current technology and communication channels between local government and communities which will ensure an improvement in service delivery**

It is recommended that the government should consider the implementation of a webpage that is user-friendly, which will address service delivery issues and that will communicate the relevant information to those citizens who have access to the internet. They should not just rely on ‘word of mouth’ as a medium of communication.

### **Implement intensive civic education programmes concerning e-government initiatives**

It is recommended that South Africa, through its municipalities, should embark on a civic education campaign to create a better-informed citizenry with whom the government can connect in its service delivery efforts. A lack of information in communities promotes apathy. Therefore, it is recommended that the government should embark on creating an internal division that will focus specifically on creating civic awareness in e-government initiatives. Citizens must be knowledgeable about the procedures and processes of how e-government functions.

### **Adequately incorporate citizens’ opinions and experiences in digital intervention**

Advocating for citizen involvement through the use of the internet, community forums and online discussion between citizens and officials is of utmost importance.

The internet and the introduction of e-government initiatives can be regarded as an avenue by which governments can increase information, citizen access and participation. Since the opinions and experiences of citizens will be heard vis-à-vis these platforms, they will have the opportunity to re-examine their needs and promote better accountability of officials through more effective delivery of services. Today, there are still challenges that remain such as the increasing levels of unemployment and access to health care services amid a global pandemic, and citizens are now more than ever expected to get involved in government initiatives.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the insights gathered in this literature review, it can be concluded that for the successful implementation of e-government strategies, it is fundamental that there is a positive relationship between citizens and government. What this article emphasises is that technology plays an increasingly crucial role and that these e-government initiatives create new opportunities to potentially empower citizens, revisiting means of communication between government and citizens, increasing the participation of citizens and increasing the effectiveness of public service delivery. The best way forward is to acknowledge the complications inherent in digital government and engaging citizens and government alike to assist in the effective delivery of services.

Further research is therefore required to expand on the theoretical and practical implications of the role of e-government initiatives in strengthening the G2C interaction. An important avenue for future research would be to examine some of the challenges experienced for the successful implementation of e-government strategies as well as the mechanisms that the government could put in place to address these challenges. The future of e-government in South Africa is threatened if these challenges are not adequately addressed and implementing e-government initiatives to promote effective service delivery will be a mere pipe dream.

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# Ethics and Accountability in BRICS Countries

## Analysing Critical Issues

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### ABSTRACT

This article reports on ethics and accountability in the BRICS countries comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The group of emerging economies was formed as an economic bloc in 2003, at the time referred to as BRIC, with South Africa joining in 2010. The BRICS countries have various bilateral trading agreements that are mutually beneficial. The aim of this article is thus to reflect how the BRICS countries have addressed issues of ethics and accountability as important prerequisites for good governance. It is underpinned by an ethics and accountability theoretical framework. Although the BRICS countries differ in accountability levels, by all means, they are all corrupt according to the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International. Employing qualitative methodology and document analysis as a data collection technique and the application of discourse analysis, the extent of ethical cultures and accountability was explored from political and economic BRICS contexts. These contexts are important in understanding ethics and accountability because studies have found that emerging economies, for example, have a tendency to result in corrupt activities and weak accountabilities. The findings suggest that there is a correlation between ethics and accountability – a high ethical environment yields high accountability and the converse applies.

## INTRODUCTION

BRICS is an acronym for the combined economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Economists at Goldman Sachs originally coined the term BRIC (without South Africa) in 2003. South Africa joined in 2010 and was officially added to the list on 13 April 2011, creating BRICS. Analysts speculated that, by 2050, the economies of these countries would be the most dominant (Sayeed & Mantzaris 2017:95; Chen 2019). This is so because BRICS is well positioned as an emerging global player. Since its inauguration, the BRICS bloc has positioned itself as a global voice aimed at advocating for a more just and fair acceptance of itself within the international system. This is one area where BRICS has been consolidating its collective dynamism in responding to development challenges within but this requires sound ethics and an accountability framework, against which the BRICS countries will be tested.

While BRICS offers a source of foreign expansion opportunity for firms and an investment avenue for institutional investors looking for high returns as a new economic bloc and emerging economic and political power (Chen 2019), it must do so by being conscious of ethics and accountability as important pillars of good governance. The BRICS countries have relatively complex micro legal and institutional frameworks but it is critical that these frameworks be consolidated at macro level. Some of the roots of corruption or unethical behaviour are grounded in the political and economic contexts of countries. Hence, an overview of the BRICS economic situations as provided in Table 1 is necessary to understand the growth patterns of their gross domestic products (GDPs).

**Table 1: GDP economic indicators**

Country	Population	Annual GDP (US\$)	GDP per capita (US\$)	Human Development Index	Debt (US\$)	Debt as % of GDP	Deficit as % of GDP
Brazil	209 469 333	1 867 818	8.917	0.759	1 641 023	87.89	-7.23
Russia	1 395 380 000	13 368 073	9.580	0.752	6 766 845	50.64	-4.82
China	1 352 617 328	2 718 732	2.010	0.640	1 849 402	68.05	-6.40
India	146 800 000	1 657 290	11.289	0.816	241 945	14.61	2.92
South Africa	57 939 000	368 135	6.354	0.699	208 683	56.71	-4.42

Source: (Countryeconomy.com 2020)

Table 1 above illustrates that the BRICS countries are at various levels when it comes to economic activity as shown by GDP growth. Therefore, it is of interest to determine how the BRICS countries have held public officials to account for the use of financial resources – among other forms of accountability – as well as for upholding the highest levels of ethical conduct as is expected of public officials. As such, the current study explored through discourse analysis how the BRICS countries are dealing with the issues of ethics and accountability. This was necessary to understand the connect between the two (ethics and accountability) that the BRICS countries espouse at a global level and the articulation of such variances at country level. Issues of ethics and accountability are critical for BRICS to flourish as the emerging economic and political power in the world.

A public administration discourse assists in establishing a link between ethics and accountability to inform an ethics and accountability framework of the BRICS architecture at regional and global level. There are two central questions informing this inquiry:

- Why does it matter to know how the BRICS countries address ethics and accountability?
- To what extent can the actions of BRICS countries be assessed in determining whether there is alignment between what BRICS articulates as an emerging global player and individual BRICS countries at their local contexts?

The current article attempted to answer these two important questions by analysing critical issues of ethics and accountability in the BRICS countries. This is even more relevant during the Covid-19 pandemic, which demands institutions to be resilient against the scourge and surge of corruption. The qualitative methodology and document analysis as data collection technique, coupled with the application of discourse analysis, were found by the authors to be suitable in answering the research questions.

First, the article provides expositions of what ethics and accountability are. Second, BRICS ethics and accountability dilemmas are presented. Third, the status of ethics and accountability in the BRICS countries are discussed, and lastly, a conclusion is drawn, which reflects all critical issues raised to strengthen the ethics and accountability framework within the BRICS countries.

## **CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL EXPOSITIONS OF ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

The section below provides an exposition of theoretical perspectives of ethics and accountability that underpinned the study.

## Ethics

Raga and Taylor (2005:23) are of the view that the concept 'ethics' is concerned with the character, conduct and morals of humans. In addition, Banerjee (2015:100) argues that ethics is built on, inter alia, personality and culture. Ethical behaviour is important for the achievement of a stable political-administrative authority within social and economic structures (Raga & Taylor 2005:23). Wright, Hassan and Park (2016:647) aver that studies have found that in most instances, while carrying out their duties, public officials have demonstrated unethical behaviour. The officials thus tended to promote their self-interests as opposed to the interests of communities at large. What makes this situation worse is that most participating officials were also not confident that, when they report suspected ethical violations, appropriate action would be taken and/or that they would not be punished for having done so (Wright *et al.* 2016:647).

Sambo and Webb (2017:150) mention that ethics in the context of a public institution refers to what is considered right and proper behaviour of both political office bearers and public officials coupled with the moral requirements of public officials when carrying out their duties. The personal morality of officials, codes of conduct as well as what is permissible and not permissible in public life, are important considerations. Mutema (2016:34) conceptualises ethics as the field of study related to how people try to live their lives according to a standard of 'right' or 'wrong' behaviour. The meaning of ethics is clustered into three aspects:

- first, ethics means right and wrong or good and bad;
- second, there is the question of integrity of someone's personal character – ethics is understood as that which concerns individual character, in other words how we ought to behave; and
- third, ethics is defined as a set of principles or rules, which sanction or forbid certain kinds of conduct.

In their research, Wright *et al.* (2016) investigated the relationship between public service motivation (PSM) and ethical behaviour. This was done by testing "the degree to which PSM predicts ethical behavioural intention of government employees" (Wright *et al.* 2016:647). In summary, Wright *et al.*'s study found that government employees with higher PSM are more likely to exhibit values that promote public interests, and they are less concerned about consequences of whistle blowing within their organisations. In addition, supervisors with higher PSM are more likely to be considered as demonstrating ethical leadership by their subordinates. Subordinates of these supervisors in turn have higher PSM and are more willing to report unethical behaviour within their organisations (Wright *et al.* 2016:647).

Similarly, Aziz, Rahman, Alam and Said (2015:166) argue that effective leadership has the potential to improve teamwork and quality of work. Furthermore, Aziz *et al.* claim that in instances where the behaviour of the leader differs considerably from the expectations of their subordinates, this may weaken the performance of both the group and of the individuals. Accordingly, the leadership style of a leader could affect the way in which accountability is accomplished in an organisation, either in a positive or in a negative way. For this reason, accountability is conceptualised below.

## **Accountability**

According to general standards, accountability is all about being answerable for one's action or inaction. Together with ethics, accountability forms an important pillar of governance. Koenane and Mangena (2017:68) contend that accountability means the ability to accept responsibility for decisions and the foreseeable consequences of actions and inactions, and setting examples for others. Aziz *et al.* (2015:164) are of the view that, at a basic level, accountability refers to the relationship between public managers, politicians and citizens. In addition, Kolthoff, Huberts and Van den Heuvel (2007:419) write that government should not only be accountable to a select group of stakeholders but to the entire population.

The concept of accountability has evolved over time, and has broadened to include issues of financial management and stewardship over the use of public financial resources in an efficient and effective manner in all areas of government. In this context, accountability calls for governments to account to the public for the way public financial resources are utilised. Kolthoff *et al.* (2007) add that, over and above using public financial resources prudently, government is also supposed to treat everyone fairly to achieve its objectives. On the other hand, Aziz *et al.* (2015:164) emphasise that understanding the way in which accountability can be improved in the public sector, is one of the essential elements of ensuring that there is good governance. Accordingly, the concept of good governance recommends ideal administrative behaviour, which rejects unethical or questionable behaviour.

Similarly, Banerjee (2015:95) is of the view that public accountability, rule of law, ethics and good governance as well as the fight against corruption are all intertwined. Fard and Rostamy (2007:331) add the concept of trust in their study on explaining the role of public accountability. The latter authors found that public accountability positively influences public trust by improving satisfaction on the part of citizens, where satisfaction is measured by the quality of public services provided. Accountability, according to Sambo (2017:41), is regarded as holding elected or appointed individuals and institutions that have a

public mandate to account to the public for their actions and activities and the decisions that they make. This is because their mandate stems from the public. Accountability also focuses on the ability to account for the allocation, use and control of public financial resources according to legally accepted standards regarding budgeting, accounting and auditing. In addition, Madue (2009:413) says accountability in service delivery and financial management is the cornerstone of any organisation.

The test of the principle of accountability is fundamental in answering the question of who is accountable or responsible for actions that adversely affect the public, in other words, public accountability. Accountability determines whether a particular government can or cannot be trusted. This is important as it could affect the integrity and stature of the organisation. Whether it is realised or not, the decisions governments make always have moral implications, and society requires government officials to be accountable for these decisions (Koenane & Mangena 2017:69).

Fard and Rostamy (2007:336) further identify six types of accountability, namely,

- ethical accountability – among others, this refers to a lack of nepotism and bribery as well as fulfilling promises made to citizens;
- legal accountability – providing citizens with the necessary information relating to laws and regulations, on time;
- political accountability – indicated by responses to questions by representatives of citizens in councils and public trust in elected officials;
- democratic accountability – refers to the nature of participation by citizens in elections;
- financial accountability – has to do with transparency when it comes to the presentation of financial information, such as the annual budget, to citizens; and
- performance accountability – the presentation to citizens of annual performance information as well as information that relates to government achievements.

These types of accountability were used to expatiate on how the BRICS countries have done so far in addressing accountability issues to inform the framework of ethics and accountability developed in the current study. Overall, given the conceptual expositions, accountability is closely linked to ethics because holding public officials and political office bearers to account for the actions they take or do not take while in public office goes hand in hand with the expectation that these incumbents ought to behave in a manner that the public deems proper. This shows the importance of having ethical officials who are in turn accountable. In this regard, Raga and Taylor (2005:22) contend that among other things, training in ethics is necessary in reassuring public officials that there is sufficient

organisational support towards the attainment of an effective, efficient and accountable public service.

Kanyane (2014:185) avows that it is important to conduct advocacy classes on ethics, accountability and oversight to strengthen the moral compass at various levels and stages of humanity. An ethical society that is ready to take action against corruption is a barrier to corruption. This barrier should be taken seriously because corruption, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (n.d.) raises the cost of business, undermines public trust and hampers growth. The OECD (n.d.) further states that it disproportionately affects the poor and vulnerable by diverting resources from essential public services, such as health care, education, transportation, water and sanitation. Combating corruption and promoting integrity requires a whole-of-society approach.

## **BRICS ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY DILEMMAS**

The dilemmas of the BRICS countries were drawn from the Transparency International (TI) corruption perception surveys. In 1993, a few individuals decided to take a stance against corruption and created TI. Now present in more than 100 countries, the movement works relentlessly to stir the world's collective conscience and to bring about change. Much remains to be done to stop corruption, but much has also been achieved, including:

- the creation of international anti-corruption conventions;
- the prosecution of corrupt leaders and seizures of their illicitly gained riches;
- national elections won and lost on tackling corruption; and
- companies held accountable for their behaviour both at home and abroad (Transparency International 2019).

Although the corruption perception surveys have shortcomings, the data generated since its inception in 1993 has been consistently informed by a growing number of countries who have joined the TI surveys. The analysis informed the corruption levels of the BRICS countries. This was juxtaposed with Nordic countries found to have low levels of corruption compared to those of the BRICS countries. With time, the BRICS countries should develop their own credible instrument to measure themselves against corruption to complement the TI surveys.

Norway is one of the Nordic countries, which also comprise Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. The OECD (2013:127) reports that Norway is regarded as one of the countries with least corruption in society. In the 2019 TI Corruption Perception Index, Norway ranked 7 out of 180 countries and earned

an average score of 85 out of 100 between 2012–2019. This ranking places Norway among New Zealand, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Singapore and Sweden as the top seven least corrupt countries in the world.

The Norwegian government has shown commitment to ethics and accountability by eradication of corruption in a number of ways. First, TI presents that the Norwegian leadership implemented anti-corruption conventions, for example,

- the 1997 OECD Convention on combating bribery of foreign public officials in international business transactions;
- the 1999 Council of Europe Criminal Law Convention on Corruption;
- the 1999 Council of Europe Civil Law Convention on Corruption; and
- the 2003 United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Second, the Norwegian Directorate of Public Management in the Ministry of Government Administration sets aside a budget and human capital to offer courses in ethics, which include:

- fundamental public sector values;
- the concept of the welfare state;
- an introduction to a methodology for ethical reflection; and
- problem solving associated with daily problems of both professional and administrative nature (OECD 2013).

Nordic countries are less corrupt because they are small, rich, politically stable and they all have homogeneous societies. Demographically, Norway has a small population of about 4.6 million people. Notwithstanding other factors, it is easier to fight corruption in smaller jurisdictions. Norway is a prosperous bastion of welfare capitalism, which has a healthy economy and very high living standards among its citizens. The economy is founded on ingenuousness and transparency, rule of law, and a well-built tradition of minimum forbearance for corruption under a 1902 penal code, which has been practised by the Norwegians for over 100 years (Mutema 2016:52).

Given the high levels of corruption in Russia, Brazil, India, China and South Africa in that order according to the TI Index, it is important that ethics and accountability issues receive attention in BRICS countries. A commonly expressed view is that corruption is more pervasive in the developing world and less in the more mature developed economies. The aforementioned assertion is not correct all the time. Another view that is often heard is that the phenomenon is universal. It merely varies in the form in which it appears in different geopolitical and economic environments (Chhokar 2015:8). Notwithstanding either of these views, the presence of corruption in the BRICS countries is indisputable and stems from ethics and accountability questions. This though, does not suggest that BRICS is a club of corrupt countries.



Thomas Hobbes argues that a society acts out of self-interest and fear, not out of natural feelings for one's fellow man. This is repugnant to civil law, which encourages communal relationships (Albert 1980:144–147). It is in this regard that an element of *ubuntu* (a person is a person because of the other people), rooted in the African tradition, is crucial. According to Nawa, Sirayi and Kanyane (2017:120–121), *ubuntu* is an ancient anthro-philosophical thought according to which Africans view their world. From this perspective, the philosophy could be metaphorically portrayed as the ultimate calibrator of relations among Africans in general, or more philosophically “the potential of being human”, that is, in mind, body and soul.

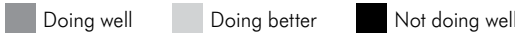
The demands for ethics and accountability require public organisations to put in place appropriate systems and structures informed by effective governance principles and ethical values subjected to periodic reviews in order to adequately meet the expectations and needs of the BRICS countries. To this end, ethics and accountability in the BRICS countries should continue to shape their responses, cooperation and development. According to Ladner, Soguel, Emery, Weerts and Nahrath (2019:ii), those who exercise authority must account for its use – to those on whose behalf they act. It is for the same reason that, if the BRICS governance and ethics compass can be improved, the money spent on corruption could be used for the right course, for bettering the lives of society, especially at grassroots in the BRICS jurisdictions.

At a bare minimum, ethical behaviour by public officials requires respect for the rule of law and the dignity of the individual. The rule of law is the oldest constitutional requirement, which has its origins in English constitutional laws. In that context, the rule of law does not therefore tolerate any *ultra vires* situation. Respect for and compliance with the rule of law could therefore be a solution to the prevailing corruption in the BRICS countries. In South Africa, for example, a code of conduct for governing the conduct of every employee in the public service exists, although it is not absolute. It acts as a guideline to employees for what is expected of them from an ethical point of view, both in their individual conduct and in their relationship with others. Compliance with the code can be expected to enhance professionalism and help to instil confidence in the public service (Kanyane 2014:163–165).

## **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY STATUS OF BRICS COUNTRIES**

Table 2 provides a schematic presentation of how the BRICS countries have dealt with various types of accountability. The details of how each country is doing are further explained below.

**Table 2: BRICS accountability continuum**

Country	Ethical accountability	Legal accountability	Political accountability	Democratic accountability	Financial accountability
Brazil	■	■	■	■	■
Russia	■	■	■	■	■
India	■	■	■	■	■
China	■	■	■	■	■
South Africa	■	■	■	■	■
					

Sources: (Fard & Rostamy 2007:336; Sayeed & Mantzaris 2017:97–100; International Budget Partnership 2019)

## Brazil

*Ethical accountability:* Brazil’s score on TI’s 2019 Corruption Perception Survey is 35. This is an indication that the country is among those that are considered highly corrupt. *Legal accountability:* The country experienced numerous setbacks to its legal and institutional anti-corruption frameworks. These setbacks included a Supreme Court order that essentially paralysed the country’s anti-money laundering system and an illegal inquiry that secretly targeted law enforcement agents (Sayeed and Mantzaris 2017; Transparency International 2019). *Political accountability:* The 2018 national elections are said to have been strongly influenced by special interests in government. Progress towards the country’s anti-corruption agenda is thus at risk and escalating impunity threatens to weaken democracy and destabilise the country. One of the challenges is the growing political interference by the president with anti-corruption institutions and congressional approval of a statute that threatens the independence of law enforcement agents as well as accountability by political parties (Transparency International 2019; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance [IDEA] 2019).

*Democratic accountability:* Brazil is doing well when it comes to democratic accountability. The country was congratulated by the Organisation of American States (OAS) (2018), which was deployed to the country to observe the second round of the General Elections held on 28 October 2018. The OAS was satisfied that the Brazilian people demonstrated civic commitment as they turned out to the polls in large numbers to choose their representatives. *Financial accountability:* Brazil ranked sixth out of 117 countries on the Open Budget Survey. Some of the recommendations made for the country to improve its budget transparency, public participation and budget oversight respectively are:

- The versions of budget documents provided to the public should be published throughout the budget process. The documents that need to reflect the public’s

requirements for budget information should also be distributed widely on various platforms.

- Vulnerable and underrepresented communities should be actively engaged – directly or through civil society organisations representing them – during the budgeting process.
- A committee of the legislature should scrutinise in-year budget implementation information and publish reports with their findings online (International Budget Partnership 2019).

## Russia

*Ethical accountability:* Russia scored 28 on the 2019 Corruption Perception Survey. This is an indication that the country is among the countries that are considered highly corrupt (Transparency International 2019:3). *Legal accountability:* GAN Integrity (2017) found that the business environment in Russia suffers from inconsistent application of laws as well as a lack of transparency and accountability in public administration. The regulatory inefficiencies have led to substantial increases in the cost of doing business and have a negative impact on market competition. *Political accountability:* The Kennan Institute (2020) explains that in Russia, “war has been a fundamental part of the exercise of federal state-building” and is essentially “meant to legitimate and enhance presidential power”. President Putin is said to have created a ‘two-track system’ of political accountability in Russia. On the one hand, the Russian government is relatively open and transparent when it comes to foreign policy matters; on the other, not much information is provided on domestic matters.

*Democratic accountability:* When it comes to democratic tools such as elections in Russia, these have not proved to ensure effectively that there is accountability on the part of Russian leaders (Kennan Institute 2020). *Financial accountability:* Russia ranked 14 out of 117 countries on the Open Budget Survey. Some of the recommendations made for Russia to improve its budget transparency, public participation and budget oversight respectively are:

- Improve the completeness of the mid-year review by, among others, displaying updated revenue estimates for the entire budget year.
- Increase the ways in which civil society organisations and the public wishing to participate in budget processes are engaged (International Budget Partnership 2019).

## India

*Ethical accountability:* India has a score of 41 on the Corruption Perception Survey of 2019. This places the country among countries closer to the average score of

the survey, which is 43 (Transparency International 2019:2–4). *Legal accountability*: Various statutes have been promulgated in India to fight corruption. Some of these are the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002. The execution of these laws has, however, been short of enforcement as corruption in India remains relatively high (Sayeed & Mantzaris 2017:99; Transparency International 2019:4). *Political accountability*: In strengthening political accountability, greater transparency in the selection of candidates for election by the political parties was sought through initiatives of citizen groups who asked political parties to be more accountable to the people (Paul, n.d.). *Democratic accountability*: Paul (n.d.) says there is a need for the implementation of reforms in the way in which democracy works in India. The root cause of the problem is said to lie in the inadequate electoral process. Community organisations have subsequently taken it upon themselves to address issues of electoral transparency and reform by, among others, organising information campaigns on candidates contesting elections and setting up a people’s commission to investigate complaints against candidates by citizens. *Financial accountability*: India is ranked 53 out of 117 countries on the Open Budget Survey. Some of the recommendations made for the country to improve its budget transparency, public participation and budget oversight respectively are:

- Include detailed information on income and expenditure in the approved budget.
- Actively engage underrepresented and vulnerable communities during budgeting processes.
- Make certain that the legislature is consulted before the executive reduces spending as a result of revenue shortfalls (International Budget Partnership 2019).

## China

*Ethical accountability*: China had a score of 41 on the 2019 Corruption Perception Survey. This places the country among countries closer to the average score of the survey (Transparency International 2019:2–4). *Legal accountability*: Sayeed and Mantzaris (2017:99) caution that public officials in China do not interpret laws consistently, which creates challenges in the achievement of an ethical public service. *Political accountability*: A lack of political will by the ruling political Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to fight corruption in China is cited as the main reason for its continuing increase (Sayeed and Mantzaris 2017:100). *Democratic accountability*: Although it is difficult to judge China based on democratic accountability, as the country is not characterised by the principles of democracy, Xixin and Yongle (2018:31) aver that the CCP and the central government are aware of the urgent need to carry out political and administrative reforms to expand citizens’ participation in political and administrative processes. There is thus a call for the ruling party

to improve oversight institutions, expand citizens' orderly political participation, protect people's right to democratic elections, decision-making and safeguarding people's extensive rights and freedom, respect and protecting of human rights.

*Financial accountability:* China ranked 98 out of 117 countries on the Open Budget Survey. Some of the recommendations made for the country to improve its budget transparency, public participation and budget oversight respectively are:

- Produce and publish the pre-budget statement and mid-year review online and on time.
- Pilot ways in which government can engage the public during budget formulation and monitor budget implementation.
- The budget of the Executive should be approved by the legislature at the beginning of the fiscal year (International Budget Partnership 2019).

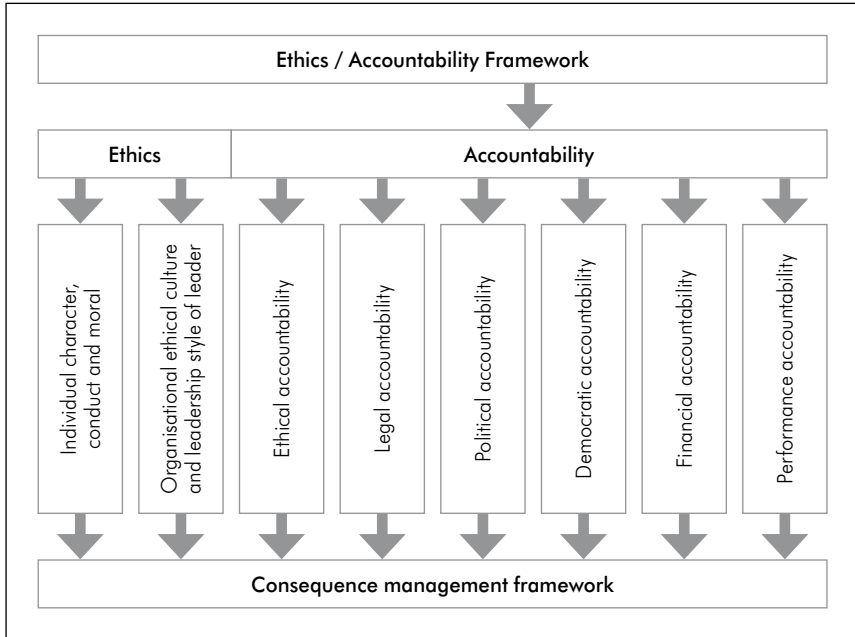
## South Africa

*Ethical accountability:* South Africa scored 44 on the 2019 Corruption Perception Survey. This means the country's score is close to the average score of the survey (Transparency International 2019:2–4). *Legal accountability:* Klug (2015) says the South African legal framework, which establishes the rules and processes of good governance, is among the most sophisticated in the world. This is evident in South Africa's unique Constitution of 1996 and the adoption of several statutes, such as the Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999. However, the implementation of these statutes has been less effective. *Political accountability:* Stiftung (2018) argues that one of the indicators of political accountability, namely trust in elected officials, was put to the test in South Africa during the presidency of Jacob Zuma. This is due to unending corruption scandals, which have damaged democratic institutions and the public's trust in them.

*Democratic accountability:* There is democratic accountability in South Africa. All adults of voting age (18 years) are eligible to vote. However, Stiftung (2018) raises the concern that in countries such as South Africa, where there is a perceived absence of alternatives to the governing party, abstention and disengagement by potential voters appear to be better options than participating in elections. *Financial accountability:* South Africa is ranked second after New Zealand out of 117 countries on the Open Budget Survey. This shows that the country is doing well on matters related to budget transparency, which is a major factor of financial accountability. Some of the recommendations made for the country to improve its budget transparency, public participation and budget oversight respectively are:

- Improve on the extensiveness of the approved budget by including approved estimates of revenue, government borrowing and debt.

**Figure 1: Theoretical framework for inculcating ethics and accountability**



Source: (Authors' own construction)

- Provide feedback to the public on how inputs collected during pre-budget consultations and budget implementation processes are used by government.
- Submit the budget of the executive to legislators at least two months before the start of the fiscal year (International Budget Partnership 2019).

The various types of accountability as well as the theoretical exposition on accountability described above were used to develop a framework of ethics and accountability, as reflected in Figure 1.

The framework presented in Figure 1 suggests that, to promote ethics and accountability, first, the various forms of accountability have to be in place. Second, individuals' character, conduct and morals are critical in determining whether they are ethical or otherwise. Third, the organisation plays a pivotal role in promoting an ethical culture. The culture of the organisation should be modelled by the leadership who is likely to be mimicked by the subordinates. Lastly, all these ethics and accountability issues should happen within an environment within which there are consequences for both positive and negative actions. Consequences for positive action are necessary in rewarding employees for good behaviour, while consequences for negative action serve as a deterrent for the same actions not to be repeated.

In the main, accountability should intersect with consequences to maximise control against corruption. This is even more possible when, according to Klitgaard (2015), institutions that promote accountability and transparency are robustly evaluated on an ongoing basis. Tackling corruption entails practical, feasible strategies to weed out monopolies, increase accountability, align incentives, improve enforcement, create coordinated and concerted government approaches, enlist the cooperation of businesses and civil society, empower the public and disrupt corrupt equilibria. These strategies must be developed locally and adjusted to local realities.

Efforts to combat and prevent corruption should be informed by continuous authentic and reflective policy conceptualisation and design interventions. Such interventions imply a bottom-up approach to policy design, one in which policy is continually conceptualised and informed by empirical data on the policy issue – in this case, corruption as well as values that guide policy decision-making, namely ethics and accountability (Webb and Kanyane, 2019:95). The wicked problem of corruption can only be solved effectively if BRICS countries are seriously concerned about an anti-corruption infrastructure that is resilient and responsive against corruption at both country and global level.

## **CONCLUSION**

It became evident from the above discussion that ethics and accountability are critical building blocks of any country or organisation. Without these building blocks, the country or the organisation is susceptible to corruption and all its manifestations. The study reported here exposed BRICS countries to anti-corruption measures, such as corruption perception surveys, open budget surveys and the accountability continuum. All these frameworks show that BRICS countries need to pay attention to ethics and all types of accountability at both regional and country level. For BRICS to thrive as an emerging superpower on the economic and political front, it is unquestionably necessary for an ethics and accountability framework to be entrenched in BRICS public institutions. This will go a long way in tackling ethics and accountability concerns raised by the corruption perception surveys, open budget surveys and the accountability continuum.

It is of the utmost importance to establish intersectionality between accountability and the management of consequences. The practice of one without the other poses a weak approach of fighting corruption, and this should be followed by robust monitoring and evaluations of the oversight institutions to ensure that they are enforcing accountability and consequences. The intersectionality should not be far removed from building an ethical society. Drawing from the Nordic countries, especially Norway, a portion of a budget must be set aside for

capacity building in ethics, accountability and oversight in all stages of humanity to make the governments of all BRICS countries responsive to and resilient against corruption.

## NOTES

- 1 **Ethical accountability** in Table 2 is considered based on the outcomes of corruption perception surveys whereas **financial accountability** is based on the ranking of the Open Budget Survey. The Open Budget Survey is used internationally to assess public access to government budget information, opportunities for the public to participate in budget processes as well as the role of budget oversight institutions, such as the legislature in budgeting processes.
- 2 The score continuum for Transparency International's Corruption Perception Survey is as follows: Countries that score between 0–49 are considered very corrupt, with those scoring closer to 0 being the most corrupt. Countries scoring between 50–100 are regarded as least corrupt, with those closer to 100 considered as very clean.

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# Inner-city Decay and Problem Buildings in Major South African Cities Two Decades Into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

## Is Effective Programme Management by City Governments Feasible?

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### ABSTRACT

The evaluation of managerial interventions is an important instrument applied internationally to determine whether policy objectives are being achieved. In this article, programme management of inner-city decay and problem buildings by selected South African city governments is evaluated. The article commences by providing the international context, followed by theoretical perspectives on public sector programme management. The importance of project management principles is emphasised, culminating in an integrated public sector programme management framework in which the *Project Management Body of Knowledge* principles are incorporated. The legislative context for city governments to deal with the owners of problematic properties is also described. As part of a case study approach, executive councillors and managers were interviewed to obtain the primary data. The findings were fed into a normative model for an inner-city turnaround strategy. The article concludes with recommendations for improved programme management in relation to inner-city decay and problem buildings.

## INTRODUCTION

For purpose of this article, programme management by city governments, was evaluated, in relation to the phenomenon of inner-city decay and problem buildings in selected South African cities. While the inner-city decay situation and circumstances in especially Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town have been observed, a detailed case study (2018/2019) was conducted at a selected metropolitan municipality in the province of the Eastern Cape (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in Port Elizabeth), which served as setting for the study and for primary data collection.

Where most of the historic inner-city districts of large South African cities have two decades ago still been economically viable and an attraction for local and international tourists, severe decay is evident two decades into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Problematic buildings are usually found in the context of general inner-city decay. Lack of effective waste management, increased criminality, insufficient law enforcement, ineffective municipal service delivery, social ills and a deteriorating built environment are some of the salient characteristics of inner-city decay. If timeous interventions are not implemented, inner-city areas will spiral even further downwards and become even more dangerous for residents and visitors. Opportunities for economic, property and tourism development – and accelerated job creation – are possible benefits of effective inner-city turnaround strategies.

This article is embedded in the New Public Administration theory, programme management literature, and principles from the Project Management Body of Knowledge, which are applicable to the South African context as well as those of other developing countries.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main research question was: *In the context of inner-city decay and with reference to public sector programme management theory and relevant legislative frameworks, to what extent is programme management pertaining to problem buildings performed effectively in South African cities?*

The experience in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in Port Elizabeth has been highlighted, as a case in point. A qualitative research design was developed for this cross-sectional research. As backdrop to the study, a theoretical analysis of public sector programme management and programme evaluation was undertaken; an analysis of relevant legislation and municipal by-laws was also conducted. The sampling technique utilised was purposive sampling, where 16 municipal councillors and municipal managers, directly responsible for inner-city

management and problematic buildings, acted as respondents to in-depth semi-structured interviews with follow-up communications for clarification.

The research was evaluative, with the goal to learn lessons towards improved inner-city turnaround programmes by city governments. The scholars referred to below properly captured the nature of, and approach to, public sector programme evaluation.

Cloete, Wissink and De Coning (2011) expound on policy programme evaluation. The following questions guided the study: What is programme evaluation? Why is this evaluation necessary? What are suitable evaluation methods? What should the scope of the evaluation be? What timings and time frames are suitable for evaluation? What constraints need to be considered when evaluating policy programmes?

In a scholarly work on evaluation management in Africa and South Africa, Cloete, Rabie and De Coning (2014:3) deal with the most strategic contemporary evaluation themes and theory, illustrated with case studies. Policy, programme and project evaluations are covered in a wide range of practical scenarios. Cloete *et al.* (2014:4) aptly define programme evaluation as “systematically reflecting on and learning lessons from the nature, processes and consequences of decisions and actions” by an organisation, to improve future results.

Boruch, Chao and Lee (2016) enlighten the reader with their ‘Basic Themes in Programme Evaluation’. The focus of these authors is on programme evaluation, rather than on areas such as personnel or policy evaluation. Boruch *et al.* (2016) frame the basic themes that underpin most programme evaluations, regardless of academic discipline, agency or country. These themes are: What is the nature of the problem or issue? What is the manifest evidence of the problem? How is the intervention deployed to address the problem? Are the interventions effective? Is there evidence to support claims of success? Cost-effective intervention? These authors focus on the importance of evidence, including quality control, inspections, reporting and effective document management.

## **ADDRESSING INNER-CITY DECAY – GLOBAL CONTEXT**

The matter of decay in historical inner-cities – and how to address the problem – has been the theme of scholarly attention over many years. Herewith is presented some selected perspectives.

Grogan and Proscio (2001:55) refer to, *inter alia*, the achievements of community development corporations and organisations in selected modern American cities, demonstrating how thinking ‘outside the lines’ – and not just waiting for government – is important. The authors point out the importance of business’ embrace of the inner-city as a growth opportunity. Government

and business working separately were unable to solve inner-city crises; but a blend of public-private partnerships, grassroots non-profit organisations, and a willingness to experiment brought out the best among the new approaches to urban problem solving. Businesses were welcomed back into inner-cities after government agencies and new techniques of community policing cracked down on symptoms of social disorder. As a consequence of these efforts, the inner-cities became vital communities once again – from Cleveland and Boston to San Francisco and Chicago. Their argument is that bold new (comprehensive and multi-layered) approaches to age-old urban problems can be effective in uplifting inner-cities.

Zapotosky and De Young (2016) report on former New York mayor Giuliani's 2003 Mexico City proposals, which were largely the ones that he had implemented in New York. An aggressive approach to petty crime, with increased arrests and stiff fines, police training, and zero tolerance for graffiti and broken windows that made residents feel unsettled in their communities. The zero-tolerance approach became well-known around the world.

Andersen (2003) researched selected European cities, especially the problems experienced in the oldest (historic) urban areas. These neighbourhoods were marked by visible physical and social problems that disfigure the otherwise pleasant urban landscape. The author explains why urban decay and deprived neighbourhoods appear in certain parts of cities, as well as how they affect residents and cities in general. Drawing on in-depth empirical research from Denmark, Anderson compares this research with studies from Europe and the United States. The author combines theories and methodologies from the fields of geography, economics (on processes of urban decay) and social research (on deprived neighbourhoods) to provide illuminating insights. The importance of active city governments that respect and encourage property investment and renewal, as well as vigilant security presence by government agencies are some of the salient recommendations presented.

Guided by their Inner-City Roadmap the Johannesburg Development Agency in 2018 announced a programme to focus on strengthening the position of the historic inner-city as a critical business and residential node, and a primary gateway to transit networks for the city. The inner-city is seen as important for financial services networks for the Gauteng region, and for cross-border trade networks for the African continent. The agency announced a phased plan to strengthen inner-city precincts, address movement challenges, and improve the quality of the built environment across the inner-city. The specific activities include managing the development of the Johannesburg inner-city through capital investments in selected precincts, by overseeing integrated investments by other municipal departments and private entities, and by facilitating partnership initiatives (Johannesburg Development Agency 2018).

Lekwot, Yakubu, Kwesaba, and Sahabo (2015) report on badly deteriorated inner-city slum areas in Jos Metropolis, Nigeria. Slum is defined as a squatter settlement that is formed as a result of infiltration of people into urban areas. The study aimed at identifying slum characteristics and how they contribute to environmental deterioration. In this study questionnaires were distributed to selected households in the study area. The results revealed that most of the household sizes in the selected slums were between five to nine persons, the number of persons per room between six and seven persons – indicating that the average occupancy ratio in the selected slums is high (densely populated). The toilet facilities are shared and in bad condition. The walls and roofs of most of the dwellings in the selected slums were in appalling condition. The authors recommended transformation and new development alternatives to be planned, to improve the severely populated and unhygienic conditions.

## **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON PUBLIC SECTOR PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT**

In the global and national context there usually are a number of important factors (in some sort of combination) responsible for inner-city decay and the concomitant phenomenon of problem buildings – for a summary of these factors, see Table 2. The authors have, however, selected as the theoretical framework for this research, *public sector programme management*, since even ‘non-programme management’ aspects (for example, corrupt activity; lack of regulations; lack of police presence) need to be covered and addressed when a comprehensive programme to turn around decay is launched.

As a broad approach to this research study, the idea of, and the necessity for, innovation in the public sector was a fundamental point of departure. Bekkers, Edelenbos and Steijn (2014) highlight the journeys of innovation on which several public organisations have embarked in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These authors go beyond a focus on modernisation of public services and processes, an idea often dominant in the *New Public Administration* literature, to emphasise the need for legitimate government and investment in linking ‘capacities’. In a discussion on societal challenges and co-creation, self-organisation and meta-governance, these scholars reported that governments are increasingly investigating relevant coordinating mechanisms such as markets and communities that can be used to allocate public values and corresponding services, programmes and projects. The changes in public administration roles and functions are accompanied by practical implications and challenges to innovation (Bekkers *et al.* 2014:242).

Social and community innovation practices, for instance, those found in the initiation of city improvement districts and special rates associations in South

African inner-cities, are manifestations of the civil self-organisation referred to by Bekkers *et al.* (2014:243) These should be linked to new (meta) governance models that are being considered, as societies and their governments wrestle with new and complicated challenges. In South African inner-cities too, the government and communities are beginning to create new models of service delivery, where the responsibilities and functions are spread out and allocated in ways different to the era of the former public administration mode of delivery (Conradie 2020:22).

The researchers focused on programme management theory, emphasising the usefulness of project management principles and practice in public sector programme management contexts. When the phenomenon of inner-city decay and problem buildings is keenly observed, it becomes clear that a large part of the solution to the challenge can be found within the effective application of public sector programme and project management practices. Programme management is important at a fundamental level because an effective, strategic, managerial intervention over an extended period is required. Project management is essential because, wherever projects are managed successfully, several of the main contributing factors observed are precise planning, as well as firm commitment to adherence to pre-set time frames, budgets and standards when executing the plans. It is unlikely that inner-city decay and problem buildings can be resolved successfully by any city government or municipality without effecting relevant managerial competency, including successful project management (Conradie 2020:24).

Programme management in the context of this study refers to the simultaneous management of several problem building cases (projects) by a city council. In addition, when inner-city turnaround interventions are implemented over a sustained period, programme management will typically take place. Gildenhuis (2004:194) mentions the importance of “programming as an operational programme for implementation by the relevant organisational unit” of government policies.

Qing (2016:44) advances the view of programme management as a novel and growing application of management that “enables multiple, inter-related projects to be managed collectively”, in contrast to traditional project management where projects are managed individually and in isolation. This author posits that the importance of programme management is increasing, particularly in the public sector. Qing applied social network analysis to explore ways in which collaboration is affected by the “organisational affiliations, project grouping and physical proximity” of partners’ personnel.

This contribution highlighted recent trends towards high-order, inter-organisational relationships in the programme management context. In other words, ways of increasing the effectiveness of stakeholder collaboration in a programme management context. The notion that programmes, like projects, also have life-cycles is valid, as programmes are also initiated, planned, executed and closed. While programmes normally run long-term, projects could be as brief as a few



months in duration. On the one hand, the ongoing and longer-term nature of programmes in which stakeholders collaborate to achieve objectives by utilising their networks, and on the other hand project management approaches to deal with specific problem buildings in the short term, could ideally constitute effective public sector programme management (Conradie 2020:26).

Van der Waldt (2011:72) supports the view that no public sector programme will be effective if the principles, disciplines and techniques of project management are not applied appropriately. These techniques could include the application of work breakdown structures, network diagrams, critical path methods and Gantt charts.

When programme management in a specific context is evaluated, the point of departure should always be: what is “programme management” and what is meant by “effective programme management”? Hence, scholarly theoretical perspectives of programme management need to be analysed. An analysis of the works of internationally recognised scientists will assist to identify the key characteristics and principles of effective public sector programme and project management. As previously stated, public sector programme management and public sector project management are closely linked disciplines and effective programme management cannot occur without integrating project management knowledge and techniques (Conradie 2020:32).

Xuza and Swilling (cited in Van Donk, Swilling, Pieterse & Parnel 2011:263–267) refer to the importance of stakeholders outside the government partnering with government agencies in programmes aimed at stimulating economic development, investment and job creation. The roles of non-governmental organisations, municipal local economic development units, development forums, donor agencies and development agencies are explored and ways to facilitate synergies are investigated (Van Donk *et al.* 2011).

In a situation in which inner-city decay and problem building challenges are increasing, as in Central, Port Elizabeth, for example, and where turnaround strategies are being considered, it is crucial to obtain the buy-in of all relevant development partners and stakeholders so that co-production of public services and development initiatives can receive the necessary support and resources (Conradie 2020:32). The initiating partner, for example, a special residents’ association or property owners’ body, should consider the less complex route of agreeing on cooperation with partners bi-laterally and incrementally rather than attempting to obtain multilateral consensus among numerous role players with different political agendas and interests (Special Rating Association 2019).

In an important work on the state of strategic public management in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Joyce, Bryson and Holzer (2014) offer profound insights into inter-organisational relationships and management capabilities at national and sub-national government (provincial) spheres. The strategic dimensions

of networks, partnerships and programme management are explored, as are strategic planning and other public management systems.

Mandell, Keast and Agranoff (2013) posit that authorities need to recognise that 'business as usual' is not good enough and that stakeholders in public sector programmes need to leverage increased outputs and innovation by the partners in their network. New rules of cooperation are required, based on reciprocity. When communities take action in their local context to address seemingly insurmountable problems related to inner-city decay and problem buildings that spiral out of control, a creative and strategic approach becomes vital. City improvement initiatives begin to dictate to government agencies that the former will undertake one part of the work, provided that local government undertakes another successfully for the benefit of society (Conradie 2020:33).

Public sector programme management clearly is a *sine qua non* when city governments decide to halt and turn around inner-city decay. Environmental (for example, waste management) and security (for example, visible policing presence and security camera systems) interventions over an extended period of time – where public, private and community interest groups collaborate effectively – are fundamental. Dedicated programme managers in city governments as well as committed units to deal with problematic properties are good practice internationally.

## **Application of the Project Management Body of Knowledge in public sector programme management**

It is herewith proposed that successful public sector programme management is hardly possible without integration and application of acknowledged principles of project management in programme planning and execution. Selected scholarly contributions that follow here demonstrate the relevance of such principles. The project management discipline's fundamental theoretical framework is known as the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK), a theoretical foundation developed by the Project Management Institute in Philadelphia, United States of America. Most project management textbooks and training courses are based on the 10 knowledge areas contained within the PMBOK (PMBOK Guide 2013:4).

According to Gido and Clements (2015:4) a project is an endeavour to "accomplish a specific objective through a unique set of interrelated activities" and by the effective utilisation of resources. These authors posit that "a project has a specific time frame or finite life span". Burke (2011:367) defines project management as the management of a project using the project management principles and the special planning and control tools and techniques. Burke also refers to the textbook definition: "the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities" to meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders.

Van der Waldt (2011:69) makes a beneficial conceptual contribution to public sector project management when he refers to debates pertaining to the differences between management applications in public and private sector settings. Van der Walt emphasises that, although the same principles, approaches, techniques and methodologies are applied, the application context of the public sector differs. It is more complicated to apply the processes and procedures of project management in the public sector environment than in the private sector due to the nature of government projects. Unique aspects of public sector projects are listed by Van der Waldt as political context, competency levels, unique goals, management culture, organisational culture, statutory frameworks, transparency, accountability and project customers.

Scope delineation, strict time frames, and budget control are hallmarks of effective project management. Public sector programmes similarly cannot be effective without sufficient attention to these aspects, known as the triple constraints. For an effective inner-city turnaround programme, clearly delineated scope (for example, in the form of a manageable precinct for area-based development), a time-framed approach integral to all aspects of the entire programme, and sufficient municipal budget allocation (and control) are important aspects to be considered.

The application of the 10 fundamental project management knowledge areas (PMBOK) in the initiation, planning and execution phases of public sector programmes is not only possible but important, and is proposed by the authors of this article as novel public management theory, that is, new knowledge creation (Conradie 2020:55).

## LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The applicable constitutional and legislative frameworks are important when city governments need to deal with inner-city decay and the owners of problematic inner-city properties. The researchers specifically identified *strategic remedial legal options* available to city governments when dealing with transgressing owners of problematic buildings, as depicted in Table 1 (Conradie 2020:56).

Section 25 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*, canonises foundations and principles related to property rights and ownership, referring to, *inter alia*, the illegality of arbitrarily dispossessing someone of their property. A current proposal discussed in the South African parliament to change Section 25 of the Constitution to enable expropriation of property without compensation could – if the law in effect changes – have implications for expropriation of abandoned buildings in cities.

The national legislation outlined in Table 1 can be regarded as relevant when city governments in South Africa need to deal with inner-city problem buildings

by taking remedial action against the transgressing owners of such properties. The aspects related to each piece of legislation that is helpful in the context of problem buildings are stated in a key word/phrase in the Table.

**Table 1: National legislation applicable to inner-city problem buildings**

Name of Act	Aspects applicable to inner-city problem buildings
Municipal Finance Management Act, 56 of 2003	Expropriation of property for the public good; read with Expropriation Act; alienation and acquisition of immovable property.
National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 103 of 1977	Transgressions related to the built environment; demolition of properties in the execution of a court order or per permit; mandatory repairs; cost recovery.
National Health Act, 61 of 2003	Health nuisances.
Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act, 16 of 2013	Framework for spatial planning and land use management matters.
Expropriation Act, 63 of 1975	Property expropriation. Providing for the expropriation of land and other property for public and other purposes and to provide for matters connected thereto.
National Veld and Forest Fire Act, 101 of 1998; Fire and Safety Regulations	<i>Inter alia</i> , open spaces between buildings. Fire hazards.
National Environmental Management Act, 107 of 1998 Waste Act, 59 of 2008	Environmental threats. Waste management issues.
Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, 19 of 1998	Persons occupying property cannot be evicted illegally.
Criminal Procedure Act, 51 of 1977 Schedule 2 [Schedule 2 amended by s. 5 of Act 126 of 1992, by s. 15 of Act 62 of 2000 and by s. 68 of Act 32 of 2007.] Part I (Section 35).	Police need to act, for instance to stop people from selling drugs on the streets and committing other crimes.
South African Police Service Amendment Act, 83 of 1998	Authorises municipal police to combat crime.
Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 3 of 2000	Municipalities need to provide reasons for decisions, e.g. when development applications (that could assist with urban rejuvenation) are declined.
Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2 of 2000	An example of where this Act is relevant would be where members of the public have an interest in whether owners of problem buildings are even paying their property taxes to municipalities.

Source: (Conradie 2020:63)

Several municipal by-laws, enforceable by city governments in South Africa, can be implemented to address problematic buildings. By-laws generally need to be adhered to by citizens and must be enforced by municipalities. The by-laws are often enforced after receipt of complaints from community members. In cases in which the desired repairs to problematic buildings and properties are not performed by the owners of such properties, it is possible to refer the matter to a 'problem buildings unit' at the city government (Conradie 2020:64).

For clarity, not all South African city governments or large municipalities have specific 'problem building by-laws' in place and although Cape Town adopted such a by-law in 2010, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in Port Elizabeth only followed suit in 2018.

After years in the making, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality eventually adopted a problem buildings by-law in August 2018 to provide for the identification, control and management of dilapidated and problem buildings and land in its area of jurisdiction, to protect and promote the interests of all people in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan area (Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality 2018). However, an organisational system with the capacity to give effect to the by-law remains undeveloped (Conradie 2020:65). Developing the capacity to enforce the by-law as part of the city government's strategy to combat inner-city decay and inner-city problem buildings is vital to avoid the entire problem buildings by-law initiative in Port Elizabeth being termed a waste of time and taxpayers' resources.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

For purposes of data collection, a qualitative research approach was followed, which included semi-structured, in-depth interviews with political and managerial leaders at the selected municipality. Thematic content analysis and relevant coding practices were utilised in the analysis and interpretation of the collected data.

### **Towards data categories and emergent themes (second cycle of coding)**

Data categories and emergent themes were identified by the researchers from a reduced data set presented as part of the first cycle of coding. The categories and themes closely corresponded with the outcome of the first cycle of coding, ensuring that a clear and logical line of analysis was demonstrated, without any deviation from the data generated initially. The emergent themes were identified from the respondents' descriptions and perceived causes, solutions and implementation actions in relation to problem buildings and inner-city decay.

**Table 2: Causes and solutions in relation to inner-city decay and problem buildings**

Causes of inner-city decay and problem buildings.	Solutions to inner-city decay and problem buildings.
<p><b>Political and managerial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Widely reported political instability (e.g. cities of Port Elizabeth and Pretoria) and lack of competent managerial execution at the city government level.</li> <li>■ Corrupt practices and skewed focus of municipalities, with the resultant lack of the required municipal budget allocation towards an inner-city turnaround programme.</li> </ul>	<p>The causes as presented in the column on the left should be addressed. Addressing rampant corruption is a difficult and complex challenge. The ensuing solutions need to be considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ An inner-city improvement strategy needs to be launched, located within the Municipal Manager’s Office and driven transversally.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Municipal and government roles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ineffective, uncoordinated and incoherent municipal by-law enforcement due to political and managerial instability and/or corruption.</li> <li>■ Ineffective law enforcement generally.</li> <li>■ Lack of legal and financial sanctions for transgressing property owners and community members.</li> <li>■ Lack of a dedicated problem buildings unit and expert project manager at the city government, with enforcement capacity (managed, staffed and resourced).</li> <li>■ Lack of a declared precinct-based city improvement programme (including a problem buildings unit) and expert programme manager, with alignment of stakeholder focus and resources, incentives and overlay zones.</li> <li>■ An ineffective waste management programme.</li> <li>■ An ineffective crime management programme.</li> <li>■ Municipal budget constraints (limits municipal action).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Network and stakeholder collaboration, based on a rapport between leading individuals who are diplomatic, innovative and creative, must be promoted.</li> <li>■ Unified vision of a long-term focus within geographically manageable (small) development precincts. For example, in the case study city of Port Elizabeth, the Central area could be divided into six to twelve city improvement precincts. Each precinct should have a particular functional focus, for example, tourism, retail, education, mixed-use. Public and other stakeholders should align their resources per precinct for a long-term solution to inner-city decay and problem buildings.</li> <li>■ Co-production of public services where the private, community, academic and municipal sectors join hands per project, but within the framework of a broad, ongoing, inner-city improvement programme. Effective application of public sector programme and project management practices is crucial to be effective in turning around inner-city decay.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inhabitants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Loitering and littering in the streets.</li> <li>■ Selling drugs on the streets.</li> <li>■ Prostitution and other social ills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Residents’ and property owners’ collective organisations can make a difference to a turnaround, given the apparent lack of effective political leadership.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Property and business owners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insufficient pressure on the municipality for acceptable municipal service delivery and law/by-law enforcement.</li> <li>■ Ruthless and/or irresponsible property owners allowing their buildings to be invaded and/or become dilapidated, whether purposefully or not.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inclusion of budgetary resource allocation in municipal spending plans.</li> </ul>

Source: (Conradie 2020:150)

The themes, as applied to the case study, have direct reference and implication to whether or not a coherent municipal programme to resolve the inner-city challenges exists.

The main data analysis categories identified by the researchers were the following (Conradie 2020:151):

- *general fundamentals*, that is, prioritising inner-city decay and dealing with problem buildings, the inextricable link between the decay and problematic properties, the severe political, economic, social and financial risks related to allowing inner-city decay and rot to take root.
- *causes of the problems* – Refer to Table 2.
- *solutions to the problems* – Refer to Table 2.

Table 2 presents the main emerging themes (causes and solutions) which emanated from the study.

## Research findings

The rationale as to why no centrally coordinated programme exists to address problem buildings and inner-city decay within the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality is unclear. The study revealed the necessity for such a programme (Conradie 2020:230). The benefits of a successful programme to rehabilitate the inner-city could be rewarding, with renewed local economic development and investment, tourism development, property investment, increased property tax income for the municipality, job creation and the creation of a smart and innovative thriving African inner-city.

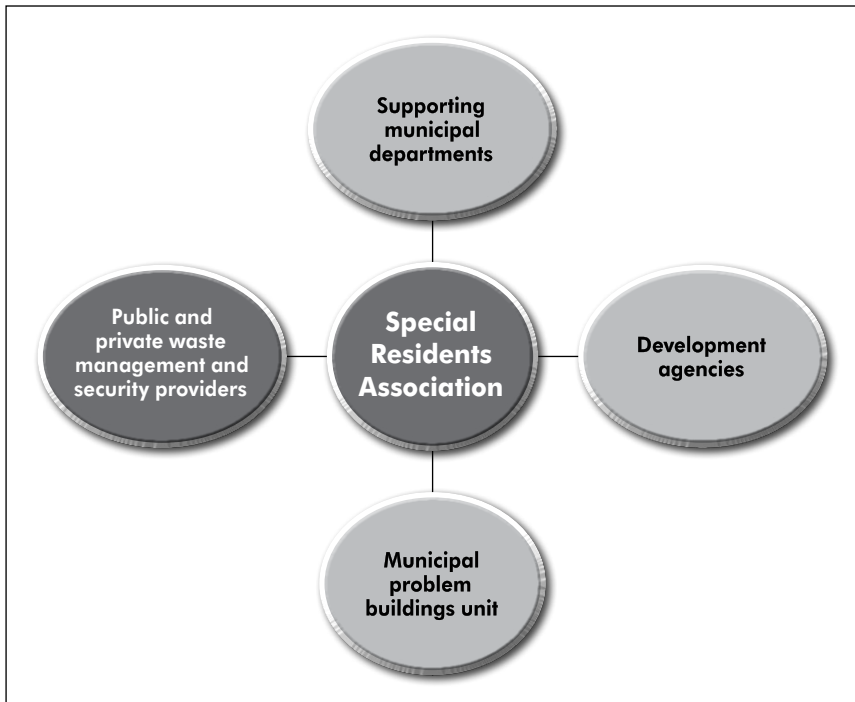
The research findings indicated that factors such as ineffective political leadership, political instability, lack of continuity in the municipal leadership sphere (councillors and managers), complex politics, challenges related to internal municipal and external stakeholder collaboration, insufficient programme and project management knowledge and skills hamper development. Further findings included a lack of initiative, inadequate law and by-law enforcement, inadequate municipal service delivery, seemingly opportunistic owners of problematic properties, exploitation of the lack of adequate law and order by undocumented immigrants and a general shortage of expertise and knowledge are largely to blame for the inner-city decay and the numerous problem buildings in the suburb of Central, Port Elizabeth. It needs to be mentioned that similar manifestations, although not identical, of inner-city decay and the concomitant phenomenon of problem buildings have been observed in the majority of South Africa's large cities. The causes appear to be similar. The findings that emanated from this study could, to a large extent, be transferable or at least applicable to inner-cities and city governments managing similar problems in other cities (Conradie 2020:165).

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW CITY GOVERNMENTS CAN ACHIEVE INNER-CITY TURNAROUND SUCCESS

In a poorly functioning city government, it becomes increasingly necessary for residents and property owners to organise themselves formally and to protect themselves and their assets from neglect and decay. Municipalities need to be pressured to provide and improve vital public services and should ensure that crime is combatted in coordination with the South African Police Service (Conradie 2020:161).

A city government can facilitate positive change in a decaying inner-city context by taking the initiative, as reflected in Figure 1. These initiatives should be executed over the long term.

**Figure 1: Specific role of a city government in inner-city turnaround**



Source: (Conradie 2020:179)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The authors advance the following recommendations in relation to the specific concrete role a city government can potentially perform to turn inner-city



decay around and to manage problem buildings in inner-city areas (Conradie 2020:179,180):

### **Appointment of a Programme Manager in the Municipal Manager's Office**

A dedicated programme or project manager should be appointed in the offices of municipal managers (CEOs) and be mandated by municipal managers to effect inner-city turnaround; such a step could have a significantly positive effect in South African cities. The appointee should work transversally across municipal departments and with stakeholders outside the municipality to facilitate and enhance an inner-city turnaround programme. The term 'programme manager' is preferred, as various and diverse projects will have to be initiated and executed over an extended period.

### **Establishment of a Municipal Problem Buildings Unit**

The creation of a Municipal Problem Buildings Unit would focus on problematic buildings and ensure that the owners of these buildings are encouraged by means of the administrative and legal instruments available to the municipality to take the necessary remedial action.

### **Strict enforcement of laws and by-laws**

The enforcement of laws and by-laws would contribute to restoring law and order in affected communities and is a vital component of any strategy to address issues pertaining to inner-city decay. This intervention should encourage officials to engage with the communities they serve. Apart from serving notices on the owners of problematic buildings, the owners of unruly bars and taverns, those that consume alcohol in public, drug dealers, and those guilty of illegal disposal of refuse, should all be brought to book. The relevant laws and by-laws should be strictly enforced.

### **Initiate incentivised precinct development**

Where a substantial portion of the inner-city has become significantly dilapidated, it would be wise for the municipality to identify, as a start, a small precinct (for instance, four city blocks, or two streets) and ensure that identified problem buildings, waste, crime and any other related challenges are addressed and brought under control as soon as possible.

Various incentives can be introduced to encourage the rejuvenation of affected areas, for example, property tax reduction incentives, streamlined applications for property development, limiting bureaucratic red tape and introducing tourist attractions.

## CONCLUSION

In a context where city governments need to turnaround inner-city decay, effective public sector programme management evidently is a vital component of a successful strategy, in line with international good practice. Aligning interest groups and stakeholders within a city government with interest groups in the private and community sectors is the first decisive step to be taken. Allocation of sufficient resources in a sustainable long-term model is the next logical step. A turnaround programme cannot be successfully executed if a dedicated senior programme manager is not appointed at the city government level. Furthermore, a precinct-based approach is critical, where a manageable geographic area (for example, a number of street blocks in the historic inner-city) is brought under control and targeted for rejuvenation and property investment. A dedicated municipal unit to deal with problem buildings needs to be established – problematic properties could strategically become part of the solution.

Corruption and incompetence of city governments is a significant risk factor, with a seriously negative impact on potential inner-city turnaround programmes. In such scenarios the private sector and civil society structures need to play an enlarged and more proactive leading role, while engaging selected useful municipal departments to participate in the turnaround process.

The integrated public sector programme management framework, regulatory regime, new normative inner-city turnaround model, and the authors' recommendations can all be useful to city governments that are faced with the challenges of inner-city decay and problem buildings. Accelerated local economic development, well-maintained inner-city properties, increased property tax income for municipalities, as well as enhanced tourism are the potential results of successful inner-city turnaround. A long road lies ahead to achieve such progress in most South African cities.

## NOTE

- \* This article is partly based on a PhD thesis in Public Administration: "An evaluation of programme management in relation to inner-city decay and problem buildings" submitted to the Nelson Mandela University, under the supervision of Prof. Derek Taylor.

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# The Complexity and Limitations of Strategic Governmental Policy Change Initiatives in South Africa: 1986–1988

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## ABSTRACT

This article critically assesses the tortuous 5-year route that strategic policy decision-making took in South Africa after the disastrous Rubicon speech of President P W Botha in August 1985, until the start of the post-apartheid era. Three case studies in failed strategic policy decision-making within government during this period, are identified and contextualised from a critical participant-observer perspective, using *inter alia* a number of yet unpublished internal government documents. The assessment clarifies the complexity of the different ideological, political and administrative decision-making conflicts and battles for political influence among senior political and bureaucratic government elites over this attempted strategic policy direction change. Findings include that the leadership style of then President P W Botha dominated his cabinet so strongly that they did not have the courage to break ranks with him although they all knew that government policies had to change fundamentally. They lacked the resolve and commitment to overcome their fundamental policy differences for a number of reasons. This situation paralysed the strategic policy decision process at the heart of government. The assessment illustrates the complexity and limitations of democratic policy change processes and has important strategic lessons for political change management initiatives.

## INTRODUCTION

This article deals with the internal government policymaking process over a period of three years (1986 to 1988) to try to achieve strategic political policy change in

South Africa. These processes comprised unsuccessful attempts at policy change by the ruling elites in the National Party (NP) government to structure their responses to increasing domestic and international pressure on it to extend political rights to black South African citizens. This pressure escalated over a three-year period as a result of then President P W Botha's refusal to grant effective political rights to black citizens in his notorious Rubicon speech in August 1985. In 1989, F W de Klerk succeeded Botha as president and suddenly and unexpectedly reversed NP policies that he had ardently supported, protected and tried to expand up to that point. This political about-turn kick-started a constitutional transformation process that resulted in the current post-apartheid democratic governmental system in South Africa.

This policy reversal, however, was preceded by very serious internal ideological, political and administrative conflicts and battles for political influence among senior political and bureaucratic government elites tasked with developing a democratic and constitutional transition to a more acceptable governance system for the country. These policy and decision-making dynamics are summarised, contextualised and assessed here to illustrate the complex nature of policy change in a highly ideological policy system. It also clarifies outstanding questions about exactly what happened during this period to trigger the eventual implosion of the apartheid regime in South Africa, as is evident from a number of previously unpublished internal government sources.

This article is part of a more comprehensive ongoing research project on the nature and consequences of the strategic policy transformation from apartheid to democracy during the 1980s in South Africa. A large number of scholarly and other assessments have already been written by South African and other authors from different perspectives about this period. The most informative, relevant and significant South African contributions so far include Friedman and Atkinson (1994), Sparks (1994), Prinsloo (1997), De Klerk (1999), Slabbert (2006), Heunis (2007), Esterhuyse (2012), Giliomee (2012), Barnard (2015), Stemmet (2013), Pahad (2014). However, all these assessments have been written from the perspectives of outsiders who were not directly involved with the internal policymaking and management of the governmental transition process during that period. This ongoing research project attempts to fill this gap in the existing scholarly literature on specific issues and events to some extent. This article is the second research output for this purpose. The first was Cloete (2019).

## **METHODOLOGY**

-The reason for selecting this approach is that the author was employed for nearly 10 years as a Constitutional Policy Planner (from 1980 to 1989), first in the Office

of the Prime Minister, and then in the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning (DCDP). During the last three years of my work in government for this purpose, I was the Head of the Constitutional Planning Chief Directorate in DCDP. The unit was a policy think tank comprising about 12 political and constitutional planning specialists. It was tasked with developing and designing a more democratic future constitutional governance system for South Africa, and advised government what to do, how and when to try to achieve that goal. It was also responsible for coordinating the implementation of this transition as far as it was possible in the volatile period that followed.

In this capacity my colleagues and I were engaged in strategic policy agenda-setting, design, persuasion, support and facilitation of public policy change implementation for a peaceful transition from the controversial apartheid policy system at that time to a more modern democratic political system in South Africa (Cloete 2018a). The preparatory work of this unit in the end did just that until 1994 when the Interim Government of National Unity (GNU) took effect. Until I left the department in July 1989, I was therefore in a relatively strategic position to observe, and be closely involved in the unfolding of most of the events assessed here. Before I took up the above job, however, I was for five years involved in lecturing and research in the fields of Political Science, Policy Studies, Public Administration, Constitutional and Administrative Law, and returned in 1989 to university life for the rest of my subsequent 25-year full-time academic career in these fields.

My 30-year exposure to the more theoretical and scholarly academic and research world before and after I became actively involved in applied policy research, planning and implementation in government for 9 years, provided some relevant and applicable theoretical knowledge and practical skills and experience to inform and facilitate the application of this research approach.

## **THE COMPLEXITY OF FUNDAMENTAL DEMOCRATIC POLICY CHANGE**

The process of fundamental policy change through democratic decision-making processes is never simple. The scope and intensity of demands for policy change among disaffected citizens are in most cases equalled by the scope and intensity of resistance to change among other stakeholders with vested interests, as occur in all democratic societies, and also occurred during the 1980s and 1990s in South Africa (Rustow 1970; O'Donnell, Schmitter & Whitehead 1986; Huntington 1991; Diamond 2008; Diamond, Fukuyama, Horowitz & Plattner 2014; Cloete 2018). In contrast to revolutionary political change where an existing government is physically and forcefully removed from power through violent uprisings against



ruling elites, fundamental democratic policy change is generally characterised by exhausting peaceful consultation and deliberation processes with both supporters of change and opponents of change within a ruling regime and among outsiders to that regime. The purpose of these consultative processes is to minimise as far as possible the use of force that might lead to unnecessary violence, loss of life and damage to infrastructure and property. Such consultations and negotiations, however, inevitably have to be interspersed with strong security force interventions in cases where emotions run too high and violence breaks out among competing groups and factions trying to promote their different opposing views and goals (Diamond, Fukuyama, Horowitz & Plattner 2014).

Fundamental democratic policy transformation is therefore in most cases a very messy, volatile process and frequently fails. Failures can result in either an authoritarian suppression of reform attempts by the ruling elites (for example, which happened in Egypt during its Arab Spring period, and under Pinochet rule in Chile), or a revolutionary replacement of ruling elites with a new set of rulers. These new ruling elites can comprise either another authoritarian ruling oligarchy substantially returning to the *status quo ante* (like in Egypt), or a new democratic system under new political management (which happened in Chile and South Africa) (Huntington 1991; O'Donnell, Schmitter & Whitehead 1986; Rustow 1970).

This article illustrates the complexity and messiness of attempts at fundamental political policy transformation in South Africa within the ranks of senior politicians and bureaucratic officials in the ruling NP government between 1986 and 1989. This period was characterised by intense competition for internal influence over the internal governmental policy change process in the country and eventually resulted in a serious policy decision and change stalemate within government that was eventually broken by unexpectedly strong leadership by F W de Klerk, who succeeded P W Botha as South African President in September 1989. Up to that point, De Klerk was the leader of the internal faction of the ruling party that vehemently resisted fundamental policy change in the country.

Three strategic case studies of unsuccessful internal government's attempts to reach agreement on strategic policy change after the disastrous Rubicon speech in 1985, have been selected for analysis and assessment to determine the main reasons why they failed. These cases represent the most important strategic opportunities for 'momentous' policy change (Dror 1984) that occurred in the period under investigation.

## **THE RUBICON STARTING POINT**

President P W Botha's notorious Rubicon speech on 15 August 1985 at the governing NP Congress in Durban, was probably one of the most significant

speeches in the history of South Africa. It was supposed to break the political and military deadlock that existed at that time between the apartheid government and the banned black liberation movements over the NP government's refusal to extend political rights in South Africa to black South African citizens. He was widely expected to announce new policies that could have been the start of a democratic transformation process in the country. However, it did not happen. The speech was instead a total fiasco because he refused to even slightly relax the existing restrictions on citizen's rights for black South Africans at the time (Botha 1985; Cloete 2019).

In the immediate aftermath of the Rubicon speech of 15 August 1985, P W Botha relented somewhat and eventually formally announced the 'restitution' of South African citizenship of black people who lived in the 'independent national states', to allow them to have dual citizenship of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) and of their own 'independent black national state' (Cloete 2019:132–155). Shortly thereafter he announced the government's willingness to enter into negotiations with its main opposition movement, the African National Congress (ANC) if it was willing to renounce violence and also renounce its links to the South African Communist Party (SACP). He also announced the NP's rejection of the apartheid principles of 1) domination of one group over others, 2) the exclusion of any community from decisions that affect them, 3) injustice and inequality of opportunity, and 4) racial discrimination and the denigration of people's dignity (Cloete 2019:153).

The NP government was further at the time also considering the creation of an advisory national statutory council to deal with issues affecting black citizens outside the black national states. This was an attempt to establish a platform for identifying 'credible and legitimate' black leaders for engaging in eventual negotiations about a permanent democratic solution for black political rights in the country (Giliomee 2012:210; Prinsloo 1997:214). However, all these 'concessions' towards black South African citizens were peripheral to their main concerns of being virtually totally excluded from the mainstream governance system in the country. Black opposition became increasingly violent and the NP government had to rely on increasing suppression of protest and unrest in the country.

The NP cabinet at the time was not in full agreement among themselves about what needed to happen to resolve this increasingly tense and volatile deadlock between the white-dominated government and its black opposition, although they tried hard to present a united front to their critics and supporters. The NP was a disciplined party, and its leader, P W Botha tried his best to persuade and even intimidate his caucus where necessary to maintain solidarity and not to break ranks. Behind the scenes and out of the limelight, however, party unity had been increasingly eroding and fragmenting gradually over a long period as many

NP members started to realise that the party's apartheid policies were ineffective and could not endure for much longer (NP 1985–1986).

These growing ideological and strategic differences among various influential NP cabinet members sporadically erupted as summarised later in this article. Two distinct ideological camps existed in the 1985 cabinet (Cloete 2019:143). The undisputed spokesperson and leader of the conservative hardliners within the NP who did not want to make any significant concessions to reduce the monopoly on political decision-making enjoyed by the minority white racial community in South Africa, was the Leader of the Transvaal NP and Chairperson of the White Own Affairs Legislature in the Tricameral Parliament, F W de Klerk. He was generally supported in his resistance against political power-sharing with black citizens by the Free State leader of the NP, and the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Kobie Coetzee, as well as by the Minister of Police, Louis le Grange. As President, P W Botha associated himself strongly with the conservative hardliner faction, by normally right at the start of any discussion explicitly ruling out constitutional innovations like general power-sharing among all citizens and races within a unitary or federal state structure. He also consistently refused to consider even a fourth racially-based black Chamber of Parliament, to supplement the other three racially-based chambers, respectively for white people, coloured people and Indians. He regularly made it clear that he would only support a 'confederal' solution (or a 'Constellation of Independent States'). In this way he deliberately set the tone for cabinet and other policy meetings and restricted the discussion to exclude these possible reform options (Cloete 2019:138–141).

A distinctly more enlightened and moderate ideological faction in cabinet consisted of the Cape Leader of the NP, the Minister of Constitutional Development, and the influential Chair of the Special Cabinet Committee on Political Development (SCC), Chris Heunis. Heunis was the most senior NP Minister after P W Botha. He was a long-standing political protégé of Botha and succeeded him as Cape Leader of the NP in 1986. He was also the Minister that I reported to during my constitutional planning activities in government. Heunis was generally supported on political reform issues by the remaining members of the SCC, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pik Botha, as well as the Minister of Finance, Barend du Plessis. The other senior Ministers on the SCC, Gerrit Viljoen, responsible for National Education, and Stoffel Botha, Natal NP Leader and Minister of Home Affairs, were both inherently conservative. However, they did not consistently support their hardliner colleagues. From time to time they switched sides to also support Heunis and his more moderate colleagues on a number of issues that they felt had to be changed in the interest of the NP, although such reforms might not have been their preferred choices. They, for example, frequently conceded that political power-sharing with black people in South Africa was unavoidable, and that it had to be done but only in a manner that would protect 'civilised

values' (that is, maintain final white political end control in some or other way) (Cloete 2019:138).

A number of significant case studies of internal governmental developments and events that illustrate and explain the complex, competing perspectives of senior NP leaders about how to change their apartheid policies to transform the beleaguered apartheid state into a more modern, democratic governance system, are briefly identified and assessed next. These events significantly influenced the run-up to De Klerk's seminal 1990 policy changes.

## **CASE 1: SCC MEETING IN CAPE TOWN: 20 JANUARY 1986**

Since its inception in 1983, the mandate of the SCC was to explicitly develop a political transformation plan for government to extend political rights to black South Africans without weakening white self-determination (Cloete 2019:138). This mandate was logically impossible to achieve, but Heunis and his planners developed a range of possible strategies for the SCC to consider. In the aftermath of the disastrous Rubicon speech by P W Botha on 15 August 1985, the SCC held a policy brainstorming discussion on 20 January 1986 to prepare inputs to the President's opening speech in Parliament on 31 January 1986 (Prinsloo 1997:216). As was his normal practice, Heunis got his planners to prepare an extensive document consisting of 15 pages, setting out different options and implications to be used to guide and inform the discussions. The document was titled 'Implikasies van Huidige Staatkundige Beleid vir Toekomstige Strukture' (Implications of Current Constitutional Policy for Future Structures) (SCC 1986a). It contained all the main reform principles that had been accepted by government up to that point, with their political and structural implications.

The verbatim transcript of that meeting (SCC 1986b) indicates that the participants in the meeting fundamentally disagreed about existing government policies towards black citizenship rights and also about the implications of all the government's announcements on these issues. This disagreement was a continuation of the paralysing impact that these ideological faction fights within the SCC had on government reform initiatives in the run-up to the Rubicon speech five months earlier (Cloete 2019).

The main golden threads that ran through all the discussions in the meeting, include on the one hand their steadfast resolve to still protect 'civilised values' (SCC 1986b:31). This was cabinet speak for 'de facto white political end control' which is what their NP constituents wanted (SCC 1986b:31–33, 55). On the other hand, they agreed that if this was done too blatantly, it would not be acceptable to black leaders. The meeting therefore identified a number of potential strategies to achieve the most feasible compromise between these contradictory goals.

One option was to appoint these black leaders as an interim strategy to the existing cabinet and conduct negotiations there. Le Grange and De Klerk were hesitant about this idea (SCC 1986b:18, 82) because it would logically then also imply establishing one or more separate legislatures and executive Ministers' Councils for black people outside the national states to legislate on their own affairs and also on general affairs. De Klerk and Le Grange were unwilling to accept these possibilities, despite the NP's accepted principle that all citizens had the right to full participation in legislative and executive decisions over issues of concern to them. They were unsure how to structure these political processes in such a way that white end control over civilised standards were not endangered. They all were also aware that it would not be acceptable to P W Botha who had by that time already voiced his extreme frustration in the NP Parliamentary Caucus about the 'delaying and obstruction tactics' that he experienced from the ex officio Coloured and Indian Ministers' Council representatives in cabinet, Reverend Alan Hendrickse and Mr Amichand Rajbanzi.

In order to please De Klerk and Le Grange, Heunis proposed one or more legislative bodies for black people, either as separate institutions or as a fourth chamber of parliament, or, alternatively, incorporating black people in one new joint chamber but with racial caucus-based decisions with an acceptable conflict-resolution mechanism. This minority group veto mechanism (SCC 1986b:31, 44, 55) was supposed to avoid the dilemma of a possible black majority outvoting the white minority and therefore endangering civilised values (SCC 1986b:82-96). This would then hopefully also have reduced P W Botha's resistance against black participation in legislation based on demographic numbers, which would have meant the end of white political control. However, De Klerk and Le Grange steadfastly refused to commit themselves to the principle of black involvement in legislation outside the existing black homelands. Le Grange rejected it in principle, while De Klerk, as a stalling tactic, wanted to have the full details of all the implications and structures for self-determination over own affairs and joint decision-making over matters of mutual concern spelt out and adopted by the NP first. De Klerk liked the group veto principle, but was still not sure how it should be implemented.

With the exception of Le Grange, the whole SCC meeting also accepted the principle of a rotating weak presidency in future (SCC 1986b:47, 53). This would have reduced the risk of black majority domination at higher governmental levels, if a maximum number of own and general affairs could be entrenched in own affairs administrations with full legislative and executive control over those affairs. It would also hopefully have had a similar impact on joint decision-making bodies where black majorities would have been less able to endanger white end control over civilised standards. The existing racially-based local authorities as well as the fully racially integrated RSCs would then also have had to be endowed with

much more extensive legislative and executive powers to achieve these goals and to have reduced any potentially negative impact to more restricted areas at community level instead of having a blanket impact across the whole country. Some of the participants, especially Le Grange and Viljoen, were, however, wary of the feasibility of having a weak, largely ceremonial or technocratic president as the face of the country.

The meeting did not take conclusive decisions in the end. The participants superficially discussed a range of potential options to resolve the continuing deadlock over black political rights, but no single option direction seems to have garnered sufficient agreement among all members. In the end they just agreed to continue their 'very fruitful and constructive' discussions at a later stage.

## **CASE 2: SCC MEETING ON ROBBERN ISLAND: 1 MARCH 1986**

P W Botha then decided to again intervene to try to achieve some measure of consensus in his cabinet on black political reform. He therefore scheduled a special follow-up brainstorming meeting with SCC members at Robben Island on 1 March 1986, which he uncharacteristically decided to chair himself. The full transcript of the meeting is also available (SCC 1986c). As happened with the special cabinet brainstorming meeting on 2 August 1985 in the 'Sterrewag' (Observatory) in Pretoria to prepare for P W Botha's Rubicon speech two weeks later, Botha also recorded the Robben Island meeting in secret again, resulting in the full meeting transcript found in his personal paper archive. Neither De Klerk nor Du Plessis recall being aware of it or having seen it before (De Klerk 2019; Du Plessis 2019).

In contrast to the Sterrewag meeting, though, P W Botha this time allowed each of the other eight participants that attended the meeting (Heunis, De Klerk, Pik Botha, Le Grange, Du Plessis, Coetsee, Viljoen and Stoffel Botha), to make a brief opening statement about what issues were still unclear, before he stated his views. The differences among the participants were immediately again highlighted from the start of the meeting. The most salient opening statements were the following: Heunis simply said as opening statement that they had no agreement where they should take the country, and that they should get agreement among themselves urgently, because the same words are interpreted differently in the same party. If this was not done, the reform process was going to fail (SCC 1986c:5–6). Heunis referred here to P W Botha and to De Klerk, whom he felt were both reluctant to accept the practical consequences of policy change principles that had already been accepted by government.

De Klerk agreed, and without mentioning Heunis by name, bemoaned attempts to distort the President's words in his speeches by ignoring specific

important qualifications that he had placed on his public announcements. He intimated that Heunis had distorted the President's Constellation (or Confederal) model subtly into a fully-fledged federal model for South Africa (SCC 1986c:8). P W Botha shared De Klerk's views. During the Sterrewag meeting already P W Botha complained that the speeches written for him by Heunis' speech writing teams contained statements that he did not understand or necessarily agreed with, and that he was then held to those statements. Le Grange again tabled his concerns that white end control would not only be weakened but endangered if the power-sharing options that had been discussed so far were accepted (SCC 1986c:10). Viljoen was more realistic. He proposed more flexibility over possible free association by those who wanted to do so; however, only if the final end state would still 'protect civilised values' (SCC 1986c:17). The importance of maintaining the NP's white end control was therefore prominent in most views. P W Botha also emphasised it strongly towards the end of the meeting (SCC 1986c:103).

As was his usual style, P W Botha then first stated emphatically that the NP was the only political instrument that white people in South Africa had to maintain civilised norms and standards. The defections of right-wing Afrikaners from the NP had weakened the party. The NP should again be strengthened by recruiting the Greek, Portuguese and Italian communities as a matter of urgency (SCC 1986c:21). Second, he stated that the coloured and Indian communities had not really accepted the Tricameral Parliament. They were just negative about everything. They wanted something else (obviously not white end control anymore). He then admitted that the government was not talking to the right people, but that was because the international community encouraged legitimate black leaders not to talk to the apartheid government because it was not going to be there for much longer (SCC 1986c:23). He concluded by reiterating that he was opposed to a one-person-one-vote system in a unitary or federal state, and that he could not understand why Luxembourg was accepted by the international community as a fully independent state, but that they refused to accept the independent black national states in South Africa.

As consistently happened in the past, De Klerk insisted on dealing with both the executive and legislative issues simultaneously, in contrast to Heunis, Pik Botha and Du Plessis who were in favour of a staged approach where executive powers and power-sharing would be adopted first, followed at a later stage by legislative political rights (SCC 1986c:54–55). The staged approach of the moderates would have fast-tracked political reforms, while De Klerk's insistence on simultaneous changes, was clearly designed to stall and delay political decisions that might weaken white self-determination. This issue was, however, left hanging in the air because the meeting broke for refreshments and then resumed with discussions of other issues, including the nature of the confederal idea. De Klerk and Le Grange openly supported the classical confederal model while Heunis

and Viljoen insisted that the existing model at the time already had strong racial federal elements which should also be accommodated in any new political model with black people (SCC 1986c:62, 65, 66). However, again no agreement was reached and no decision was taken on this issue. All participants only agreed with P W Botha that the Presidency should be elevated above party politics, in a confederal system. This implied a separation between legislative representatives and executive government leaders (SCC 1986c:96–102) which is exactly what happened in 1989 in the NP on P W Botha's request, after he suffered a serious stroke. He remained the Head of State and Government as President, while De Klerk succeeded him as Party Leader.

P W Botha then ended the discussion by instructing the SCC to advise him whether they wanted him to continue as President or not, because he did not like all the criticism that he had experienced over the preceding few months, both from right and left, including from his ministerial colleagues in that meeting (SCC 1986c:146). This was ironic, given their hesitation to differ openly from his views. However, this was classic P W Botha style to intimidate his colleagues and force them into verbally supporting him (Wessels 2020:289).

The contrast in the tone of discussions between the 20 January SCC meeting and this one, 10 days later, was very stark. The mere presence of P W Botha resulted in much more submissive, generalised and politically correct views from the same participants. It is clear that the most senior cabinet ministers felt intimidated by his presence, and they did not dare voice views that were openly contrary to his stated ones (SCC 1986c:65). Heunis was the only minister who reminded the President about his earlier public announcements about accepting a single government with geographic and ethnic components in it and participation for all in decisions affecting their interests. De Klerk, P W Botha and Le Grange had clearly all developed reservations about these issues, despite their acceptance and repeated confirmation by government in public announcements. However, De Klerk and Le Grange continued to try to steer the discussion in the opposite direction by requesting confirmation that the independence of black homelands was still the main political goal of government (SCC 1986c:37–40, 47).

## **HEUNIS' 1986 RESIGNATION THREATS**

The discussions in the SCC at Robben Island did not enable Heunis to move forward significantly with the government's strategic reform programme. The reluctance of P W Botha and the majority of his cabinet to extend political rights to black South Africans in 1985 and now again, largely paralysed the political reform process in the country. Heunis and his constitutional planners could not break through the political resistance against fundamental policy change by the



conservative majority in cabinet, led by P W Botha himself and De Klerk. The more moderate minority group in the SCC, comprising Heunis, Du Plessis and Pik Botha were further all potential presidential successors to P W Botha, whose health was at that time already of concern. They were therefore muted in their responses to P W Botha, Le Grange, De Klerk and the conservative majority in the SCC.

After the Robben Island meeting, Heunis was at one of the lowest points in his career (Prinsloo 1997:209) because he blamed P W Botha for renegeing on important principles of political power-sharing that the President had already accepted and announced numerous times in the past. He also blamed De Klerk who consistently undermined the work of the SCC in this regard by openly attaching very narrow conservative meanings to the above power-sharing principles and in that way having an insidious negative influence on P W Botha that made it impossible for Heunis to deliver on his ministerial portfolio.

This situation set the tone for one of Heunis' most defiant political acts, namely his decision to formally resign from cabinet if President Botha continued to back-track on reform principles that had been already accepted and announced. He decided to try to persuade his SCC colleagues to do the same, because he felt that P W Botha was not serious about black political reforms. As minister responsible for constitutional renewal, it had become clear to him that many of his cabinet colleagues blamed him for the failure to make progress with the government's promised reform agenda.

At the end of March 1986, a frustrated Heunis dictated a draft a letter to the President, responding to his Robben Island request for advice about his future role in South African politics. Heunis intended to table his draft response in the SCC and to try to obtain their support for the contents.

The letter started out emphasising that the (SCC) signatories were of the opinion that, if the President still accepted the government's already adopted policy reform principles and their implications for future political transformation that he had publicly announced himself, he still had a key role to play in the NP and in the country. He could then rely on their complete loyalty and full support in implementing these changes as soon as possible after negotiations with other communities on the details. However, if P W Botha did not see his way clear to confirm his prior acceptance of these principles for future implementation, they recommended that he relinquish his position as NP Leader and State President, in order not to further weaken the chances of a negotiated political settlement among the respective communities in South Africa. The punchline of the letter read as follows (my translation from Afrikaans): *"If you cannot support your (own) statements anymore, but also do not see your way open to vacate the offices of State President and Party Leader, we regret to inform you that it will be impossible for us to serve any further in your cabinet"*.

However, after Heunis had consulted the SCC again on the issue, he realised that he would not get the support of enough of his colleagues as co-signatories for the letter. He also realised that the tone and content of the letter would probably just anger P W Botha even more, and be the end of his (Heunis') political career. He therefore drafted by hand another, much milder cover letter (Heunis 1986a) in which he backtracked, and mildly gave his and the SCC's full support to P W Botha in continuing in his existing capacity as NP Leader and State President. In a grovelling tone the letter expressed the SCC's great appreciation for the sterling leadership role of the President in mobilising broad support among other communities and groups despite his position as leader of the governing NP. Heunis also stated that, against this background, the committee regarded Botha's continued leadership of South Africa as necessary. However, they did see merit in the delinking of the positions of party leader and President.

Heunis clearly used this Machiavellian tactic to try to improve his own legitimacy towards Botha. It failed in the end, because Heunis' personal and political relationship with Botha never fully recovered. Despite his increasing loss of political influence in government, Heunis and his planners then continued to prepare for and implement the few small reform concessions that the SCC and cabinet had agreed on, but the stalemate in the SCC on more significant political reforms, however, continued.

On 5 May 1986, in the run-up to his budget vote debate in Parliament, Heunis phoned President Botha to request him to re-allocate his ministerial responsibilities for the implementation of the Group Areas Act and related legislation to another minister, because it hampered and negatively affected his constitutional negotiation obligation (Heunis 2007:131–132). Botha refused to do it. This was adding insult to injury for Heunis, against the above background of his ultimatum to Botha weeks earlier, that he eventually backtracked on. He again decided that he had had enough. He notified Botha in a resignation letter that he intended resigning as Minister, MP and as Deputy Chair of the Cape NP of which P W Botha was the Chair at that time, at the end of the 1986 Parliamentary session. However, four days later, on 9 May 1986, he sent President Botha a written retraction of his resignation letter, referring to another, unspecified telephonic discussion between them two days earlier (Heunis 1986b).

Botha had clearly persuaded him to stay on, although he did not concede to Heunis' request to move the administration of the Group Areas Act to another ministerial portfolio (Prinsloo 1997:236). However, it is significant that three months later, on 30 September 1986, Heunis succeeded Botha as Cape Leader of the NP. This clearly was the pay-off to get Heunis to retract his resignation. From this point onwards all significant reform progress in the SCC ground to a halt. P W Botha intensified the security force backlash against the increasing volatility in the country by means of expanded powers to the security forces in terms of a partial

State of Emergency that was declared on 20 July 1985. However, at the same time he expected the SCC under the direction of Heunis to come up with solutions to the political deadlock and to progress with preparations for negotiations with credible black leaders. This was impossible to achieve.

The SCC meetings made no further progress to bridge the ideological schisms in the Committee. All participants accepted in principle and rhetorically the urgency of making progress with negotiations with black leaders and to develop a model for this purpose that would be acceptable to all parties, but they could not agree among themselves about the minimum content of such a working model.

### **CASE 3: OPERATION 'SKRIK-VIR-NIKS'**

Another possible opportunity for a policy change breakthrough that could have ended this ideological deadlock in the SCC occurred early in 1987. The State Security Council (SSC) was established in 1972 by Botha's predecessor as Head of Government, Prime Minister Vorster, driven by P W Botha himself, then Minister of Defence (Swilling & Philips 1989; Seegers 1991). It was largely latent under Vorster, but Botha reactivated it when he succeeded Vorster as Head of Government. It was similar to a cabinet committee such as the SCC. However, the SSC was created by special statute and therefore had slightly more status than the other cabinet committees (Seegers 1991:257). Right from the start of its resurrection by Botha, the SSC functioned as an effective inner 'kitchen cabinet', whose decisions were just rubber stamped by cabinet, because P W Botha chaired both bodies (De Klerk 1999:115–116). The security-related ministers in cabinet were members of the SSC. They were the Ministers of Defence (Malan), Law and Order (Vlok), Justice (Le Grange and later Coetsee), Foreign Affairs (Pik Botha), Constitutional Development (Heunis) and Finance (Barend Du Plessis). De Klerk, as Transvaal Leader of the NP was also a co-opted member for specific purposes only (De Klerk 1999:115). All of them were also SCC members.

The SSC had its own Secretariat (SSSC), and a National Security Management System (NSMS) was also established next to but separate from the SSSC as an informal inter-departmental administrative agency to coordinate and manage the State of Emergency. The NSMS was chaired by the Deputy Minister of Police, who attended SSC meetings as observer. The first chair was Roelf Meyer, who was later succeeded by Leon Wessels. The NSMS consisted of two separate administrative branches: The Security Branch consisting of officials from the Departments of Defence, Law and Order and the various Intelligence Services, and a Welfare Branch consisting of officials from all the other departments, the so-called 'civilian' departments. The Head of the Welfare Branch was a Deputy Director General (DG) in the Office of the President, Martin Koekemoer.

In early February 1987, Koekemoer convened a meeting of the management committee of the Welfare Branch, and informed it that the NSMS was concerned about the lack of progress with socio-economic and political reforms in the country. He had been instructed to establish a number of Working Groups to initiate a special project, called Operation 'Skrik-vir-Niks' ('Afraid-of-Nothing'), within the Welfare Branch to identify strategies to fast-track these programmes of government. The instruction was to think creatively, not be limited by government policy and to aim at achieving real answers in order to make a quantum leap, hence the name Skrik-vir-Niks.

The inter-departmental Constitutional Working Group consisted of representatives of the following 'civilian' departments: the DCDP (represented by myself and a number of other senior officials), Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Communications, Development Assistance (Black Homelands), provincial government representatives, the Bureau of Information and the SSSC. The DCDP was the lead agency, instructed to develop a discussion document for consideration and approval by the Working Group by the end of February. We therefore had barely three weeks for this task.

We immediately informed Heunis about it. He was a senior member of the SSC, and admitted to be vaguely aware of it. Surprisingly he gave us the green light to proceed on our own without clearing the contents of our inputs in advance with him or with our DG. Instead he warned us upfront that it would not be regarded as a departmental project but that it was purely an NSMS one, and that he and the SCC would not be involved in it. We accepted it on that basis and undertook to keep him fully apprised of developments with the project.

This was a strategic move from Heunis' side, and it suited us planners to a T. Allowing us free rein within the NSMS Welfare branch, clearly had a number of potential benefits for Heunis. He knew exactly what we thought needed to be done to break the existing political reform logjam in the SCC, because we had been debating these issues for hours on end during different work-related and social occasions. He trusted us to a large extent to try to achieve the constitutional goals that we had been trying so hard to achieve together in the SCC, but which had failed up to that point. He knew very well that we would probably feed those ideas now also directly into the NSMS, and keep him informally informed of developments. It therefore created another channel of potential policy change influence for him, bypassing the 'political train wreck' in the SCC, and going straight to P W Botha and his security advisors, but importantly not under his own name. This also made it possible for him to distance himself from any potentially negative backlash to whatever ideas we put forward that might probably enrage P W Botha. This is normally called 'plausible deniability' (Strayhorn 2019), and is a popular technique of avoiding responsibility and accountability in politics. This allowed him to reap the benefits of possible but doubtful success and also avoid

any negative backlash on him by being able to distance himself from the project should things go south, because he was not the responsible minister.

My DCDP colleague Dr Joh van Tonder, at the time Head of the Chief Directorate Constitutional Negotiation Support, was the convenor of our Working Group. I was one of the main drafters of the Skrik-vir-Niks strategy document. Van Tonder and his Director, Kobus Jordaan also assisted me with drafting. Dr Gerrit Olivier, a Chief Director in the Department of Foreign Affairs was another core co-author.

By the last week of February 1987, we had completed our task and informed Heunis of our recommendations to the working group. Given our instructions to be fearless, creative, action-oriented and not necessarily bound by government policy, our proposals went much further than the discussions up to that point in the SSC. The report concluded that the only way to avoid a revolutionary bloodbath in South Africa, was to implement a blitzkrieg of immediate strategic reforms. These reforms included the temporary suspension of parliament, the unbanning of black liberation movements, the release of political prisoners, and an interim GNU representing all South African citizens to draft a new constitution based on a number of non-negotiable principles providing for racially fully integrated democratic legislative and executive political power-sharing among all South Africans at all levels of government. Heunis, interestingly enough, did not comment on the merits of the proposals, but only on their probable unacceptability to the reigning security establishment. However, he did not try to change anything or stop us from going ahead with our proposals.

In the end the 21 senior officials from different 'civilian' departments that comprised the working group, unanimously approved the recommendations and signed off the document. As could be expected of such a sensitive project, the final report was classified as 'Ultra Secret', which was the highest security classification normally reserved for classified documents involving national security, like military, intelligence and cabinet documents.

Koekemoer was shocked by the bluntness with which we had approached highly politically sensitive issues like white end control and black majority rule. However, he undertook to pass it on directly through his line function channels to the President, but he also warned us that P W Botha would probably not be pleased with the report. We never got any formal feedback on the report. Koekemoer just informed us orally after about two weeks that he had sent it to the President, that P W Botha 'went through the roof' and wanted to know who the 21 signatories were. He gave the names to the President and on the advice of Dr Jannie Roux, DG of the Office of the President at the time, then just dropped the issue without tabling it formally via the SSSC in the SSC (Van Tonder 2019; Fourie 2019; Roux 2019). The project therefore died a silent death. Koekemoer also informed all the signatories that we should not be surprised if there were negative

backlashes from the President towards the signatories of the report. As far as could be established, though, none of the signatories experienced any backlash that could be directly linked to the report, except for myself and my colleague Kobus Jordaan, then Director of Negotiation Support in the DCDP. These backlashes will be dealt with in a separate output of this research project at a later stage.

The report was also informally discussed with a number of senior officials in the Security Branch of the NSMS. They did not express any open resistance to the proposals (Van Tonder 2019). It is clear that the officials in the 'civilian' government departments who were involved in the constitutional redesign processes, as well as a number of individual officials in the security departments, were much less rigid and more open and flexible about experimenting with new political strategies than the politicians in the SCC were at the time. In 1994, Koekemoer recalled that P W Botha's reaction was that it was a good report, but the time was not right for its implementation (Koekemoer 1986, 2019). This was a more moderate and euphemistic interpretation of what he told us seven years earlier.

The Skrik-vir-Niks policy exercise was clearly too radical and unthinkable to be formally considered in the extremely conservative and intimidating political climate at the time, as we expected. On the other hand, it did alleviate some of our personal and professional frustrations about the existing political deadlock inside the NP government. Now at least we had ensured that the strategies that we were convinced would break the deadlock, were directly, though informally, on the table of the people who could make the needed breakthroughs. This included the security establishment. De Klerk admitted recently that he had also been vaguely aware of the Skrik-vir-Niks project and report, but that he had never seen a copy of it (De Klerk 2019). However, the SSC had a very tight central control at the time on countering the total terrorist onslaught in South Africa through a totally integrated government response. The focus of the Skrik-vir-Niks report was further central to De Klerk's concerns about a new constitutional system and process to achieve it in South Africa. It is difficult to accept the veracity of De Klerk's recollection about this project against this background.

The decision paralysis in the SCC that was summarised and illustrated earlier, continued in its subsequent meetings over the next two years, until the end of 1988.

## CONCLUSIONS

The three case studies in failed strategic policy change that were summarised and assessed in this article, illustrate the ideological constraints on governmental decision-making through attempts at peaceful persuasion in internal policymaking processes in the South African government during 1986 to 1988. They also

illustrate the complex interactions and policy change competition for internal policy influence among the top leaders of the NP government at the time. They illustrate the fundamental ideological differences among these individuals at the time, and the paralysing impact that these complex interactions had on transformational decision-making within government, despite increasing international political and financial isolation and domestic resistance against the NP's continued exclusion of black South Africans from political processes in the country.

The assessment illustrates that the authoritarian leadership style of then President P W Botha dominated his cabinet members so strongly that they did not have the courage to break ranks with him although they knew that government policies had to change fundamentally. Their ideological differences in the government's official policy think tank for this purpose, the SCC, about what the minimum significant policy reforms were to gain the support of the majority of the black South African liberation movements, totally paralysed governmental policymaking processes. These case studies have important implications for current strategic policy change initiatives in South Africa's ruling ANC alliance where similar serious ideological and other policy differences exist, and where similar paralysing effects have become serious obstacles to public policy implementation.

Additional reasons for the inability of SCC members to reach internal agreements on what to do, include the impending succession battle in 1989 among Heunis, Pik Botha, Barend Du Plessis and F W de Klerk to replace P W Botha as leader of the NP (Van Heerden 2019; Du Plessis 2019). This made especially De Klerk, wary of breaking ranks with P W Botha on policy decisions that might lose him votes among his conservative NP colleagues in caucus and among the general flock of NP voters who had been defecting increasingly over the previous five years to the Conservative Party (CP). Their hesitation to openly break ranks with P W Botha was also reinforced by the strong intimidatory control that P W Botha had on all his ministers and caucus, as reflected by the above analyses and assessments. During this period, both P W Botha and De Klerk were the main brakes on policy change in the NP that could have brought forward the eventual political settlement in South Africa at least five years earlier, at Rubicon on 15 August 1985.

Similar factional power struggles are also currently playing out in the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC. The complex individual power relationships among senior members of government and their respective competing constituencies delay and even block practical policy compromises to make progress with many of government's policy programmes.

This assessment indicates that the paralysing policy decision-making dynamics among divergent ideological views at the top of the apartheid government had a significant negative impact on the nature and outcomes of the subsequent political transformation that resulted in the current post-apartheid South African state.

It remains an ever-present risk in democratic decision-making processes where the goal of maintaining a fragile facade of ideological unity within an organisation overrides the national interest.

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# Local Economic Development (LED) and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)

## A Match or Mismatch?

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### ABSTRACT

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) can be viewed as a solution to South Africa's service delivery challenges while simultaneously increasing its global competitiveness and relevance. South Africa has already adopted several e-government initiatives to improve service delivery and local economic development (LED). Clear and well thought out government strategies are a prerequisite for LED and open governance. In turn, for local government to create viable LED strategies, and to respond to the global pressure of the 4IR, collaboration with local communities and other stakeholders is of paramount importance. The article explores whether LED and the 4IR can address complex LED challenges and enhance economic growth. More specifically, it investigates whether a successful integrated LED strategy depends on the extent to which local municipalities embrace the 4IR. In exploring this, various scholarly literature and official documents were critically scrutinised. A hermeneutic reading modality was utilised in engaging with the literature. The literature overview presents two main arguments. This desktop research revealed that local municipalities' readiness for the 4IR plays a key role in addressing local economic challenges. Thus, it can be concluded that an LED strategy and the 4IR can be combined to ensure economic growth in local communities. The article concludes by providing a set of literature-based best practices on how the South African government can successfully implement future-focused, sustainable LED and 4IR strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

Various pieces of scholarly literature have been written on local government and LED in particular. Local government has been criticised for its inefficiency to provide basic services to the public (Khambule & Mtapuri 2018:438). In a study on governance and LED in three selected African countries, Khumalo (2018:85) found various shortcomings with regard to LED. According to the author, "Inadequate policy on LED, poor resource allocation, capacity issues and weak-subnational units" (Khumalo 2018:85). In some cases, poor implementation of LED policies led to the aforementioned challenges. Khambule (2018:287) assessed the role of the South African LED agencies and concluded that their mandate is undermined by poor development planning structures, insufficiently skilled LED practitioners, as well as a lack of coordination, understanding of local economies, capacity and funding. Moreover, Kamara (2017:98) argues that weakened intergovernmental relations in South Africa have led to the failure of LED. The author further argues that local municipalities receive limited support from the other tiers of government, which leads to the inadequate implementation of developmental and statutory mandates.

This reviewed literature indicates that there are numerous challenges at local government level. While certain authors are in favour of the 4IR, other African scholars raise concerns in terms of the continent's readiness to adopt and embrace this revolution. However, the literature also revealed certain shortcomings experienced in Africa in terms of Africa's readiness for the 4IR, such as infrastructure challenges, technology-based skills shortages, stagnant economic growth, connectivity issues and load-shedding. For example, South Africa has recently experienced a rise in corruption at all levels of government. For this reason, this article seeks to explore whether LED and the 4IR can address LED challenges and enhance economic growth, with specific reference to South African local government. This article is demarcated into various sections. First, it conceptualises LED and the 4IR. Second, it contextualises local LED where LED's role in economic transformation is addressed. Third, it contextualises the 4IR where the implications of the 4IR are scrutinised and discussed. The article concludes with lessons derived from the scholarly literature, and how these can be applied to South African local government. These lessons serve as a contribution to public administration discourse on local government and LED.

Well planned and properly implemented LED strategies can lead to enhanced economic growth, more employment opportunities and improved community-centred public-private partnerships (PPPs). In turn the 4IR is portrayed as a revolution that brings radical changes to people's lives and economic production. The following sections contextualise and conceptualise these key concepts.

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Rodríguez-Pose and Tijmstra (2005:3) define LED as the “growing number of initiatives, ranging from industrial policy and regional planning to community development...”. This necessitates formal, well considered written policies that address LED initiatives (Cleave, Arku & Chatwin 2019:96). Similarly, Khumalo (2018:70) defines LED as “...a process of improving the locality as a place of doing business which involves collective action from government, the private sector, non-governmental organisations and the community”.

According to Ackron and Auriacombe (2016:44) it has been observed that typically in practice, “...(l)ocal economic development is a highly complex matter, and there is no clear conceptual model available that incorporates all of its potentially important dimensions” (Smoke 1997 in Ackron & Auriacombe 2016:44). Ackron and Auriacombe (2016:44) state that “there currently is no evidence of the employment in South Africa of systematic methods in the determination of LED goal sets that are informed by coherent theories of change and of action”.

The Africa Competitiveness Report (2017:25) defines the 4IR as “the global transformation characterised by the convergence of digital, physical and biological technologies, built on the infrastructure of the digital revolution, which will enable transition to entirely new systems of production, consumption communication, transport, energy generation and human interaction”. Furthermore, the 4IR can be viewed as “a collective term of technologies and concepts of value chain organisation which draw together cyber-physical systems, the Internet of Things (IoT) and the Internet of Services (IoS), together with other emerging technologies such as cloud technology, big data, predictive analytics, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, agile and collaborative robots and additive manufacturing” (South Africa 2018:9). Both definitions reveal that the 4IR demands infrastructure and technological enhancement to ensure that governments are agile and innovative when responding to issues of national importance and LED in particular. Importantly, the agility of a government will determine the extent to which the 4IR is adopted.

## CONTEXTUALISING LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LED emerged in developed countries in the northern hemisphere and was adopted after the new post-1994 democratic dispensation in South Africa (Van der Walt 2018:699). According to Ackron and Auriacombe (2016:44), “the advent of the new constitutional dispensation in 1994 heralded significant transformational and governance reform in South Africa... in particular the Government White Paper on Local Government of 1998 formally introduced the concepts of

LED and of developmental local government into the South African vernacular, consistent with the evolving national *zeitgeist* of the developmental state... LED therefore had its genesis in, and was from the start in effect largely consigned by statute to the local government sphere – in the South African context arguably the governmental sphere least equipped to deal with it”. The authors add that “from the inception the narrative of LED in South Africa was influenced less by sound economic prescript than by a complex of ideological and welfare considerations” (Ackron & Auriacombe 2016:44).

Local government is mandated to implement LED strategies to improve the lives of local communities and to enhance economic growth. This implies taking primary responsibility for effectively implementing LED programmes to bolster developmental local government (Marks & Erwin 2018:26; Department of Provincial and Local Government (DPLG) 2006:3). To achieve this, the formulation of effective and efficient local economic strategies can address the current socio-economic problems that confront South African local government. To help realise this, private consultants, community-based organisations (CBOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) influence and contribute to the development of LED strategies and policies in local government. In line with this, the 2006–2011 National Framework for Local Economic Development highlights that “... local economic development is about creating a platform and environment to engage stakeholders in implementing strategies and programmes” (DPLG 2006:9). Notably, these policies should be evidence-based and should be accompanied by committed and resilient leadership (Govender 2017:23). However, transformative and innovative leaders are needed to ensure successful implementation of these policies. Khumalo (2018:71) argues that South Africa’s LED framework is more advanced than other southern African countries because of its enacted policies.

## **LED’s role in local economic transformation**

Van der Waldt, (2011:134) argues that LED initiatives “build and strengthen the economic capacity of local areas in order to improve its economic future and the quality of life of all its citizens”. As such, local communities play a vital role in these development initiatives. In line with this, Edoun (2017:27) stipulates that LED initiatives are aimed at “empowering local stakeholders to utilise business enterprises, labour, capital and other local resources effectively to maximise local benefits in order to contribute to poverty reduction and the uplifting of citizens’ life conditions”.

In turn, Ndaguba and Hanyane (2018:5) argue that LED addresses local economic transformation and unemployment of “the vulnerable, the economically dependent, and the poor”. Considering the various reports on corruption at local government level in South Africa, a clear agenda is needed where community

participation is promoted and encouraged. Local citizens should be involved in drafting a local agenda; by doing so, they will have a vested interest in improving their communities.

Van der Waldt (2018:695) emphasises the importance of drafting clearly articulated local agendas that develop “a community’s economic, physical, social and environmental dimensions”. In addition to providing a strategy for local communities, this approach can guide the various stakeholders involved in the LED initiatives. It further promotes a spirit of *ubuntu* in local communities. Mokoena (2017:468) argues that LED is a “process- oriented” initiative aimed at increasing job opportunities for local communities by developing alternative industries, identifying new markets and focusing on knowledge transfer. As LED has a localised and territorial underpinning (Kamara 2017:99), it is important to equip local communities with the necessary skills – especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, local communities can also benefit from training and development initiatives offered by provincial government.

While LED is a driver for local economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa (Malefane & Mashakoe 2008), challenges such as “evolution of trade, urbanisation, territorial inequalities, and decentralisation” are the anticipated results of LED (Rodríguez-Pose & Tijnstra 2005:2). These challenges are also experienced at a global scale. As such, Rodríguez-Pose and Tijnstra (2005:2) argue that LED should be considered as complementary to existing strategies on the continent. Undeniably, Africa’s widespread poverty and stagnant economic growth calls for strategically planned LED initiatives (Van der Waldt 2018). Within this context, LED should not be regarded as an independent strategy but complementary to existing initiatives to improve the lives of citizens, more specifically at local government level.

As far as South African local government is concerned, Govender (2017:19) argues that LED’s progress is questionable due to social inequalities and widespread poverty associated with unemployment. Edoun (2017:32) argues that such socio-economic failures are caused by a “lack of capacity, inadequate leadership, corruption and lack of good governance”. This situation has been worsened by the recent global Covid-19 pandemic. The global Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the country’s alarmingly high unemployment rate. Due to this added strain, local municipalities had to revisit their Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) to propose interventions to deal with the pandemic. Furthermore, the success of the LED initiatives depends on effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. However, Govender (2017:19) argues that the development of LED in South Africa has been sluggish due to the poor monitoring and evaluation of LED initiatives.

Ackron and Auriacombe (2016:46) state that “with the emergence of a preoccupation with LED as a component of South Africa’s post-transformation development approach, a plethora of policy papers deriving from various government

sources attempting to lend impetus to and operationalise the as yet amorphous concept of LED has compounded confusion and arguably further frustrated the purpose". The authors add that "though the conceptualisation of LED has matured and morphed over time, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in 2009 found that a lack of common understanding of the meaning and role of LED and of LED processes constituted a major obstacle to effective LED in South Africa" (Ackron & Auriacombe 2016:46).

When reflecting on causes of this sluggish development in South Africa, Van der Waldt (2018: 698) points to the country's "colonial past; geographical and political isolation; poor leadership; limited direct foreign investment; political turmoil and armed conflict; corruption; climate change and cultural issues". Interestingly, most researchers question the state of leadership as far as LED is concerned. In addition, Marais (2011:52) argues that community projects have often failed because of the "lack of basic business sense and bureaucracy". Other African countries have also experienced challenges with the implementation of LED strategies. Mensah, Bawole and Ahenkan (2017: 607) argue that, in Ghana, "LED was not a priority of the government of the pre- and post-immediate independence era". The authors add that, while Ghana's policy documents promote LED, in practice, international development agencies are responsible for implementing successful LED activities.

A qualitative study of a selected district municipality in South Africa by Biyela *et al.* (2018) found that LED is not regarded as an important feature in the strategic planning, but rather as a compliance tool. In a similar vein, Khambule and Mtampura (2018) argue that LED is not a main priority at selected local municipalities in South Africa. Furthermore, most municipalities fail to implement viable LED frameworks, irrespective of the mandate stipulated in Section 152(c) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, 1996. LED is not only an important aspect of the political agenda in local and national government, it is also regarded as a mandatory key performance area (KPA) in South Africa's local government performance framework. This is further encapsulated in Chapter Eleven of the 2030 National Development Plan (NDP), which states the importance of promoting LED and giving poor people access to economic and social opportunities.

Well intentioned LED strategies are not always effectively implemented in local municipalities (Govender 2017:19; Koma 2012:127). Biyela *et al.* (2018) argue that, in some South African local governments, stakeholders are known to implement unsustainable *ad hoc* projects with unclear LED objectives. The result is the failure to enhance economic growth and to create employment opportunities. To address this failure, municipalities should consider designing effective long-term strategies and identifying stakeholders to help address local development challenges (Cleave, Arku & Chatwin 2019). In addition, Van der Waldt (2018) states that "...lack of cooperation, coordination and alignment of LED initiatives



between adjacent municipalities are major obstacles that makes it difficult to deal with problems of socio-economic development in a region". This can be addressed by ensuring that LED initiatives are inclusive of local economies to stimulate economic growth (Govender 2017:21). Furthermore, adjacent municipalities need to be involved in stakeholder meetings to reach common ground concerning LED initiatives. These initiatives should benefit all adjacent municipalities and community members.

Apart from the initiatives such as long-term plans, the government has encouraged the use of Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs). LEDAs are expected to contribute to the development of local municipalities to implement local development strategies and to improve the lives of citizens. The main purpose of LEDAs is to enhance the effectiveness of local municipalities (interventionist) by implementing the necessary development initiatives that address the socio-economic conditions in South Africa (Khambule 2018:297). Lawrence (2015:84) affirms that LEDAs contribute strategically to local development and investment agendas. This, in turn, can bolster local economic growth and create employment opportunities. Khambule (2018:287) also views LEDAs as institutional structures that address socio-economic conditions and enhance socio-economic development. It can be argued that LEDAs should promote the interests of the public.

Ackron and Auriacombe (2016:49) state that "many LED strategies were not grounded in economics and were poorly integrated with other programmes. Indeed, the operative conception of LED has focused largely on community participation, arguably at the cost of cohesion, internal economic consistency and unity of economic developmental purpose...LED initiatives have remained largely disjointed and project-based, and have failed to harvest the synergies inherent in mutual support and cooperative governance – the latter a fundamental tenet of the South African Constitution".

## **CONTEXTUALISING THE 4IR AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR LED**

The 4IR is an inevitable revolution that can have either a positive or negative effect on society (South Africa:2018:8). Jarbandhan (2017:61) argues that the 4IR promotes digital connectivity which comprises of "available technology that allows people who have access to the Internet to connect with organisations in real time. Organisations can disseminate information and keep connected to communities even in outlying areas". In turn Schwab (2016) argues that the 4IR is "characterised by a much more ubiquitous and mobile Internet, by smaller and more powerful sensors that have become cheaper, and by artificial intelligence and machine learning".

According to Prisecaru (2016:58), exponential technology such as robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), sensors, nanotechnology and quantum computers are becoming more affordable and easier to manage. These technologies enhance communication channels, enlarge knowledge and facilitate the identification and sharing of best practices (Prisecaru 2016:58). Moreover, Karabegovi (2017:111) states that the 4IR, or “Industry 4.0”, causes a “sudden jump in productivity and change of human life in the whole world”. This calls for investing in adequate infrastructure that will cater for the competitive global digital and advanced technology era. In this regard, Karabegovi (2017:110) argues that the 4IR necessitates a technological revolution inclusive of innovative technological developments (digital and robot technology) to enhance information communication technologies (ICT; for example, the IoT, where people and devices are connected remotely. To further these arguments, the following section focuses on the 4IR and its implications on LED in South Africa.

With reference to the sub-Saharan African region, Ayentimi and Burgess (2019:641) argue that the 4IR should be seen as the main driver for social and economic growth, as well as leveraging development. On a wider scale, Ayentimi and Burgess (2019:641) argue that Africa can benefit from the 4IR by reducing extreme poverty, supporting social and economic change and fast-tracking infrastructure development. These changes can benefit both rural and urban communities. This is an opportunity that most emerging countries should embrace to enhance LED. However, for this type of development to occur, well devised policy frameworks are needed to guide countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Undeniably, the 4IR will lead to radical changes in future jobs. As such, decision-makers must find appropriate solutions to prepare new generations for future jobs at a global scale (Postelnicu & Călea 2019:201). However, these future jobs are yet unknown and undefined due to the rapid changes brought about by the 4IR. Postelnicu and Călea (2019:202) propose adopting an optimistic outlook when assessing whether the 4IR will create or reduce jobs. Their choice is justified by the following reasons:

- Computers and industrial robots will only operate based on, or following interaction with, people;
- Tacit knowledge (an individual’s experience that is built over the years) cannot be transferred to robots and computers;
- For many years to come, robots will only perform simple and repetitive tasks, whereas operations calling for more complex knowledge and involving high levels of creativity and innovation will be conducted by humans (Postelnicu & Călea 2019:202).

From a humanistic perspective, Postelnicu and Călea (2019:202) believe that, “Robots will never be able to share values such as ethics, empathy, emotions,

affinity and antipathy typical of the human being only. Likewise, they will never become physical persons with legal rights". In their article, *Is the Fourth Industrial Revolution a Panacea? Risks toward the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Evidence in the Thai Economy*, Sae-Lim and Jermsittiparsert (2019:732) argue that the 4IR is not a silver bullet for socio-economic challenges, as it could lead to a high unemployment rate, social inequality and cybersecurity risks. Similarly, Naudé (2017:4) argues that the 4IR will replace low-skilled jobs and enhance high-skilled jobs in Africa. Sadly, the South African economy – especially in rural communities – is dominated by low-skilled jobs. If the 4IR replaces such jobs, it will widen the gap between low-skilled individuals and high-skilled individuals.

While advocates of the 4IR view it as a driver for socio-economic growth, Ayentimi and Burgess (2019:641) admit that it is likely to pose various challenges "in the patterns of production, consumption and employment and set broader geopolitical and socio-economic drivers of change in both developed and emerging economies". Among other envisaged threats posed by the 4IR is skills shortages (IT applications in the various fields of specialisation), as well as challenges surrounding digital connectivity such as inequitable access (Markowitz 2019:11). Kroh (2016) contests that the key problem with the 4IR is the social dimension. This raises the following question: Is the sub-Saharan African region ready for such changes? If so, the region will have to accept "the job disruptions, skills disruptions, high unemployment, and skills shortages" (Ayentimi & Burgess 2019; Naudé 2017).

While the 4IR is inevitable and will drive changes on the African continent, such as the digital and service-based model, the 2017 Africa's Competitiveness Report outlines two repercussions that Africa could experience: Reduced low labour costs and the "continent's technological backwardness". The report further states that the continent is currently experiencing infrastructural challenges, such as connectivity problems (lack of high-speed connectivity) (Africa's Competitiveness Report 2017). As such, it highlights that "African countries are not equipped to transition to 4IR economy" (Africa Competitiveness Report 2017:19). Regardless of the fact that South Africa is ranked 58<sup>th</sup> in ICT, the report questions whether the country is ready to embrace the 4IR.

In the context of this article, local government and specifically municipalities "play a prime role in ensuring that infrastructure and quality services are provided" (Lukhele & Thanyani 2018:880). Regardless of the enacted policy guidelines for local government, local communities are still experiencing major infrastructural challenges. Lukhele and Thanyani (2018:880) argue that these challenges emanate from the legacy of the apartheid government. To counter this, Jarbandhan (2017) argues that municipal public managers should possess the necessary skills to embrace the 4IR. The author adds that public sector leaders should implement technology to enhance the social good for the citizens (Jarbandhan 2017).

Furthermore, the African Union Commission (2014) states that, by implementing sustainable, future-focused 4IR strategies, “African countries [including South Africa] will be amongst the best performers in global quality of life measure”. According to the African Union Commission (2014), “this will be attained through strategies of inclusive growth, job creation, increasing agricultural production, investments in science, technology, research and innovation, gender equality, youth empowerment and the provision of basic services including health nutrition, education, shelter, water and sanitation”.

In line with the African Agenda 2063 as proposed by the African Union Commission (2014), South Africa has established proactive measures to ensure the successful implementation of the 4IR. This is evidenced by the recent public sector innovation initiatives that have been established. Innovation, and public service innovation in particular, is seen as a main driver in achieving sustainable social and economic growth. The Centre for Public Service Commission (undated:17) defines public service innovation as “...applied creativity that is contextually relevant”. In line with this, a National System of Innovation has been established by the Department of Science and Technology (DSI) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Nel and Masilela (2020:39) argue that this initiative focuses on “quality of life and growth and wealth creation”.

Notably, the Centre for Public Sector Innovation (CPSI) plays a major role in facilitating innovation in the public sector. The Concept Document on the Establishment of the Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (2018) emphasises the importance of shared knowledge, AI and automated network management (South Africa 2018:8). To this end, the South African government is currently engaged in multilateral discussions with the African Telecommunications Union, the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Working Group on the 4IR, G20 initiatives and the African Centre for Digital Transformation. However, Sutherland (2020) notes that South Africa’s presence in the BRICS initiative is not convincing. The author further argues that the 4IR is not ideal for South Africa because “...its economy is still rooted in farming, mining and the informal sector, and burdened with high levels of unemployment, while the vast majority of its citizens lack advanced and, often, basic skills” (Sutherland 2020).

Table 1 presents key deductions regarding LED and the 4IR.

The following section focuses on how the South African government can apply LED and the 4IR to bolster the local economy.

## **LESSONS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The literature review highlights that local municipalities need to embrace various forms of AI to facilitate stakeholder engagement in LED. In line with this,

**Table 1: Deductions in terms of the characteristics of LED and the 4IR**

CHARACTERISTICS OF LED	CHARACTERISTICS OF 4IR	DEDUCTIONS
<p>Job opportunities and improved economic growth (Khumalo 2018; Mokoena 2017; Van der Walt 2011).</p>	<p>Radical changes in future jobs (Postelnicu &amp; Călea. 2019). High-skilled jobs (Naudé 2017). Unemployment rate and social inequalities (Sae Lim &amp; Jermstiftiparsert 2019; Ayentimi &amp; Burgess 2019).</p>	<p>The literature has revealed that the main aim of LED is to create local job opportunities and improve economic growth. Thus, radical changes in future jobs are inevitable. Highly skilled people will have more job security while less-skilled people are at high risk of being unemployed. This will accelerate the current high unemployment rate in South Africa and create further social inequalities. Forging new job creation initiatives is of critical importance.</p>
<p>Effective and efficient LED strategies (Marks &amp; Erwin 2018; Tijmsira 2005). KPA for municipalities (Biyela et al. 2019).</p>	<p>Agility (South Africa 2018). AI (Schwab 2016; Priscearu 2016).</p>	<p>Effective and efficient LED strategies are a prerequisite for improved local economic growth. The literature has confirmed that LED is a KPA in municipalities. This implies that local municipalities should strive to be agile in this digital age. Their agility will depend on adopting various AI technologies. This, in turn, will improve the effective delivery of public services.</p>
<p>Policy guidelines (Cleave, Arku &amp; Chatwin 2019; Khumalo 2018; Govender 2017).</p>	<p>Technological revolution, global transformation, digital revolution and transition (South Africa 2018; Africa Competitiveness Report 2017; Isak 2017).</p>	<p>Policy guidelines that embrace the current technological revolution are critical to facilitate the transition from the third revolution to the 4IR to remain globally competitive and locally relevant.</p>
<p>Comprises of various stakeholders, such as LEDAs and the local community (Khumalo 2018; Lawrence 2015).</p>	<p>Shared knowledge and best practices (Priscearu 2016). Connectivity problems (Africa Competitiveness Report 2017).</p>	<p>LED policy guidelines encourage and promote stakeholder engagement. This will enhance shared knowledge and best practices, which could be made possible by 4IR.</p>

Khambule (2018:) states that the effectiveness of LED depends on the extent to which LEDAs involve “civil society, businesses and local government”. In addition, the advocates of the pro-poor approach argue that this approach promotes “...working directly with the low-income communities and their organisations” (Lukhele & Thanyani 2018:883). This requires high-speed, effective connectivity and frequent communication. Considering the influence of the 4IR, poor infrastructure could pose a challenge in South African local municipalities. The high-speed connectivity and frequent communication can motivate local people to become involved in entrepreneurship and share innovative ideas resulting in best practices. Local partners can easily disseminate instant local knowledge, which is crucial to sustain their local economic growth. This is affirmed by the African Union Commission (2014) that stipulates that “Citizens will actively participate in the social, economic and political development and managements”. Efficient services will be delivered by establishing developmental, democratic and accountable institutions. This is further acknowledged in the Concept Document on the Establishment of the Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (South Africa 2018:13), which states that the 4IR will facilitate citizens’ engagement with governments and this will promote public scrutiny (South Africa 2018:13). This is possible in an ideal state where load-shedding is no longer a major concern that affects both rural and urban South African municipalities.

Second, globally, partnership clusters will “enable enterprises to compete more competitively” (Marais 2011:52). This, in turn, widens access to various markets, reduces transaction and procurement costs and supports sharing market information. This is in line with the LED strategy, which aims to “enhance global competitiveness and promote an integrated economy” (Koma 2014:40). To remain competitive within the digital economy, local municipalities need to attract and retain investment by providing appropriate infrastructure and reduced production costs. This will help create job opportunities and enhance local economic growth. However, Shava and Hofisi (2015:211) argue that the adoption of this initiative will pose a challenge in the public service because it may result in job losses.

Koma (2014) argues that innovative and viable policy strategies are a prerequisite to alleviate the socio-economic challenges that confront the South African economy (Koma 2014:41). The economy still needs to recover from the global Covid-19 pandemic. In line with this, Marais (2011:50) points to a global demand for alternative forms of economic development informed by the “principles of economic development”. This global market can reduce political interference in local community development initiatives. Marks and Erwin (2018:25) describe political interference as a paralysis and hindrance to community development. South African local government can encourage this cluster system of partnerships

through open governance partnerships. In line with this local government needs to promote the principles of good governance to improve service delivery and, more specifically, LED.

Third, LED is intended to “address broader societal problems such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, under-development and unfair business practices” (Madue & Pooe in Sebola 2015:170). This drive for innovative public service is promoted in various *Government Gazettes* and policy guidelines. Therefore, local government must ensure that the legislative framework that informs LED is innovative and agile. Notably, innovation is of strategic and national importance. Nel and Masilela (2020:33) argue that public service innovation promotes open governance, resulting in improved service delivery. It further encourages the use of e-governance and ICT initiatives where citizens can communicate with government. This clearly shows the urgency for government, and specifically local municipalities, to initiate and develop systems that will fast-track the implementation of smart technology. The drive for innovation should consider the following strategic areas as far as LED is concerned:

- Ensuring inclusive and integrated rural economy;
- Reversing the spatial effects of apartheid; and
- Improving education, training and innovation (Ndabeni, Rogerson & Booyens 2016:305).

Shava and Hofisi (2017:206) argue that “chances are high that if new technologies are adopted by countries, economic development can be witnessed though it depends on the existing policies to support the global initiative”. This shows that new forms of technology can also assist local municipalities in setting their local agenda to enhance economic growth and create employment opportunities.

## CONCLUSION

This article explored whether LED and the 4IR can address LED challenges and enhance economic growth – especially in rural municipalities. This was achieved by first conceptualising the terms LED and 4IR. The literature review highlighted that the main aim of LED is job creation and enhancing economic growth in local government. This can be achieved by implementing effective and efficient strategies, aligned to the legislative and constitutional framework of the country. Furthermore, the review revealed that effective LED requires the involvement of various stakeholders, such as local citizens, local development agencies, in order to set up local agendas. The research highlighted that the 4IR has already invaded the African continent and that the South African

government is indirectly coerced to adopt it. Bearing this in mind, it was evident that the 4IR, to a limited extent, can be matched with LED to support job creation and enhance economic growth. The literature overview clearly pointed to the positive and negative outcomes of matching LED and the 4IR. For example, some African scholars raised some concerns whether African countries, and South Africa in particular, are ready to adopt the 4IR. The African scholars mainly raised the issue of high-skilled labour compared to low-skilled labour. South Africa currently has a high unemployment rate, and the 4IR can continue to widen the already existing gap. The article further highlighted the importance of adopting open governance.

South Africa is not exempt from the pressure of the 4IR, especially due to current challenges such as unemployment, stagnant economic growth, and poverty that is especially evident within local rural municipalities. Moreover, the current Covid-19 pandemic has forced a number of countries worldwide to embrace the 4IR and revisit their policies and LED initiatives. This clearly shows that a proper implementation plan for an LED and 4IR framework is a prerequisite for LED. Moreover, the commitment by local municipalities is crucial.

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# City Government Resilience

## Perspectives on post-Covid-19 Recovery

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### ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged government resilience on national, city, commercial, and individual-citizen levels. The national leadership response has been to declare a state of disaster and a national lockdown to slow down infections through enforced social distancing. This challenge is widely experienced as *terra incognita*, having no frame of reference or map to guide policymakers towards resilience. It is evident that the deployment of effective resilience strategies will be required to help cities recover from the severe socio-economic impact of the pandemic. It is the premise of this article that the basis for recovery lies mainly in the resilience capability of cities that function as economic growth hubs, centres of political power, and nuclei for social welfare programmes. The article concludes with recommendations on recovering from the impact of the pandemic, including the capitalisation of high leverage areas, and the design of resilience strategies for organisations. It is argued that recovery from the impact of the pandemic will severely test the resilience of city governments and their capacity to navigate this crisis.

### INTRODUCTION

The acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), which causes the respiratory disease Covid-19, continues to ravage populations around the world. Given a disruption as severe as the mentioned virus, it would be wise for governments in general, as well as cities in particular to re-visit existing resilience strategies and identify high leverage areas for organisational recovery and resilience.

It was remarked that the pandemic has laid bare the ideological foundations of political leadership in countries. This worldwide crisis raised especially two critical dilemmas that require a clear yet nuanced policy position.

The first dilemma is that policymakers have to walk the tightrope between “Save Lives” (i.e. firm lockdown restrictions) and “Save Jobs” (i.e. open the economy). The latter option would be to open the economy in a nuanced, incremental way once infection levels are receding, or the curve is flattened sufficiently. Then if or when infections rise, lockdown could be reintroduced until infection levels decrease again. These cycles will continue until so-called “herd immunity” is reached or a vaccine is developed and applied to at least 60% of the population.

The second dilemma is that the way various countries have dealt with the pandemic has demonstrated two extreme approaches, namely centralised control (e.g. China, Russia and South Africa), and decentralised self-control (e.g. Sweden, Germany, Denmark and Holland). It remains unclear which approach has been most successful. However, early results in moderate mortality and limited economic damage in Sweden’s self-control policy position indicates a potential success for this approach in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. It is evident that perspectives on post-Covid-19 recovery has entered the mainstream policy arena.

By following an interpretivist research paradigm, the purpose of this article was to reflect on perspectives on city government resilience within the context of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to frame such perspectives, three interrelated and interconnected dimensions are explored; first, ideological-policy views; second, resilience models, strategies and approaches; and, finally, essential elements of organisational (i.e. city government) recovery and renewal. Synergy of these three dimensions could help build resilience in city government’s policies and strategies as precondition to recover more rapidly from the pandemic crisis.

## **IDEOLOGICAL POLICY PERSPECTIVES**

In the context of South Africa, a key dynamic which requires constant anticipation and adaptation by cities is the unresolved dilemma of the seeming conflict between the official National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP), that is commonly regarded as “market-friendly”, and the strong socialist-Marxist nature of the ruling African National Congress’ (ANC’s) National Democratic Revolution (NDR). Pursuing a centralist NDR ideology could lead to a situation whereby national government takes responsibilities on itself that may be inappropriate for this sphere of government. This could result in the restriction of certain constitutional freedoms at city government level, leading to inefficiencies, wastage of resources, and the overall lack of urban resilience. Migration to urban areas has increasing significant implications for national economic growth and social development.

Thus, lack of resilience on the part of cities, because of its interdependence with national ideological-policy positions, could have a ripple effect causing a lack of resilience nationally (see Glaeser 2011). It is thus crucial that seemingly opposing ideological perspectives be resolved as soon as possible to provide clear policy directives to the respective spheres of government.

An example of resolving opposing ideological perspectives is China's policy of "One country, two systems". This policy has been described as "Socialism with Chinese characteristics" (Jinping 2017:1). President Deng Xiaoping first coined this policy when he initiated opening the China economy to investors in special economic zones (SEZs), which was repeated more recently by President Xi Jinping in 2017. This may be an effective way of resolving the dilemma between central communist policy on a national level and a free enterprise market-based economy in SEZs. The result of China's dual-logic policy has mainly been sustained economic growth and job creation. SEZs such as the City of Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta, have provided impetus to develop the country into the so-called "manufacturer for the world" and laid the foundation for strong economic resilience.

South Africa's SEZs have emulated those of China, although it did not mimic the ideological approach of "One country, two systems". Lessons could be learnt from countries such as China to reconcile capitalistic, market-based economic principles with socialistic-Marxist ideology. Describing the resolution of this dilemma locally as "One country, two systems" may also be called "Socialism with African characteristics". African humanism, commonly known as *Ubuntu*, provides the unique, indigenous characteristics in the resolution of this dilemma and could offset shareholder capitalism in favour of inclusive stakeholder capitalism. Such an approach may provide a market-based stimulus for job-creation in SEZs and in designated metros as economic development zones. Stimulating the economy through this solution would provide a platform for post-Covid-19 recovery, job creation and thereby enhance urban resilience.

## **A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CITY GOVERNMENT RESILIENCE**

The notion of "resilience" has been studied from various disciplinary perspectives. In this regard, resilience may be defined "as the rate at which a system regains structure and function following stress or perturbation" (*Oxford Dictionary of Environment and Conservation* 2007), or the "personal quality of a person exposed to high-risk factors that often lead to delinquent behaviour" (*Oxford Dictionary of Law Enforcement* 2007), and "a measure of a body's resistance to deformation" (*Oxford Dictionary of Sports Science and Medicine* 2007). Masten

(1999:252) argues that the current generation of resilience research is characterised by demands for strong theoretical foundations that underpin process-oriented research. Such theoretical underpinnings should provide for the resilience of individuals, organisations, and entire ecological systems (Orr 2014:57). These three dimensions serve as valuable building blocks of a conceptual framework for city government resilience.

In the context of the individual, Windle (2017:1) defines resilience as “the process of effectively negotiating, adapting to, or managing significant sources of stress or trauma”, pointing out that “assets and resources within individuals, their life and environment facilitate this capacity for adaptation and ‘bouncing back’ in the face of adversity”.

An organisation may be conceptualised as an entity with a common purpose (Marcos and Macaulay 2008). Organisational resilience may emerge from four primary sets of adaptive capacities, namely, “economic development, social capital, information and communication and competence that together provide a strategy for disaster readiness” (Norris *et al.* 2008:127). From the perspective of resilience as an interdependent set of adaptive nodal capacities, this process may emerge from a network of such capacities. According to Norris *et al.* (2008:136), the following specific network nodes determine the level of organisational resilience:

- *economic*: aspects of financial risk, vulnerability to hazards, and the level, diversity and distribution of financial resources;
- *information and communication*: institutional narratives, a responsible media, skills, infrastructure, and access to accurate and reliable management information;
- *competence*: critical reflection and problem-solving competencies of employees, the flexibility and creativity of the workforce, collective efficacy, a sense of empowerment, as well as political partnerships; and
- *social capital*: the level of social support for the organisation, organisational linkages and cooperation, citizen’s participation, leadership, as well as a sense of “attachment to place”.

Norris *et al.* (2008:136) point out a primary interdependency between the above-mentioned four nodes, as well as interrelatedness between nodes and subordinate systems, which together form a “resilience ecology” and provide a strategic framework for disaster readiness.

Since Holling’s (1973) seminal paper on resilience as the stability of ecological systems, the conceptualisation has developed into perspectives that analyse mainly the key attributes which govern system dynamics (Forrester 1989). Especially three related attributes of social-ecological systems (SES) determine their future growth trajectories, namely: resilience, adaptability and transformability (Schwartz *et al.* 2011; Jacques 2013). Within the SES context, resilience is defined as “the

capacity of a system to absorb disturbances and reorganise while undergoing a change in order, to still retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedback” (Schwartz *et al.* 2011:1130). Such an interpretation of SES dynamics for resilience implies shifting the focus from so-called “optimal states” to adaptive governance. This changing focus means realising and accepting that shocks, uncertainty, as well as a highly turbulent and dynamic environment, are inherent in systems. According to Schwartz *et al.* (2011:1130), adaptive governance in a socio-political context would have the following implications:

- Society and its livelihoods are influenced constantly by system dynamics such as human capability, assets and infrastructure, income and poverty, and living conditions.
- Government is shaped by dynamics such as organisational and institutional capacities and performance, party politics, access to financial resources, legal frameworks, and development strategies.
- Natural systems are affected by environmental dynamics such as geo-spatial realities, biodiversity, and aquatic-ecosystem conditions.
- External drivers must be considered such as geo-political conflict, land use and population pressures, infrastructure development, macro-economic uncertainty, climate change, and environmental uncertainty.

It is evident that the complexities associated with tri-system dimensions of resilience (i.e. individual, organisational and ecological), demand a broad, systemic and multidisciplinary perspective. Such a perspective will help researchers fully comprehend the dynamics shaping government institutions (e.g. cities) into adaptive organisational systems. Van der Merwe and Van der Waldt (2018:60) distinguish city resilience from city government resilience. City resilience can be regarded as “a broad concept that incorporates the total urban environmental, social, and economic dimensions of cities”. City government resilience, in turn, can be viewed as “the organisational, administrative, managerial, and leadership dimensions of a metropolitan municipality as a complex organisation. In other words, it focuses on the structural, systemic and administrative responses of a city when dealing with those areas that may influence and challenge its resilience”.

As resilience research established a significant corpus of knowledge, the study focus has gradually steered away from factors associated with resilience, towards understanding the mechanisms that underlie “a dynamic *process* encompassing positive adaptation within significant adversity” (Windle 2017:5). This emerging emphasis on *process* for gauging resilience may be useful by identifying mechanisms that offer so-called “high leverage areas” (Denyer 2017:17; Van der Merwe and Van der Waldt 2018:62). These areas can also be used to uncover best practice for diagnosis and intervention that will build resilience in the city government.



Understanding the *process* of ensuring city government's resilience *per se* has become necessary in the face of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This process perspective implies that it is important to analyse resilience by extrapolating towards the post-pandemic adaptation, recovery, and development phases. Amid the pandemic, there may be an opportunity for cities to capitalise on high leverage areas in terms of process phases and eventually transform urban areas to ensure stronger sustainability and resilience.

## Organisational resilience modelling

Gibson and Tarrant (2010:11) present numerous models to clarify organisational resilience in terms of a range of interdependent factors that should be considered when managing resilience. These conceptual models generally illustrate that effective resilience management may be built on a range of strategies that enhance both organisational capabilities which are so-called "hard" (e.g. infrastructure, systems, and structures) and "soft" (e.g. human talent). Regarding organisational resilience, Gibson and Tarrant (2010:7) point out, "Over the last decade, volatility in our natural, economic and social systems appears to be increasing at rates faster than many organisations can cope with. While such fast-moving events (and patterns) overwhelm many organisations, a proportion demonstrates an ability to either manage or bounce back from the adverse effects of system volatility". These scholars synthesised the respective conceptual models of resilience by comparing its application within different disciplines. As a result, six common principles that guide organisational resilience emerged (adapted from Gibson and Tarrant 2010:7):

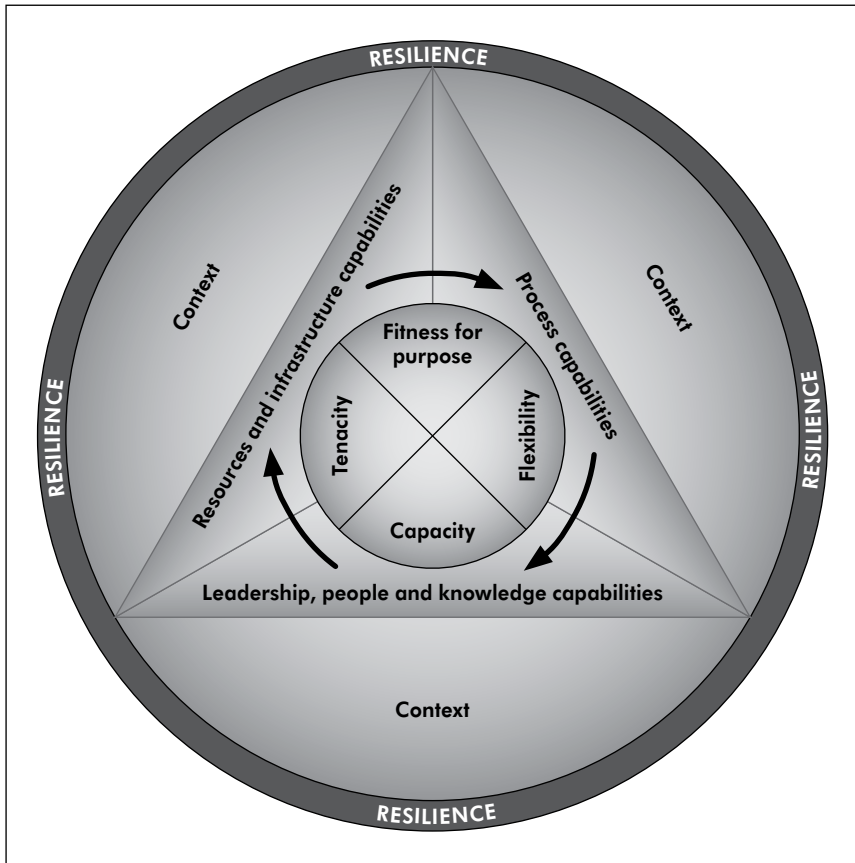
- *Outcome*: resilience as a trait becomes clear after and in response to a "substantial change in circumstances".
- *Non-static*: as a trait, resilience is dynamic – increasing or decreasing in concert with changes in the context.
- *Multi-traits*: entails a "complex interplay" of multiple trait factors.
- *Multidimensional*: a single model is lacking that describes resilience as such, whereas most models focus on specific aspects.
- *Range of conditions*: over time an increasing maturity develops in "resilience capabilities from a low-end reactive position to a high-end adaptive level of maturity".
- *Sound risk management*: resilience may be developed grounded on the "sound assessment, treatment, monitoring and communicating about risk".

Gibson and Tarrant (2010:10) conclude with an integrated model – the so-called "resilience triangle model" – of which *capability* forms an integral part. The loss of *capability*, represented on any one side of the triangle, may result

in the collapse of resilience and the integrity of the whole organisation. Gibson and Tarrant (2010) point out that the resilience triangle model emphasises the fluid nature of each of the three areas of capability. This fluidity flows from organisational processes that continually review, assess and adapt capabilities on each side of the triangle to ensure they function as follows (Gibson and Tarrant 2010:10):

- *“fit for purpose* – their design parameters meet the job that needs to be done – requires monitoring of capability and volatility;
- retain sufficient *capacity* to ensure that required organisational objectives will be achieved – this often requires that the design of the capability has some level of redundancy;

**Figure 1: The resilience triangle model**



Source: (Gibson and Tarrant 2010:10)

- have *tenacity* in that the capabilities continue to perform even in the face of severe disruptive consequences – requires that the design of these capabilities is either resistant or stress tolerant; and
- exhibit *flexibility* to go beyond original design parameters in response to changing circumstances”.

The triangle model for resilience comprising the abovementioned organisational processes is depicted in Figure 1.

Gibson and Tarrant’s model pinpoints the critical role of three areas of capability, namely:

- leadership, people and knowledge capability;
- resources and infrastructure capability; and
- process capability.

The scholars explain that should any of these capabilities (collectively or separately) become less effective, the resilience could be downgraded (Gibson and Tarrant 2010:10). Collectively, the six principles and capabilities of organisational resilience outlined in the triangle model, are the foundational elements that can be used to design strategies for such resilience. These strategies may provide cities with general guidelines to utilise high leverage areas in rectifying vulnerabilities within their current capability of adapting to shocks and stresses.

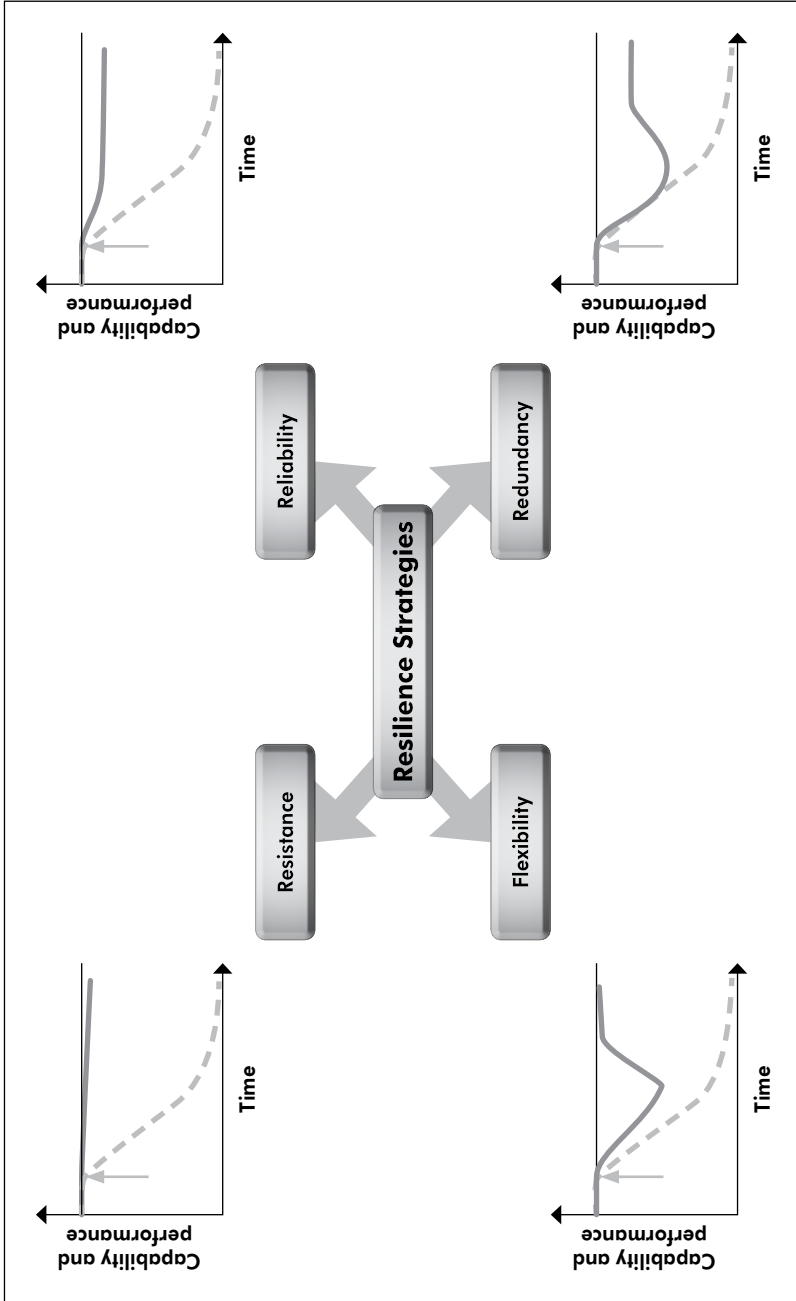
## **RESILIENCE STRATEGIES FOR ADAPTIVE ORGANISATIONS**

According to Chipangura, Van Niekerk and Van der Walddt (2017:318), the design of resilience strategies should commence through “risk problem framing”. This means that organisational decision-makers such as city government councillors and senior officials, should gain insight into the nature, scope and potential impact of risk factors or events (e.g. pandemics). Strategies should then be designed to identify high leverage areas in the organisation such as leadership, people, knowledge, resources, infrastructure, and process capabilities. These areas can be employed to adjust, overcome vulnerabilities, and eventually increase the level of resilience.

Resilience strategies are generally aimed at improving the robustness, agility and capability of organisations (e.g. cities) to adapt, which helps them withstand the effects of a risk event. In the context of a city government, several resilience strategies are in use, for example, land-use (spatial) planning, talent retention, natural disaster strategies (e.g. flood-prone areas), and protection against cyberattacks. Certain emergency response plans of organisations can thus be regarded as resilience strategies.

Existing organisational resilience strategies can be evaluated or tested against the nature and principles of each type of strategy. As such, it provides valuable

Figure 2: Resilience strategy model



Source: (Gibson and Tarram 2010:11).

insight into the ability of city governments to review their strategic vulnerabilities, adaptive capability, and overall organisational readiness to recover from shocks and stresses such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to Gibson and Tarrant (2010:11), resilience strategies generally fall into one of four types: “resistance, reliability, redundancy and flexibility”, as is graphically depicted in Figure 2.

From Figure 2, it is clear that each of the four types of strategies typically influences organisational capability in a particular manner. In the absence of a resilience strategy, organisational capability and performance (represented by the dotted line) would be expected to show a sudden and catastrophic collapse soon after a disruptive risk event occurred (arrow). The presence of one or more resilience strategies would be expected to moderate this deterioration in capability and performance (line) depending on the nature of the strategies in relation to the nature of the event (Gibson and Tarrant 2010:11). The four types of strategies are expounded subsequently.

*Resistance* strategies are typically aimed at improving organisations’ capacity to withstand the immediate effects of a volatile situation. There is usually no agility or adaptation associated with this type of strategy. The strategy generally seeks to maintain an organisation’s performance and operating levels. *Reliability* strategies aim to ensure key functions, resources, information and infrastructure continue to be available, accessible and fit for purpose after a risk event. *Redundancy* strategies seek to discard organisational systems and operations that do not aid its capability anymore. Such strategies usually involve the redesign of existing systems and operations (i.e. “hard” dimensions) to build new management capacity for foreseeable volatility. *Flexibility* strategies help the organisation adapt to extreme conditions and sudden shocks that often exceed the design parameters of the other strategies. The mentioned strategies are aimed mainly at preparing the workforce (i.e. “soft” dimensions) for disruptions and changes through training, trust and loyalty building exercises, as well as creating a sense of belonging and common purpose (Gibson and Tarrant 2010:11).

Scholars add that responses by leadership – political and administrative leaders of city governments – may strongly influence the type of resilience strategies that organisations pursue when dealing with risk, shocks and stresses (Kotter 1995; Marcos and Macaulay 2008; and Khoza 2012). Leaders make choices that shape strategic decisions and unfold operational responses to enhance resilience. These choices are informed by various schools of thought for developing a resilience strategy.

## **Schools of thought on organisational resilience strategies**

Since 2011, scholarly work on developing resilience strategies has been stimulated by the events commonly referred to as “9/11”. Schools of thought focusing on

broad-scale resilience have thus not yet fully matured and can be regarded as emergent. It is, however, important to extract foundational parameters and theoretical principles from the field of strategic management. Within these delimitations, resilience strategies can be located and subsumed to provide a starting point for a robust policy implementation. In this regard, Van der Heijden (1996:23–25) identifies at least three schools of thought that have emerged to interpret the way executive managers and leaders think. Considering the significance these and other schools of thought hold for organisational resilience and the determination of post-Covid-19 recovery options, each school is outlined briefly below.

### ***Rationalist school***

According to Van der Heijden (1996:23), the rationalist school “codifies thought and action separately”. The underlying assumption of this school is a single “best solution”. Thus, the task of the resilience strategist (e.g. organisational executive leadership and senior management) is to search for this solution or to get as close to it as possible. Van der Heijden (1996:23) lists the assumptions underlying the rationalist school as:

- “predictability, no interference from outside;
- clear intentions;
- implementation follows formulation;
- full understanding throughout the organisation; and
- reasonable people will do reasonable things”.

### ***Evolutionary school***

The evolutionary school generally regards an organisation as an “organism” that evolves gradually (Morgan 1998:35). The evolutionary school emerged after scientists realised that decision-making is not simply a rational process (Van der Heijden 1996:133). For example, Charles Lindblom studied managers in organisations in the 1950s and observed that they were not “goal-seeking” but “ills-avoiding” (Van der Heijden 1996:133). In other words, decision-makers are not searching merely for a rational solution to a problem but are also attempting to avoid “pain, harm or constraint” (Van der Heijden 1996:135). Mintzberg (1994:24–27) coined the term “emergent strategy” to describe the evolutionary nature of strategy formulation.

### ***Processual school***

The processual school regards organisations as “living organisms”, as described by Morgan (1997). Exponents of this school concur with the ideas of the evolutionists that organisational situations are generally too complex to analyse in their entirety. Solutions to resilience challenges therefore emerge as a result of continuous organisational learning (Van der Heijden 1996:36). Organisational adjustment

due to continuous learning forms the basis of the processual school. An effective resilience strategy requires feedback that elicits and evokes a conversation about specific high leverage areas that may foster organisational resilience.

### **Social justice school**

In addition to the above three schools of thought, Laloux (2014:43) posits an evolutionary paradigm along a “social justice trajectory”. This social justice school of thought is premised on foundational questions about the “inner rightness” of decisions. This approach is evolutionary since certain scholars such as Bragdon (2016) argue that there is an “evolution of consciousness” shifting from an outward focus to internal yardsticks of decision-making. Bragdon (2016:198) extends the argument posed by Laloux and describes a so-called “emerging corporate renaissance” that informs both organisational and individual decisions. Bragdon (2016) argues that this “renaissance” is mainly the result of a shift away from collaborative behaviour and living in harmony with the natural world, to a focus on individual actions.

In the context of South African cities, it may be argued that rapid urbanisation trends have removed people of African origin from a rural way of life that in general is in harmony with nature. Such migration patterns expose people to new realities associated with urban and corporate life (Khoza 2012).

### **Self-organising systems school**

A further school of thought on organisational resilience strategies is the so-called “self-organising systems” school (Senge *et al.* 1994). This view generally extends beyond the need to learn, moving into the realm of self-organisation as a paradigm for strategic planning and execution. Organisations that learn and self-organise have been popularised by Senge in his work on “learning organisations”. Senge identifies five “disciplines” that help organisations learn from past experiences and adjust accordingly. Organisational learning is explained by Senge as the foundational or ultimate basis for competitive advantage. In his work *Planning to learn, learning to plan* Michael (1973) was a forerunner in emphasising the importance of a learning process in the context of an organisation’s strategic planning. This insight was elaborated on by De Geus (1988). The latter’s perspective is that the process of strategic planning follows a learning curve. Morgan (1997) summarises and provides further scholarly support for the centrality of learning to enable resilience. According to Morgan (1997:90), through learning, organisations should develop capabilities and capacities to do the following:

- “scan and anticipate change in the wider environment to detect significant variations;
- develop an ability to question, challenge and change operating norms and assumptions; and

- allow for an emergent strategic direction and platform for organisations to adapt”.

Meadows (2008:80) continues by adding that new discoveries show that “just a few simple organising principles can lead to wildly diverse self-organising structures”. Generally, organisational hierarchies provide stability and resilience to systems. Accordingly, a comprehensive set of feedback loops creates homeostasis in a system, providing the feedback it needs to spring back into the position it occupied prior to the perturbation or shock. Cutting feedback loops thus reduces resilience (Meadows 2008:80).

### ***Antifragile school***

Finally, another school of thought on organisational strategies for resilience is described by Taleb (2012:17) as “antifragile”. Antifragility goes beyond resilience and robustness. A resilient organisation tends to resist shocks and generally remain the same, while an antifragile organisation improves its structures and functioning as a result of environmental shocks. Such antifragility may thus be a property in terms of which the organisation or system “gains from disorder” (Taleb 2012:17).

Technological convergence, which forms part of the so-called “Fourth Industrial Revolution” (Schwab 2015), could demonstrate Taleb’s theory of antifragility. The emergence of sustainable development, green growth and smart cities may be the result of an antifragile response to converging disruptive technologies, such as big data and the internet of things (IoT). Initially, these perturbations may be disruptive. However, such disruptors may help organisations adapt and recover and may stimulate the process of sustainable development, green growth and smart cities (Taleb 2012:20), thereby suggesting a hierarchy within which antifragility may unfold.

## **APPLYING RESILIENCE STRATEGIES FOR CITIES’ POST-COVID-19 RECOVERY**

The resilience of city government can be ensured in the sense of adapting rapidly to and recovering from challenges. Such resilience can be viewed as the capability to manage change effectively. In this regard, Endres (2005:40) identifies eight problems that may impede the success of resilience:

- “allowing too much complacency;
- failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition;
- underestimating the power of a vision;
- under-communicating the vision by a factor of 10 or 100;



- permitting obstacles to block the new vision;
- failing to create short-term wins;
- declaring victory too soon; and
- neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the organisational culture”.

Notably, the eight problems that Endres identifies, are point-for-point the converse of Kotter’s (1995) “solutions”. The latter cautions that two out of three attempts to manage change in organisations fail and do not produce the intended change. Kotter identifies several reasons for successful change, which are the converse of the “eight problems” from Endres provided above. Kotter’s reasons for ensuring success can still be used for change management, by keeping the problems in mind that Endres pointed out. The eight beacons providing a road map for successful resilience are as follows (Kotter 1995:63):

- “establishing a sense of urgency;
- forming a powerful guiding coalition;
- creating a shared vision;
- communicating the vision;
- empowering others to act on the vision;
- planning for and creating short-term wins;
- consolidating improvement and producing still more change; and
- institutionalising new approaches”.

The abovementioned imperatives for successful change management and the contra-problems they address may provide the basis for identifying high leverage areas for city government resilience. City governments should build and ensure the effective management of resilience challenges while, at the same time, effectively managing the day-to-day socio-political dynamics and complexity of city governance. These conflicting priorities present a key dilemma in managing change successfully. Failure to resolve this dilemma productively may be identified as one of the common threads that tie together Kotter’s eight reasons why many change efforts fail. The implication is that in two out of three cases, failure to adapt and recover will be a crucial limiting dynamic that may impede a resilience strategy for city governments.

## **Establishing strategy and leadership engagement forums**

Weisbord (2010:47), in describing his “Future Search” methodology for change management, advocates the notion of “getting the whole system in the room”. He suggests that the change leadership should incorporate the whole organisation in a strategic conversation about change. According to Weisbord (2010), this should be done to enable ownership and the successful execution of change. These

mentioned outcomes could be achieved through a structural intervention that creates infrastructure for a strategic conversation that is inclusive and cross-functional.

To explicate the mentioned strategic conversation, the article reverts to Weisbord's earlier proposal (Weisbord 1992) of establishing a strategy and leadership engagement (SLE) forum. Such a forum should engage a representative group of executive leaders and executive management from across the organisation in change processes. This structure may enable communication with and the involvement of the whole organisation. The SLE forum should ideally include executive leadership and senior management as well as other carefully chosen representatives. Selection depends on members who are collectively capable of taking the entire organisation along as well as forming a critical mass and a powerful guiding coalition to sustain and lead change successfully. Building this capability may be essential for a successful resilience strategy by a city government. In such a forum, shared leadership may help sustain a focused resilience strategy over time until such a strategy is embedded in the culture and praxis of city leadership.

Change management, as an instrument for shock recovery and overall resilience is often mistakenly treated as a project with a finite beginning and end. This may also be the wrong assumption for building a resilient city government. As the frequency of disruptions increases and the city government's resilience is challenged, there may be a case for using the SLE forum as infrastructure to manage change continuously. The SLE forum may also be useful for developing and exercising capability, which is defined by the APSC (2017) as "Leadership, Strategy and Delivery". City administrations must execute its mandate efficiently and cost-effectively. Simultaneously, such administrations must establish a resilient strategy, thereby enhancing its capability to respond resiliently by adapting to and recovering from shocks. Capability in leadership, strategy and service delivery may already have been in place through capacity building, before the city government experienced the mentioned resilience challenges.

Regarding appropriate membership of the proposed SLE for city government resilience, the following sectors would adhere to the guidelines for good governance: Executive Mayor and the Mayoral Executive Committee (MECs). However, the membership of this group is probably not inclusive enough to take the entire city government along with the changes required to build and execute a localised resilience strategy. In addition to the MEC leadership, membership of the SLE forum could include the leadership of functional silos reporting to the MEC. Informal leadership and "constructive heretics" (Kleiner 1996), from the middle ranks of city government may also form part of the SLE forum. Kleiner refers to "constructive heretics" as people who, in the context of city government, are loyal to the municipality but, at the same time, hold a divergent view of the city's policies, priorities, and management strategies (Kleiner 1996).

The abovementioned heretics often provide innovative insights into complex organisational dynamics. These heretics or informal leadership may also be gatekeepers who manage the flow of information and signals from executive levels to the middle and lower strata of organisations. It is therefore an advantage to include the so-called heretics in the SLE. Accordingly, forum membership should be structured inclusively to represent the entire city government organisation, thus eliminating what may be called “silo thinking” and communication gaps between divisions. Most decision-makers would agree that change is currently a permanent dynamic that features in any environment. However, few cities have built capability and capacity to deal with extreme shock and stresses in their environment.

The establishing of SLEs has been an integral part of successes elsewhere. An SLE guiding forum may be found on a national level in the Japanese Union of Scientists and Engineers (JUSE), with links to organisational quality councils that sustain and inform Japanese TQC and Kaizen strategies in large industrial organisations. JUSE is critical to the successful Japanese industrial strategy and so-called quality revolution over nearly 40 years since the atom bomb led to the abrupt end of the Second World War in 1945.

A South African example can be found in Eskom, the country’s public electricity utility. In the early 1980s, Eskom was technically bankrupt due to the accelerated building of new power stations to match the demand forecast for electricity, which is based on an economic forecast. Eskom’s recovery in the early 1980s may be considered as an example of successful large-scale renewal according to the concepts and generalisable principles, which were outlined later by Weisbord (2010) and Kotter (2012).

The Management Performance and Development (MP&D) division provided expertise in organisational development by installing and renewing numerous critical management processes such as business planning, performance management and worker engagement to improve quality and productivity. Eskom also rationalised 25 000 jobs during this period. As a result of the organisational renewal, Eskom’s capacity, measured in distributed electricity units, continued to increase by an average of 5% per annum. To ensure employees who lost their jobs were not destitute, supplies were purchased from former employees who had established small businesses as entrepreneurs and maintenance experts.

In the 1990s, the Open University (OU) used a similar forum to engage the leadership of the OU in scenario development and change management. Furthermore, Shell Europe Oil Products (1997–2004) applied similar organisational renewal processes based on the SLE approach. The purpose, design and functionality of the SLE forum have been described in-depth (CIL 1992). The CIL (CIL 1992) explains the purpose of this forum as building infrastructure for ownership, shared leadership and the alignment of strategic priorities across the organisation and managing change sustainably and successfully.

An important aspect of the SLE forum process is quality communication and regular engagement in strategic conversation. A conversation that enables double-loop learning helps the executive leadership and executive management critically question their assumptions and thereafter, change the subsequent decisions and actions. Typical results from the SLE forum listed by CIL (1992) are the following:

- “maintaining momentum;
- broadening ownership;
- building critical mass for change;
- preliminary conversations about change initiatives;
- management of resistance;
- elimination of silo-thinking;
- activating organisational linking pins to build vertical integration;
- raising the level of accountability and performance; and
- capability and capacity building” (CIL 1992).

Regarding Eskom’s organisational development of recovery and resilience in the 1980s, its turnaround strategy and engagement forum, called “The Top 30”, played a significant role. The forum identified a number of high leverage interventions and areas for building resilience, which enabled successful recovery and turnaround. The cluster headings and items for high leverage areas listed below are self-explanatory:

- “leadership and alignment;
- Training, development, and competency-based capacity building;
- participation and inclusion;
- recognition and rewards (in alignment with the items above);
- recruitment, promotion and succession based on merit and peer assessment; and
- regular inclusive, evidence-based communication from leadership to all internal and external stakeholders” (Van der Merwe 1991:69).

As indicator of the success of this recovery process it may be noted that on completion of this 1989 resilience strategy process, in 1990, international rating agencies granted Eskom an AAA+ credit rating status – higher rating than the South African government at the time. The mentioned high leverage areas used for the turnaround strategy are presented in Table 1.

The Eskom case study was chosen since, as a state-owned enterprise (SOE), it falls within the government sphere. It must be noted that, as SOE, Eskom currently, ironically is in dire need of change management, due to inefficient managing of infrastructure, mismanagement and endemic misuse of funds and resources (i.e. accusations of state capture). Nevertheless, when looking back, Eskom’s successful resilience strategy during the 1980s to 1990s may provide valuable learning about successful organisational change for city governments.

**Table 1: High leverage areas for organisation recovery and resilience (Eskom ca 1985–1989)**

<b>High leverage areas for organisational recovery and resilience</b>
<p><b>Leadership and alignment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vision and strategies</li> <li>▪ Evaluate strategic and business plans</li> <li>▪ Individual results</li> <li>▪ Performance review (conversation quality and engagement)</li> <li>▪ Pay links to job evaluation and on job results delivered</li> </ul>
<p><b>Training and development (competency-based capacity building)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Management (executive management, mid-management)</li> <li>▪ Supervisors</li> <li>▪ Trainers/facilitators</li> <li>▪ Human resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Participation (inclusion)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Problem-solving teams (cross functional at mid-management levels)</li> <li>▪ Quality circles (Part of TQC, Kaizen and TQM)</li> <li>▪ Productivity measurement and improvement (REALST Modelling)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recognition and rewards</b></p>
<p><b>Recruitment, promotion and succession based on merit and peer assessment</b></p>
<p><b>Communication</b> (regular, inclusive, evidence-based communication from leadership to all internal and external stakeholders)</p>

Source: Van der Merwe (1991:69)

As was mentioned previously, the principles and concepts which Weisbord (2010) and Kotter (2012) formalised in their later research, have also already been applied successfully in the organisational renewal processes followed by the OU (2001–2007) and Shell Europe Oil Products (1997–2004). It should be emphasised that the use of these case studies in no way underplays the severity and fact that uncharted territory must be navigated with care regarding the Covid-19 crisis. However, the lessons learnt in these cases and the identification of high leverage areas for recovery and resilience, could underpin change management successes. Such guidelines may be useful to guide city governments towards post-Covid-19 recovery.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The aim of this article was to reflect on emerging perspectives about city government resilience within the context of recovering from a socio-economic crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic. It is evident that to frame such perspectives, three interrelated and interconnected dimensions must be clarified: ideological-policy

views; models, strategies and approaches of resilience; and essential elements of organisational recovery and renewal. By integrating these three dimensions, city government resilience could be enhanced as precondition to recover rapidly from the pandemic crisis. It is further clear that sustainable resilience strategies to cope with shocks and stresses in cities depend on organisational “hard” and “soft” capability and capacity, the exploitation of high leverage areas for recovery, strong leadership, and successful organisational renewal efforts. Furthermore, it is advisable to extract best practice and lessons learnt from organisations (cases) that experienced shocks and stresses of profound organisational change.

A sound understanding of organisational resilience and strategy-making as a process should form the basis of informed choice between the various options of resilience strategies, focusing on economic recovery and job creation. It is recommended that metropolitan municipalities in South Africa constitute SLE forums as a mechanism for change management with a view to successful organisational recovery. These SLEs can identify high leverage areas for organisational renewal and guide the city government’s overall resilience.

Covid-19 has severely disrupted cities as socio-economic hubs in the country. Further similar disruptions are emerging in the form of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, climate change, extremism, and environmental resource constraints. According to Schwab (2016), these and other disruptions may “constitute a revolution equal in magnitude to previous industrial revolutions”. The following pandemic may already be on the urban radar. It might be wise to keep on developing and refining resilience strategies for organisational capacity. Such strategic frameworks may capacitate city governments to anticipate, adapt to, and recover rapidly from disruptive discontinuities in future urban environments.

## NOTE

- \* Dr van der Merwe is Managing Partner of the Centre for Innovative Leadership (Pty) Ltd (CIL), an international consultancy for strategy and training. This article is based on his doctoral thesis under the supervision of Prof Gerrit van der Waldt titled “City government resilience: Towards a diagnostic instrument”.

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# The Impact of the Mandela-Castro Medical Collaboration Programme on Health Care Service Delivery in the Frances Baard District Hospitals in the Northern Cape Province

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## **ABSTRACT**

Access to health care is a basic constitutional right in South Africa. The extreme shortage of doctors in sub-Saharan Africa is well documented, with 26 doctors per 100 000 people against a global average of 141 doctors per 100 000 people. The situation is no different in South Africa. The rural health care facilities have been facing a critical shortage of medical doctors where approximately 43% of the people in the rural areas often face greater health challenges such as having access to a mere 12% of the medical workforce in South Africa. In an attempt to address the shortage of doctors the late Presidents of South Africa and Cuba, Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro, signed a bilateral agreement in 1996. One of the key terms of the agreement was to address the critical shortage of medical doctors in South Africa.

This article reflects the findings of a study that was conducted to assess whether the Mandela-Castro Medical Collaboration Programme (MCMCP) has assisted in promoting health care service delivery in the small district hospitals in the Frances Baard District Municipality (FBDM) area in the Northern Cape Province. The period reviewed was from 2017 to 2019 because the doctors produced through the MCMCP had already been delivering health care services in hospitals of the FBDM. The research approach applied was deductive in nature and used quantitative

data to generate propositions. The article provides insight into the impact of MCMCP on health care service delivery in the FBDM district hospitals, Northern Cape Province.

## INTRODUCTION

Since 1994 the National Department of Health (NDoH) introduced new policies to address the former fragmented health care system. The National Health Act, 61 of 2003 (the NHA 2003) was introduced to give effect to the constitutional right of people to have access to health care services. Since 1994 the health care system has been decentralised to the provinces, while the actual delivery of health care services is performed by the district health services (DHS). The aim of the NDoH decentralised health care system, was to place all health care services under the ward-based health system to ensure that primary health care teams were established in South Africa with the required number of medical professionals (medical specialists, physicians, medical doctors and nursing staff). To further improve the health care service, the National Health Amendment Act, 12 of 2013 (the NHAA 2013) was passed by Parliament in 2013, resulting in the establishment of the Office of Health Standards Compliance (OHSC). The OHSC regulates the quality of health services using a set of National Core Standards (NCS). The OHSC is responsible for monitoring and setting standards for the health sector where public and private facilities comply with prescribed norms and standards (NCDoH 2015:25).

Irrespective of the NDoH's attempts to improve health care services in South Africa, the inequality of health care services remains a challenge. Patient care in many district hospitals is poor, prevention, primary health care and the quality of care are neglected (Benatar, Sullivan and Brown 2017:9; National Planning Commission (NPC) 2011:331). In particular, the Northern Cape Department of Health (NCDoH) lacks the adequate numbers and skills mix of human resources needed to deliver essential health services for a number of reasons including poor socio-economic conditions of the province, a poor mix of skills and a lack of proper human planning, and a shortage of health professionals in the province (NCDoH 2015:7–9).

In light of the above, the NPC (2011:295) provides that access to medical care is one of the social determinants of effective health care service delivery. The NPC (2011:332) further emphasises that the provision of primary health care must focus on a more people-centred approach of the district health system. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2016:10), mere availability of health professionals (medical doctors, specialists, clinical practitioners, pharmacists,

radiographers and professional nursing staff) and other health workers (nursing assistants and emergency medical care officers) is not sufficient. This occurs only when they are equitably distributed and accessible by the population, and when they possess the required competency, and are motivated and empowered to deliver quality care that is appropriate and acceptable to the socio-cultural expectations of the population, as well as when they are adequately supported by the health system with all necessary resources.

According to the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2013:5), the first bilateral agreement between the Republics of Cuba and South Africa on cooperation in the fields of health and medical health services was signed on 30 October 1996, following the 1995 Declaration of Intent signed between the two countries under the leadership of the late Presidents, Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro. For the Northern Cape, one of the interventions since 2000, to improve health care services in rural communities was to recruit candidates from poor communities to study medicine in Cuba through the South African Cuban Medical Training Medical Collaboration Programme with the aim of strengthening primary health care at the district facilities to promote health care service delivery. The 1996 agreement was extended in 2012, when Cuba increased the students' intake from South Africa to 1 000 from 80 to study medicine in Cuba. From 1996 to 2011, this programme was named the South African Cuban Medical Training Medical Collaboration Programme and in 2012 at the Joint Academic Meeting, it was renamed the Nelson Mandela-Fidel Castro Medical Collaboration Programme known as the MCMCP (NDoH 2012c:1).

Previous research about the MCMCP focused on a variety of topics. A study was conducted in 2008 about the specific clinical training that the students received who took part in the MCMCP (Reed, Torres and Torres 2008). A study was conducted by Motala in 2013–2014 about the perceptions of training and perceived competence in clinical skills of the students from Cuba who took part in the MCMCP (Motala 2014). A case study of 20 Cuban-trained doctors was also conducted in 2019 (Motala and Van Wyk 2019). No study was conducted to assess the effect or impact of the MCMCP in promoting health care service delivery in the FBDM district hospitals in the Northern Cape Province. This view is supported by Bin-Abdulrahman, Minnin, Harden and Kennedy (2015:106) that no research exists to show how well MCMCP trained medical students perform as medical doctors. Subsequently, the main objective of the study on which this article is grounded was to assess whether the MCMCP has an effect on the promotion of health care service delivery in the FBDM district hospitals in the Northern Cape Province. The primary research question of this study was: Does the MCMCP have an effect on the promotion of health care service delivery in the FBDM district hospitals in the Northern Cape Province? To further explore the primary research question, the following were the secondary objectives of the study:

- To determine the attitude of health care professionals on whether enough competent doctors are produced by the MCMCP to reduce the shortage of doctors in the FBDM area.
- To determine the attitude of the health care professionals on whether the doctors from the MCMCP improve the medical care services in the the small district hospitals in the FBDM area in the Northern Cape Province.
- To determine the attitude of health care professionals on whether the MCMCP trained medical doctors are competent and motivated in their role as medical practitioners according to the perceptions of the hospital staff that they work with.
- To determine what recommendations could be made concerning the effect of the MCMCP to promote health care service delivery in the small district hospitals in the FBDM area in the Northern Cape Province.

The article commences with an overview of health care service delivery and the MCMCP programme, followed by a discussion about the research methodology, the findings, recommendations and concluding remarks.

## **AN OVERVIEW OF HEALTH CARE SERVICE DELIVERY AND THE MANDELA-CASTRO MEDICAL COLLABORATION PROGRAMME**

According to the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2013:5), the South African Cuban Medical Training Medical Collaboration Programme was considered by the late Presidents of the Republics of South Africa and Cuba, Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro in 1995 as one of the options that could be used to recruit young black South Africans from poor families to study medicine in Cuba, with the aim of strengthening primary health care in rural areas of South Africa. The original agreement led to the participation in the South African Cuban Medical Training Medical Collaboration Programme in 1997 later known as the MCMCP where black and disadvantaged high school graduates were recruited to study medicine in Cuba (Lungelow 2011:7). On 25 May 2012 a further agreement between the governments of South Africa and Cuba to extend the MCMCP training of medical students to 1 000 students on an annual basis, was concluded. The MCMCP aims to provide primary health care, especially to health care facilities in rural areas.

The purpose of the MCMCP was first to recruit medical doctors from Cuba to serve in rural areas of South Africa as well as professors to teach medicine in South African universities to increase the current output of medical doctors. Second, the original agreement led to the agreement where black and disadvantaged high school graduates are recruited to study medicine in Cuba (Lungelow 2017:7).

In terms of Article 3 of the NDoH Agreement between the governments of Cuba and South Africa on Training of South African Medical Students and Postgraduates in Cuba, the South African government is responsible to select students who meet the requirements in respect of qualifications and medical fitness; to supply the student selected with a contract outlining the obligations of both parties (NDoH 2012b). Except for the above, the South African government is further responsible to assist the selected students to obtain their passports and visa documents; to notify the government of Cuba through diplomatic channels of selected medical students one month prior to their departure to Cuba; to submit authenticated documents (qualifications, birth certificate and medical certificate) together with Spanish translations of the documents before the arrival of the students in Cuba. The South African government has to pay the travelling expenses and insurance costs of selected students to and from Cuba at the beginning and end of their studies or during any period as stipulated in their contract; to donate to the Cuban government annually an amount agreed upon according to the level of study of the students; to pay the total fees for the respective undergraduate and postgraduate studies and accommodation for the respective undergraduate and postgraduate students, which amounts shall be determined by the parties and communicated through the diplomatic channel. Lastly, to pay equal monthly allowances to South African students while in Cuba of an amount to be determined by the Minister of Health in South Africa in consultation with Members of the Executive Council for health of a particular province (NDoH 2012b).

The South African medical students that take part in the MCMCP have to study one year of Spanish and then five years of medicine before returning to South Africa to do their final clinical rotation and community service (Department of Labour 2008:46). The purpose of clinical training in South Africa is for the graduates of Cuban medical schools to familiarise themselves with the country's burden of disease, including a very high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (Spooner and Ullmann 2014:72). As part of the decentralised training initiative, upon their return to South Africa, the South African Cuban trained medical students are expected to spend 18 months, comprised of six months orientation and 12 months of integration, in South African Medical Schools before they can obtain their medical degrees (Motala and Van Wyk 2016:7).

The MCMCP is managed on a decentralised but centrally coordinated basis. Van Schalkwyk, Couper, Muller, Blitz and De Villiers (2017:74) maintain that the decentralised training initiative is shared by the NDoH, and higher education institutions. This initiative benefits the MCMCP students, the facilities where they train, and the health system at large. The NDoH is responsible for the overall coordination and management of the MCMCP that includes development of legislative documents and related regulations; whereas the provincial governments are responsible for funding and logistical arrangements. Upon the completion of

their medical degrees, it is the responsibility of the NDoH to facilitate the appointment of the newly qualified doctors and ensure that they serve their contractual obligations which is equivalent to the number of years funded by the department (NDoH 2012a:4). The newly qualified medical doctors of the MCMCP must commit to serve in a disadvantaged community in a particular province, to ensure a positive impact in rural health facilities. It is the responsibility of the provinces to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that clinical training sites, teaching facilities, accommodation, clinical supervision, transport costs, information and communication technology, tuition fees and other related costs are available for the training of MCMCP students (NCDoh 2017:2).

The MCMCP was criticised with assertions that the South African medical students returning from Cuba, are not adequately equipped for the South African context, being unable to treat illnesses such as tuberculosis (TB), HIV and complications associated with diabetes (Masters, Zondi, van Wyk and Landsberg 2015:176). Another factor that counted against the MCMCP was that the former Minister of Health, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, admitted that the MCMCP is more expensive than medical training in South Africa (Khan 2018:1). This is due to the fact that one year is spent on the Spanish Language Course, five years on medical training in Cuba and 18 months' orientation and integration in South African universities' medical schools, including the cost of flight tickets after every two years in Cuba. When all of these are factored into costs it leads to the exorbitant nature of this programme, which is likely to be three times the average cost of training in medicine in South Africa.

In light of the above Bin-Abdulrahman, Minnin, Harden and Kennedy (2015:106), argue that the MCMCP has proven very costly and has not gone a long way to resolve the country's lack of doctors. South African MCMCP medical students studying medicine in Cuba are also confronted with numerous challenges such as language and culture. Donda, Hift and Singaram (2016:2) maintain that the MCMCP medical students experience academic difficulties on their return to South Africa. In the final examinations, around 50% of the MCMCP medical students will have to repeat modules in order to qualify, resulting in a continuation of training. Except for the above, Kooverjee (2017:14) avers that the MCMCP students lack professional support and this leads to the use of unhealthy coping mechanisms to maintain resilience and to safeguard their emotional functioning.

Although the MCMCP is very costly and various challenges were reported as indicated above, the South African government is determined to considerably increase the number of Cuban-trained South African candidates. Since 2012 the NDoH aimed to maximise the use of MCMCP trained medical doctors to ensure a positive impact in rural health facilities (NDoH 2015a:13). In addition, Van Schalkwyk *et al.* (2017:74) and Batemen (2013) confirm that from 2018 onwards around 1 000 undergraduate MCMCP trained medical students are to return to South Africa from Cuba to complete their clinical training in South Africa.

## **THE INTEGRATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF MCMCP TRAINED MEDICAL DOCTORS IN THE NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE**

In the context of the Northern Cape Province, the MCMCP was identified as an alternative measure to improve access to health care services and to improve the quality of health care services in particular in rural areas. The total population of the Northern Cape Province in 2016 was 1 191 997 and they were serviced by 251 primary health care facilities comprised of 74 non-fixed clinics, 133 fixed clinics, 33 community health care centres and 11 district hospitals (NCDoH 2016:64–65). According to the Annual Performance Plan of the NCDoH the vacancy rate of health professionals in the NCP was recorded as 38.12% and this implies that there were numerous facilities where quality health care was unavailable and inaccessible due to the shortage of health professionals (NCDoH 2016:30). The highest population of the Northern Cape Province is located in the district of the FBDM which makes up 33.2% of the total population of the province. The FBDM had a population of 383 428 in 2016, it has 34 clinics, 5 community health centres and 5 district hospitals (FBDM 2017:3).

The MCMCP was identified as an alternative measure to improve access to health care services and to improve the quality of health care services in rural areas in the Northern Cape Province.

The NCDoH has since 2000 been a participant in the MCMCP. According to the NCDoH (2017:2), seven of the 35 doctors distributed across the Northern Cape Province were based in the hospitals of the FBDM. Table 1 provides a summary of the South African-Cuban student intake, who took part in the MCMCP programme from 2000 to 2015 in the five municipal districts of the Northern Cape Province.

The MCMCP scholarship grew gradually over the years, with significant growth particularly in 2013. Eight years from inception, the scholarship was awarded to a new intake of 39 and 43 students in 2012 and 2013 respectively. A total of 205 students from the Northern Cape Province were recruited as part of the MCMCP from 2000 to 2015 to study medicine in Cuba, a total of 33 dropped out due to a variety of reasons such as pregnancy, medical conditions, academic exclusion and disorientation with the programme (NCDoH 2018:1–3). A total of 35 qualified as medical doctors, while the remainder were at different levels of their studies during 2016. These doctors are obliged by the contractual agreement to serve in the NCDoH, and particularly in areas where there is a dire shortage of doctors (NCDoH 2016:2).

The Annual Report of the NCDoH indicates that between 2000 and 2017, this programme has produced 35 doctors, 71% of these doctors are serving in various health care facilities within the Northern Cape Province, and those on internship were placed by NDoH to serve elsewhere outside the province (NCDoH



**Table 1: Summary of the number of South African-Cuban student intake from 2000 to 2015**

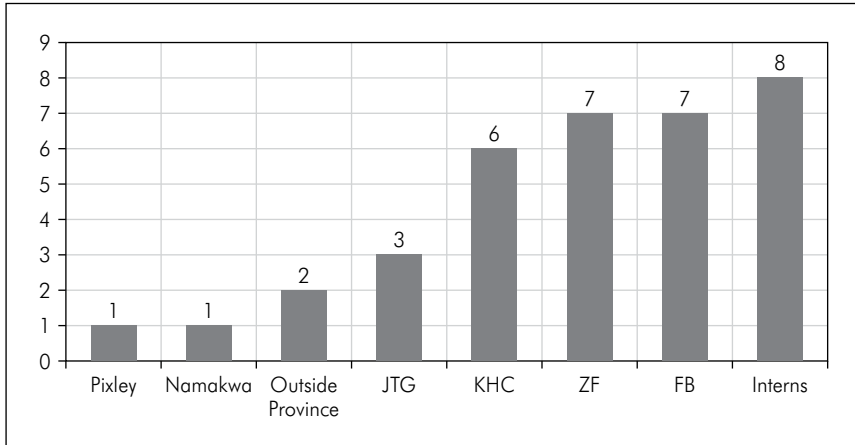
Year	Beneficiaries per district in the Northern Cape Province					
	Pixley Ka Seme	Frances Baard	Namakwa	John Taolo Gaetsewe	Zwelenifanga Fatman Mgcawu	Total
2000	0	0	0	2	0	2
2001	0	0	0	1	0	1
2002	1	4	0	0	0	5
2003	2	4	1	1	3	11
2005	4	5	1	1	4	15
2008	0	9	1	0	0	10
2010	3	2	1	4	0	10
2011	3	3	1	4	1	12
2012	7	21	1	5	5	39
2013	5	25	4	7	2	43
2014	4	13	1	6	3	27
2015	6	7	4	8	5	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>205</b>

Source: (Adapted from NCDoH 2016:2)

2017:90). The newly qualified MCMCP trained doctors have been deployed to various facilities to improve the quality of health care services and the Northern Cape province envisages to continue with the MCMCP by identifying and sending young matriculants to study medicine in Cuba with the intention to alleviate the shortage of medical doctors in rural areas of the province (NCDoH 2015:9; NCDoH 2017:90). Once the medical interns have completed their internship in other provinces, they are expected to return to the Northern Cape Province to serve their contractual obligations.

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of 35 MCMCP trained medical doctors across the Northern Cape Province in 2017. Seven were placed in the FBDM district hospitals. The district hospital of ZK Mathews was allocated three while the

**Figure 1: Distribution of MCMCP trained medical doctors in 2017 across the Northern Cape Province**



Source: (NCDoH 2017:11)

remaining four were rotating between the remaining district hospitals including Warrenton district hospital. This means that 20% of these doctors were based in the FBDM district hospitals.

Except for the above, the Annual Report of the NCDoH of 2018–2019 provided that 30 MCMCP trained students in their final year of training at the University of the Free State (UFS), South Africa were placed at Robert Mongaliso Sobukwo Hospital, a provincial hospital in Kimberley, Northern Cape Province (NCDoH 2019:98).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2014:160) maintain that most research methods can be used in research based on either qualitative or quantitative methodologies. The research approach applied was deductive in nature and used quantitative data to generate propositions on whether the MCMCP has an effect in promoting health care service delivery in the small district hospitals in the FBDM area in the Northern Cape Province. Cooper and Schindler (2003:149) state that the research design can be seen as a general plan or blueprint on how the researcher goes about answering the research questions. In this study a descriptive non-experimental design was used. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchel (2005:93) a survey design is a non-experimental research design that can be used in quantitative research; whereas, Salkind (2018:19–20) maintains that non-experimental research design refers to research in which no manipulation of variables is involved and no cause and effect relationship is studied.

In this study the simple random sampling technique as part of probability sampling was used to select two of the five district hospitals of the FBDM of the Northern Cape Province on which to conduct the research. The simple random sampling technique provides an equal and independent opportunity that each object or member of the population can be selected to be part of the sample (Salkind 2018:88). The two FBDM small district hospitals that were drawn were the ZK Mathews Hospital in Barkly West and Warrenton Hospital in Warrenton, where seven MCMCP trained medical doctors were deployed. Probability sampling was also used by means of a random stratified sampling method to draw the sample of health professionals (medical officers also known as a medical doctor or general practitioner, professional nursing staff, physicians, surgeons and other specialists), allied health professionals (which refers to a broad range of health professionals who are not doctors, dentists or nursing staff), and other health professionals (speech therapists, physiotherapists, dieticians, occupational therapists, social workers, pharmacists and radiographers) and health administrative staff for the two selected hospitals; to determine the impact of the MCMCP health practitioners on health care service delivery in the small district hospitals in the FBDM area in the Northern Cape Province. The target sample for ZK Mathews Hospital was 49 (n=49) of 98 (N=98) while for Warrenton Hospital it was 23 (n=23) of 46 (N=46) health professionals, allied health professionals, other health professionals and health administrative staff.

The researcher received a total of 64 (43 from ZK Mathews hospital and 21 from Warrenton hospital) completed structured questionnaires that were presented to the respondents based at the selected two hospitals. The response rate was 88.8% (n=64) of the 72 structured questionnaires that was seen as a sufficient response rate. Since 2015 the selected respondents interacted closely with the seven MCMCP trained medical doctors of the two selected small district hospitals of the FBDM area.

To administer the structured questionnaire, the researcher made appointments with the Central Executive Officers (CEOs) of the two selected district hospitals to distribute the structured questionnaire. Consent was granted by the District Manager responsible for health care facilities in the FBDM district hospitals and the CEO and Operational Manager of ZK Mathews and Warrenton Hospitals to conduct the study. The Cronbach's alpha ( ) was used to calculate the internal consistency of all items in the structured questionnaire. According to Maree, Creswell, Ebershohn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen, Plano Clark (2016:239), the Cronbach's alpha ( ) is used to measure the internal reliability of a research instrument. An excellent internal consistency ( > 0.90) which means high reliability, was achieved with all statements in the questionnaire. To substantiate the validity and reliability of the data-collection instrument, a pilot study was carried out at Harry Surtie Hospital in Upington, using 30 respondents. Amendments were made to the questionnaire before it was distributed to the selected respondents of the ZK Mathews and Warrenton Hospitals. The data collected was loaded into MoonStats

and analysed by using descriptive statistics. MoonStats is a stand-alone statistical software program that operates in Windows 95 or higher (Wellman *et al.* 2005:319). An experienced statistician assisted with the analysis of the data. Table 2 provides a summary of the data which emanated from the empirical study.

## **FINDINGS**

This section outlines the findings of the study that seeks to assess the effect of the MCMCP in promoting health care service delivery in the small district hospitals in the FBDM area in the Northern Cape Province. Table 2 illustrates the findings of the biographical data (race, experience and occupation) of the respondents.

The biographical data of the study showed that the majority (77.8%) of the respondents were female while 22.2% of the respondents were male. Table 3 further illustrates that the highest proportion of the respondents constitutes 68.8% of the population size of the research participants and these were of African descent. The second highest category consisted of 26.6% of the Coloured population of the research participants. The combined response rate of the Whites and Asians was 3.2%, shared equally between the two races. The highest proportion of respondents, 39.3%, were between the age group 30 to 39 years. The age group between 40 and 49 constituted 31.2%, followed by the age groups between 20 to 29 and 50 to 59 constituting 13.1% and 11.5% respectively. The smallest proportion of participants was between 60 to 69 years constituting about 4.9% of the total population size of the participants. The largest number of respondents were professional nurses who make up about 53.1% of the total number of the research participants, who interact on a daily basis with MCMCP trained medical doctors. The second highest category was emergency medical care officers (10.94%) who interact on a daily basis or from time to time with MCMCP trained medical doctors. The combined response rate of the allied health professionals and pharmacists was 7.81% shared equally between the two respondent groups, while medical officers and radiographers (4.69%) were shared equally between the two respondent groups who interact also on a daily or from time to time basis with MCMCP trained medical doctors. Other health professionals consisted of 2% of the total number of respondents. The remaining 9% of respondents was from the health administration staff.

### **Findings on the competency of the MCMCP trained medical doctors**

The respondents were asked whether the MCMCP trained medical doctors are competent at what they are doing. The findings are presented in Figure 2.

**Table 2: Race, experience and occupation of the respondents**

<b>Race of the Respondents</b>				
<b>Race</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Per cent</b>
Missing	1	1.56	1	1.56
African	44	68.75	45	70.31
Asian	1	1.56	46	71.88
Coloured	17	26.56	63	98.44
White	1	1.56	64	100.00
<b>The experience of the respondents</b>				
<b>Experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Per cent</b>
1–5 years	25	39.06	25	39.06
5–10 years	27	42.19	52	81.25
10–20 years	8	12.50	60	93.75
20 and more years	4	6.25	64	100.00
<b>Occupation of the respondents</b>				
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Per cent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Per cent</b>
Professional Nursing staff	34	53.13	34	53.13
Medical Officer	3	4.69	37	57.81
Pharmacist	5	7.81	42	65.63
Emergency Medical Care Officer	7	10.94	49	76.56
Radiographer	3	4.69	52	81.25
Allied Health Professionals	5	7.81	57	89.06
Other Health Professionals	1	1.56	58	90.63
Health Administrative Staff	6	9.38	64	100.00

Figure 2 illustrates that 54.7% of the respondents agreed that MCMCP trained medical doctors are good and competent in carrying out their duties whereas 25.0% strongly agreed. The smallest proportion of respondents range from those who strongly disagreed to those who disagreed at 1.2% and 3.1% respectively. It can, therefore, be deduced that a small fraction of the respondents think that MCMCP trained medical doctors are not good or competent at executing their duties.

**Figure 2: MCMCP trained medical doctors are competent at what they are doing**

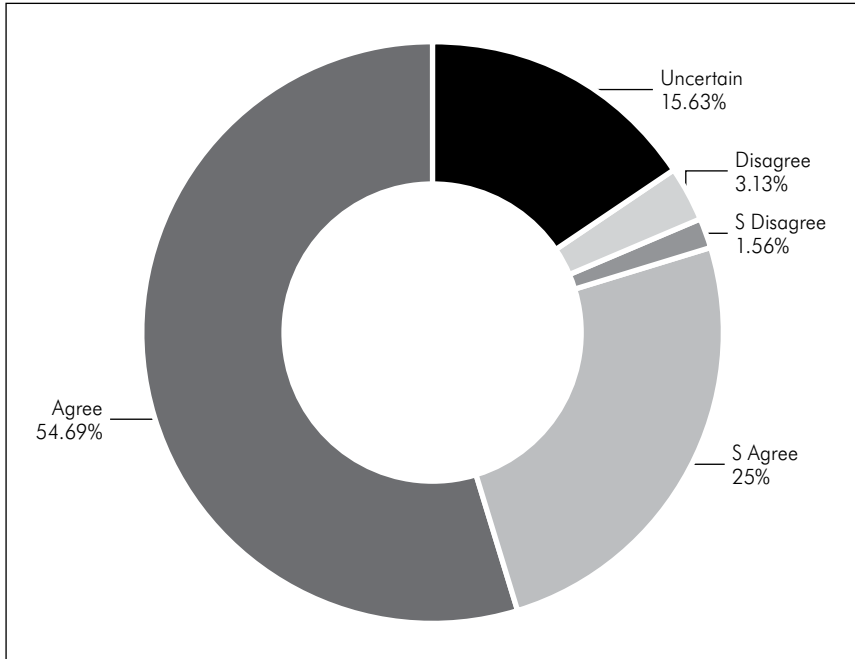


Figure 2 clearly demonstrates that the majority of the respondents (79.69%) expressed a degree of confidence in the competencies of the doctors trained through the MCMCP. There was, in contrast, a small fraction of respondents who do not have confidence in the competencies of the MCMCP trained medical doctors.

On the statement whether the MCMCP trained medical doctors are not well trained and are unable to perform basic procedures responses are illustrated in Table 3.

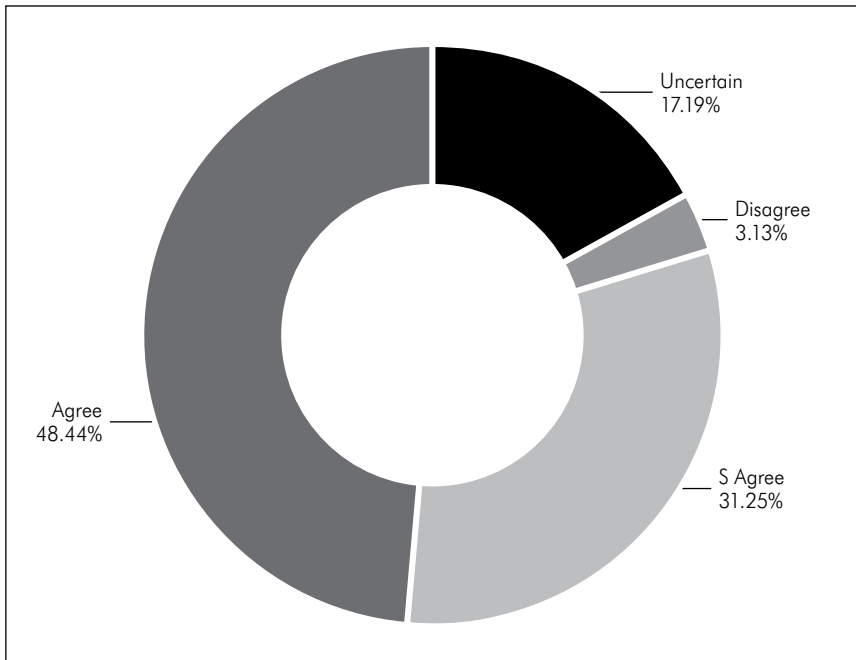
Table 3 illustrates that 47.6% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that MCMCP trained medical doctors are not well trained and are unable to perform basic procedures such as delivery and setting drips, among other things. This response was also shared by the next category of respondents where 39.7% disagreed with the above assertion. A small proportion of respondents either agreed (1.59%) or strongly agreed (1.59%) that MCMCP trained medical doctors are not well trained and are unable to perform basic procedures. The remaining category of respondents, constituting 9.5% of participants, were uncertain as to whether MCMCP trained medical doctors are well trained or not, regarding being able to perform basic procedures such as delivery and setting drips, among other things. Thus, one could interpret that the majority 87.3% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree

**Table 3: The MCMCP trained medical doctors are not well trained and are unable to perform basic procedures**

Level of agreement	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Per cent
Strongly disagree	30	47.62	30	47.62
Disagree	25	39.68	55	87.30
Uncertain	6	9.52	61	96.83
Agree	1	1.59	62	98.41
Strongly agree	1	1.59	63	100.00

that MCMCP trained medical doctors are not well trained and are unable to perform basic procedures such as delivery and setting drips, among other things. The above findings correspond with the findings demonstrated in Figure 2 in which the majority of the respondents (79.69%) expressed a degree of confidence in the competencies of the doctors trained through the MCMCP.

**Figure 3: The MCMCP trained medical doctors relate with their patients**



## Findings on how MCMCP trained medical doctors relate with their patients

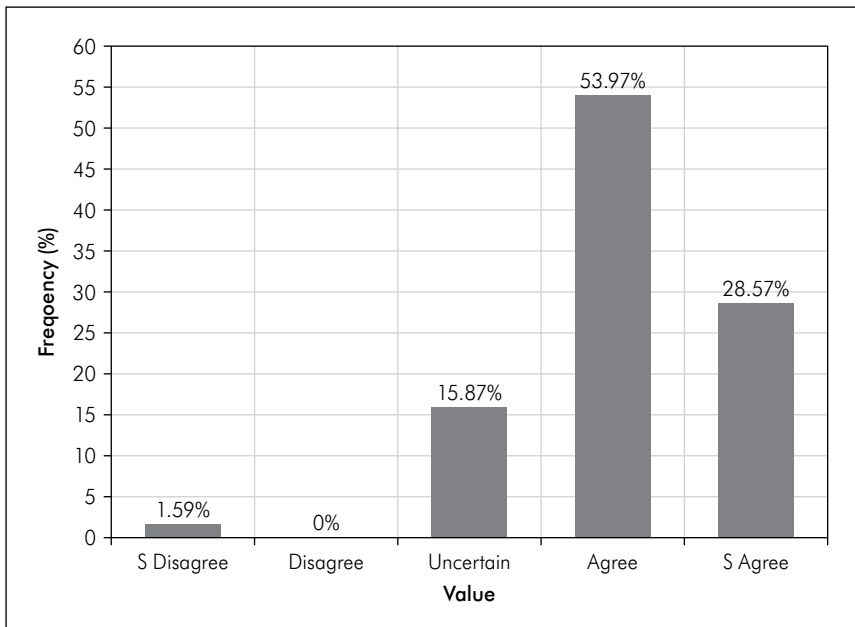
The respondents were asked to indicate how MCMCP trained medical doctors relate with their patients. The findings are further illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3 demonstrates that the majority of 48.4% of the respondents agreed and 31.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that MCMCP trained medical doctors relate well with their patients. On the contrary 3.1% disagreed with this claim. It was also depicted in Figure 3 that 17.2% were uncertain if MCMCP trained medical doctors relate well with their patients. However, the majority (79.6%) of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that MCMCP trained medical doctors relate well with their patients. This finding corresponds with the statement in the literature review of this article that the provision of primary health care must focus on a more people-centred approach of the district health care system.

## Findings on the commitment of MCMCP trained medical doctors

The summary of the research participants' responses to the statement about the commitment of MCMCP trained medical doctors is presented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: The commitment of MCMCP trained medical doctors**





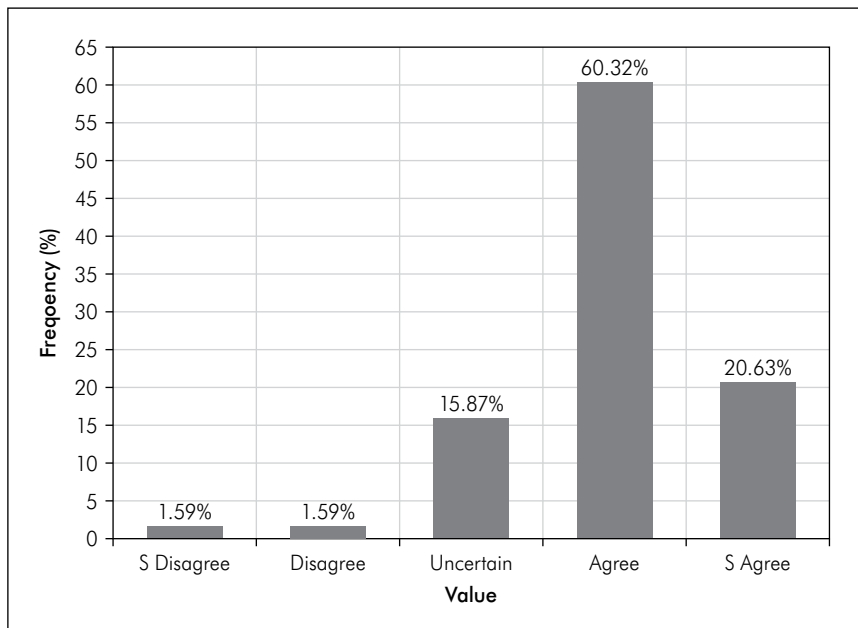
There was an overwhelming majority (82.6%) of the research participants who thought that MCMCP trained medical doctors are committed to their work. This assertion is demonstrated in Figure 4, where 54.0% agreed while 28.6% of respondents strongly agreed with the above statement. Some of the respondents, comprising 15.9%, were not certain if MCMCP trained medical doctors are committed to their work. It was only a small fraction (1.6%) who disagreed with the above assertion. Figure 4 further illustrates a positive attitude of the majority of the respondents on the level of commitment of MCMCP trained medical doctors towards their profession.

### Findings about the level of motivation of MCMCP trained medical doctors

The findings of the respondents' responses about the level of motivation of MCMCP trained medical doctors to deliver health care are illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5 illustrates that 60.3% of respondents agreed that MCMCP trained medical doctors are motivated to deliver health care while 20.6% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. A small fraction of 3.2% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the above statement while only 15.9% of the research

**Figure 5: The level of motivation of MCMCP trained medical doctors**



participants were uncertain. This finding supports the statement accentuated in the literature review of this article that mere availability of health workers is not sufficient; therefore, medical professionals must possess the required competency and must be motivated and empowered to deliver quality health care services.

## **Findings on how the MCMCP trained medical doctors promote primary health care**

The respondents were asked whether MCMCP trained medical doctors promote primary health care. The findings are presented in Figure 6.

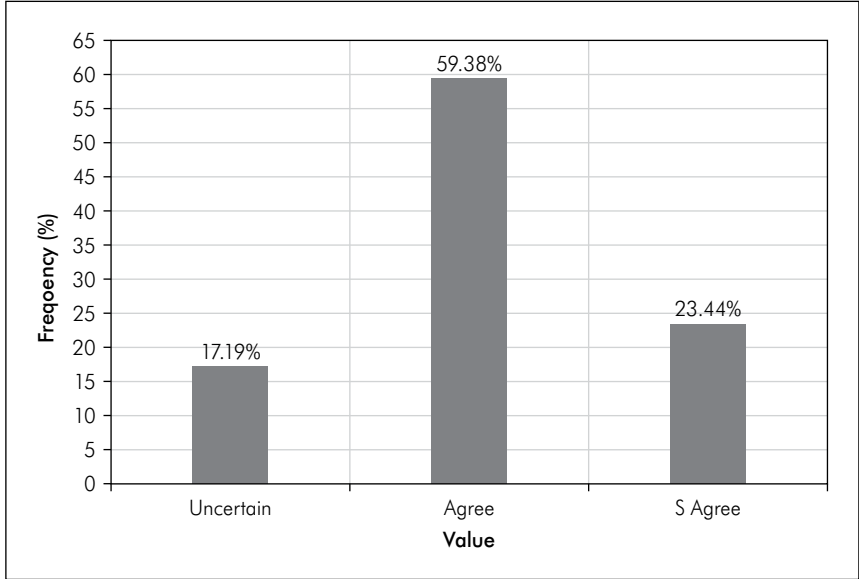
Figure 6 demonstrates that 59.4% of respondents agreed while 23.4% strongly agreed that MCMCP trained medical doctors promote primary health care. Thus, the majority of the respondents (82.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Only 17.9% of respondents demonstrated a degree of uncertainty towards the above statement while no one agreed or strongly agreed with the above statement. It was mentioned in this article that the MCMCP was initiated by the late Presidents of South Africa and Cuba, Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro in 1996 with the aim of strengthening primary health care in district facilities to promote health care service delivery in rural areas.

## **Findings about the level of prejudice towards MCMCP trained medical doctors**

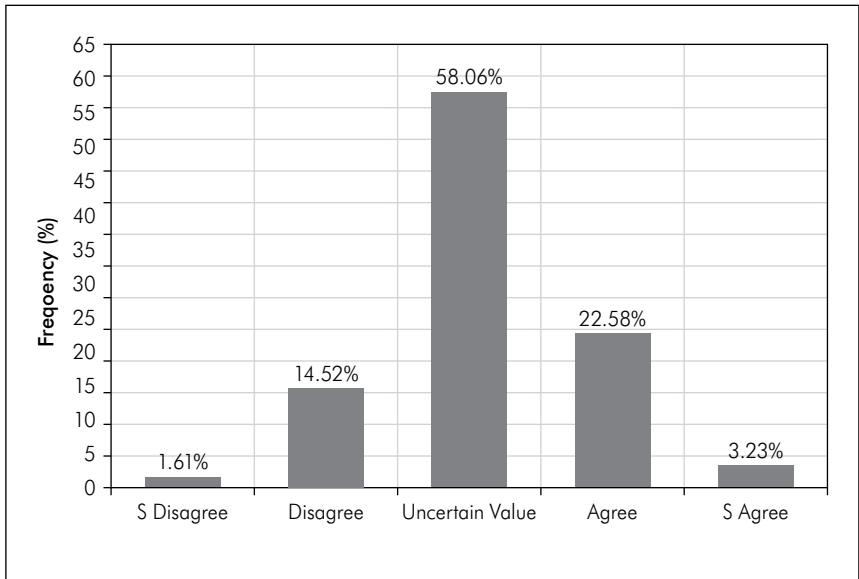
The findings on the statement of whether locally trained South African health professionals treat MCMCP trained medical doctors with contempt is illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7 demonstrates that the highest proportion of the respondents, 58.1%, were uncertain if locally trained South African health professionals treated MCMCP trained medical doctors with contempt. It is not clear whether these respondents were aware of any incidents where locally trained health professionals treated MCMCP trained medical doctors with disrespect or whether these respondents were not aware of any incidents. There was, however, a category of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed, with a response rate of 22.6% and 3.2% respectively, with the above statement. On the contrary, 14.5% disagreed while 1.6% strongly disagreed with the statement that locally trained South African health professionals treat MCMCP trained medical doctors with disrespect. Although the majority (58.1%) of the respondents, were uncertain if locally trained South African health professionals treat MCMCP trained medical doctors with contempt, it remains a concern that 25.8% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that locally trained South African health professionals treat MCMCP trained medical doctors with contempt.

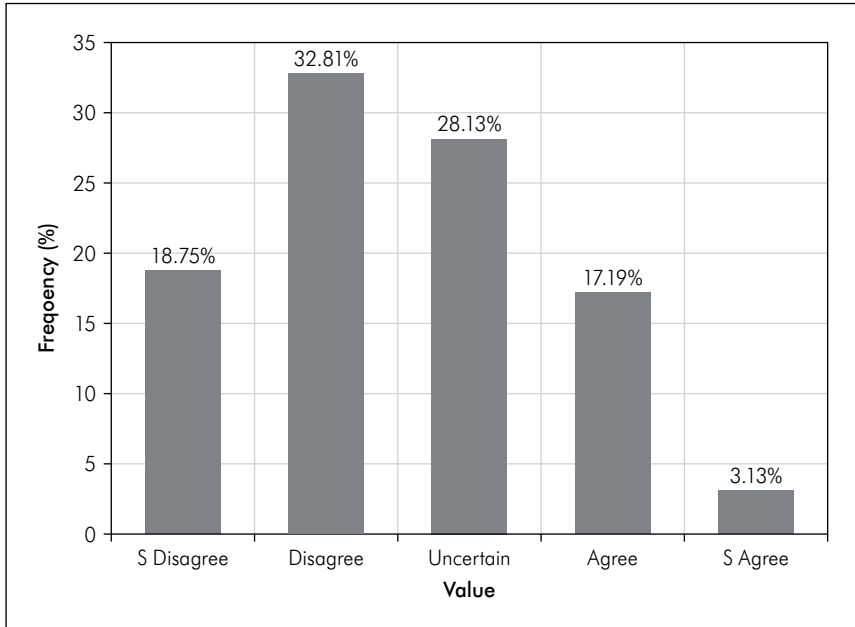
**Figure 6: MCMCP trained medical doctors promote primary health care**



**Figure 7: Locally trained South African health professionals treat MCMCP trained medical doctors with contempt**



**Figure 8: Locally trained South African health professionals look down on the Cuban health system**



Except for the above the respondents were asked to indicate if locally trained South African health professionals look down on the Cuban health system. The results of the findings are presented in Figure 8.

The findings in Figure 8 illustrate that 32.8% of the respondents disagreed while 18.8% strongly disagreed that locally trained South African health professionals look down on the Cuban health system, while 28.1% were uncertain, while a combined response rate of those who agreed and strongly agreed was 20.3% of the research participants. It is clear that the majority (51.6%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that locally trained South African health professionals look down on the Cuban health system.

### **Findings on the level of professionalism of MCMCP trained medical doctors**

The respondents were asked to indicate whether MCMCP trained medical doctors are professional (represent the medical profession well) in how they conduct themselves. The results of the findings are presented in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: MCMCP trained medical doctors are professional in how they conduct themselves**

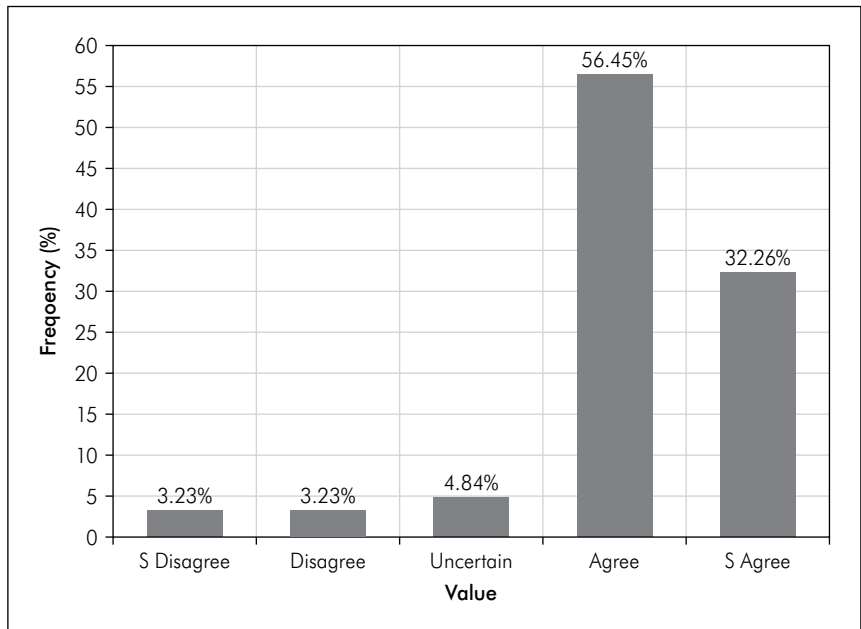


Figure 9 shows that the majority (88.8%) of the respondents believed that MCMCP trained medical doctors are professional in how they conduct themselves. The findings in Figure 9 prove that 56.5% agreed while 32.3% strongly agreed with the above statement. It was also indicated that an equal proportion of respondents, 3.2% of each category of the research participants, had either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the research participants. It was only a fraction (4.8%) of the respondents who were uncertain if MCMCP trained medical doctors are professional in how they conduct themselves.

### **How do the MCMCP trained medical doctors affect the FBDM district health care service delivery in the Northern Cape Province?**

The above question was asked to determine if MCMCP trained medical doctors had any effect on FBDM district health care service delivery in the Northern Cape Province. The respondents were asked to indicate their preferred answer from the following three possible answers: if this programme has had a positive effect, no effect or a negative effect. The results of the findings are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Effect of MCMCP trained medical doctors on the FBDM district health care service delivery in the Northern Cape Province**

How MCMCP trained medical doctors affect the FBDM district health care service delivery in the Northern Cape Province				
Value	Frequency	Per cent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Per cent
Missing	6	9.38	6	9.38
Positive effect	53	82.81	59	92.19
No effect	4	6.25	63	98.44
Negative effect	1	1.56	64	100.00

The results of the findings depicted in Table 4 indicate that six respondents did not answer the question. A possible reason could be that the respondents did not understand the question. The highest proportion of the research respondents, 82.8%, believed that the MCMCP had a positive effect, whereas only 7.8% believed that the MCMCP had no effect in the FBDM district health care facilities in the Northern Cape Province.

In the literature discussion of the article it was emphasised that the mere availability of health professionals is not sufficient. The health professionals need to be equitably distributed and accessible by the population. Furthermore, they must possess the required competency, and should be motivated and capacitated to deliver quality care that is appropriate and acceptable to the socio-cultural expectations of the population, as well as when they are adequately supported by the health system with all necessary resources (WHO 2016:10). The results of the findings have also revealed that the MCMCP doctors are committed and motivated to deliver health services in the FBDM health care facilities. It should also be noted that there was a significant number of respondents, constituting about 24.5%, who were uncertain if the MCMCP trained medical doctors were committed or motivated to deliver health care services in rural hospitals.

According to Renzaho (2016:153), local health staff are being poached by international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and staff are motivated to move from rural and regional service areas to urban centres with technologically advanced facilities. It can also be argued whether this programme is sustainable as the results of the findings indicate that there was a great sense of uncertainty about whether the MCMCP trained medical doctors would remain in the rural areas to improve health care service delivery.

Accessibility to primary health care has to a certain degree been compromised by the language barrier. The findings expressed above attest to the fact that the dominant languages in the FBDM area are Setswana and Afrikaans, while most doctors in rural hospitals according to the NCDoh Persal Report (2018), are not conversant with these two languages. However, it was accentuated in the literature discussion that the MCMCP aims to provide primary health care, especially to health care facilities in rural areas. It is within this context that the MCMCP trained medical doctors tend to receive a degree of approval from their colleagues as shown in the results of the findings where 82.81% of the respondents maintain that the MCMCP trained medical doctors assist in promoting primary health care in the FBDM small district health care facilities in the Northern Cape Province.

It was mentioned in the literature discussion of this article that the MCMCP was criticised as South African doctors returning from Cuba are not adequately equipped for the South African context, being unable to treat illnesses such as TB, HIV and complications associated with diabetes. On the contrary, the above findings correspond with the findings that the majority (87.3%) of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree that MCMCP trained medical doctors are not well trained and are unable to perform basic procedures such as delivery and setting drips, among other things.

The highest proportion of the research respondents, 82.8%, believed that the MCMCP had a positive effect whereas only 7.8% believed that the MCMCP had no effect in the FBDM district health care facilities in the Northern Cape Province.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The article shows that one of the key terms of the MCMCP agreement between South Africa and Cuba was to address the critical shortage of medical doctors in South Africa. The MCMCP aims to provide primary health care, especially to health care facilities in rural areas. The article is grounded on a study that seeks to assess the effect of the MCMCP in promoting health care service delivery in the small district hospitals of the FBDM area in the Northern Cape Province. The findings of the empirical study show that an overwhelming majority of the respondents either agree or strongly agreed that MCMCP trained medical doctors had a positive effect in the FBDM district health care facilities in district hospitals in the Northern Cape Province. The findings further illustrate that the highest proportion of respondents confirm that the MCMCP trained medical doctors are competent, motivated and well trained to fulfill their duties in the FBDM district hospitals in the Northern Cape Province to promote health care service delivery. A concern was raised that a small proportion of the respondents maintain that locally trained

South African health professionals look down on the Cuban health system. It was argued that this is an indication of prejudice against the MCMCP trained medical doctors. The findings further showed that there was a great sense of uncertainty about whether the MCMCP trained medical doctors would remain in the rural areas to improve health care service delivery.

It was highlighted in the literature discussion of this article that the cost of training in Cuba is likely to be three times the average cost of medical training in South Africa. Therefore, it is recommended that the NDoH increases the necessary capacity in local South African universities' medical schools, and to divert the funding that would have gone to Cuba, to train medical students locally. It is recommended that skills development and training strategies for both clinical and support staff should be implemented by the NDoH at national and provincial spheres to alleviate the shortage of scarce and critical skills in the FBDM hospitals. There is a need to establish a clear succession plan and a retention strategy for rural hospitals. This will not only assist in the replacement of the ageing staff but also assist in the equitable distribution of the MCMCP trained medical doctors, thus ensuring that health care service delivery is accessible and available to communities that were previously disadvantaged. It was further accentuated in the literature discussion of this article that the MCMCP grew progressively over the years and this would mean that without a properly drawn up retention strategy the trained medical doctors produced through the MCMCP may also be relocated elsewhere. The suggested recommendations could be useful to improve the MCMCP and health care service delivery in the FBDM district hospitals in the Northern Cape Province.

## NOTE

- \* The article is partly based on a master's dissertation under the supervision of Dr M De Montfordt and Prof T van Niekerk: Motsumi, O.L. 2020. Assessing the impact of the Mandela-Castro Medical Collaboration Programme in promoting health care service delivery in the Frances Baard district hospitals, Northern Cape Province. Unpublished Master of Public Management (MPM) degree, Bloemfontein: Central University of Technology, Free State.

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# Good Governance Index Towards Responsive Urban Land Administration

## Empirical Evidence from Ethiopia

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### ABSTRACT

Good governance is frequently used in academic discourse and common-place debate about how government, business organisations, and civic societies manage themselves and their relationship with the people within the sphere of service delivery. However, existing literature does not provide adequate evidence of how land administration is measured from a good governance perspective. The article provides a good governance index towards responsive urban land administration. Methodologically, a case study design was adopted. Utilising a top-down approach where an initial comparative analysis of various studies on the principles of good governance was conducted, 11 principles with 55 sub-principles were identified as relevant for a good governance framework. The initial step was followed by a bottom-up approach in which 399 respondents were selected using a simple random sampling technique from the urban land lease auction list of Mekelle municipality to weigh the level of significance of the principles of good governance. The survey data comprised of a close-ended questionnaire was analysed based on the descriptive statistics method. The findings demonstrate that accountability, transparency, rule of law, and public participation matter the most in urban land administration with a significant score of 0.109; 0.109; 0.107; and 0.103, respectively. The existence of accountable and transparent officials; respect for the rule of law; and community participation in policymaking can improve service provision; control

corruption; improve fairness and equality. The article complements the limited understanding of how to evaluate the performance of urban land administration from the perspective of good governance literature.

## INTRODUCTION

Good governance has become a commonly used term in academic discourses and ordinary debates about how the government, private sectors, and civic societies manage themselves and their relationship with the wider society (Colebatch 2014:307; Peters 2014:301). It was introduced by the World Bank to achieve viable development in sub-Saharan Africa countries (Siddique 2015:5). Good governance has also been utilised increasingly in urban land administration since 1999 to enhance human settlements in urbanising territories (UN-Habitat 2004:11; Dool *et al.* 2015:17). Since its emergence, it has been considered a prerequisite for urban sustainability (Kemp & Parto 2005:18; Monkelbaan 2019:53).

As the world moves into the urban age, cities are becoming the leading home for humankind and the engine rooms for the entire human development (UN-Habitat 2012:nd). However, this process of urbanisation has both merits and shortcomings. On the one hand, cities have a dynamic function in a national economic and technological revolution, while on the other hand, cities are spaces where conflict over land resources manifest, inefficient urban services ascend, and informal settlements and slums emanate (Dawson *et al.* 2014:4). The city spaces are enormously complex, contested by several organisations and other stakeholders' conflicting interests (Ruhlandt 2018:1).

Szeftel (2000: 288) and UN-Habitat (2012:46, 98) argue that governance is both a cause and a solution towards the stumbling blocks of urban land administration. It is a cause for concern because impediments to efficient administration result from maladministration, and it is a solution because the obstacles can be addressed through the proper application of good governance principles. However, the principles of good governance, *inter alia*, transparency, accountability, fairness and equality, public participation, responsiveness, rule of law, control of corruption; have various levels of contribution across different sectors when goods and services are delivered (Gismar *et al.* 2013:53; Kaufmann *et al.* 2011:3).

Given the significance of good governance in addressing maladministration, several studies have assessed the evolution and paradigm of the principles of good governance in public administration. What is rather worrisome is that less attention has been paid to generating a good governance index that comprehensively addresses urban land administration (Kaufmann *et al.* 2011; Lockwood 2010;

Schaap *et al.* 2015; Fraj *et al.* 2018; Aina *et al.* 2019). Also, studies that generated a good governance framework outside the context of land administration used a few expert opinions to measure the level of significance of the principles thereof (Biswas *et al.* 2019). However, Biswas *et al.* (2019) confirmed the use of expert opinion as a limitation of their study and suggested clients' opinions can provide an alternative approach to developing a good governance framework. This is because clients or the community and not experts are the direct victims of the maladministration or the beneficiaries of good administration. Thus, this article interrogates the level of significance of the principles of good governance as a means to address maladministration using a good governance index generated from the clients' opinion perspectives.

The article is structured as follows. The first section presents the introduction and contribution of the article. This is followed by conceptual background and theoretical perspectives encompassing the notion of good governance and responsible land administration theory. Following this, the conceptual framework is drawn from the reviewed concepts and theoretical literature. Finally, the methodology is presented followed by findings, discussion, and conclusion respectively.

## **CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

In this section, the notion of governance and responsible land administration theory are discussed. The concept of governance was utilised to identify the principles of good governance while the responsible land administration theory was applied to cascade urban land administration from the land administration.

### **The notion of governance**

Governance is not synonymous with the term government (Flinders 2002:52). Governance is broad in scope and encompasses actors such as the public governance architecture like governments, the private sector, and civil societies with each coexisting with others to guide the affairs of societies. In this understanding, the contribution from the government in a governance system is not superior but rather equivalent in status with the other sectors since none of the sectors has the necessary capability to separately address the intricate and diversified social problems embedded in governance (Kickert *et al.* 1977:9; Rhodes 1997:53; Lo 2018:651). Flinders (2002); Pierre (2000); and Rhodes (1997) perceived governance as processes, structures, and dimensions. Governance as a process concentrates on issues of accountability, transparency, rule of law, public participation, control corruption, responsiveness, fairness, and equity. It is also a structure where state-society relations are mediated through hierarchies, markets, and

networks. In terms of dimension, it is the amalgam of the vertical and horizontal arrangements to govern modern states. While the vertical dimension concentrates on the relationship between the tiers of government, the horizontal dimension accentuates the interdependence across departments along the same level.

Good governance was introduced from the business world as a normative prescription to enhance the effectiveness of public management and fight corruption in countries that were subject to the structural adjustment programmes of the international financial institutions (Fraj *et al.* 2018:328). In this regard, governance focuses on two basic normative prescriptions – policy authorisation and policy implementation (Salamon 2011:14). The normative prescription of governance interrogates how policy should be endorsed and implemented to deliver goods and services to the people (Lynn *et al.* 2002:3). The blueprint is policy authorisation that stems from legislative decisions that establish policies and laws to allocate resources.

The normative implementation of the principles of good governance is found in the field of International Relations where prescriptions aim to provide guidelines on how societies should address the most pressing global problems (Dingwerth & Pattberg 2006:193; Weiss 2010:796). In this regard, several scholars in the field have identified several normative principles considered relevant for inclusion in policy formulation and implementation, including the principle of rule of law, accountability, transparency, impartiality, efficiency, effectiveness, service delivery, and responsiveness (Moote *et al.* 1997:878; Zakout *et al.* 2006:7; Renn 2015: 13; UN-Habitat 2016:83). In the article, these principles were used to generate a good governance index. Considering that the level of significance of one principle to another may differ across the different sectors, the article contextualised the principles based on the concepts and theory of responsible land administration reviewed below.

## **Responsible land administration: concept and theory**

This section discusses the concept and theoretical thoughts that lie behind responsible urban land administration and arguments relating to the function of good governance as a means to enhance urban land management. Land administration is perceived as the rules, procedures, and structures of “determining, recording and disseminating information on land use, ownership and valuation of its associated resources” when implementing land and related legislation (UNECE 1996:14; Williamson *et al.* 2010:96; Enemark *et al.* 2014:13).

Land administration as a theory can be discussed from the “conventional land administration and responsible land administration” perspective (Zevenbergen *et al.* 2013:17). A conventional form of land management is rooted in the traditionally established assessments of land administration. Safeguarding tenure in

this land management system is associated with consolidating the supervision of dealings with land. However, it supports the wealthy and works against the needs of the poor, which results in informal settlement and slums (Zevenbergen *et al.* 2013:11; Vries *et al.* 2016:4–5). It is also non-transparent due to the unclear procedures, limited supply of land documents, which in turn requires a facilitation fee (Zevenbergen *et al.* 2013:597).

On the contrary, the responsible land management model was developed based on the social and ethical implications of different innovations in land management. It is based on the significance of adopting insight from manifold disciplines such as land surveying, information sciences, computer sciences, law, anthropology, and development studies (Vries *et al.* 2016: 7). It enhances landowners' tenure security and recognises the participation of formal and informal land tenure holders in the land policymaking process (Zevenbergen *et al.* 2013:598; Simbizi *et al.* 2016:17; Vries *et al.* 2016:7). The concept of responsibility in the context of responsible land administration is the building of collaborative relationships of officials with the clients to foster a shared understanding of public issues and thereby cultivate shared responsibilities.

Good governance in urban land management has received significant attention in the contemporary urbanisation processes where specific principles could be utilised to evaluate issues of resilient land governance because urban expansion requires a well-organised decision-making process that enhances its sustainability and resilience (Alemie *et al.* 2016:58). Governance from an urban land management perspective is described by a shared system of decision-making in urban land grounded on multifaceted linkages of actors belonging to the state, private sector, civil society, and communities (Dool *et al.* 2015:12). Incorporating the principles of sound land governance into policy formulation and implementation reduces administrative impediments and motivates concerned stakeholders to participate in the overall policymaking processes (McNeill *et al.* 2014:12).

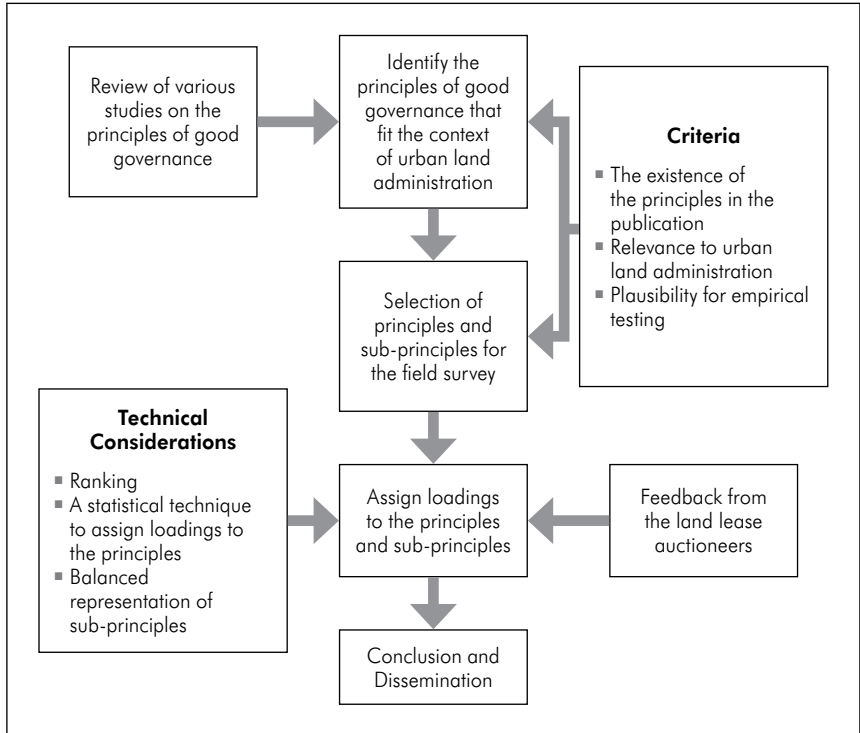
Generally, the conventional land administration perspective which is pro-rich and exclusive is not considered in this article. Instead, a responsible land administration model is assumed as a foundation to adopt the principles of good governance in the context of urban land administration. Enhancing good governance in urban land administration is a challenging mission, nonetheless, it is achievable.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO GENERATE GOOD GOVERNANCE INDEX**

The conceptual framework was drawn from the reviewed concepts and theoretical literature. It demonstrates the claim to measure the numerous features of good governance that have resulted in a plethora of sources. It also demonstrates how



**Figure 1: The conceptual framework to generate good governance index**



Source: (Authors' own construction)

the principles of good governance included in generating the index were identified; how weight to each principle and sub-principle was distributed; and how the statistical techniques, such as rankings, assigning loadings to the principles and balanced representation of the sub-principles were applied. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework for the article.

## METHODOLOGY

Ontologically, this article is based on nominalism, which assumed that reality is the result of individual cognition and one's mind (Burrell & Morgan 2019:4). It asserts that the social world does not exist autonomously but is the product of individual perception. From the epistemological point of view, the article tends to an interpretivist view guided by the assumption that knowledge is softer and subjective based on experience and personal opinion.

## Research design

The article is based on a case study research design and has the city of Mekelle in Ethiopia as a case of interest. The city is among the fast-expanding cities in the track of converting massive rural land to urban residential, business, and other uses (Fenta *et al.* 2017:4109). To facilitate the city's expansion, good governance in land administration is considered a crucial component (TNRS 2012). This requires a good governance index that can fit the context of urban land administration so that municipalities would decide a point of priorities to achieve better performance in urban land administration. According to UN-Habitat (2004:4) and Biswas *et al.* (2019:226), the foundation to develop a governance index is

**Table 1: Sources of good governance principles and sub-principles**

"Governance for sustainable human development: a UNDP policy document"	(UNDP 1997:12)
"Making sense of governance: Empirical evidence from sixteen developing countries"	(Hyden <i>et al.</i> 2004:16)
"Urban governance index: conceptual foundation and field test report"	(UN-Habitat 2004)
"Good governance in land administration: principles and good practices"	(Zakout <i>et al.</i> 2006:7)
"Good governance for terrestrial protected areas: a framework, principles and performance outcomes"	(Lockwood 2010:763)
"Land administration for sustainable development"	(Williamson <i>et al.</i> 2010:31)
"The worldwide governance indicators: methodology and analytical issues"	(Kaufmann <i>et al.</i> 2011:3)
"The land governance assessment framework: identifying and monitoring good practice in the land sector"	(Deininger <i>et al.</i> 2012:40–45)
"Towards a well-Informed society and responsive government: Executive report Indonesia governance Index 2012"	(Gismar <i>et al.</i> 2013:52)
"Fit-for-purpose land administration"	(Enemark <i>et al.</i> 2014:6)
"Application of the urban governance index to water service provisions: between rhetoric and reality"	(Moretto 2015)
"Good urban governance: challenges and values"	(Dool <i>et al.</i> 2015:23)
"Good" Governance Principles in Spatial Planning at Local Scale	(Virtudes 2016:1711)
"Governance and economic growth: the role of the exchange rate regime"	(Fraj <i>et al.</i> 2018:339)
"Top-down sustainable urban development: urban governance transformation in Saudi Arabia"	(Aina <i>et al.</i> 2019:279)
"Governance, Good"	(Williams 2020)

to establish the appropriate principles and assign proper loading to the selected principles and sub-principles. Accordingly, the article utilised both top-down and bottom-up approaches to generate a good governance index towards responsive urban land administration. First, the top-down approach was utilised to identify the principles and sub-principles of good governance. Based hereon, several principles developed by various authors and institutions were reviewed from the sources identified in Table 1.

The sources were identified from different databases – Elsevier’s Scopus, AJOL, and Google scholar – utilising operationalised search terms that combined principles of good governance, indicators of governance, parameters of governance, principles of land governance, and urban land governance, among others. Three major criteria were used to identify which literature is relevant for inclusion in the good governance index. They include, (1) that a paper mentions a principle related to good governance, (2) that the said principle is relevant to the context of urban land administration, and (3) that it holds plausibility for empirical testing (access to and analyses of collected data).

Accordingly, 185 papers met the first criterion and were further scanned to identify the relevance of good governance principles they discussed. At the end of the exercise, 25 publications referenced good governance principles with relevance to the urban land administration. Out of this number, 16 publications fulfilled the third criterion with the potential for empirical testing of the principles they relay (Table 1). From the 16 papers, 176 good governance principles with several nomenclatures were found using the content analysis technique. After repeated principles were removed from the list, 55 principles were identified. As demonstrated in Table 2, these principles were grouped under 11 main principles following their affinity to one another. 55 other principles were categorised under these general principles using the thematic technique.

**Table 2: The list of good governance principles and sub-principles**

Main Principles	Sub-principles	Code
Effectiveness and Efficiency in Urban Land Administration (EE)	Availability of “one-stop-shop” service	EE1
	Separation of “front-office and back-office”	EE2
	Delivering services without imposing an undue cost	EE3
	Speedy application for land lease	EE4
	Effectiveness at addressing land-related problems	EE5

Main Principles	Sub-principles	Code
Transparency in Urban Land Administration (TR)	Transparency on “land use, land valuation, and taxation”	TR1
	Clarity of the land allocation process	TR2
	Public access to land-related documents	TR3
	Availability of information about allocated land	TR4
	Availability of information centre	TR5
Accountability in Urban Land Administration (AC)	Proper evaluation of the performance of officials	AC1
	Public officials do what they promised	AC2
	Officials liable for the effect of their decision	AC3
	Subjecting to regular audits	AC4
	Clear assignment of responsibility	AC5
Fairness and Equality in Urban Land Administration (FE)	Fairness in the decision-making process	FE1
	Officials’ impartiality to provide services	FE2
	The existence of “first come first served” principle	FE3
	Fairness on the valuation of land as per the market price	FE4
	No delay of justice when land-related conflict occurs	FE5
Public Participation in Urban Land Administration (PP)	Client participation in decision-making	PP1
	Provide awareness creation training	PP2
	Hotlines to enable clients to report misconducts	PP3
	Public meeting for sharing view and evidence	PP4
	The intimacy of the city to its resident	PP5
Responsiveness in Urban Land Administration (RP)	Serving clients in a specified time frame	RP1
	Responding to the client’s question	RP2
	Mechanisms for appeal	RP3
	Low level of pending conflict	RP4
	Legitimate conflict resolution institutions	RP5

Main Principles	Sub-principles	Code
Rule of Law in Urban Land Administration	Adherence to the land management legislation	RL1
	Legitimate respect for existing land rights	RL2
	Clear mechanisms for adjudication of land rights	RL3
	Restrictions on rights are based on the assessment	RL4
	Clarity of enforcement of land rights	RL5
Control of Corruption in Urban Land Administration (CC)	Service deliveries are free from nepotism	CC1
	Judicial authorities are free from bribery	CC2
	Decision-making is free from nepotism	CC3
	Use of public power as a platform for public benefit	CC4
	No payment for kickbacks to officials	CC5
Legitimacy and Bureaucracy in Urban Land Administration (LB)	Clients' access to justice	LB1
	Ethical codes of conduct	LB2
	Legally constituted tender board	LB3
	Law enforcement by the municipality	LB4
	The ability of the judges to impact discrimination	LB5
Ownership Security in Urban Land Administration (OS)	Quick conflict resolution	OS1
	Predefined territorial boundaries	OS2
	Security towards land tenure	OS3
	"People feel free to express their opinion in public"	OS4
	Safe municipality for vulnerable groups	OS5
Service Delivery in Urban Land Administration (SD)	Public satisfaction survey on quality of municipality	SD1
	Facility for citizen complaints	SD2
	Strong educational support to service delivery	SD3
	Produce data from the comment by the community	SD4
	Dedicated officials to serve clients	SD5

Source: (Own Survey 2020)

## Sampling and data collection

In this article, individual clients were considered as a unit of analysis. A close-ended questionnaire was designed to collect the primary data from 399 auctioneers. Respondents were selected using simple random sampling from the urban land lease auction list of Mekelle municipality where a computer-assisted random selection was applied to give all auctioneers an equal chance of being selected. The total population of those who participated in the auctions in Mekelle City from 2014 to 2019 is 72 768. The sample size was computed taking a 95% confidence level and 0.05 limit of error using an equation developed by Yamane (1967) as shown below. The sample size is obtained using the following equation:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \quad (1)$$

Where: 'n' = sample size, 'N' = population size, 'e' = the level of precision, '1' = the probability of an event occurring.

$$n = \frac{72.768}{1 + 72.768(0.05)^2} = 399 \quad (1)$$

The actual sample size of 399 auctioneers was allocated proportionally between the winners and losers of the auction, and the same questions were asked to acquire pertinent information from both groups. The 11 principles of good governance with each of these principles comprising of five sub-principles were included in the questionnaire in the form of positive statements (Table 2). Respondents were asked to rate a five-point Likert scale extending from least important (1) to most important (5). To ensure maximum precision in data collection, the English version of the survey was translated into *Tigrigna* (local language) before distribution to the study participants. Data was collected door-to-door by the principal investigator from September 2019 to January 2020.

## Data analysis

In this article, a quantitative data analysis technique was implemented. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics. SPSS 26 software was used for the analysis of the data. Weight distribution between principles was conducted and an index was generated based on the participant survey.

## FINDINGS

This section provides a summary of the findings collected from the participant survey. The results were discussed in light of the level of significance of the principles of good governance towards responsive urban land management.

### Weight-distribution among principles based on participant survey

The article utilised a standard technique to select principles followed by normalising and weighting to aggregate the principles and sub-principles. Unlike the study conducted by Biswas *et al.* (2019) who utilised an opinion of 7 experts to decide on the level of significance and generate an index, this article employed a survey of 399 clients to prioritise the principles of governance in urban land administration as per their anticipated level of rank. Their responses were consolidated to acquire the weight distribution among the principles. Respondents were asked to rate the level of significance of these principles using a five-point Likert scale where 1 is least important; 2 is less important; 3 is important; 4 is more important;

**Table 3: Weight distribution among principles based on participant survey**

Major Principles of Governance	Level of agreement					Final Result (Fp)
	1 = Least Important	2 = Less Important	3 = Important	4 = More Important	5 = Most Important	
Effectiveness and Efficiency	0	184	40	16	159	1,347
Transparency	0	0	20	25	354	1,930
Accountability	0	0	9	40	350	1,937
Fairness and equality	0	28	82	150	139	1,597
Public participation	0	0	55	60	284	1,825
Responsiveness	0	120	110	80	89	1,335
Rule of law	0	0	15	70	314	1,895
Control of corruption	0	0	149	50	200	1,647
Legitimacy and bureaucracy	14	130	136	79	40	1,198
Ownership security	0	109	128	70	92	1,342
Service delivery	0	0	93	89	217	1,720
<b>Total Score</b>						<b>17,773</b>

Source: (Own Survey 2020)

5 is most important (Table 3). The weight distribution between principles was computed as follows. The result for the specific principle ' is:

$$Fp = \sum_{j=1}^5 Npj * j \tag{2}$$

Where: denotes the final result for a principle;  $Npj$  represents the number of replies for  $p^{th}$  principle and  $j^{th}$  importance. 'p' varies from 1 to 11 and 'j' spread from 1 (least important) to 5 (most important). Table 3 illustrates the weight distribution among principles and the final score based on participant surveys.

In the case of weight distribution, a weighted compensatory model was utilised. Unlike the non-compensatory model which shares the values equally, the weighted compensatory model reveals the relative significance of each principle. It also has a central role to describe and predict the client's preference. The weight of a principle is based on the service that a client needs to receive from the urban land administration. In this way, the total score as stated in equation 3 is the total of the result of each principle of good governance.

$$T = \sum_{i=1}^{11} Fp \tag{3}$$

Where:  $T$  represents the total score. A total score is crucial to generate a weight for each principle. As illustrated in equation 4, the final weight for each principle was generated by dividing the final score of each principle to the total score. This is specifically utilised to identify the level of significance of the principles for policy decisions. Hence, the final weight for the ' $p^{th}$ ' principle is:

$$Fwp = \frac{Fp}{T} \tag{4}$$

Where:  $Fwp$  denotes final weight for a principle. Since the survey respondents did not provide a level of significance to the sub-principles of governance, the results of the weight distribution in the principles were proportionally divided into the sub-principles. For example, if the " $p^{th}$ " principle has a " $np$ " number of sub-principles, then the weight for the corresponding sub-principles is:

$$Fsp = \frac{Fwp}{np} \tag{5}$$

Where:  $Fsp$  denotes final weight for sub-principle.



Table 4 demonstrates the final weight distribution between the principles and sub-principles. Due to the optimum sample size, a survey of 399 auctioneers, the statistical results were utilised as a base to determine the major principles.

**Table 4: Final weight between principles and sub-principles**

Major principles of Governance	Final-Weight for each principle (Fwp)	Number of Sub-principles (np)	Final-Weight for each Sub-principle (Fsp)
Effectiveness and Efficiency	0.075	5	0.015
Transparency	0.109	5	0.022
Accountability	0.109	5	0.022
Fairness and Equality	0.090	5	0.018
Public Participation	0.103	5	0.021
Responsiveness	0.075	5	0.015
Rule of Law	0.107	5	0.021
Control of Corruption	0.093	5	0.019
Legitimacy and Bureaucracy	0.067	5	0.014
Ownership Security	0.075	5	0.015
Service Delivery	0.097	5	0.019

Source: (Own Survey 2020)

For policymaking decision purposes, the results of the survey were regrouped into three clusters. The variables that scored 0.1 and above are classified as the highest rank; variables that scored 0.09–0.099 are classified as the middle rank, while variables that scored below 0.09 per cent are grouped as lower rank.

As demonstrated in Table 4, accountability, transparency, rule of law, and public participation are the most significant principles to achieve enhanced performance in urban land administration with an index score of 0.109, 0.109, 0.107, and 0.103 respectively. Furthermore, the article revealed service delivery, control of corruption, and fairness and equality as the second rank with an index result of 0.097; 0.093; and 0.090 respectively. Moreover, effectiveness and efficiency, responsiveness, security, and legitimacy and bureaucracy were ranked at the third level. As far as the weight distribution to sub-principles is concerned, the final weight in the principle was equally distributed to the sub-principles under it. For

example, accountability has an index of 0.109. The 0.109 was divided among the 5 sub-principles under it to get 0.022. The same procedure was followed for the rest of the sub-principles.

## DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings of this article are discussed in comparison to the findings of others in urban land administration. The findings of this article revealed that accountability, rule of law, transparency, and public participation are the primary principles of good governance to achieve a well-informed society and responsible urban land administration. Consistent with these findings, Gismar *et al.* (2013:53); Biswas *et al.* (2019:229) found transparency and accountability as the most significant principles of good governance in comparison to the others.

The primary concern is the existence of instrumental prerequisites for effective accountability because the latter requires a precisely identified power and functions for the urban land administration officials at different levels. Clear identification of roles and responsibilities helps the officials in a certain position to validate the acceptance of the tasks in their plans and strategies and assists the government and the other stakeholders to evaluate the performance of the governing bodies based on the predetermined tasks. As revealed in the finding, accountability can be perceived from two directions – accountability to their head and the clients (Table 2). Governing bodies are supposed to be equally accountable to both sides. Lockwood (2010:760) argues that the existence of strong accountability and transparency can result in opportunities for all stakeholders of urban land administration, including marginalised and disadvantaged societies, to participate in matters which affect them.

Transparency is crucial to foster enhanced performance and create responsive urban land administration because full access to information is substantial to allow clients to comprehend and monitor the officials' day-to-day activities and thereby create a well-informed society. As also argued by Lockwood (2010:759), the existence of greater transparency is a building block to inhibit bribery and other related misconduct.

Rule of law is at the centre of all the remaining principles of good urban land governance. The commitment of urban land administrators to transparency and accountability promotes the rule of law. All the urban land administration officials, institutions, and other stakeholders are supposed to be responsible to publicly broadcast, equally enforce, independently adjudicate the urban land laws, plans, guidelines, and systems. This requires mechanisms to share decision-making with the local community and ensure that their actions are consistent with the legislation.

Another decisive phase in urban land administration is the preparation of offline and online platforms for community participation in policymaking. It is a necessary component of sustainable urban land governance. By developing a platform for the public, media, civil societies, private sectors, and other stakeholders to comment on the decisions and actions of the officials of urban land administration, high levels of trust can be achieved among these officials and the clients. Reporting the performance of these officials is supportive to evaluate why a certain choice was made and a specific action was taken. Adding the traditional knowledge of the local and indigenous people to the existing system of urban land administration supports officials in their determination to achieve good governance and in their effort to develop public trust.

Compiling a client survey is a crucial mechanism to assess the degree of satisfaction with the overall service delivery in urban land administration and recommendations for its enhancement. In addition to the clients' survey, establishing hotlines to follow-up on the client's complaints in areas of corruption and the overall operation of the institutions is another crucial step for the officials in their effort to enhance responsible urban land administration.

Service delivery, control of corruption, and fairness and equality were ranked at the second level in this article. Those charged with advancing the performance of urban land administration are expected to be fair concerning the valuation of urban land as per the market price, serve the clients on the "first come first serve principle", and impartial in the exercise of the mandate given to them. This can increase trust among government officials, investors, and communities and can reduce bribery and other corrupt attitudes. Fair and non-discriminatory land legislation can contribute towards responsive urban land administration and thereby increase its acceptability by the clients (FDRE 2011:6220).

A favourable balance of the costs and benefits of decision-making, the consideration of the opinions of concerned participants in urban land administration, and the mutual respect among the different levels of officials enhance fairness and equality. Countries like Moscow, Albania, Romania, Armenia, Croatia, Indonesia, Egypt which mitigated corruption and rent-seeking behaviour in land allocation, enhanced fairness and equality among clients in land adjudication, introduced a web-based information system and activated counter offices and client survey; have achieved inspiring performance in urban land administration (Zakout *et al.* 2006:10–17). Furthermore, the article revealed effectiveness and efficiency, responsiveness, ownership security, and legitimacy and bureaucracy at the third level. Urban land administration officials can acquire acceptance from their clients if they are responsive to the existing land legislation, policies, and regulations, and if their verdict and engagement are consistent with the predetermined objectives of urban land administration. In this way, effective leadership contributes to the legitimacy of officials. A responsive official accepts the complaints and criticisms

which arise because of their actions and decisions and works to limit its degrees. Furthermore, providing long-term ownership security fosters land productivity and motivates investment. Under these circumstances, urban land governance can be enhanced and sustained.

## **CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The principles of good governance have different levels of contribution across sectors. Thus, government, business organisations, and civic societies need to know the level of significance of each principle to prioritise to achieve better performance in their respective sector. This, in turn, requires recognising the client's opinion on the codes of conduct. Hence, a good governance index is generated in this article to help countries and cities in their effort to estimate the performance of urban land administration from a good governance perspective.

The findings revealed that the principles of good governance have different levels of significance in urban land administration. The article demonstrates that the presence of accountable and transparent officials, respect of rule of law, and public participation can boost service delivery, control bribery, and enhance fairness and equality. Consequently, institutions which do not open their activities to the public, officials who are not held accountable for their actions and decisions, who do not abide by the urban land laws, plans, guidelines, and systems, and who do not permit their clients to participate in decision-making, may encounter challenges in running responsive urban land administration.

Generally, a good governance index in urban land administration is developed in this article based on participant surveys. The literature reviewed was vital in identifying the variables included in the article and served as a sound guideline. On the other hand, the findings of this article supported the literature reviewed positively. It confirmed which principles countries and cities can prioritise to enhance urban land administration and improve the client's satisfaction. The findings of this article revealed that accountability, transparency, rule of law and public participation are relatively most significant followed by service delivery, control of corruption, and fairness and equality. From this one can understand that the appropriate operation and follow-up in the highest-ranked principles of good governance would address problems in service delivery, would curb corruption, and enhance fairness and equality. Also, an accountable and transparent official who abides by the rule of law is indirectly responsive and legitimate.

Therefore, this index would serve as a sound guideline for global institutions, national governments, and municipalities to apply the results of this article in weighing the status of governance structures in urban land administration. It would also help municipalities to decide which principle of governance to prioritise in

their determination to achieve better urban land administration. The findings of this article will also benefit future researchers in weighing cities and countries' status of land administration from the good governance perspective for further policy decision-making.

## NOTE

- \* This article is partly based on an unpublished Doctoral thesis, "Urban Land Administration in Sub-Saharan Africa Countries: Evidence from Ethiopia", at the University of Stellenbosch, under the supervision of Professor Pregala Pillay.

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# Social Innovation During the Covid-19 Pandemic in South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

A number of government interventions across the globe, have been instrumental in driving growth, development and innovation. Social innovation can provide effective solutions to challenging social and environmental issues in support of social progress. As South Africa faces unique development challenges, an increase in innovation can lead to economic and social development. This article considers the nature and manifestations of social innovation in the South African context. This article is descriptive and theoretical in nature. A qualitative approach is adopted, by means of a desktop study. The findings of the research suggest that social innovation provides novel approaches that aim to meet social needs in a better way than the prevailing approaches. A number of barriers to social innovation identified in the South African context, include the lack of a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem, insufficient policy development and implementation, lack of funding and lack of management capacity. A more holistic approach to increase social innovation during and after a National State of Disaster caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, is needed in South Africa. A 'Fivefold Helix' approach to cooperation, co-creation, partnership, capacity building, leadership and collaboration for increased social innovation is recommended in South Africa. This approach entails a network of the following actors: government, business, universities, civil society and communities working together to solve social problems.

## INTRODUCTION

Governments across the globe recognise the importance of social innovation and regard social innovation as a tool that can be utilised to foster the creation of creative ways to solve or minimise challenges which are difficult in nature (Pue, Vandergeest, Breznits 2016:6). Social innovation is a movement that is spreading at a fast pace and it is receiving a lot of attention globally, more specifically from a policymaking perspective (Boelman, Kwan, Lauritzen, Millard and Schon 2015:5). South Africa has the third largest economy and is the most developed country on the African continent. South Africa receives a lot of investments as well as the largest amount of start-up funding on the continent. South Africa “has been a focus for social innovation in sub-Saharan Africa” (Howaldt, Kaletka, Schröder, and Zirngiebl 2018:146). Despite the latter, the country is still experiencing challenges such as high unemployment rates and inequality.

The aim of this article is to describe social innovation within the South African context. First, this article conceptualises and contextualises social innovation. Second, an overview of social innovation in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is provided. A discussion of social innovation in South Africa is provided, including the current initiatives for social innovation and the challenges to social innovation in South Africa. In addition, social innovation during a National State of Disaster such as the Covid-19 pandemic is considered. Lastly, recommendations on how to overcome these challenges are provided. This article is descriptive, conceptual and theoretical in nature following a qualitative research approach by way of a literature study and desktop analysis. Unobtrusive research techniques are used to analyse literature and secondary data. Specifically, documentary and conceptual analysis is applied in this article.

## CONCEPTUALISING AND CONTEXTUALISING SOCIAL INNOVATION

Social innovation can be defined as a set of ideas that addresses social needs that have not been previously met. The objective of these ideas is to work in both theory and practice (Nicholls, Simon and Gabriel 2015:2). Tucker (2014:4), concurs that the ideas that have been implemented ought to work collectively in order to enhance ‘social goals’. Pue *et al.* (2016:10), define social innovation “as a process encompassing the emergence and adoption of socially creative strategies that reconfigure social relations in order to actualize a given social goal”. Social innovation can therefore be regarded as a process, that consists of a sequence of steps or strategies and these steps or strategies thus lead to a change towards solving societal problems in a strategic manner in order for it to be adopted within

policy frameworks, once evidence has been obtained pertaining to this change (Pue *et al.* 2016:10). Nicholls and Murdock (2016:9), define “social innovation as a process of reshaping social relations to maximise productivity and economic development, often framed by the optimistic assumption that the benefits of these changes will be shared equally”. It is imperative to take into consideration that change does happen with individuals who are willing to undertake a few risks (Mulgan 2019:13).

According to Nicholls and Murdock (2016:13), “the economic and social performance of nations, regions, and industrial sectors and organisations” are determined by social innovation. Franz, Hochgerner and Howaldt (2012:4), regard social innovation as intentional, because the objective of social innovation is to bring change to those circumstances it aimed to change. This characteristic is what distinguishes social innovation from social change. De Souza, Lessa and Filho (2019:61) further state that the purpose of social innovation is the “common good, general interest, collective interest and cooperation”.

## **Social innovation facilitates collaboration, co-creation and partnership**

Social innovation is not restricted to one sector (Caulier-Grice, Davies, Patrick and Norman 2012:15). Therefore, social innovation is not attached to any fixed boundaries (Nicholls and Murdock 2016:9). These sectors include the public and private sector as well as non-profit organisations. O’Connor and Ross (2015:359), further state that within an innovation system, the public and private sector as well as academia are regarded as the key actors at a macro level in the economy. According to Eichler and Schwarz (2019:1), there are five key actors who are involved in the development and implementation of social innovation. These actors include: social entrepreneurs; non-governmental and non-profit organisations; public institutions; firms and civil society. These actors work together through a common shared value (O’Connor and Ross 2015:362). These sectors are interlinked as most acts of social transformation occur within the parameters of these sectors. According to de Souza *et al.* (2019:61) good governance is fostered when the actors cooperate, negotiate and form a partnership with one another. In order for the full potential of social innovation to be reached, a constructive partnership among the various actors is required (Howaldt, Kaletka, Schröder and Zirngiebl 2018:13).

Nicholls and Murdock (2016:2), further argue that social innovation is present across all the respective sectors within society and it is known for the unique combination within the three sectors mentioned earlier. In terms of the public sector, social innovation is aligned to “an established tradition of welfare reform”, with the emphasis on ensuring that the needs of society which are continuously

growing are met in the most efficient and effective manner with a limited amount of resources at the government's disposal (Nicholls and Murdock 2016:3). Power structures across social relations, whereby goods and services have been rendered in an ineffective and unequal manner, are being challenged by social innovation.

Social innovation within the private sector has two dimensions. The first dimension ensures that human relations within an organisation are aligned to technological innovations, if not, these innovations will be unsuccessful. The second dimension of social innovation serves as a 'new agenda', pertaining to the role that businesses have to play within society (Nicholls and Murdock 2016:3). In the last sector, civil society, social innovation is present within the internal processes that are linked to the changes within an organisation. Social innovation also plays a pivotal role within the external outputs and outcomes of an organisation (Nicholls and Murdock 2016:3). Social innovators have the ability to establish cross-sector partnerships. As a result of these partnerships growth is fostered and the various forms of funding received are utilised on initiatives focused on social and environmental impact, which are found within a variety of markets and contexts (Bonnici 2020). According to Howaldt and Schwarz (2016:1), the abovementioned actors can be referred to as heterogeneous actors, that are regarded as the 'carriers of social practices'.

The last decade witnessed an increase in the literature of social innovation (Caulier-Grice *et al.* 2012:5). From both an academic and policy perspective there is a growing interest around social innovation (Eichler and Schwarz 2019:1). Nicholls, Simon and Gabriel (2015:1), indicate that social innovation is not new; however, it is entering a new phase. As a result, solutions are offered to problems on a local level, as well as on systematic and structural issues. The objective of social innovation is to question why some "problems, such as world epidemics, social inequality, hunger" and changing weather conditions, have not been eliminated by existing structures and policies (Bittencourt, Figueiró and Schutel 2017:2). The recent interest in social innovation is to increase the speed of it in order to respond to these problems (Nicholls and Murdock 2016:8). Attention ought to be given to the role of the social entrepreneur, because this indicates that there has been a reconciliation between the public and private sectors in terms of productivity and growth and everyone can thus be seen as a changemaker (Nicholls and Murdock 2016:9).

According to Caulier-Grice *et al.* (2012:5), the dissatisfaction of the utilisation of technology within "economic innovation literature and innovation policy" is attributed to the reason for the emergence of social innovation. Therefore, on both levels of policy and research, emphasis has been placed on social innovation. Social innovation is also regarded as a mechanism that can be utilised towards the increase of "growing social, environmental and demographic challenges", that are very complex in nature. The challenges are complex and it thus requires

commitment from a lot of stakeholders in order to mitigate these challenges (Caulier-Grice *et al.* 2012:5).

Social innovation occurs when various stakeholders are in solidarity, in order to ensure that the needs of human beings are met as a result of the transformation of societal relations (Bittencourt *et al.* 2017:2). Social innovation can therefore be regarded as a driver that can facilitate social change, to foster transformation within society as a whole (Caulier-Grice *et al.* 2012:6). Bittencourt *et al.* (2017:2), concur that social innovation is a driver that has an objective to mitigate social inequality on a global scale; a driver that continues to explore new opportunities to mitigate social inequality. Societal problems can be minimised or mitigated through the application of social innovation (Bittencourt *et al.* 2017:2). Moulaert, Mehmood, MacCallum, and Leubolt (2017:11), allude that social innovation is regarded as a corrective measure to address societal problems. As a result of social innovation, public participation can increase and public services can be improved. Social innovation is a driver that promotes social change as it ensures that the needs of human beings are met accordingly (Bittencourt *et al.* 2017:3).

Social relations are reshaped in order “to maximise productivity and economic development, often framed by the (perhaps optimistic) assumption that the benefits of these changes will be shared equally across society” (Nicholls *et al.* 2015:8). It is imperative to note that social innovation can occur in any type of community with different spatial scales, but this can only be realised on the condition of consciousness raising, mobilisation and learning processes (Moulaert *et al.* 2017:18). According to Brandsen, Cattacin, Evers and Zimmer (2016:5), the social aspects in social innovation are associated with improvement that can provide solutions to basic needs as well as ensuring the satisfaction of social relations.

## **SOCIAL INNOVATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**

Lee, Yun, Pyka, Won, Kodama, Schiuma, Park, Jeon, Park, Jung, Yan, Lee and Zhao (2018:1), state that “the 4IR is characterised by a fusion of technologies that blurs the lines between the physical, digital and biological sphere”. According to Schwab (2015:1), the manner in which people live, work and relate with one another is due to the technological advancements which are associated with the 4IR. All industries and part of society, are being transformed as a result of the technological change that is associated with the 4IR (Philbeck and Davis 2019:17). The 4IR “has been used to frame and analyse the impact of emerging technologies on nearly the entire gamut of human development in the early 21st century, from evolving social norms and national political attitudes to economic development and international relations” (Philbeck and Davis 2019:17).

Franz *et al.* (2012:4), refer to the internet as one of the major social innovations; as the manner in which people have communicated as well as work together collectively changed tremendously over the past 20 years. The internet is regarded as a collection of innovations. Furthermore, the internet was first regarded as a scientific tool; however, today it is regarded as a tool that fosters communication and the exchange of information across the globe (Franz *et al.* 2012:5). Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools can be utilised in education in order to improve and promote the quality of education (Mulgan 2019:17). A cultural and moral compass is required to ensure that technology can contribute towards the upliftment of people (Vestberg 2018).

One of the most unique characteristics of the 4IR is that it is aimed on progress for the sake of social good (Gafni 2015). The vision of the 4IR is steered by the creation of the “positive socio-economic change” as a result of the potential of ICTs (Pollitzer 2019:87). According to Bonnici (2020), technology can be utilised by the social innovators that can be regarded as an enabling and equaliser tool. In terms of technology being an equaliser tool, it enables learning, sharing and remote collaboration. Mulgan (2017), further adds that more innovators, citizens, entrepreneurs ought to be involved in the 4IR, in order for innovators to be fully engaged with the tools that are shaping the revolution. Solutions to issues such as employment creating opportunities and problems experienced in health, education, security and nutrition can be gradually solved through the application of technology and the 4IR tools (Bonnici 2020). Klugman (2018), concurs with Bonnici (2017), as new systems are introduced to the market on a regular basis offering new solutions, that can be utilised within the health and transport sectors. In terms of health care the impact of technology is positive. It is imperative that human beings take full advantage of these technological advances to deliver a healthier, more connected future for people around the world (Jimenez 2016).

Howaldt *et al.* (2018:20), further state that the role of technology varies greatly “in different practice fields and social innovation initiatives”. Social innovation initiatives can take full advantage of what new technology has to offer in order to tackle social problems. Through the application of the 4IR tools development can occur on an individual, societal and economic level (Schwab 2016). Urban sectors can be reshaped as a result of the 4IR tools (Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) 2017:2). Mulgan (2017), is not in favour of the latter and suggests that the funding that is directed at technology within the 4IR ought to be redirected towards human needs and these needs include education, mobility and health care. The 4IR tools also play a pivotal role to ensure the sustainability of the environment (PWC 2017:3). The 4IR is only in its beginning phase (Nurkin and Rodriguez 2019:16). It is important for social innovation not to be left behind by technological advancements (Howaldt and Schwarz 2017:163).

Although technology offers a lot of potential, there are some challenges associated with technology (Herweijer and Waughray 2019). Bonnici (2020), states that despite the benefits that are associated with technology, it can further contribute towards the digital divide and inequalities. Therefore, it is imperative for stakeholders that regard technology as an enabling and equaliser tool, to ensure that the technology is managed in such a manner that the true potential of technology is realised (Bonnici 2020). Mulgan (2017), further states that the 4IR plays a big role in job destruction, instead of fostering the creation of jobs. It also fosters threats to personal privacy as well as cybersecurity. Schwab (2016), further states that marginalisation, an increase in inequality, new risks in terms of security as well as human relationships being undermined can be created if the 4IR is not implemented correctly. More funding is directed towards military purposes instead of being allocated to meet the basic needs of human beings. Seiler-Hausmann (2002:7), further states that technology can be a double-edged sword as it can have both positive and negative implications on the welfare of human beings when new products are introduced to solve environmental problems; however, new problems can be created.

Therefore, there is a big demand for the social entrepreneur model, because this can enable the challenges within society to be mitigated with practical solutions. It is therefore imperative that the public and private sector work as a collective to ensure that the potential of technology is aligned to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Herweijer and Waughray 2019). However, there is no detailed discussion of how ICTs will assist with the realisation of the SDGs (Pollitzer 2019:87). Another challenge is the “risks to democracy and human rights”, when technology is being misused. Unless the realities of the people that technology aims to uplift is recognised, technology cannot be regarded as a tool that will uplift people (Pollitzer 2019:82). As mentioned previously the vision of the 4IR is steered by the creation of the positive socio-economic change as a result of the potential of ICTs. However, most countries that are still in a developing phase and low-income countries do not have the necessary conditions, such as political, scientific, financial, and institutional required to implement this vision (Pollitzer 2019:87).

## **SOCIAL INNOVATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In 1996, the White Paper on Science and Technology was introduced by the former National Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. The White Paper was regarded as a vital document with the objective of bringing “change to the thinking about innovation in South Africa and restructure the country’s National System of Innovation (NSI)” (Hart, Ramoroko, Jacobs and Letty 2015:1).

However, there has been some challenges, including to expand ideas about and practices related to social innovation as a means of making the outputs of innovation more relevant to society to encourage inclusive development. Not a lot of emphasis has been placed on what social innovation ought to address and the purpose of it beyond the reduction of poverty; it is also imperative to ensure that social innovation remains in the NSI, in order to ensure that it has far-reaching, direct and positive social outcomes for marginalised members of society (Hart *et al.* 2015:1).

## **Social innovation initiatives in South Africa**

Social innovators received substantial support from universities, civil society and the private sector, and government is also displaying interest across the country. A lot of success has been witnessed with the incubators and social innovation competitions. However, there is still a need for the development of a consolidated strategy to support the growth of social innovation in the country. Support for social innovation has grown predominantly in Johannesburg and Cape Town, but this has changed as the support has been extended to other towns in the country. The real challenge is how support for social innovators will be expanded throughout the entire country (Howaldt *et al.* 2018:146).

A window of opportunity for social innovation within the health sector is available due to it not having enough resources and being oversubscribed. Innovations within this sector commenced with the support from government (Howaldt *et al.* 2018:147). In 2014, the Groote Schuur Hospital, which is the largest academic hospital in the Western Cape, launched the Groote Schuur Innovation Programme in collaboration with the Inclusive Healthcare Innovation. This hospital is well known for its innovation capacity, as it was the first hospital in South Africa to perform a heart transplant under the guidance of Prof Christiaan Barnard in 1967 (Hlabangane 2017). The objective of this programme is to discover the next ingenious health care tools and practices. This innovation programme is aligned to the 2030 Strategy of the Western Cape, to ensure a quality people-centred health care service, as there is a great need for innovative delivery of patient care. Staff members of the hospital are afforded the opportunity to translate their ideas into reality by solving some of the biggest challenges; thereby sustaining a culture of care and dignity, working better with community services and boosting volunteer resources of the hospital simultaneously (Chowles 2014). Staff members who are a part of this initiative could apply for funding, guidance from experts as well as mentorship.

The duration of this programme was one year. In April 2016, the top 10 teams were chosen who had the best solutions to address the challenges (Chowles 2016). Valuable lessons were learnt from the teams and these teams were commended



for their efforts and the Hospital Board encouraged the teams to pursue their ideas as the objective of having 'patient-centred care' can be achieved. It can therefore be concluded that the teams came a long way to help "realise the hospital's vision of leadership, innovation and change" (Chowles 2016). Another example of social innovation at the Groote Schuur hospital was in 2017 when competitions for social innovation for the members of staff were held. The objective of these competitions was "in order to raise the profile and increase the impact of innovations that are happening on the ground" (Howaldt *et al.* 2018:147).

The Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI), in South Africa is a part of government and the objective of this Centre is to create a culture and practice where challenges can be solved through innovation. The root causes of problems are identified and partnerships are fostered in order to embark on possible solutions to mitigate these challenges as well as developing funding models (Boelman *et al.* 2015:5). This Centre was established in 2001 and it is "in the portfolio of the Minister of Public Service and Administration. It was established to identify, support and nurture innovation in the public service, with a view to improve service delivery" (CPSI 2020). Throughout the public service innovative ideas are developed as well as implemented by CPSI. This is achieved as a result of facilitating pilot projects that demonstrate the value of innovative solutions, and through activities that create an enabling environment within the public sector to support and sustain innovation. CPSI is able to identify and share lessons as well as information about innovation trends occurring within the country, on the African continent and internationally (CPSI 2020).

The Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship is hosted by the Graduate School of Business at the University of Cape Town (South African Brewery, Ltd (SAB) Foundation 2020:4). The Bertha Centre is the first academic centre in Africa dedicated to advancing social innovation and entrepreneurship. The Bertha Centre for social innovation and entrepreneurship is a specialised unit within the Graduate School of Business at the University of Cape Town (The Bertha Centre 2018:2). This Centre was established in partnership with the Bertha Foundation. The Bertha Foundation is a foundation that works together with "inspiring leaders who catalyze for social and economic change and human rights" (The Bertha Centre 2018:2). The objective of the Bertha Centre "is to build capacity and pioneer practices in Africa, working with partners, practitioners and students to advance the discourse and systemic impact of social innovation" (SAB Foundation 2020:4). The Centre works with the Graduate Business School to integrate social innovation into the curriculum of the Graduate Business School, it also established a large number of community practitioners and over seven million scholarships have been awarded to students across the African continent.

This Centre works closely with the academic faculty, the MTN Solution Space, and the Raymond Ackerman Academy of Entrepreneurial Development (The

Bertha Centre 2018:2). The Bertha Centre aims to build an evidence base of African-centred social innovation and systems entrepreneurship, generating actionable insights for practitioners and students, and publishing them as case studies, research and media articles and curricula. Individuals, systems and institutions are empowered by the Centre and this is done through the provision of scholarships and “social venture test or start-up capital” (The Bertha Centre 2018:3). The “faculty and team members teach curricula created to advance social innovators, social and system entrepreneurs with a focus on addressing Africa’s social challenges and inequality in direct and in systemic ways” (The Bertha Centre 2018:3). The Network of Social Entrepreneurs at the University of Pretoria’s Gordon Institute of Business Science is another Centre that is responsible for bringing legitimacy and recognition to the people and the innovations in the field of social innovation (Howaldt *et al.* 2018:146).

The Princess D Menstrual Cup, is another example of innovation in South Africa. This initiative was spearheaded by Famram Solutions founded by Ms Shamila Ramjawan in 2016. The Princess D Menstrual Cup was created for young schoolgirls from poor and disadvantaged communities who have to stay at home during their menstrual cycle because they cannot afford to purchase sanitary towels (CPSI 2019:16). It is estimated that young schoolgirls from poor and disadvantaged communities do not attend school for approximately five to seven days every month, as a result of not having access to sanitary towels. This also causes a hindrance for the “United Nations Sustainable Development Goal four, namely to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (CPSI 2019:16). There was an urgent need, based on thorough research, to bring about a sustainable solution to this challenge.

The Princess D Menstrual Cup is hygienic, easy to clean, sterilise and reusable for a period of 10 years. It is comfortable to wear and most importantly: healthy, hygienic, easy and safe to use. It is also eco-friendly so it also contributes to the reduction of waste as it is linked to the concept of ‘going green’, saving the environment (CPSI 2019:17). As a result of corporate funding for 200 to 800 girls from one school, over 130 schools from rural communities were provided with the menstrual cup and this has had a phenomenal impact on their lives. This initiative is not only limited to South Africa, as thousands of young girls throughout the world, were beneficiaries of the Princess D Menstrual Cup (CPSI 2019:18). The pride of young school-girls was restored as they are able to attend school during their menstrual cycle, which was not the case previously.

The SAB Foundation is an independent trust that annually invests millions of rands towards developing entrepreneurship in South Africa. This foundation was established in 2010 as part of the broad-based black economic empowerment of the SAB Ltd. The SAB Foundation has three programmes that are aimed at promoting social innovation in South Africa. For the purpose of this article only two

programmes will be explored. The first programme is the Social Innovation and Disability Empowerment Awards. The objective of this programme is to award innovators, social entrepreneurs, institutions and social enterprises with prototypes, or businesses that are in the early stage of development, that have the ability to solve social problems. These initiatives are aimed at addressing the challenges that are experienced by low-income women, the youth, people living with impairments and people that live in rural areas (SAB Foundation 2020:4).

The estimated unemployment rate among individuals who have an impairment ranges between 70% and 90% and they are the most marginalised within societies (SAB Foundation 2020:4). Therefore, the Disability Empowerment Awards, is a very important initiative. Through this initiative social enterprises are discovered and supported that are responsible for the provision of solutions that are innovative with the objective to “either improve access to the economy for people with disabilities and/or provide solutions for people with disabilities, at the same time ensuring that enough revenue is generated in order to become sustainable over time” (SAB Foundation 2020:4). The recipients of the Social Innovation and Disability Empowerment Award, receive an award between R200 000 and 1.3 million (SAB Foundation 2020:4). This prize money is utilised as an investment for the respective innovation. Not only do the recipients receive prize money, they are also assessed on a case-by-case basis and are afforded the opportunity to be part of a business development programme that is tailor-made with a selected business mentor (SAB Foundation 2020:4). Due to the flexibility of this initiative, it is adjusted to the needs of each winner, as mutually agreed upon by them and their mentors.

The Student Seed Fund, another initiative by the SAB Foundation, is a collaboration between the Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (The Bertha Centre) and the SAB Foundation, that started in 2015. This fund was designed and established to host current students and former students who are part of the university’s alumni. This initiative focuses on providing social ventures with access to pure grant seed capital at the pre-start-up business model discovery phase, the start-up phase, as well as those in transition between the two phases. The objective of the seed fund is to support social ventures with high potential for commercial viability and social impact creation. Due to the success of this initiative in 2019, the SAB Foundation was afforded the opportunity to expand this initiative to other universities such as the University of Limpopo, University of Zululand and University of Venda (SAB Foundation 2020:4).

According to Howaldt *et al.* (2018:148), the success of social innovation in South Africa in the future is dependent on how social innovation can address the social challenges. It is important that the necessary energy and resources are in place in order to ensure the continued success of social innovation in the country. A strategic approach to ensure that there is continued support for social

innovation is required among all the actors that are involved in the social innovation. The ultimate objective of social innovation in the country is to empower citizens to create solutions to their problems (Howaldt *et al.* 2018:148).

## **Social innovation challenges in South Africa**

One of the biggest challenges faced by social innovators is funding. This is because “social innovators and entrepreneurs do not easily fulfil traditional investment criteria for charitable, commercial or public investors” (Bonnici 2020). In order for social innovators to ensure that there is an increase in their delivering capacity, and to reduce product costs; funding is required. There is also a big demand for funding in order to have successful marketing campaigns (SAB Foundation 2020:16). Rental costs are still very high and it is difficult for businesses that are willing, to partner with social innovators.

A number of challenges in terms of social innovation in South Africa, have been identified in the SAB Foundation Impact Report; including a lack of funding, resources, production equipment, market access, brand exposure, premises or office space, small markets, right customer fit, lack of buy-in from government, lack of proper finance systems, lack of capacity to meet demand, finding suitable suppliers, staff shortages and lack of trained staff (SAB Foundation 2020:16). Additional challenges include systemic barriers such as a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem, insufficient policy development and implementation, insufficient funding and management capacity. Although South Africa has witnessed a number of social innovation initiatives during the past decade, approaches and attempts have been fragmented and disjointed. A more holistic approach to increase social innovation in South Africa is needed.

## **SOCIAL INNOVATION AMID A NATIONAL STATE OF DISASTER**

The world has experienced a pandemic during 2020 due to a novel coronavirus (Covid-19), which has led to a National State of Disaster in South Africa. The world has changed dramatically, contributing to disruptions in social, economic, governance and health systems across the globe. For a social value co-creation perspective to be useful to deal with Covid-19 effects, the perspective should incorporate multiple entities including community, government, business and civil society. The perspective should provide ways to incorporate altruistic aims into policies regarding the importance of social innovation and social cohesion in society (Ratten 2020:3). A global crisis such as the Covid-19 pandemic provides an opportunity for innovation, leading to social change and the creation of more radically different,

adaptive and resilient systems (Van Niekerk 2020:1). The focus should not only be on maximising shareholder value but also to increase emphasis on the benefit to the community; activities should focus on having a social purpose (Ratten 2020:5–6).

During a time of social change, technical innovation alone cannot provide resilient and sustainable solutions. There is a need to increase social innovation efforts while waiting for technical innovations such as rapid diagnostics and vaccines to emerge (Van Niekerk 2020:1). Nilsson (2019) argues that “to limit innovation to technology is to limit the scale of the impact we can have”.

Table 1 outlines the differences between technical and social innovation features.

**Table 1: Technical innovation compared to social innovation**

Features	Technical innovation	Social innovation
<i>Challenge</i>	Problem focused	Systemic social challenges, needs of humanity, possibility focused
<i>Goal</i>	Financial, technical or intellectual impact	Social impact – well-being, improving quality of life for society as a whole, social inclusion, social change
<i>Characteristics</i>	Novelty and newness	Combining existing elements in creative ways
<i>Place</i>	Created in laboratories or controlled environments	Created within the contextual reality
<i>People</i>	Disciplinary experts	Multi- and trans-disciplinary – experts and lay people across various disciplines and sectors
<i>Longevity</i>	Limited lifespan	Sustainable, durable and resilient
<i>Process</i>	Top-down directive	Co-creation, partnership and collaboration
<i>Outputs</i>	Tangible: new products and service	Both tangible and intangible: social relationship, empowerment, and agency
<i>Resultant change</i>	Change in externalised institutions (structures and processes)	Changes in externalised institutions but also internalised institutions (mindsets and beliefs)

**Source:** (Adapted from van Niekerk 2020:2)

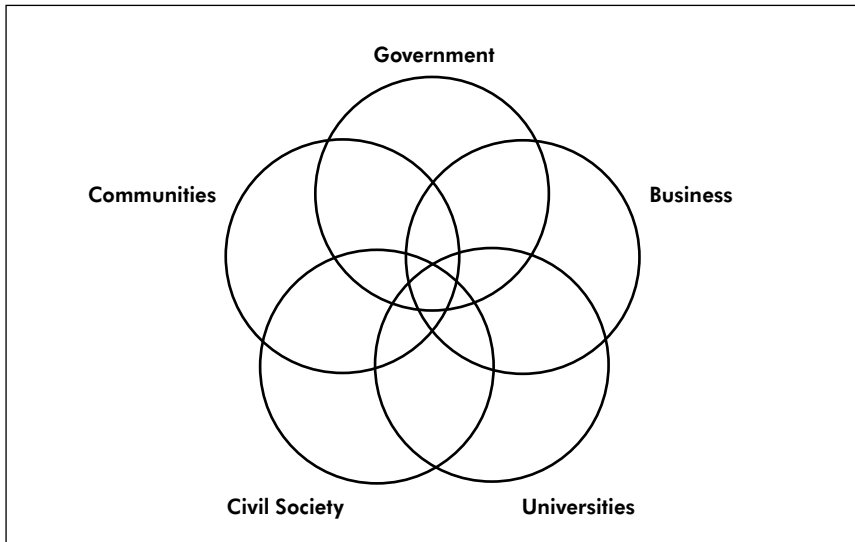
Table 1 illustrates that technical innovation alone will not address social challenges in a sustainable way. Social innovation focuses on building leadership and community capacity to address social problems. An example of how citizens have worked together to respond to challenges presented by Covid-19 is the

Community Action Networks established in Cape Town, South Africa (Van Niekerk 2020:3). In March 2020, a group of teachers, doctors, and artists started with a vision of “Cape Town Together” (CTT), a rapid community response to Covid-19 to encourage and inspire people from all over the city to self-organise, to take local action, and to develop ways to share resources. CTT has produced a network, known as Community Action Networks, of local community initiatives, neighbourhoods across the city and the country (Scheepers, Lakhani and Armstrong 2020).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

South Africa faces a ‘triple challenge’ of poverty, inequality and unemployment, with half of the population living in poverty (Meldrum and Bonnici 2017). According to Meldrum and Bonnici (2017) “this tension between a favourable innovation climate and extreme social challenges creates an environment where many of the opportunities for innovation have an implicit social impact”. Etzkowits (2002) argues that “innovation is increasingly based upon a Triple-Helix of university-industry and government interactions”. However, a more inclusive approach is required in South Africa to involve actors beyond the ‘Triple-Helix’ of innovation. Thus, a strategic approach to social innovation

**Figure 1: The Fivefold Helix approach to social innovation**



Source: (Adapted from Etzkowitz 2003:3)

involving both business, government, the community, civil society and universities is needed for co-creation and social impact. This approach is illustrated in Figure 1 as a 'Fivefold Helix' including government, business, universities, communities and civil society, to increase cooperation, co-creation, partnership, capacity building, leadership and collaboration towards social innovation. The Fivefold Helix is based on a non-linear, multidimensional and hybrid network for social innovation. This would allow for sharing knowledge and research for innovation to transcend traditional boundaries of organisations or actors, sharing of resources among actors or organisations, capacity and leadership building and transformation.

With the current public overstrained and the strain on national government's competitiveness and long-term economic growth, social innovation can provide a more holistic approach to social, economic and environmental challenges through collaborative co-creation and partnership (Lekhanya 2019:1–2). Following the Fivefold Helix approach illustrated in Figure 1, could provide a holistic approach to achieve social innovation during and after a National State of Disaster due to the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Lehanya (2019:5) "government and policy makers must work on putting social innovation into perspective, while all stakeholders in the field of entrepreneurship and social development should participate in social innovation activities to provide much needed support", in South Africa. Governments should facilitate creating new opportunities through the Fivefold Helix networks, for social progress.

## **CONCLUSION**

Social innovation leads to social impact. Social innovation aims to promote social change by addressing the needs of humanity. During the 4IR social innovation is a key driver for social change by taking advantage of new technology to tackle social problems. However, during times of crises and a National State of Disaster, witnessed in the current Covid-19 pandemic, technical innovation alone cannot provide resilient and sustainable solutions, thus social innovation has become increasingly important to ensure resilience in various systems in society. The aim of this article was to describe the nature and manifestations of social innovation in South Africa. A number of noteworthy social innovation initiatives have been identified in South Africa. However, a number of challenges should be addressed in order to increase social innovation in South Africa. These challenges include: the lack of a conducive entrepreneurial ecosystem, policy formulation and implementation, funding and management capacity. Thus, a more inclusive approach to increase social innovation in South Africa is needed. This approach entails increased collaboration, co-creation and partnership towards a common goal to

solve social problems. A Fivefold Helix approach is recommended for increased social innovation, involving business, government, the community, civil society and universities. Governments should facilitate creating new opportunities for social progress, by facilitating collaboration through hybrid innovation networks such as the Fivefold Helix networks.

## NOTE

- \* This article is partly based on an unpublished Doctoral thesis, "The impact of e-governance on social justice in the Gauteng Department of Education", by Carmen Joel, under supervision of Professor Danielle Nel-Sanders, at the University of Johannesburg.

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# Exploring Social Media Initiatives to Increase Public Value in Public Administration

## The Case of the Department of Communication and Information System (GCIS)

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### ABSTRACT

This article explores the utilisation of social media to increase public value. It focuses on the Department of Communication and Information System (GCIS) and its utilisation of Twitter, particularly the South African Government Twitter account – @GovernmentZA. Social media is discussed within the context of public administration, highlighting its use as part of Government 2.0 and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Within the statutory and regulatory frameworks, public servants are expected to place the needs of the citizenry first. Furthermore, citizens are entitled to access information, participate in democratic processes and express their views. Social media provides a platform through which all of these expectations can be realised.

The study relied on qualitative research methods, which included semi-structured interviews with GCIS employees, the tweets collected from @GovernmentZA and citizens' responses. Secondary data was gathered from books, journals, Twitter, policy documents, relevant legislation, published articles, the internet and annual reports to acquire knowledge and insight to respond to the study's objectives. The study utilised a thematic analysis to identify themes in the data related to public value. The data was analysed through ATLAS.ti.

The study found that GCIS endeavours to produce public value and acknowledges Twitter as a means through which public value can be created and increased. Furthermore, the tweets posted on @GovernmentZA reflect the themes necessary to increase public value. The study revealed that the GCIS can enhance its utilisation of Twitter by listening and responding to citizens on a more regular basis, particularly when they are dissatisfied with government. Recommendations of how the GCIS can enhance the utilisation of Twitter to increase public value are finally provided.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The creation of public value should be a priority for all governments as one of the key responsibilities of public managers is to ensure that their work produces value for citizens. Social media provides new opportunities for governments to communicate and engage with the public and in so doing, expands avenues for the co-production, creation and increase of public value.

Social media is a relatively new phenomenon, but its impact is far-reaching and provides many opportunities for governments globally. Social media platforms offer governments the prospect of redefining their relationship with the citizenry through improved communication, enhanced public participation mechanisms, providing citizens a platform to air their views and improving service delivery. These are significant matters that are highlighted in South Africa's Constitution and are further cemented through legislation and government policies. Within this framework, government utilises social media to deliver services and communicate with citizens.

Government's utilisation of social media has evolved in line with e-government initiatives and Government 2.0 (Gov 2.0). As the 4IR unfolds further, governments will have to once again adapt their utilisation of social media to remain relevant.

South African government departments utilise social media platforms aggressively, with the GCIS in particular, driving the utilisation thereof. Government's utilisation of social media takes place in the context of the significant contribution these platforms facilitate in the creation of public value, which is also explored in this article.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION CONTEXT**

Social media is gaining popularity in public administration globally, particularly because of its reputation as an instrument to engage with citizens. In an age

where government focuses increasingly on citizens' needs and wants, social media can be viewed as a formidable instrument to improve interaction with citizens (Zavattaro 2013:244; Kutsikos 2007 in Karakiza 2015:385). Gruber (2017:91) asserts that, "The opportunities presented by social media have changed the public administration playing field". Social media has evolved from its original intention of merely linking users to their off-line contacts on an online platform. Social media provides government with opportunities to bolster its traditional communication channels, public participation and networking goals (Mergel 2012:470). Government already utilises social media through Gov 2.0, which builds on electronic government (e-government) initiatives. Furthermore, the 4IR also offers opportunities to further maximise the utilisation of social media.

Governments' utilisation of social media also aligns with public officials' efforts to create public value. Gruber (2017:94) suggests that guidelines on social media conform to the elements of Moore's strategic triangle which impacts on the quest for public value. The author points to the authorising environment which promotes government's interaction on social media platforms to engage unreservedly with the public. The state's increasing utilisation of social media to interact with the public also implies increased operational funding, especially when considering the amount of capital invested in it and the new developments it yields. Concerning the value circle, it has become evident that government clearly anticipates the type of messaging it allows in terms of the provision of services (Gruber 2017:94). Furthermore, Moore underscores the significant role public managers have to play in relation to public value, which places them at the centre of creating public value. Concerning government's utilisation of social media, public managers are responsible for the content that is disseminated through a particular entity's social media platform and are guided by its policy.

## **e-Government**

e-Government refers to government entities' utilisation of information technologies which possess the potential to change the way it interacts with the public, other forms of government and the private sector (World Bank 2011 in Karakiza 2015:385). Gil-Garcia et al. (2016:525) note that e-government promotes engagement with stakeholders and the public through mobile gadgets, websites and other digital avenues.

The utilisation of these technologies can result in a number of benefits, including the improved provision of services, galvanising citizens by sharing information, and ensuring improved governance by public managers. Marufu (2014:19), who expounds on these benefits, argues that the reporting mechanisms available through e-government ensure openness and accountability. Higher productivity is also achieved through a standardised interface which offers regular services with

limited interference from humans. These e-government tools, which also take the form of websites, electronic mails and transaction applications, have the potential to result in standardised and improved services (Marufu 2014:19). e-Government also has the potential to ensure that government services reach more people, since geographical boundaries are no longer an impediment if the citizen has access to the internet (Marufu 2014:19). e-Government provides an opportunity to interact with citizens in a way that focuses on the needs and desires of citizens. This user-centred approach implies that government will have at its disposal the necessary information to provide goods and services which meet the needs of citizens (Gil-Garcia *et al.* 2016:527).

The South African government has also embraced the benefits of e-government. The Department of Telecommunications and Postal Services (DTPS) resolved to make e-government the central portal, as well as avail information and services to citizens through various e-government channels (DTPS 2017:18–19). The latter channels are aimed at improving service delivery and ensuring that all citizens can access government services whenever they choose to, regardless of where they are situated. These channels include:

- Digital TV. With the move from analogue to digital broadcasting, digital set-top boxes are required to decode the digital signal to ensure that TV channels can be viewed on analogue TV sets (Department of Communication 2018). Government intends assessing what information can be shared through set-top boxes.
- Internet. Government's services are offered to the public through the central e-government portal on the Internet at [www.eservices.gov.za](http://www.eservices.gov.za). Furthermore, all government departments are expected to have standardised websites and services accessible on the Internet throughout the year.
- Common service centre. Government avails services to citizens in rural areas through its Thusong Service Centres. At these centres, public officials are also expected to assist citizens through online channels.
- Mobile. A large number of South Africans have access to a mobile phone with an Internet connection. In efforts to provide additional channels to access government services, these are also available through unstructured supplementary service data, mobi sites and mobile apps.
- Phone (call centre). The e-government call centre provides technical support for business and citizens who access services through the e-government portal, provides information on e-government services, and allows for citizens to undertake certain transactions (DTPS 2017:18–19).

Despite its many benefits, Khan (2017:14) is critical of e-government. The author argues that it is founded on an inside-out approach, that is, the focus is on optimising and utilising internal public resources to deliver services to the citizenry. Khan underscores that e-government services are one-directional, emanating

from government and flowing to citizens, whose only role is as that of consumers. Gov 2.0 endeavours to address these shortcomings.

## Gov 2.0

Gov 2.0 refers to government's utilisation of interactive communication technologies to re-engineer its relationship with the public into one that considers citizens. It can be described as a form of e-government that is more accessible, collaborative and social (Meijer, Koops, Pieterse, Overman & ten Tije 2012:59–60). Gov 2.0 endorses data integration on the internet partnerships and communication. Citizens have taken to Gov 2.0 applications and are active on platforms such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. Gov 2.0 goes beyond the utilisation of technologies and also marks a culture change, that is, the internet is considered a means for service delivery (Chun, Shulman, Sandoval & Hovy 2010:5). Gov 2.0 has its origins in the notion that the public should participate creatively in public administration through social media and the opportunities it offers to generate and disseminate content (Osimo 2008 in Omar 2015:25). e-Government applications were originally intended to deliver information to citizens on behalf of government. This is a one-way flow of information, without any provision for responses from citizens. Gov 2.0, on the other hand, is concerned with incorporating innovative technologies with a transformation in organisational culture to improve transparency, interaction and partnerships with government.

Gov 2.0 also offers a means for better collaboration and engagement between the public and government (Karakiza 2015:386). This outside-in approach allows the public official to exploit external resources, such as social media and collective technologies, in the delivery of services to the public (Khan 2017:14). Various authors suggest that the utilisation of social media tools by governments marks the shift from e-government to Gov 2.0, which results in services being co-produced and decision-making incorporating the views of citizens (Chun *et al.* 2010; Nam 2012 in Criado *et al.* 2016:32; Khan 2017:14).

Meijer *et al.* (2012:59) highlight the potential of Gov 2.0 and in particular, its ability to redefine how government and the citizenry engage with each other. The authors note that Gov 2.0 provides opportunities for service delivery and policy design through structured collaboration with government, the public and other relevant stakeholders. This novel means to engage offered by Gov 2.0, has the ability to boost the public's trust in government (Meijer *et al.* 2012:59). Chun *et al.* (2010:5) argue that the utilisation of social media makes government more dependable, responsible and open because public officials, citizens and other role players are actively involved in content production, information sharing, mutual decision-making and gathering data. Sadeghi, Ressler and Krzmarzick (2012 in Omar 2015:1) concur, and reiterate that this new focus of government – Gov



2.0 – seeks to build on the principles of fairness, cooperation, transparency and the idea that the opinions of many carry more weight than that of one.

## **THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S UTILISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

In the South African public administration context, the utilisation of social media is encouraged due to the many benefits it offers as well as the growing percentage of citizens who access the platform. Government also acknowledges that social media provides an opportunity for public servants to become active participants in the digital revolution and engage in discussions with citizens, instead of merely disseminating information (GCIS 2011:4). As an indication that public institutions are aware of the need to utilise these platforms, many national and provincial government departments, and municipalities are active on social media platforms, for example, Facebook and Twitter (Government of South Africa 2018).

Various benefits arise as a result of government's utilisation of social media. These include:

- Improving government's ability to reach its citizens.
- Broadening the public's access to government communication.
- Providing a means for government to swiftly adapt and redirect communication when it is required to.
- Reducing the costs associated with government communication over an extended period.
- Improving the pace at which citizens are able to respond and contribute.
- Communicating with targeted audiences on matters relevant to them.
- Decreasing government's reliance on conventional media tools to engage with citizens (GCIS 2011:7).

Government also highlights the significance of ensuring that the abovementioned benefits are realised. Public managers can determine the effectiveness of a social media tool by assessing whether it enables interaction with both "internal and external stakeholders by facilitating one or more of the following: communication, disseminating information; interaction; and/or education" (GCIS 2011:7).

## **THE GCIS' UTILISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE**

Currently, no research has been conducted on GCIS' utilisation of social media. However, Ramodibe makes brief reference to GCIS' utilisation of social media

when evaluating its success in disseminating information to the public. The author recommends that GCIS maximises social media and communicates with citizens through this platform (2014:124). Furthermore, Ramodibe (2014:176) suggests that the government communication policy incorporates social media as one of the tools through which it shares information with the citizenry. The GCIS has a number of Twitter and Facebook accounts which it manages for its various products and services (GCIS 2017c:39). The Government Communication Policy (GCIS 2017a:57), which was formulated by GCIS, sets out guidelines for the utilisation of social media. It also prescribes certain essential values that must be observed when public servants are active on social media (GCIS 2017a:60). These include:

- Social media activity should not be viewed primarily as a means to influence the environment and must always bear in mind the requirements of the public.
- The content provided on the relevant platforms should be beneficial, pertinent and timely.
- Social media activity should understand the obligations of the Public Service to be considerate and attentive to citizens' request for discussions.
- To encourage openness of state processes and choices, there should be no delay in providing information on social media platforms, when such a request is made.

The GCIS is keen to embrace social media, particularly the opportunities it provides to converse with citizens instead of a one-direction flow of information. The benefits of social media are only likely to increase as the digital divide decreases (GCIS 2011:4).

## **GCIS' use of Twitter**

The choice of Twitter as a communication tool was explored by asking those responsible for the social media account why GCIS utilises Twitter to communicate with citizens on behalf of government. The participants highlighted that Twitter has the ability to reach a large number of people in a very short space of time. Twitter emerges as an obvious choice because "on Twitter every two minutes, like 50 000 people are logged in" (P 2 2019). "So why not use that platform because it has so many views" (P2 2019). The immediacy of Twitter was further highlighted by P 3 (2019), who said, "We use Twitter because it reaches a number of people. It's easier to engage and it's very fast, whatever you posted at that time goes".

Another feature of Twitter that the participants accentuated is that many users turn to this social media platform for news updates. The participants argued that for government to be relevant and have its message on a particular issue disseminated promptly, it needs to have a presence on Twitter.

Based on the responses from the participants it is clear that Twitter is a valuable and effective tool through which GCIS communicates with the public. Twitter enables GCIS to rapidly disseminate information and immediately respond to a topical issue, thereby clarifying government's stance on that issue. Furthermore, given that large segments of the population are active on Twitter, the social media platform allows GCIS to reach a large portion of the public in a matter of seconds.

## **Understanding public value**

When offering their views of what public value entails, certain participants acknowledged they were unfamiliar with the concept, while P 2 avoided the question altogether. Those who elaborated on their understanding of public value alluded to the significance of the public and providing them with information and services that they would find beneficial. P 5 (2019) argued that public value is "being informed about what this government is doing and also the truth maybe, from government's perspective".

All participants agreed that creating public value was vital to their work. P 1 (2019) stressed the importance of serving citizens and stated: "It's about uplifting people, telling them about jobs, telling them how to get government services, so that's us also putting value to their lives".

Despite participants suggesting they were unfamiliar with public value, the participants identified the key elements of public value, which included creating something which citizens consider to be of value to them and public managers are expected to create this value. All the participants articulated that the needs and interests of the public were vital to creating public value, reflecting on the views held by Stoker (2006:47). The participants underscored that providing value to the public translated into disseminating information to the citizenry including services which are beneficial to them. Furthermore, the participants highlighted the central role they play, as public servants, in the creation of public value and their responsibility towards those they serve. This is aligned to Moore's (1995:28) assertion that the work of public servants is intended to produce public value.

## **Twitter's role in creating public value**

The participants believe that Twitter has a role to play in creating public value. They noted that through Twitter, a large number of citizens are informed about government services in a very short space of time. Furthermore, Twitter also provides the means for citizens to directly and quickly, interact with government. Twitter is a platform through which citizens can voice their comments and concerns or pose questions directly to GCIS. Public servants can then utilise the same platform to respond immediately.

According to P 5 (2019), “The way that government is currently using the platform, we are literally just broadcasting news so it’s almost like a one-way type of communication. We haven’t got to a point where we make it a two-way type of communication platform where citizens are able to communicate with us”.

The participants’ responses suggest that due to the communication channels it opens, its speed, responsiveness and ability to connect people, Twitter has a role to play in creating public value. However, to get the most out of Twitter, it must be utilised effectively by listening and responding to the public, instead of being viewed solely as a means to broadcast government information.

**Table 1: Adherence to Moore’s elements of the strategic triangle**

<b>Elements of Moore’s strategic triangle</b>	<b>Participants’ responses</b>
<i>Public value</i>	<p>“You want someone who’s going come and ask: ‘How do I apply for an ID’, and you tell that person, how they can apply for an ID. The next thing, the person is getting a grant from SASSA because now they’ve got this” (P 2 2019).</p> <p>“Whatever you post you must make sure that the person that is going to look at that content will say this has value” (P 3 2019).</p>
<i>Operational capabilities</i>	<p>“Every day someone comes up with a new idea of how we can improve” (P 2 2019).</p> <p>“We will actually monitor what is trending on Twitter. The Rapid Response meetings in the morning, they don’t check other social media accounts, but they do check Twitter” (P 4 2019).</p> <p>“Every week we monitor the people that follow us” (P 3 2019).</p>
<i>Legitimacy and support</i>	<p>“Our content comes from either statements from government or from key messages being compiled by other sections” (P 4 2019).</p> <p>Mostly tweet about “what’s happening in the news, also monitoring what’s trending, if there’s anything we need to comment on or write about we do that” (P 1 2019).</p> <p>“The account is supposed to be as informative as it can be ... it’s actually seen as an advocate for government” (P 5 2019).</p>

Source: (Author’s own illustration)

## GCIS creating public value on Twitter

All the participants agreed that they considered public value when crafting the content and deciding what to post on @GovernmentZA. They consider the value the tweet would add to citizens’ lives, in terms of providing them access to services and informing them of government activities. This alludes to the public value

or the benefit that GCIS wants to create. One of the elements in Moore's strategic triangle is significant public value or benefit the entity wants to create through its targets and goals (Moore 1995:71; Omar 2015:29).

The participants described @GovernmentZA as an advocate of government, noting that most of the content posted originates from government statements, key messages and issues which need to be responded to. This suggests that legitimacy and support are provided by GCIS for the Twitter account. The participants held that followers have a significant role to play and should not merely be passive recipients of the tweets.

It is evident that the participants encourage collaboration and engagement with those who view the tweets. The respondents are eager to see followers retweet the posts on @GovernmentZA because this engagement results in the information contained in the tweet being widely disseminated. Furthermore, the participants actively encourage questions from followers and are open to engaging in discussions to ensure a positive outcome for citizens. However, when the comments from the public are negative, the respondents do not engage with the public. When citizens ask GCIS questions based on a tweet, the officials provide further information which results in a positive outcome, and co-production takes place.

## **Increasing public value**

The four themes central to the measurement and increase of public value are: efficiency, outcome achievement, trust and legitimacy, and service delivery quality. The participants were asked how the tweets posted on @GovernmentZA contributed towards each of these themes.

## **Helping government become more efficient**

Efficiency is described as the degree to which the public organisation achieves the best results for citizens with limited resources (Faulkner & Kaufman 2017:79). Stakeholder or shareholder value, innovation, productivity, effectiveness and parsimony are all values that have an effect on efficiency. The respondents were divided on whether the tweets they post help government become efficient.

Despite the mixed responses, it is clear that the tweets contribute towards government becoming more efficient. The tweets achieve this in two ways: first, by allowing citizens to voice their concerns and thereby providing government departments an opportunity to address these issues, and thereby making the department more productive. Second, posting tweets saves government resources such as time and money but still gives it the opportunity to reach and engage with thousands of people.

## Achieving specific outcomes

Outcome achievement is the degree to which the public sector develops results which are valued by the public in a number of sectors, including social, economic, environmental and cultural outcomes (Faulkner & Kaufman 2017:77). Factors that relate to outcome achievement include common good, social cohesion, public interest, fairness and equity, access to knowledge, employment and benefits of economic endeavours and social capital.

Most participants highlighted that the tweets achieved specific outcomes. Concerning social cohesion, the respondents cited the tweets acknowledging achievements, such as a victory by the one country's national sports team or an accomplishment by a singer. These posts solicit many positive responses and are regularly retweeted by the public. These 'feel good' tweets spark much positive reaction and rallies the country behind an achievement, thereby contributing towards social cohesion.

In terms of employment, the participants held that they regularly tweeted job opportunities in government and its programmes. Furthermore, the tweets encouraged citizens to apply for these and provided information on how to do so.

Explaining how the tweets help achieve environmental outcomes, P 5 (2019) highlighted Good Green Deeds Campaign – a government campaign aimed at caring for the environment – noting that when tweets related to the campaign were posted, it was not merely to inform the public about the campaign but to also inspire them into action. P 5 (2019) argued that the intention of posting such information was so that “people would actually turn it into an action-oriented type of thing, where instead of throwing paper or you see somebody throwing papers, you pick it up yourself. Then they create clubs and all that stuff on maybe every Saturday, they'll have a community outreach, but that's coming from a tweet or update that was done”.

P 4 (2019) held that while the tweets do contribute towards specific outcomes, achieving these were also largely dependent on other factors. Citing an outcome such as improved health care, P 4 (2019) stated that while the tweets will have some impact, for example, inform the public what they can do to ensure they do not contract Listeriosis; improved health care is largely dependent on the services delivered by the country's clinics and hospitals. It is clear from the responses that the tweets posted by the participants do have a role to play in helping achieve a number of outcomes. The GCIS tweets address a range of outcomes including economic, environmental, health, and social. When the content of the tweet is educational and raises awareness, and citizens choose to act on that information, outcomes can be improved and achieved.

## **Satisfaction with services**

The respondents were asked whether the tweets they posted helped ensure that citizens are satisfied with the services provided by government. Certain participants pointed out that they could not establish whether tweets contributed towards citizens' satisfaction with government services because the tweets merely provided information on how to go about accessing services. Furthermore, there was no assurance that citizens are acting on that information. Others noted that even when tweets relating to service delivery are posted, citizens choose to respond by highlighting the shortcomings of government.

However, several participants disagreed, noting that tweets relating to government services are well received by followers. Some of the information posted in the tweets included new innovations and services offered by government which the public would not have been aware of. The respondents highlighted that when they post such information, they help citizens access government services more efficiently, because citizens are prepared and know what to expect when accessing a particular service. Consequently, the citizenry is satisfied with the services they receive.

While there was no consensus among the participants whether their tweets left citizens satisfied with government services, their responses revealed that this is indeed the case. Citizens are empowered with information. Therefore, they can approach a government department with the correct information and have their expectations met. This would leave them satisfied with the service they receive from government.

## **Building trust and legitimacy**

Trust and legitimacy constitutes the degree to which citizens and other stakeholders consider a public organisation and its undertakings to be legitimate and truthful (Faulkner & Kaufman 2017:79). Values that have a bearing on citizens' trust in government include: accountability, dialogue, responsiveness, listening to public opinion, user democracy, integrity, openness, citizen involvement, professionalism, honesty and self-development.

The participants noted that the tweets do build trust in government because the information shared is an indication that government cares for citizens and is working towards improving their lives. However, it was also pointed out that the content of the tweets often determined whether this trust was reinforced. Moreover, the people mentioned in the tweets also had an effect.

The respondents noted that the tweets posted highlighted the achievements of government, including statistics such as how many houses had been built or jobs created. These posts are intended to illustrate that government is at work and is delivering on its mandate, which builds public confidence.

Furthermore, tweets are often posted on current issues that dominate the news. The participants argued that by commenting on these issues immediately through Twitter, the public is assured that government is aware of the needs of the people; responds to, and cares about the day-to-day events citizens experience.

P 4 believed the extent to which a tweet helped build trust in government was largely dependent on the content of the tweet and to some degree, the context and timing of the tweet. "For instance, we are currently still posting messages on anti-corruption and we still got the Zondo Commission on. I think it's very difficult for the public to build trust if they still hear, daily, breaking stories from the Zondo Commission, and government is saying no, anti-corruption, anti-corruption" (P4 2019). The participant pointed out that in contrast, tweets about government's Youth Employment Service (YES) programme, helps build trust in government because it is evidence that the pressing issue of youth unemployment is being addressed.

Tweets posted by GCIS have the potential to build trust in government, particularly when the content of the tweets reveals to citizens that government is delivering services and is addressing significant issues of the day. However, not all citizens receive the tweets favourably. Even when a tweet is intended to highlight government's success, certain followers interpret it to highlight shortcomings, which calls into question their trust in government. Furthermore, where the credibility of the person mentioned in the tweet is called into question, the posted tweet does not necessarily build trust in government.

## CONCLUSION

Globally, governments cannot ignore social media because it has the potential to enrich the relationship between the citizenry and governments as well as improve service delivery. While the Constitution and White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (DPSA 1997) were drafted at a time when social media did not exist and make no mention thereof, these platforms are important tools to achieve the aims of both. Social media provides access to services, disseminates information, encourages public participation, is a means for expression and enhances service delivery.

Governments' utilisation of information communication technologies was initially limited to e-government initiatives. e-Government offers a number of benefits, including improved service delivery, accountability and transparency (Marufu 2014:19). However, e-government also adopts an inside-out approach, that is, the services it offers are one-directional and citizens are perceived as mere consumers (Khan 2017:14).

As an evolution of e-government, Gov 2.0 has the potential to re-engineer the relationship between government and the public into one that provides more consideration to citizens (Meijer *et al.* 2012:59–60). An integral part of Gov 2.0



is social media. The South African government acknowledges that social media provides an opportunity for public servants to become active participants in the digital revolution and engage in discussions with citizens in alternative ways (GCIS 2011:4). GCIS, in particular, views social media as an important tool and its social media guidelines sets out the many benefits it hopes to achieve through the utilisation of social media.

In an era of constant change, governments must look at maximising the utilisation of social media to capitalise on the 4IR. Social data, in particular, can help ensure that governments better understand citizens and their needs and then respond to them accordingly (Yilmaz *et al.* 2017: 253).

The article analysed the data that was collected through the semi-structured interviews with those responsible for updating @GovernmentZA and the tweets posted during March 2018. The focus was on determining GCIS' understanding of public value; whether Twitter has a role to play to increase public value; whether GCIS considers public value when tweets are posted on @GovernmentZA; and whether the tweets posted on this site increase public value. It was revealed that GCIS employees have a clear grasp of public value and the pivotal role they play in its creation. They also recognise Twitter as a platform through which they can not only create but also increase public value. GCIS employees regularly tweet about the themes – outcome achievement, service delivery quality, trust and legitimacy, and efficiency – which have been identified as fundamental to increase public value. This study also revealed that these themes are evident in the tweets that were posted for the period 1 March to 31 March 2018 and, therefore, GCIS does attempt to increase public value through the tweets posted on @GovernmentZA.

One of the challenges identified in this study was that GCIS does not engage with citizens as much as it should in determining what is public value. The public value created by GCIS can be further enhanced if the department engages regularly with citizens to determine the kind of content they want to receive through Twitter. This is currently not being done. Therefore, citizens are not as involved as they should be in the co-production of public value. Furthermore, GCIS is excluding opportunities presented by citizens for this type of engagement by not responding regularly to the queries raised on Twitter by citizens.

A further challenge relates to the content of the tweets not achieving the desired outcomes. While the tweets do represent the four themes linked to an increase in public value, it is clear from the manner in which the public engages with the tweets that in certain instances these themes are rejected entirely. Citizens reacted negatively to the content of many tweets and displayed a lack of trust in government and questioned whether it has the will or capacity to deliver quality services. Through their responses to the tweets, citizens also raised concerns about government's failure to utilise state resources

optimally or in the best interests of citizens. Moreover, specific outcomes were not being achieved. GCIS has indicated a willingness to create value that is beneficial to citizens as well as to ensure that public value is increased through its utilisation of Twitter.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are recommendations that will assist GCIS increase the public value it creates through @GovernmentZA.

### **Facilitating the co-production of public value**

GCIS should undertake efforts to ensure and facilitate the co-production of public value on @GovernmentZA. This would entail the provision of opportunities to citizens to participate in the creation of public value in collaboration with GCIS. Currently, co-production is very limited because GCIS determines what it believes citizens want to know through the Rapid Response meetings and EIR employees who monitor what is trending on Twitter at that particular time. The department should embark on initiatives, such as executing research or placing a poll on Twitter to determine what content citizens want GCIS to tweet. Once citizens' views have been surveyed, GCIS can utilise the gathered information to enhance the content plans it develops for @GovernmentZA. This co-production will ensure that the tweets are more relevant and add value to the public.

### **Increasing interaction with citizens with dissenting views**

It is important that GCIS endeavours to create value for all citizens, even those who do not agree with government or are critical of it. Therefore, GCIS should interact with citizens who respond to the tweets posted on @GovernmentZA regardless of whether the comments are positive or negative. GCIS should develop a strategy that would provide direction of how to respond to the negative comments, instead of ignoring these, which is currently the practice. Part of the strategy should include identifying those tweets that are likely to prompt negative responses from citizens before they are posted and have pre-planned messages ready to counter the comments.

### **Strengthening trust and legitimacy on @GovernmentZA**

To facilitate an increase in public value, GCIS should focus on efforts to ensure that the tweets posted on @GovernmentZA strengthen trust and legitimacy. GCIS

should give as much consideration to the messenger who is relaying the content of the tweet, as it does to the message itself. Regardless of the content of the tweets, citizens focus on the credibility of the messenger. Values related to the theme 'trust and legitimacy' include accountability, integrity and honesty. If the person quoted in the tweet is deemed by the public to lack these values, citizens will pay little attention to the content. GCIS should therefore, give careful consideration to who is being mentioned or quoted in a tweet, particularly if the message it wants to convey is an important one. In such instances, GCIS should consider quoting a more credible messenger in the content of the tweet or remove all mention of the controversial principal from the content and instead underscore the message itself.

GCIS can further bolster trust and legitimacy by increasing its responsiveness to followers. To ensure that @GovernmentZA is more responsive to citizens, GCIS should develop a strategy to ensure that all queries raised are responded to, even if they do not relate to the work of the department. Currently, no such strategy exists. Therefore, GCIS is restricted in the queries from the public which it can respond to. The strategy would have to be an integrated one because GCIS would require the cooperation of other government departments. This integrated approach would allow GCIS to refer citizens with enquiries which fall outside its scope to a specific person at the department best placed to deal with the enquiry. This increased responsiveness on the part of GCIS will ensure that citizens' needs are addressed.

## **Addressing service delivery quality concerns**

In a bid to further increase public value, GCIS should address concerns about the quality of the services delivered that citizens raise on @GovernmentZA. One of the themes that is linked to an increase in public value is the quality of the service delivered. One of the findings was that citizens constantly lamented the lack of quality service delivery on @GovernmentZA. This issue should be addressed by the strategy described above and further augmented by social media campaigns that should be run in conjunction with other government departments. @GovernmentZA should be monitored to identify the most pressing issues related to the quality of services delivered and social media campaigns developed to address these issues. The campaigns should highlight the progress being made in delivering services to the public and programmes that have been implemented or are being developed to improve service delivery. To ensure positive participation from citizens on these issues, the social media campaigns should also encourage them to share their suggestions of how they would go about ensuring service delivery. These campaigns should be rolled out on both @GovernmentZA and the Twitter account of the government department responsible for the particular service delivery mentioned.

## Working towards efficiency

GCIS should increase the frequency of tweets related to the theme 'efficiency'. An increase in public value is linked to an increase in efficiency and one of the values related thereto is innovation. While GCIS tweets about innovations in government, these are restricted to those in the news environment at that particular time. This theme was not tweeted about as often as the other themes but when tweets about innovation were posted, they were well received by followers. The EIR unit should approach other departments regularly at both the national and provincial spheres to source content on any new innovations the departments have launched. Tweets based on the content gathered from the departments should be developed to ensure that GCIS has a steady stream of tweets related to innovations to post on @GovernmentZA, even when no new innovations are rolled out.

## Focus on social outcomes

To further enhance public value, GCIS should increase the frequency of tweets related to the theme 'outcome achievement'. In particular, GCIS should post more tweets linked to the values of social outcomes such as social cohesion. Content plans for @GovernmentZA should include at least one tweet linked to social outcomes per day. Tweets that acknowledge the achievements of South Africans or milestones should become a daily occurrence whether these are related to government or not. Citizens interacted with these tweets the most and responded to them most favourably. This is an indication that citizens consider these tweets to be of value to them. Therefore, GCIS should increase the frequency of such tweets.

## NOTE

- \* This article is partly based on an MPA dissertation that was completed under the supervision of Prof N Holtzhausen. Naidoo, I. 2020. *Exploring the use of social media to increase public value: The case of the Department of Government Communication and Information System*. Unpublished Master's in Public Administration. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

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# **A Conceptual Model for Public Budget Formulation for East African Countries to Enhance Participation of External Stakeholders in Budget Formulation Decision-Making**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This article focuses on decision enhancement for public sector budget formulation (PSBF) in three selected East African Community (EAC) countries. Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, and the likely impact thereof on transparency, accountability, and budgetary decision-making. The purpose of the article is to determine how decision-making for PSBF can be enhanced to promote participatory budgeting in these countries. The methodology is exploratory and conceptual in nature and used a purely qualitative research approach. The research methods entail unobtrusive methods (conceptual and documentary analysis) and a multiple case study research strategy. The study found severe fiscal constraints, complexities of budgetary decision systems that were applied, weak vertical accountability and transparency, and poor prioritisation of programmes and projects. The study recommends that an integrated approach of participatory budgeting processes of stakeholders (internal and external) should be formalised, Information Technology (IT) applications in participatory budgeting should be improved, and regulatory policies related to participatory budgeting should be implemented in an integrated manner to enhance public budget formulation decision-making.

## INTRODUCTION

There is a need to enhance public budget decisions during formulation. Lee *et al.* (2008:1–5) argue that an ideal budgeting system is one that focuses on gathering the best information for a decision, whether it is technical or primary, on the best way of allocating public financial resources. Enhanced credible budget formulation requires integrated support in expediting the budgeting processes. Involvement of both internal and external stakeholders in budget decisions, and IT technology application supported by a legal framework enhances public budget decision-making in the context of developing EAC countries. This involvement of stakeholders helps to prevent poor budget decision-making and corruption.

External stakeholders do not have a direct impact on government budget priorities in the EAC. This approach of budgeting is based on the realisation that in order to bring about the required interventions in the light of challenges in the EAC, budget process changes are necessary to enhance public value (Kelly and Rivenbark 2008:457–481; Rivenbark and Kelly 2006:31–42). In an era where external stakeholders hold government accountable for their decisions, there is a need for a budgeting approach where external stakeholders are involved in the budget decisions while addressing their concerns (Institute of Economic Affairs 2015).

In general, this article is informed by the consequences of mostly unsuccessful, ill-advised and uninformed public budget decision-making practices in the EAC countries (Nutt 1999). It also aims to expand upon the idea advanced in the literature, that engaging external stakeholders in participatory “budget decision-making” by focusing discussions on public values and priorities, enhances accountability and transparency (*cf.* Farmer 2013). Farmer (2013), states that governments need budget decision-making practices that can allocate scarce financial resources in an approach that meets the expectations of the general public.

The three EAC countries were selected because their traditional incremental budgeting practices inhibit external stakeholder participation in budget formulation. These countries lack a full basis for a prototype participatory budgeting system that involves data gathering and decision-making, hence the need to review existing policies on participatory budgeting to develop a comprehensive external stakeholder participatory budgeting model.

The sections below provide a conceptual clarification of terms relevant to the topic, contextualises the general background, rationale and problem statement of the study and provides a conceptual model and recommendations to enhance public budget formulation for the EAC in terms of participatory budgeting.



## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Shim and Siegel (2009) describe a **budget** as “the formal expression of plans, goals, and objectives of management that cover all aspects of operations for a designated period”. Following this definition, senior officials in the public sector are responsible for determining targets and goals covering the needs of their entities (Shim and Siegel 2009). Public budgets, therefore, are aimed at meeting the economic and social demands or activities of the public at the central level of government (Matei and Dinu 2009). This can be achieved through effective and efficient balancing of government revenues (source of finance) and public expenditures (the specific programmes and projects to meet the nation’s social and economic goals and targets) (Matei and Dinu 2009).

According to Lee *et al.* (2008:53–60), “**public sector budgeting** is a process of making and implementing decisions on financial resource acquisition, allocation, and the use of resources by the government”. From the perspective of Lee *et al.* (2008), public sector budgeting should fulfil its national mandate of dividing the country’s financial resources among the critical areas of society, in a manner that adequately meets the needs of external stakeholders.

Globally, **public sector budget formulation** (PSBF) is a crucial step of public sector financial management. From the studies of Baiocchi and Lerner (2007:7–13) and Lee, Johnson and Royce (2008:53–60), public budget formulation is where crucial decisions for balancing expenditure and revenues are made. In the economic and social context, budgeting can be described as systematic processes where decisions about public resources are made (Wang 2002:102–118). It is the basis for the allocation of resources for spending. This means that if a wrong decision is made or if there are discrepancies, the entire financial condition of the country is affected (Adelina and Tatian-Camelia 2014:131–140).

Kahar, Rohman and Chariri (2016:1663–1667) state that the term **participatory budgeting** is an accountability instrument for the executive arm of government, while Baiocchi and Lerner (2007:7–13) describe it as a tool for information gathering from external stakeholders. Furthermore, Bourgon (2007:7) asserts that participatory budgeting fosters dialogue between external stakeholders and internal stakeholders for meaningful budgeting. Put simply, participatory budgeting is an approach to poverty reduction (Wampler and Touchton 2017).

## CONTEXTUALISING THE BACKGROUND, RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Lee *et al.* (2008:53–60) argue that in the public sector of both developed and developing countries there is an inadequate standard of measuring budget activities,

especially those of social importance to the public. Indeed, this makes the budget formulation step the centre of attention in the public budgeting process (Lee *et al.* 2008:53–60).

Poor public budget decisions have been plaguing the EAC for decades. The Ministries of Finance of EAC countries have traditionally been preparing general public budgets that are formulated on the basis of significant financial projections from internal revenues as well as donors, to run a substantial budget to meet the demand of politicians who run for office, by promising the electorate various types of favours; for example, higher expenses on education or infrastructure and lower taxes (Slembeck, Jans and Leu 2014:141–147). These budget estimates are sometimes based on inaccurate economic forecasts resulting in severe economic downturns (Blöndal 2001:41–47).

Blöndal (2001:41–47) further asserts that a weak economic forecast causes an increase in government expenditure, which is prone to systematic deficits (i.e. “deficit biased”). This means that long-term obligations will not be funded (Farmer 2013). At the same time, the EAC practises traditional incremental budgeting which does not provide senior officials with strategies to achieve financial targets and has failed to pay attention to the priorities of the external stakeholders. Also, in the EAC, budgeting is approved incrementally based on the availability of funds. This makes traditional (line-item) budget systems appropriate because increments or deductions can quickly be executed at any time based on the availability of funds. When there are minimal donor funds, budget allocation on items funded by donors is reduced or eliminated.

Traditional (line-item) budgeting, therefore, is inappropriate for the EAC since priority setting is determined by the availability of donor funds, rather than by overarching domestic priorities. Additionally, the high inflation rates that characterise the EAC call for incremental budgeting. According to Tohamy, Dezhbaksh and Aranson (2006:47–70), higher inflation rates cause countries to adopt a traditional (line-item) budgeting practice. In this case adjustments are easily made based on the levels of inflation. What was required in the developing countries of East Africa is an approach of public budgeting that addresses the weaknesses of traditional (line-item) budgeting, while simultaneously addressing the governance issues of budgeting. Many scholars have identified and discussed participatory budgeting as the new public budgetary lens that addresses the weaknesses of traditional (line-item) budgeting. This approach of budgeting enables the involvement of external stakeholders in decisions regarding priorities of high importance to the general public, while simultaneously enhancing transparency, accountability, financing strategies and the voices of external stakeholders on projects and programmes to be financed by the government.

The future of public sector financial management will depend on how developed and developing countries position budgeting as a priority. At a general

level, the general budget indicates how the public sector plans for the spending of scarce resources. Public budgeting is a crucial financial management instrument for resource allocation. At the formulation level, budgeting is a governmental mechanism that seeks to allocate resources to achieve the country's established objectives (Adelina and Tatian-Camelia 2014:131–140). Moreover, it is argued that public budgeting supports resource allocation decisions in the programme and project priorities of the country (Dumitrescu 2012). This calls for a system of making choices between alternatives that will meet the established objectives. According to Adelina and Tatian-Camelia (2014:131–140), public sector budgeting systems are “systems for making choices of ends and means”. Notably, “these decisions are guided by theory, by hunch, by partisan politics, by narrow self-centredness, by self-sacrifice, and by other sources of assessment” (Lee *et al.* 2008:55). Public budgeting, therefore, embodies the priorities and choices of various stakeholders (internal and external stakeholders) in this process.

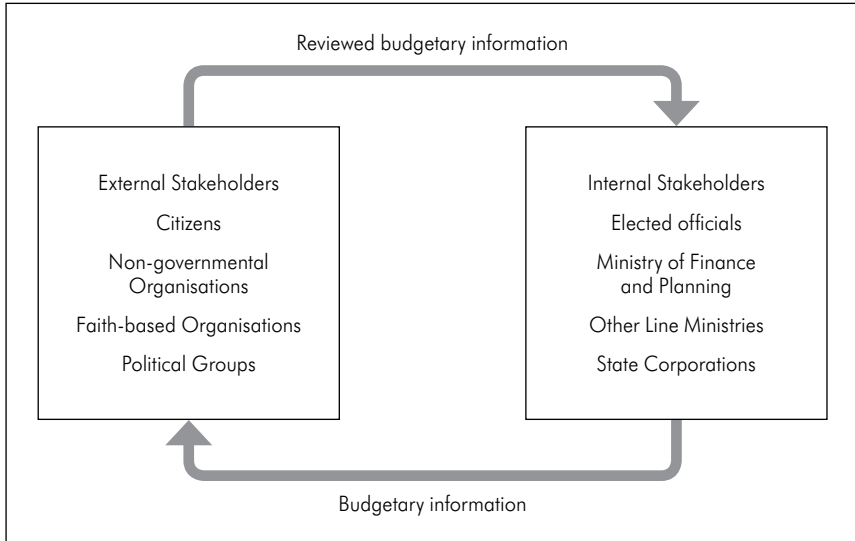
The importance of broad public participation in public budgeting decisions is emphasised by studies conducted by Naylor (2010) who argues that participation by all stakeholders is not only a source of information for the budgeting process but also for purposes of making financial and priority decisions. Public involvement in budgeting ensures accountability and transparency, which also reduces the chances of corruption, bureaucracy, and political interference (Bertot, Jerger and Grimes 2010:263–270).

Under ideal circumstances, in the public budget formulation environment, the internal stakeholders communicate with the external stakeholders through continuous engagement to make decisions on the allocation of resources. The internal stakeholders approve budget decisions after consultation with the external stakeholders in identifying public values and public priorities (Dumitrescu 2012). External stakeholders may include non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations, the donor community, political groups, and educational institutions. Internal stakeholders, on the other hand, could constitute elected officials, finance ministries (the Ministry of Finance and Planning in the EAC countries), other line ministries, state corporations, and commissions, as shown in Figure 1.

In general, the PSBF follows four distinct steps: First is the budget formulation, where the estimates of the expenditure and receipts for the ensuing financial year are prepared. The second step involves the budget enactment, where the proposed budget is approved by the relevant authorities (in most developing nations, this is done by the legislature).

The third step constitutes budget execution and the fourth and last step involves a review of budget implementation through an audit of the government operations (Dumitrescu 2012). Each of these steps must involve obtaining the external stakeholders' public views on which programmes are of greater value to the general external stakeholders. It must also avoid a scenario where the public

**Figure 1: Stakeholders involved in public budget formulation**



Source: (Mitchell 2014)

budget is perceived to be a reserved affair for the executive arm of the government and the legislature.

For PSBF in the EAC countries, the budgeting process comprises four activities: First is the setting up of the economic objectives including “the level of expenditure compatible with these targets”; second is the formulation of public sector spending policies and the country’s priorities; third is “the allocation of resources in conformity with both policies and fiscal targets” and last is “addressing operational efficiency and performance issues” (Potter and Diamond 2015). To achieve the desirable elements in public budget formulation discussed above, the EAC has undergone many reforms in public budgeting.

East African countries have implemented reforms in their public budget systems to enhance efficiency, accountability, and transparency (Lapsley and Wright 2004:3455–374). From the studies of Guthrie *et al.* (2003:2–7), the reforms are advocated because the overall results may increase benefits against the cost thereof. A fundamental reform that was introduced in the EAC constitutes the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). According to Gray (1998), the MTEF is a top to bottom budgeting approach where government ministries and agencies allocate resources in each sector. The aim of the MTEF is improved inter-sectoral resource allocation and balanced public sector policies. Also, the Constitution of Kenya of 2010, introduced the notion of the consultative process of public budgeting both at the national and the county government levels, where

all stakeholders are supposed to participate in budgeting processes and policy-making (Republic of Kenya 2010).

From the study of Rahaman and Lawrence (2001) on the deficiencies in the financial management of developing countries – using the case of the Volta River Authority (VRA) in Ghana – it was found that inadequate public budgetary procedures led to widespread embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds. The same sentiments were expressed in Kenya, where corruption is a severe constraint hampering higher economic growth (Wakiriba, Naghu and Wagoki 2014:105–115).

Three EAC countries, namely Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, with a combined population of 145.5 million (KIPPRA 2017), are facing recurring fiscal crises due to limited supply of long-term finance, low revenue collections, reduced aid inflows, downturns in Europe and Asia, economic volatility, budgetary deficits, depreciated local currency in the EAC against the dollar, as well as sovereign debts (World Bank 2018). With mild economic and fiscal policies, as posited by the World Bank (2018), these countries practise traditional (line-item) budgeting which does not give budget decision-makers strategies to achieve financial health in declining economic growth. There is also the aspect of limited external stakeholder participation in determining what programmes and projects are of interest to all stakeholders or beneficiaries (Mathenge *et al.* 2018:61–96). In some countries neighbouring the EAC, like Malawi for instance, “traditional budgeting is like a theatre lacking credibility as a financial plan” (Simson and Welham 2014).

In this way, the traditional (line-item) budget does not serve public sector organisations as a financial tool to help deliver specific outcomes. In an environment under fiscal constraints, traditional (line-item) budgets are budgets that allocate scarce financial resources to non-priority programmes and have limited adaptability to changing revenue streams (Potter and Diamond 2015:45; Ouassini 2018:77).

In Kenya, Rotich and Ngahu (2015:514) showed that even today, the budget formulation practices in developing countries such as those which form part of the EAC are still traditional (line-item) budgeting. The traditional (line-item) budgeting practised in the EAC is based on incremental theory, whose proponents were Davis, Dempster and Wildavsky (1966:529). The theory described budget decision-makers as backward-looking. The theory further argues that “the changes in resource allocations during public budgets are strict to incrementalism in budgeting” (Davis *et al.* 1966:529). Moreover, the decrease or increase in the allocation of resources to specific projects/programmes/areas is made in the same proportion each year. The application of a particular percentage added to the previous budget means that there is no involvement of external stakeholders in the budget process, and it will not have any effect.

The Ministries of Finance in the EAC countries still find traditional (line-item) budgeting appropriate because of the complexities of public budget formulation, a large number of interrelated programmes/projects that are supported

by the budget and the technicalities involved in choosing between competing programmes/projects. This is in line with the findings of Caiden and Wildavsky (1980) who argue that developing nations adopt traditionally incremental budgeting practices due to the short time they have for budget formulation and the large number of budgetary items.

However, given that projects or programmes have different values to different people, there is a need for an objective method to help in judging priorities among the programmes or projects which is absent in traditional (line-item) budgeting practices. Furthermore, traditional (line-item) budgeting involves using the base of spending as given and marginal adjustments are made to this base to determine new budget formulation proposals. In this case, the new year's budget is formulated subject to the previous year's budget. It is also referred to as line-item budgeting since all the programmes or projects in public budgets are itemised, based on their objectives during budget formulation (Ouassini 2018; Jones 1996:227). Notably, the focus of traditional (line-item) budgeting is not on the services or value offered by the budget, but rather on what is purchased.

Traditional (line-item) budgeting is also perpetuated by the responsibilities that the external stakeholders have accorded to government and the trust they have in the government. Following the agency theory (Pepper and Gore 2015), the government acts as an agent of the people, and is therefore responsible for making decisions on their behalf. The spending ministries make their budgetary allocations based on the spending cuts or limits from the Ministry of Finance (MOF).

In this manner, there is control over what the agencies or line ministries are spending since they cannot spend more than their caps. There is, therefore, a tight fiscal grip over government operations. The controls in traditional (line-item) budgeting are relatively simple through the detailed specification of inputs (Tohamy *et al.* 2006:47–70). This eventually makes it easier for developing nations, such as those of East Africa, where there are minimal resources to manage a complex system of valuing budget outcomes and monitoring their implementation. Schick (2009) argues that public budgeting continues to be a traditional (line-item) budget since public expenditure does not respond quickly to political conditions or national priorities.

While traditional (line-item) budgeting has offered the EAC a means of making budget decisions quickly by simply making changes to base values, the challenges these nations are currently facing calls for the adoption of new budgeting practices to ensure effective decision-making. Given the preceding, and the difficulty in financing their budgets due to limited revenue compared to spending needs, it can be concluded that there are decision-making challenges in the EAC's public budget formulation. According to the African Development Bank (2014:21–64), the EAC is virtually facing a permanent fiscal crisis. The focus is consequently drawn to effective decisions in the budget formulation that will help solve the

dilemma of meeting the needs of the nation with the inadequate funds available. Public budget practices in the EAC are expected to provide interventions in crucial aspects of public budget formulation, that include public budget planning, decision-making, transparency during budget formulation, the involvement of external stakeholders, and strategic prioritisation of programmes and projects.

However, the budget formulation in the EAC has not been effective in addressing these dilemmas. This appears to point to the weaknesses in traditional (line-item) budgeting practised in the EAC as discussed above, as well as other challenges which include public budget decision practices, bureaucracy, limited transparency and accountability, weak public engagement and poor prioritisation (Imbuye 2013; Clift 2010:3). Additionally, public budget formulation in the EAC has been ineffective in public budget decision-making for it is error-prone and does not take into consideration the interests of the general public (Odhiambo 2011:6; Therkildsen 2000:58–72). Also, according to an IBP (2015) survey, “there is weak public participation in public budget formulation in EAC compared to Norway (84%), Brazil (71%) and the USA (69%). Kenya and Tanzania scored 33%, while Uganda scored 23%”.

The above discussion underscores the need to develop a model for public financial management, to ensure participation of external stakeholders in decision-making during the budget formulation phases in the EAC.

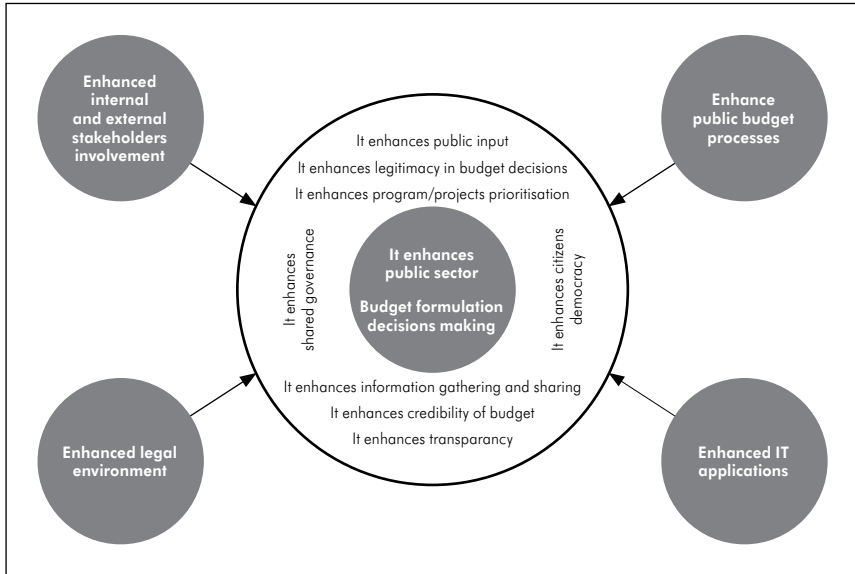
## **CONCEPTUAL MODEL TO ENHANCE PUBLIC BUDGET FORMULATION FOR EAST AFRICAN COUNTRIES**

Goldman, and Stern (2011), argue that a model once developed should provide external stakeholders an opportunity to express their views and have an opportunity to make decisions on the programme and project of their choice. At the same time, it should provide an avenue for capturing programmes and projects most valued by external stakeholders (Nabatchi 2012:699).

The proposed model is depicted in Figure 2 as a conceptual framework to enhance public budget formulation for the EAC. The depiction, consists of four aspects of innovation that need to be enhanced in an integrated manner in the EAC to achieve enhanced decision-making during PSBF. These four aspects are, internal and external stakeholder’s involvement in the public budget formulation; enhanced public budget processes; IT application in the public budget formulation; and a conducive legal environment for the public budget.

The findings of this study built upon the literature in the area of an IT-based participatory budgeting approach, by producing new ideas related to the involvement of external stakeholders in public budgeting and decision-making that produces credible and transparent budgets. Keen and Sol (2008:12) assert that a system-based

**Figure 2: Participatory Budget Formulation Decision-Making Model (PBFDM Model)**



Source: (Authors' own analysis 2020)

approach where people, technology, and processes interact in a unified manner, improves the decision-making process. Dannemiller (2000:33) and Eggers and Johnson (2002:234) argue that the involvement of all stakeholders in public budgeting leads to higher creativity, better decision-making, and generates energy for action, the lack of which undermines the integrity of budgeting processes. Moreover, Alan Hevner and Samir Chatterjee (2010) argue that a model or artifact solves real-world problems when it is fully developed and applied correctly.

The four aspects mentioned in Figure 2 which emerged from innovations in advanced robotics (Martin and Leurent 2017), technological innovations and an integrated approach of people, technology and processes (Keen and Sol 2008:42), a model underpinning an infrastructure budget (Huang, Teng and Lin 2010), from information obtained from the empirical responses and the literature that was analysed in this study; are essential for the delivery of credible, accountable budgets. If effectively implemented, it will enhance public inputs, enhance legitimacy in budget decisions, enhance programme or project prioritisation, enhance shared governance, enhance citizen democracies, enhance information gathering and sharing, enhance budget credibility, and enhance transparency; all of which lead to enhanced public budget formulation. These four aspects (as depicted in Figure 2) respond to the ideal of public budgeting described by



Transparency International (TI), that it should provide room for accountability, allocative efficiency based on priorities, transparency, and comprehensiveness (where all budget-related information is made available to all stakeholders on time) (Transparency International 2014; Keen and Sol 2008:42; Polletta, Chen & Anderson 2009).

Figure 2 demonstrates a solution to the capacity aspects necessary for credible and transparent budgeting in the EAC. This is a new model for adoption in the public sector, and more particularly the EAC governments.

Notably, the involvement of both internal and external stakeholders in a participatory manner is grounded in citizenship theory which, according to Monfardini (2005) and Cooper (2004:394), advocates for democratic rights and responsibilities of all external stakeholders to be involved in public decisions and that they have the right to be served by internal stakeholders who pay for those services. Furthermore, this budgeting approach is also grounded in the foundation of New Public Management (NPM) theory which asserts that public management is closer to the private sector in its operations and practices, and if both internal and external stakeholders are involved in decision-making regarding the public budget, it will be more credible. The proposed model in Figure 2 illustrates stakeholder roles that include information sharing on programmes and projects, a discussion of a decision on a specific programme or project by way of voting and the external stakeholders that should be involved in public budgeting.

The involvement of both internal and external stakeholders in public budgeting is also built on both Arnstein's (1969) theory of citizen participation and the agency theory. From Arnstein's perspective, it can be deduced that when powers are delegated to external stakeholders, and there is an adequate partnership, this results in external stakeholders' control over the budgeting processes and budget decision-making through participation.

Agency theory asserts that an agent, in this case the internal stakeholders, are self-maximising bureaucrats who act in their own interests rather than in the interests of external stakeholders. Hence, internal stakeholders should not be left alone in the budget-making process. Both internal and external stakeholders should be involved in the budget-making process, working together to build partnerships and improve public budget outcomes.

In addition, the leveraging of IT technology, for innovative information gathering, connectedness and decision-making during public budgeting, is built on the principles of reinventing government. This principle from the perspective of Osborne and Gaebler (1992), advocates for a public sector that is entrepreneurial in creating a culture of innovation and creativity. In this case, IT innovations make the blurred budget process clearer, and increase connectedness between internal and external stakeholders, thus enhancing decision-making, as well as deepening transparency and accountability for those involved in the budget

formulation. Furthermore, the application of IT to address transparency, accountability, and the involvement of external stakeholders in the budget formulation is grounded in participatory governance. Participatory governance, according to Michel (2011) attempts to empower external stakeholders from being representative to participative in democracy, public budgeting and decision-making. Public budgeting under the PBFDM model proposed in this article presents an opportunity for external stakeholders involved in public budgeting in the EAC to effectively engage with internal stakeholders during the budget process. Several aspects need to be considered when determining how to design an IT approach to participatory budgeting for the EAC. Key aspects that are to be considered crucially include that:

- The model should enable a **discussion forum** per sector for the external stakeholders. This could be a kind of 'WhatsApp-functionality'. External stakeholders can be added to the discussion forum group of their sector.
- The model should enable **virtual meetings** per sector for the external stakeholders. This could be a kind of 'Skype-functionality' or 'Hangouts-functionality'. External stakeholders can be added to the 'virtual meetings' forum group of their sector.
- The PBFDM should present a list of programmes/and projects proposed to be funded by the government to be decided by external stakeholders by way of voting, and the programme/project with the highest votes should be funded by the government as a priority.
- The PBFDM should indicate programmes and projects which received the highest voting by external stakeholders.
- The PBFDM model should provide information on the performance of the previous year's budget programme/project performance, intended for non-experts. This might be a report per sector in the form of a public version of an MTEP report (Medium Term Expenditure Framework).
- The PBFDM model should have an online 'Help' functionality that is (very) easy to use.
- The PBFDM model should be reachable via the internet.
- The PBFDM model should log and save every interaction with the PBFDM model.
- The PBFDM should also contain the following information:
  - A list of the points given to programmes/projects by the external stakeholders in a sector.
  - A list of comments on programmes/projects made by external stakeholders in a sector.
  - A list of suggestions per sector (for the next year) made by external stakeholders.
  - The list of the final results per sector after the voting round.

Decision-making in public budget formulation is built on rational theory which is known as a budget decision-making approach that asserts that individuals have preferences and choices among available alternatives (Paternoster, Mamayek and Wilson 2017:22). Therefore, given the opportunity in public budget formulation where choices are made based on available information, external stakeholders will make rational decisions.

Finally, the proposed approach of budgeting requires a change in the behaviour of the executive during public budget formulation. This is built on the NPM theory, which asserts that a successful public organisation implements decisions effectively in keeping with private sector practices (Kamensky 1996:240).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This article aimed to propose a solution to address these deficiencies in the current budget formulation process (See Figure 2). However, before proposing a budgeting approach, it was deemed necessary to identify the specific decision-making gaps in the current budget formulation process.

First, in terms of the public budgeting process in the EAC, one observes a process that is largely based on the strategic directions of each country. Therefore, budgets take into account the guiding strategy for the country, at the national (ministry) level. Governments have over-arching strategies supported by the annual rolling budgets, which include: poverty eradication and economic growth strategies prioritising certain projects and programmes to focus on in the upcoming period. It is therefore recommended that the budgeting approach should involve both internal and external stakeholders and that it should be aligned with the objectives of the country.

Second, with the fiscal crises in the EAC, where resources are never sufficient to fund programmes and projects during public budgeting, it is recommended that the adopted budgeting approach should support an allocation of scarce resources in an integrated and collaborative manner, responding to the changing economic and social needs of external stakeholders and solving complex issues related to fiscal crises. This will result in a budget that captures the services and programmes valued by external stakeholders with the financial resources available in a given financial year.

Third, it is recommended that budgetary frameworks anchored in a participatory approach, should leverage the existing IT platforms to ensure accountability, accuracy, speed, and reliability (Rowe and Frewer 2005:251). Lee *et al.* (2008:270) also argue that IT makes it easier for budgetary oversight. Also, IT technology allows external stakeholders to share their views frankly and in an anonymous manner with the government agency (NDI 2014; Bilge 2015:3). The use of IFMIS

in supporting the PSBF process has proved to be insufficient since it is mostly an accounting information system, not a decision-making system. Hence, an alternative public budget system can be considered in the EAC, integrated with IFMIS and designed for participatory budgeting. This system, besides involving external stakeholders, must facilitate the creation of a budget that is more achievable and boosts the morale of those involved. It also covers a wide range of territories, solving the challenge of public budget hearings.

Finally, for the participatory approach of budgeting to be successful, the legal environment must be conducive. According to Nice (2002), a budget is an agreement between internal and external stakeholders. It is there to safeguard the decisions agreed upon by stakeholders during budgeting from being violated, and laws are used in part to ensure successful implementation. Therefore, the EAC should consider the establishment of required rules and regulations for the successful implementation of the participatory approach of budgeting. This, therefore, calls for a legislative framework in the EAC to enable participatory budgeting to regulate the governance aspect of budgeting. This recommendation suggests that the budgeting approach should provide a legal environment where both internal and external stakeholders work together in the development of public budgets.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article investigated public sector budgeting decision practices in the EAC (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda). It sought to understand the budgeting practice and processes and the decisions associated with it. The results of this study identified a lack of involvement of stakeholders in the public budget formulation process as a significant gap in the process which caused several challenges, such as the lack of transparency, accountability problems, corruption, political interference, loss of public funds, poor prioritisation of programmes and poor budget decision-making.

The four aspects illustrated in Figure 2 that can lead to a higher degree of legally informed budget decisions, accountability, and transparent budget formulation, are proposed as a guide to practitioners in public administration and academia that are interested in studies aimed at enhancing public budget formulation decision-making and transparency.

Therefore, given an opportunity to adopt the NPM approach of budgeting, the EAC will effectively apply and implement public budgeting and management. It is anticipated that application of the PBFDM model of public budgeting, will unlock opportunities for external stakeholders to help enhance prioritisation of public programmes and projects, enhance decision-making during public budgeting and

enhance transparency and accountability. This would be beneficial to the public sector in the EAC region and the citizens it serves.

The recommended solutions provided in this article integrate budgeting processes, internal and external stakeholders, IT technology, in a legally binding environment. This solution is aimed to form a unified lens of joined effect public budget decision-making in the context of the developing countries of the EAC, enhance public budget decision-making and address poor prioritisation, transparency, and accountability in a public sector environment.

## NOTE

- \* The article is partly based on a PhD Thesis: Barngetuny, J. 2020. *Decision enhancement for public sector budget formulation in East African Countries*. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg. The Thesis was completed under the supervision of Prof Vain Jarbandhan and co-supervision of Prof Christelle Autiacombe.

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# Contextualising the Regeneration of Africa's Indigenous Governance and Management Systems and Practices

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## **ABSTRACT**

The primary aim of this article is to remind contemporary public administration analysts and policy-makers of the need to position indigenous governance management systems and practices within mainstream intellectual discourse. The African continent has suffered a tormented history. This is partly due to the different historical periods and deliberate efforts to Westernise all explanations concerning African governance, knowledge management systems and practices. Centuries-old indigenous African knowledge regarding the management of societal affairs has been overshadowed by colonialism, neocolonialism, global capitalism and the promotion of Western organisational management/leadership practices. Furthermore, Western cultures showed intellectual arrogance by painting anything African in a negative light. Yet, indigenous African countries had their own governance systems and knowledge management practices that are worthy of any academic and intellectual theorisation and discourse. While the article does not argue that these indigenous systems and practices are flawless, the societies under study exhibited important features that can provide a lens for understanding contemporary challenges surrounding public administration and theorisation.

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Defending centuries-old knowledge systems and practices to a contemporary analyst can raise questions of relevance, especially where the importance of history is understated. Indigenous peoples' cultures and their respective knowledge systems are largely misunderstood or even dismissed by development planning experts and those who believe in modern science (Green 2016; Lalonde 1991:3). Indigenous knowledge touches on what local people knew and did for generations in their attempt to manage public affairs (Appiah-Opoku 2005; Green 2016; Basheka 2015; Lalonde 1991; Njoh 2006; Nkondo 2012). Authors such as Gbadamosi (2003), Kiggundu (1991), Zeleza (2006), Mazrui (1978) and Kaya and Sereti (2013) highlighted how various Western colonial powers destroyed or devalued local institutions and management practices and substituted them with what were believed to be culturally and technologically superior colonial administrative systems. However, the new academic leadership of the African continent should redirect their energy towards rebuilding African management models and theories. While some African societies' governance systems demeaned the human race, many societies had good management practices that are worthy of scholarly attention.

Eurocentric authors want us to believe that Africans lived a 'miserable' life in one form or another before colonialism. However, this view is strongly contested by certain authors who believe that it is wrong to posit that pre-colonial Africa was devoid of administration or social organisation systems (Basheka 2015; Odhiambo 1990). Zeleza (2006:197) confirms the dominance of the Western hegemony in Africa and the neglect of indigenous systems. Furthermore, the author reports how Western ideologies appeared to have been "...everywhere, dominating the disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourses and departments, paradigms and publications, academic politics and practices". Indigenous governance systems have been subjected to neglect and they hardly receive any scholarly attention in most public administration discourses, as well as within policy analysis debates concerning the solution to African peoples' problems (Basheka 2015; Njoh 2006; Odhiambo 1990).

Since the colonisation of Africa, all systems of knowledge production, dissemination and consumption tended to reflect Western hegemony (Zeleza 2006:196). Such an approach has worked to deflate what Africans knew and could do to manage their societies. To date, the Western perception of African practices remains limited, as it lacks appreciation of the African social context. The use of indigenous institutions and knowledge systems has come to be encouraged and acknowledged in both developed and developing countries (Appiah-Opoku 2005; Basheka 2015). Basheka (2015) argues that, where Western scholars view

African systems as irrelevant and not worthy of scholarship, African scholars should document indigenous knowledge practices. With public administration, there is a need to develop a theory based on indigenous knowledge and practices to better serve the continent.

Indigenous knowledge is built up by societies through generations of living in close contact with nature. Such knowledge includes norms, taboos, a system of classification for natural resources, a set of empirical observations about the local environment and a system of self-management that governs resource usage (Appiah-Opoku 2005). Mazrui (1978), who devoted most of his academic research to advocating for indigenous knowledge systems, criticised the limited Western conceptualisation of scholarship and education. Rather, Mazrui (1978) supported the need for scholarly attention to indigenous knowledge and management systems. Moreover, Nkondo (2012) states that the Western perception of African indigenous knowledge as a mere repetition of practices without any theory to explain them is a reflection of Western cultural and intellectual arrogance.

Before the advent of colonialism, African societies were founded on certain knowledge systems, structures and practices in all aspects of societal life and existence. African societies had known religious beliefs, norms and practices that connected their existence to God. These societies had strong systems of medicine as they used their knowledge of local medicinal plants to heal the sick. The indigenous societies had mechanisms of commerce and trade which reflected knowledge of the principles of economics and market systems. Bartering was the main medium of commerce and trust played a fundamental role in trade. Indigenous or pre-colonial societies' governance systems had democracy-based doctrines like checks and balances as well as systems that demanded accountability from those in leadership positions. While corruption was present in some of these structures, Africans had systems in place to run their governments.

According to authors like Lander (2000) and Chavunduka (1995), the introduction of the Western world view of 'knowledge' to Africa and other non-Western societies has lacked an understanding of the holistic nature and approach of non-Western ways of knowledge and knowledge production. One area that has been unfairly treated is the governance architecture of indigenous societies. Based on historical accounts, indigenous governance structures included all functions of modern government and governance. Societies of the time had structures and bodies that were responsible for making and implementing executive decisions. Some institutions (formal and informal) performed legislative functions, while other structures discharged judicial functions. The governments of the time practised foreign affairs and diplomatic functions through the use of agents and emissaries to foreign lands. Moreover, communication and public relations played a key role in running the governments of the time. The governance and political

systems featured high regard for participatory decision-making and the need for consensus-building in making decisions.

In the pre-colonial African context, a traditional healer who was able to cure a particular disease using specific herbs had the knowledge and theory of the plant species and its characteristics. However, such knowledge is often disregarded by Western medicine as lacking scientifically proven results. A traditional king in the pre-colonial African context who had the ability to unify his people around common projects that supported the development of the kingdom demonstrated traits of public servant leadership and good governance. However, such practices are discounted by Western leadership style theory. These concerns have been highlighted by scholars who have devoted some effort to indigenous systems. Lalonde (1991:3) raised concerns about how indigenous knowledge is treated. The author states that, in the past, indigenous peoples' cultures and their respective knowledge systems had been largely misunderstood or even dismissed by development planning experts. Where indigenous communities were known to have centuries-old knowledge of their environment, this reality was ignored or neglected to the detriment of the continent.

Before colonialism, African people practised "...the development and use of appropriate technology for primary resource utilisation and a holistic world-view that parallels the scientific discipline of ecology" (Appiah-Opoku 2005:103). Indigenous healers had intimate knowledge of the environment including of plants and their healing properties. Indigenous farmers were thoroughly acquainted with vegetation, soil and climatic conditions. In turn, indigenous hunters had extensive knowledge of the habitat, including the "location and timing of a host of biological events unknown to scientists. They knew the life-cycle of certain animals including the kinds of foods they ate, their methods of searching for food, their pregnancy and gestation period, natural habitat and average life-span" (Knudston and Suzuki 1992).

Although much has been said about the indignity of African practices, there has been limited effort among African scholars to provide a clear understanding of the concept of 'knowledge' based on Africa's history of ideas and intellectual development (Kaya and Sereti 2013:31). This has undermined the development of a strong African indigenous theoretical framework and methodological rigour to guide the scientific incorporation of African knowledge and knowledge-production into the post-colonial education system. As such, there is a need to revisit historical facts and regenerate Africa's indigenous knowledge systems. In this regard, Green (2016:76) points out that history inspires a deep respect for the personal sacrifices of our predecessors. Furthermore, history can provide the 'intellectual ammunition' to challenge the narrow contemporary orthodox thinking. In systems terms, history reveals how different institutions emerged and evolved to reach the structure, culture and practices we see today. This, in turn, offers useful insights

on how to influence the current *status quo*. History inspires a healthy acceptance of pluralism since institutions have taken many different paths. One can also argue that history provides a temporal positive deviance – by studying the historical outliers on any given issue, we gain new insights and ideas.

## Research problem

The broad research problem addressed in this article aims to determine whether indigenous societies had any governance systems and knowledge management practices in place that are worth being regenerated by African scholars. Western knowledge and science have tended to depict pre-colonial Africa as primitive societies that lacked any form of order, social organisation and knowledge management systems and practices worthy of intellectual discourse and theorisation. A review of literature and African folklore strongly suggests that indigenous societies had indigenous knowledge and practices on a range of subject matter. In fact, some were comparable to modern scientific methods and practices. Unfortunately, indigenous practices and knowledge have remained undocumented and related models and theories have not been supported or encouraged. While elders in various African societies still possess such knowledge, there has been limited empirical research in this field. Due to this intellectual injustice, there is a serious ‘dearth of knowledge’ about the governance practices and knowledge management systems of indigenous people. One way to address this gap is to call for a regeneration of this debate.

From an educational perspective, Ayithey (2006:17), states that it is undesirable to apply Western management theories and practices in Africa. The author has made a call to African scholars to transform “imported” theories and concepts into acceptable cultural norms that could be applied to management practices in Africa. This intellectual expectation is possible to achieve through the development of indigenous African management principles and practices that accommodate cultural, social, political and environmental factors that are unique to Africa. Ayithey (2006:17), argues that, while economic governance did exist in pre-colonial African societies, these systems have always been portrayed as nothing more than simple hunter-gatherer activities. European anthropologists and historians who study Africa often focus on racially motivated stereotypes. Ayithey (2006:17), argues that indigenous African economies revolved around efforts to eke out a “pitiful living from primitive subsistence agriculture” and that “trade and exchanges were unknown since self-sufficiency and subsistence farming were the operative commands”. Undeniably, this is not a true reflection of the commerce and trade practices within indigenous societies.

To shed new light on contemporary discourses, the discipline of Public Administration and Governance needs to develop models and theories based

on indigenous practices, systems and structures. A theory, in the context of this debate, should encompass a systematic collection of related principles and management practices to categorise pertinent management knowledge relating to African norms and practices (Basheka 2015). In line with this, African Public Administration theory should involve a collection of indigenous African principles, practices and knowledge that depict how indigenous societies managed their public affairs. One of the underlying causes of the West's negative view of African indigenous management practice stems from African scholars' limited efforts to document indigenous systems.

There is a need to regenerate African indigenous knowledge practices and systems. African scholars should build a coherent analogy of the elements of African systems that would see the African paradigm of administration being covered in public administration training. In this regard, indigenous knowledge should serve as a starting point to the construction of alternative administrative theories. This knowledge should be adequately disseminated and shared among interested public administration scholars and policymakers (Basheka 2015).

The following sections of the article will address the secondary questions:

- What general indigenous knowledge management practices and systems existed in Africa before colonialism and how did colonialism influence these systems and practices?
- What characterised the indigenous governance structures and political organisation of Africans before colonialism?
- How did indigenous societies ensure accountable leadership and governance to prevent abuse of power by those who had authority over managing societal affairs?
- Is it possible to develop a framework or model for indigenous governance, management and decision-making practices to address contemporary public administration challenges?

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The term 'indigenous' has various applications and may be subject to varying interpretations, by different people, depending on their intellectual and theoretical orientation. Some scholars apply the term to knowledge, governance, systems, culture, beliefs, practices, institutions and structures. 'Indigenous knowledge' and 'indigenous governance' present broader terms and as used in this article, capture a number of other aspects. Semali (1997), for example, describes indigenous knowledge as encompassing what local people know and do, and what they have known and done for generations. This could relate to what local people know about medicine, conflict resolution, governance, education, societal structures,

checks and balances, commerce and trade, project management and resource management. In turn, Dei (2000:72) considers 'indigenous knowledge' as a consciousness that arises locally and in association with the long-term occupancy of a place.

The term 'indigenous', when used in relation to governance, has different interpretations as governance itself has various connotations. One can argue that pre-colonial Africa had governance mechanisms based on the following two elements: First, governance involved the evolving processes, relationships, institutions and structures by which a group of people, a community or society organised themselves collectively to achieve things that are believed to be of importance (Hunt, Smith, Garling and Sanders 2008). Second, governance had both formal and informal structures and processes (Martin 2003). Such governance within communities involved strengthened decision-making and control over their organisational systems. Furthermore, it was based on people's skills, personal and collective contributions, and shared commitment to an organisation's chosen governance processes, goals and identity. Njoh (2006) has attempted to provide a comprehensive description of the governance apparatus that existed in pre-colonial Africa. However, Odhiambo (1990) argues that the education system in Africa has consistently ignored the knowledge, skills and survival strategies of local farmers, who have successfully managed their farmlands and remained productive for centuries, with little or no external input.

The term 'governance' can be used to imply a regulatory framework or government. If the concept of 'government' refers to the regulatory functions of the rule of law, social institutions and processes, then it is clear that pre-colonial East African communities had governments. In most indigenous African political systems, "the lineage was the most powerful and effective force for unity and stability" (Abrefa 1951:6). Indigenous knowledge varies from community to community and is likely to change and become diluted once one community's knowledge is mixed with that of another community (Green 2016).

## **KEY FEATURES OF INDIGENOUS SYSTEMS AND MANAGEMENT**

Pre-colonial Africa, or indigenous societies, had diverse governance and management systems due to the societal set-up. However, there existed certain common features to maintain societal cohesion. This section of the article highlights the systems and management practices of these societies according to the following five broader areas:

- Political management
- Judicial functioning

- Health management
- Education systems
- Systems of trade and commerce.

This is to avoid a situation that Gbadamosi (2003) describes as the dominance of Western academic and management thinking in Africa. Indigenous administrative systems had a wealth of knowledge scattered across many disciplines. It has become a challenge for African Public Administration scholars to document what can be described as a common administrative theory (Basheka 2015). The continent has enjoyed many accomplishments in the areas of political and social organisation, architecture, city planning, arts and crafts, commerce and trade, tax administration, education, health management, grievance-handling and discipline.

## **Indigenous governance and political systems**

Did pre-colonial Africa have governance systems in place that are worth researching by Public Administration scholars? Kaya and Sereti (2013:31) have reported that much has been said about the indigenous African practices. The authors add that African scholars' limited endeavours to provide a clear understanding of 'knowledge' based on Africa's history of ideas and intellectual development has been a disadvantage. The research efforts have produced three broad indigenous governance systems in pre-colonial Africa, namely centralised kingdoms and empires; centralised medium-size kingdoms; and widely dispersed empires and chiefdoms (Vassin 2005). Sesay (2014) observes that several pre-colonial societies were organised into medium-sized city-states, with centralised and pyramidal structures of authority. The most important distinction between medium and large pre-colonial kingdoms in Africa was their territorial size. Medium-sized kingdoms were urbanised and their kings wielded immense power, which they shared only with trusted allies. Law-making, and the implementation and adjudication of powers were concentrated in the king-in-council. The royal elite monopolised access to vital economic resources, such as land and revenue from taxes, and controlled the military and security agencies.

In an attempt to defend the narrative that indigenous societies had a governance architecture, Ayithey (1991:257) summarised key features of such an African indigenous political system. These features go hand in hand with what Williams (1987) refers to as the "African constitution". The scholars argue that African societies were characterised by the following democracy-leaning features:

- The people were the building blocks of government
- Decisions were made by public opinion
- Checks and balances were implemented to curb despotism
- Decentralisation of the political system existed;



- Freedom of expression was emphasised
- Decision-making was by consensus
- Participatory democracy existed.

The above features resemble the contemporary elements of democracy. As such, pre-colonial Africa adopted governance systems that had a democratic underpinning. These governance and political systems, however, had their own weaknesses which cannot be overlooked. While the above features demonstrate the idea of good governance and constitutionalism, in such societies, rulers exercised much authority on behalf of the citizens. Some leaders were authoritarian and benefited their families and friends at the expense of the general citizenry. Some strong checks and balances were instituted at various levels. Like now, pre-colonial societies had decentralised governance systems, and decision-making was by consensus. Citizens had a right to exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms through their involvement in decision-making.

According to Walsh and Stewart (1992 in Peters 2003:8–9), a pre-colonial governance structure had the following elements of a traditional governance model:

- **An assumption of self-sufficiency:** Government was a self-sufficient actor that could act autonomously regarding the economy and society.
- **An assumption of direct control:** Government was internally structured by authority and hierarchy, and the individuals at the top of organisational pyramids were assumed capable of exercising control within their own organisations.
- **An assumption of upward accountability:** Accountability was to flow upward, with career officials answering to their political “masters” and those ministers answering to legislatures. This mode of accountability formed the principal connection between the administration, the political system and the surrounding social system.
- **An assumption of uniformity:** Government had to treat all citizens equally and to provide the same benefits and deprivations to all similarly situated people. This was seen as a fundamental reflection of fairness.
- **An assumption of a civil service system:** Standardised established procedures to govern public sector personnel through a formalised civil service for recruitment, pay, grading and other aspects of internal management.

Chieftaincy was one of the key indigenous governance institutions. Traditional African systems were aware of the misgivings of poor government, an unravelling state (often as a result of local and regional conflicts) or upheavals associated with political transition (Chabal and Daloz 1999). Pre-colonial societies generally had elaborate systems of checks and balances for holding the leaders accountable because the then-political systems knew the dangers of allowing a traditional leader to attain uncontrolled power (Ayittey 1999:89).

Three institutional mechanisms of checks and balances existed. First, some checks were handled within religious structures. Second, some checks and balances were institutionalised within the existing political institutions. Third, certain checks and balances were simply spontaneous. As a result, it was not unusual for leaders who failed to meet societal expectations to be removed from power. In a number of cases, chiefs were surrounded by numerous institutions, which served as checks regarding their powers (Ayittey 1999:126). In terms of religious checks and balances, the chief/king was the guardian of the people and served as a bridge between the ancestors and the people. The duty of ensuring the safety and well-being of their people to please the ancestors was explicitly stated when the chiefs were sworn into power (Opuni-Frimpong 2012:57). The institutionalised checks and balances took the form of private and public reprimands from the Queen Mother, the inner or Privy Council of Advisers and the Council of Elders (Ayittey 1991:128). Where religious and institutional checks and balances failed, a third form of checks and balances through spontaneous action took place (Ayittey 1991:140).

In other societies, respective institutions established for managing societal affairs played this role. If a chief/king did not listen to these entities, he could face being removed from his position of power. For example, the Asante people removed three kings from power: Osei Kwame in 1799 for absenting himself from Kumasi and failing to perform his religious duties during the Adaye festivals; Karikari in 1874 for extravagance; and Mensa Bonsu in 1883 for excessively taxing the Asante people (Ayittey 1991:139). The protection of human rights and the interests of the community played a key role. In traditional Africa, the rights of the individual never came before the rights of the community.

## **The African indigenous judicial system**

Political governance and judicial systems are key cornerstones of human civilisation. The judiciary, or any institution mandated to handle disputes in society, is a central feature of a functioning state/society. Indigenous societies had extensive judicial systems for handling grievances at different levels. Like modern-day law, there existed institutions for dealing with private law (resolving disputes between individuals) and public law (resolving disputes between individuals and the state). Some were written rules, while others were based on societal customs. The institutions of conflict prevention and resolution, resource management, and social integration were valued as a constitution and a cornerstone of society (Legesse 1973:73).

The customs guided the administration of justice and were a key component of indigenous judicial systems in several societies. The indigenous judicial system also had comprehensive consultation processes that were used to maintain order and harmony in communities. Grievance hearings before community

members were fundamental to the indigenous justice system. During these hearings, all community members were welcome to attend. In addition, the principle of collective indemnity and communal solidarity underlined the judicial system of indigenous societies, with a key guiding rule that decisions needed to be made by consensus.

Heath (2001) states that Africa has been viewed as a stronghold for many variants of free, fair, thorough, and advanced legal systems. Indigenous African systems had diverse court systems for resolving disputes. Some of the indigenous court systems still exist in the traditional authorities on the continent. This is testimony to their enduring nature and the need for a home-grown and time-tested legal system in Africa.

According to Heath (2001), the Somali indigenous democratic system of governance, *Gadaa*, for example, was based on elections, democratic procedures, new leadership every eight years and a smooth transition of power. *Gadaa* was a complex system in which the Oromo were divided into age groups, with specific rights, duties and responsibilities. Known as *miseensa* or parties, duties and responsibilities in military, political, legal and cultural affairs were given to individuals of each *Gadaa* group from childhood to adulthood. Each *miseensa* had specific roles and functions to perform in five stages of eight years (Baissa Lemu 1971:48). While Legesse (2000) highlights that the *Gadaa* institutions assumed military, economic, political and ritual responsibilities in the leadership of the Oromo society, Hinnant (1978) states that these institutions were less politically relevant and played more of a ritualistic role. The system was, however, crafted in such a way that it included all the functions of modern government, such as executive, judicial and legislative functions. The Oromo were able to participate in self-rule, elect new leaders every eight years, recall those who failed to discharge responsibilities, make laws through their representatives, and settle disputes according to the law (Baissa Lemu 1971:50).

In another example of indigenous judicial systems, the *gacaca* court hearings were synonymous with the Tutsi of Rwanda. In these courts the hearings were held in open places where all the concerned parties to the disputes were invited. The grievances of the offended were followed by the accused defending their acts, as is the case with contemporary judicial systems. Testimonies were heard from eyewitnesses and supporters of both the accused and the complainant and these constituted the key elements of what is now referred to as natural justice. The judges of the time were tasked with sifting through submissions by all parties to separate lies, inconsistencies in arguments and other discrepancies before declaring judgement. There was always room for a retrial or appeal to a court of higher authority.

Existing literature suggests that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Africa were generally closely bound with socio-political and economic realities of communities (Rabar and Karimi 2004). In Tanzania, traditional conflict resolution

mechanisms have played a major role in bringing about harmony and peace among members of the society. These mechanisms were created within the socio-political structure of every community (Emanuel and Ndimbwa 2013). As the mechanisms of resolving conflict tended to be rooted in the culture and history of the particular society, the customary courts relied on the goodwill of society to adhere to the ruling in any conflict. The judicial and conflict resolution systems were anchored on the social set-up of the societies and disputes were handled by different structures, depending on the gravity of the offence. Olaniyan (1985:28) states that the nuclear family, for example, had jurisdiction to settle minor disputes among members of the family, while more severe offences were handled by the extended family or kindred. In these societies, the lineage heads settled “cases of assault, petty theft, family disputes, adultery and even divorce”. In most African societies, for example, the Igbo of Nigeria, the village court handled inter-lineage cases where the lineages involved could not reach agreement (Olaniyan 1985). While handling conflict in indigenous societies, it was emphasised that both the plaintiff and defendant pay settlement fees, although the plaintiff only paid the summons fees. The innocent party had a part of their settlement fees refunded. These procedures resembled the contemporary court procedures for handling disputes.

The *Boran* political and judicial system from modern Ethiopia is another example of an indigenous system that has never received any formal recognition. Yet, this system has been, and remains, an important institution for regulating interpersonal relations in the rural context. The overall state-imposed allocation of land and resources to newcomers has partly affected the relevance of this indigenous system. However, for the current debate, it remains worthy of attention. Newcomers who claim a substantial share of existing water rights and often neglect the local rules and agreements ignite the importance of home-grown community-based structures for managing such scarce resources. The relationship between the formal political administration units of government and traditional institutions has also received attention.

## **Indigenous knowledge systems of education**

While Africa’s pre-colonial education systems have been neglected, they present scholarly attention within our contemporary public administration discourses. Odhiambo (1990) observes that the education system in Africa has tended to unfairly ignore the knowledge, skills and survival strategies of local farmers who successfully managed their farmlands and remained productive for centuries, with little or no external input. In pre-colonial Africa, traditional skills and knowledge were acquired in four different ways, depending on the type of knowledge in question. Knowledge was transmitted through a process of apprenticeship; the

practice of oral tradition; direct observation and instruction; and through dreams, natural talents or divine gifts.

Ssekamwa (2001) reports that imparting specialised knowledge and skills through oral tradition was a key characteristic of indigenous educational systems. From an early age, children were exposed to the different types of life-skill activities in the village. In terms of pre-colonial African informal systems, fathers and mothers played a critical role of educating boys and girls, respectively. While this indigenous system had no known curriculum and was offered in indigenous languages, it emphasised a communal sense of education, promoted indigenous culture and prepared learners to be future societal leaders (Kasibante 2001). According to Semali (1997), a curriculum which divides “indigenous” knowledge from “modern” knowledge fails to teach students about the unique cultural patterns by which people developed and advanced their social worlds, and ignores the ways in which “modern” cultural beliefs and practices drew from folklore and indigenous ways of life.

## **Indigenous knowledge on economics and trade**

Indigenous African societies have been involved in trade and commerce for centuries. Ayittey (2006:345) highlights that indigenous societies had a unique system of trading which was based on the institution of trust, and with this trust, it was possible for “middlemen or agents to secure credit”. Skinner (1961) has long reported how Africans were involved in diverse economic activities that revolved around “agriculture, pastoralism, hunting, fishing, and woodworking”. The indigenous societies also had small thriving industries such as pottery, brass works, iron, copper, silver, gold and tin smelting and smithing which constituted key ingredients of the economy of the time. The key characteristics of the indigenous economic system were its subsistence nature, limited goods and services and small-scale production. In these societies, labour was sourced locally – usually among family members. Distribution of land, labour and produce was, to a large extent, determined by social relationships. The tools that were used were simple and were made from locally available resources. People borrowed money by pledging their farms or formed partnerships with a person with capital. In the African marketplace, trade and economics were founded on the idea of production for consumption and exchange. In the West, it is founded on “the worker selling his labor for wages, or by the manufacturer producing goods for profit and then using the profit to obtain other desired items” (Schneider 1986:181).

Western scholars have always attempted to characterise African indigenous economic systems as nothing more than hunter-gatherer activities, and the myth of subsistence-based indigenous African economies has long been upheld by anthropologists and most European historians studying African culture. Schneider

(1986:181) disproves claims of a focus on hunting and primitivity, by stating that the economic system that existed in pre-colonial Africa was legitimate and in line with what is acceptable as the fundamentals of market process. Understandably, the way Africans conducted their economic affairs differed from that of Europe and America “but their behavior could still be considered economic and commensurate with market process” (Schneider 1986:181).

## **Indigenous knowledge in medicine**

In the history of medicine, societies have changed their approach to illness and disease from ancient times to the present. Medical institutions, referred to as Houses of Life, are known to have been established in ancient Egypt as early as 2200<sup>BC</sup>. Early medical traditions included those of Babylon, China, Egypt and India. Indigenous African societies had their own systems of healing the sick and practising medicine, which usually relied on the use of locally available plants. Indigenous medicinal knowledge is thus as old as the first inhabitants of the continent. For centuries, this knowledge was applied to ensure longevity and quality of life within societies, and although practised in various interpretations, there is general consensus regarding its underlying philosophy. Flint (2001:202), for example, records that “when Europeans first arrived, Africans in the Zulu kingdom had, for the most part, minimised health risks by settling outside low-lying malarial areas and requiring multiple dwelling structures for large families”. Herbalists also prescribed an array of remedies based on the medicinal component of a specific plant, root or herb.

The sophisticated nature of indigenous healing that Baronov (2008:137) associates with African indigenous herbal remedies has led Western pharmaceutical companies to patent several of the age-old remedies as their own intellectual property. Baronov asserts that, “This robbery is based on an ongoing relation of exploitation between Africa and the West as well as biomedicine’s proclivity to treat medical care as comprised of discrete elements that exists outside a holistic framework”.

In pre-colonial Africa, supernatural healing characterised a number of African societies. Regarding the relevance and usefulness of supernatural healing, there are two schools of thought on its role in African indigenous medical practice. One school of thought argues that the role of such forces is archaic and inconsequential in the study of the herbal knowledge of the medical practitioners. The supernatural aspect of African indigenous medicine, the school of thought contends, “contravene the laws of nature and are therefore, surely nothing more than the fanciful ranting of a preliterate, uneducated and primitive mind, however respectfully discussed” (Baronov 2008:138). The second school of thought, however, argues that supernatural healing exists, and the fact that Western science, which upholds only the physical, does not take it into consideration, is not proof of its non-existence. This school of thought submits that “such forces pertain to a reality not captured by

investigations of the natural world (for example, ancestral spirits) and are, therefore, simply beyond the self-imposed ontological limits of the Western natural sciences” (Baronov 2008:138). Notably, practitioners and patrons of indigenous African medicine and several African scholars subscribe to the latter view.

Closely related to the supernatural realm of analysis in explaining indigenous medicine practices is the social network explanation as the cause of disease in human beings (Baronov 2008 142). Indigenous African medical philosophy contends that a breakdown in interpersonal relationships would occur when two people engage in some sort of quarrel. This could lead to a physical breakdown, especially when one party engages the supernatural to harm the other. For the indigenous medical practitioner, it is pointless to administer herbs to treat the symptoms of ill health if the underlying causes are not adequately addressed.

## **THE RELEVANCE OF INDIGENOUS SYSTEMS IN MODERN GOVERNANCE**

The preceding section has examined a variety of indigenous systems of politics, commerce, education, medicine and governance. For the purposes of understanding and relevance, it is important to investigate whether such systems and practices can help shed light on understanding of contemporary public administration problems. Undoubtedly, one can learn many lessons from history. Indigenous systems were not perfect as there were many incidences of human rights violations. Green (2016:79) reminds us how new factors, like technology, women’s rights and mass literacy, have emerged to shake the kaleidoscope of power and unleash the possible, as do new threats like climate change. Even in all these new developments, history remains an engine of the imagination.

Odhiambo (1990:3) argues that, “Indigenous knowledge can reveal missing ecological keys, which may help scientists develop alternative agricultural technologies less dependent on nonrenewable resources and environmentally damaging inputs (e.g., chemical pesticides), than conventional technologies”. Through this connection, it is argued that a repository of indigenous knowledge, practices, systems, cultures and customs offers a perfect platform for understanding contemporary governance problems and provide us with useful knowledge on how some societal problems have been addressed in the past. This gives contemporary analysts a template or a set of best practices for addressing similar modern-day problems.

While African traditional knowledge systems may not necessarily be better suited to making long-term predictions of change, indigenous knowledge (as observed in traditional survival strategies) may have some advantages in recognising the onset of change and finding ingenious ways to accommodate and mitigate them at an early stage and within community-based decision-making structures (Lalonde

1991:4). The wisdom and skills maintained by the “keepers of indigenous knowledge” (as applied in the traditional practices of farmers, hunters, gatherers, master fishermen, artisans, etc.), are based on a dynamic and sophisticated understanding of their local surroundings. Change in the use of this knowledge is not random, but rather predicated upon conscious efforts by people to define their problems and seek solutions through local experiments and innovation, including evaluating and learning from appropriate technologies elsewhere (Lalonde 1991:4).

Public Administration is taught at various levels at universities in Africa. Such intellectual debates require knowledge from different contexts and perspectives. Indigenous systems of governance offer contemporary analysis on the perspective of the importance and longevity of certain democratic values. Wiredu (1997:307) explains how the idea of consensual democracy was an African feature and more specifically of the Ashanti kingdom. Ayithey (1999:91) argues that the indigenous system of government was unique and inclusive thanks to an open system of decision-making along with representation through kinship. Based on the African philosophical thought of interconnectedness and sacredness of the land and its people, decisions at village meetings were made by consensus (Ayithey 1999:88). If unanimity was not reached, the chief would request a village assembly where deliberations took place in order to reach consensus. The premise of making decisions through consensus was to ensure that minority positions were heard and considered. While consensus-building brought about unity, the downside was the length of time it took to make decisions. It often took days and sometimes weeks to come to a decision due to the need to build consensus.

Lalonde (1991:5) argues that an understanding of indigenous knowledge and customs can help development planners with establishing more flexible project alternatives or innovative mitigative measures, in order to avoid inadvertent damage to the ecosystem or culture. Agriculture has been the backbone of African society since time immemorial. In recognising the need for pre-existing indigenous knowledge and its usefulness in agriculture, several development agencies have called for the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the research and development of agricultural projects in developing countries. The Farming Systems Research and Extension Projects, for example, “recognise that local farmers know a great deal more about their own situations and needs than does anyone else, and these exigencies can and should form the basis of local development projects in the sector” (Warren 1991:10).

## **TOWARDS A MODEL OF INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

A model is a framework for understanding what held indigenous societies together and can be used as an intellectual guide for analysing the indigenous society's



contemporary system. Gennaioli and Rainer (2007) suggest that, as pre-colonial political centralisation has had an impact on the contemporary levels of development in Africa, it is prudent to have a framework upon which such impact can be analysed effectively. Moreover, Nkondo (2012) highlights that the perception of African indigenous knowledge as a mere repetition of practices without any theory has perpetuated the Western cultural and intellectual arrogance on African matters. This approach is unwelcome and has been criticised for distancing higher education on the continent from community concerns and producing graduates who tend to be inadequately sensitive to the developmental challenges of their local communities and country (Muya 2007).

A model for indigenous governance and management systems needs to be based on the centrality of people as the key element to any governance arrangement. While people are central, representative democracy demands that certain structures be put in place to manage societal affairs. The people have a collective view of what they need (rights) and what they demand from those in leadership positions (services and protection of their rights). People broadly establish systems and structures for managing their affairs through elected representatives. History tells us how people have always had systems of checks and balances in place. The other fundamental feature of the governance model is therefore a need to examine structures and systems that were established for managing societal affairs, as well as the checks and balances for demanding accountability.

The systems of governance or government align with the contemporary branches of government in terms of the separation of powers. Some structures are vested within the judicial branch, with systems of appeal mechanisms. Others are vested within legislative functions, which were traditionally performed by the assembly and decision-making was participatory and consensus-based. The executive functions were performed by those assigned the power and a system of decentralisation was recognised. Notably, the advent of technology and the emergence of the need to show accountability creates another element of the governance framework that is based on monitoring and evaluation as well as an additional element that is based on the use of technology.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Indigenous societies were diverse and had various governance and management systems. These societies had useful systems and practices that need to be espoused and used in modern public administration discourses. Having examined the various key features of the traditional governance and management systems in indigenous societies, a number of building blocks emerge. First, people and government are fundamental building blocks in a functioning society. The building blocks of any

government are the people and all government activities must be directed at improving its service to the people. Second, decision-making processes and practices give various stakeholders insight into government's intentions. Consensus and stakeholder involvement, as emphasised among traditional African cultures, are critical elements of contemporary public administration discourse.

Third, checks and balances are an important feature for any level of governance. To address the centralisation of authority, indigenous systems teach us how checks and balances were implemented to curb despotism among leaders. In this arrangement, decentralisation of the political system played a fundamental role. Fourth, freedom of expression, the protection of human rights, decision-making by consensus and a heavy reliance on systems for promoting participatory democracy are critical. As such, African scholars should show a renewed interest in theories and models for advancing indigenous governance and management systems and practices.

## NOTE

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