

Public Administration in Southern Africa Democratic Regimes in governance

Douglas John Chikhowe Banda, Prof. Nirmala Dorasamy, Prof. Zamokuhle Mbandlwa,

PhD Candidate, Durban University of Technology,

chikhowebanda@gmail.com

Senior Lecturer, Durban University of Technology, nirmala@dut.ac.za; and

ZamokuhleM@dut.ac.za

HOW TO CITE:

Douglas John Chikhowe Banda,
Nirmala Dorasamy, Zamokuhle
Mbandlwa, (2026), Public
Administration in Southern Africa
Democratic Regimes in governance
International Journal of Special
Education, 41(21s), 329 - 343

ABSTRACT

This article attempts to explain public administration in Southern Africa Democratic Regimes in governance in different African institutions, using different ways for measuring the effectiveness of policy implementation in the case of economic meltdown. The public administration in Southern Africa Democratic Regimes in governance, has been neglected, due to the scrutiny from oversight institutions such as parliaments. It relates policy implementation, as well as the implications of not managing public sector economy to make policy adjustments in different institutions. In addition, the systematic literature review was used to examine public sector economy with a human face by selecting eight articles from both the old and new articles. It also serves as a modified framework that incorporates a top – down approach. This provided an insight to policy implementation and contextualizes it to analyse the impact of public administration in Southern Africa Democratic Regimes in governance on the ground limiting the public institutions from promoting efficiency and effectiveness. Although the major focus is on relating public administration in Southern Africa Democratic Regimes in governance identified gaps of knowledge to link effectiveness to policy adjustments. This paved the ways to improvise public sector economy and implement policy effectively at the local level.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT:

Copyright: © 2026 Authors.
Open access publication under
the terms and conditions
of the Creative
Commons Attribution (CC
BY)

license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Keywords: accountability, bureaucracy, democratic, governance, institutions, public administration

Introduction

Public administration in Southern African democratic countries is characterized by a combination of national, regional or provincial and local government structures, most of them being ineffective to implement policies (Parnell, Piterse, Swilling, and Wooldridge, 2002). Some of the institutions are inherited from the previous

colonial era, which institutionalised bureaucracy and it is difficult to democratise the in Southern African countries. Some public servants occupying influential positions have been serving the people for decades, they are used to autocratic rule, and they often resist change from the appointed Cabinet ministers (Hattingh, 1988). As a result, Surty, (2010) states that they spread false information about the incompetence of the heads

of departments because they fear change and may be laid off to pave the way for new faces. Despite the presence of public administration in Southern Africa democratic countries, the institutional frameworks are neglected due to the political patronage system in all governing structures (Ndletyana, Makhalemele & Mathekga, 2013). The main purpose of this is to examine the public administration in Southern Africa Democratic Regimes in governance. Shah, and Shah, (2006) state that many Southern African countries used bureaucracy to govern their structures, the transition from colonial rule and authoritarian regimes to democratic governance in the late 20th century brought relief. Public administration in Southern African democratic countries was recognised and adopted, to play a crucial role in governance, policy implementation, and service delivery (Wiseman, 2009). Mashele, & Qobo, (2014) state that the rule of law is fundamental to democratic governance in Southern African democratic countries, providing a framework for protecting citizens' rights and ensuring accountability within public administration. While challenges remain, public administration guides the Southern Africa democratic countries to show commitment to uphold the rule of law to foster trust and legitimacy in democratic institutions (Steytler, 2005). This transition brought challenges such as resource constraints, poor legal frameworks and corruption significantly impact public administration in Southern African countries (Parnell, *et al.* 2002).

Democratic governments in Southern African countries pursue public sector reforms aimed at improving efficiency and service delivery including merit-based recruitment, training programs, and performance evaluations (Hattingh, 1988). Surty, (2010) states that the engagement with civil society organisations is a hallmark of democratic governance in Southern Africa, fostering inclusive policy-making and ensuring diverse voices are heard. The mechanisms for citizen participation, such as public consultations, town hall meetings, and participatory budgeting, are often encouraged by the public officials (Ndletyana, *et al.* 2013). Wiseman, (2009). Some Southern African

countries collaborate with CSOs, to enhance their responsiveness and accountability, to strengthen these relationships democratic regimes. The political influence compromise the independence of public institutions with weak mechanisms for accountability allowing corruption and mismanagement to persist (Sidel, 2010). Steytler, (2005) states that while some Southern African countries do not collaborate with CSOs, they regard them as a threat to secure their electoral base and return to power. This have had effect on enforcing the rule of law among the public officials unwilling to consult others about the use of the legal frameworks to implement policies in democratic regimes (Shah, and Shah, 2006). As a result, the limited transparency in decision-making processes fuels public distrust in restructuring public administration to align with democratic principles (Parnell, *et al.* 2002).

Problem statement

A snapshot of the complexities and dynamics of public administration in Southern Africa's democratic regimes are mostly, human made such as corruption, political patronage, and resource constraints (Surty, 2010). Ndletyana, *et al.* (2013) state that many public officials struggle with limited human and financial resources allocated to different departments in Southern African countries implementing policies. Ensuring equitable access to services remains a significant challenge due to persistent corruption on limited resources which undermines trust in public institutions (Wiseman, 2009). Mashele, & Qobo, (2014) state that some Southern African democratic countries have not fully embraced digital governance, they are still using the old manual system. The e-services are partially use to improve efficiency and accessibility when governing the institutions and in most case lack coherence in democratic institutions. The policies adopted and implemented are influenced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which increasingly focus on poverty alleviation, education, and health. Thus, Parnell, *et al.* (2002) states that neglecting participatory governance, to contribute to decision making processes to implement policies. Organizations like the Southern African Development Community

(SADC) promote collaboration on public administration reforms, which is not enough to use public administration (Huber, & Shipan, 2002). Some of their rules and regulations undermine sovereignty of Southern Africa democratic regimes through lack of standardize practices and improve governance across member states (Hattingh, 1988).

The objectives of this paper

- To examine public administration in Southern Africa Democratic Regimes in governance.
- To explain public administration in Southern Africa Democratic Regimes in governance
- To determine the effective ways of managing public administration in Southern Africa Democratic Regimes in governance

Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach used to encompass the strategies, techniques, and collect, analyze, and interpret data in a well-defined research design ensures systematic data collection and analysis. Parnell, *et al.* (2002) state that the control of variables in qualitative research, controlling for confounding variables enhances the validity of findings using tools and methods should be tested for their ability to produce consistent and accurate results. These are highlighted in articles by Aghion, and Tirole, 1997. Formal and Real Authority in Organizations. *Journal of Political Economy* 105(1):1–29; Antwi-Boasiako, 2010. Public administration, local government and decentralization in Ghana. *Journal of African Studies and Development* 2: 166–175; Botes, Brynard, Fourie, and Roux, 1997. Public administration and management: A guide to central, regional and municipal administration and management. Pretoria: Kagiso Tertiary; Huber, and Shipan, 2002. Deliberate Discretion? The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy. New York: Cambridge University Press; Huber, and McCarty, 2004. "Bureaucratic Capacity, Delegation, and Political Reform." *American Political Science Review* 98:481–494; and Mashele, & Qobo, 2014 *The fall of the ANC: What's next?* Johannesburg: Picador Africa. The

articles focuses on understanding concepts, thoughts, or experiences through the systematic qualitative methods which look for recurring themes into broader categories to highlight diverse perspectives or aspects of the questions (Surt, 2010). These themes interact and what they reveal about the research questions to discuss any contradictions or unique insights that emerge from the different literature by Ndletyana, Makhalemele & Mathekga, 2013. Patronage politics divide us: A study of poverty, patronage and inequality in South Africa. Johannesburg: Real African Publishers; Parnell, Piterse, Swilling, & Wooldridge, 2002. Democratizing local government: The South African experiment. Landsdowne: University of Cape Town Press; Philippon, and Reshef, 2009. Wages and Human Capital in the U.S. Financial Industry: 1909–2006." NBER Working Paper No. 14644; and Prakash, & Gugerty, 2010. Trust but verify? Voluntary regulation programs in the nonprofit sector. *Regulation & Governance*, 4 (1), 22–47. The articles obtain valid and reliable results, through the data analysis when implementing the policies. The content analysis to highlight how themes answer the clear research questions to grasp the main arguments, methodologies, and findings (Sharma, 2010).

Literature review

Public administration in Southern African democratic regimes focus on enhancing efficiency and service delivery through merit-based recruitment, training, and performance evaluations (Parnell, *et al.* 2002). Surt, (2010) states that while challenges exist, these reforms aim to create a more accountable and effective public administration that better serves citizens' needs, identified in different literature. Despite the presence of democratic frameworks in Southern Africa, public administration is significantly undermined by the public officials using patronage system to secure their positions (Ndletyana, *et al.* 2013). The literature review shows the continuous efforts to address these issues to improve governance and ensuring that democratic institutions function effectively as indicated.

Public administration

Public Administration with capital (P) and (A) is a study discipline taught by different academics at Universities and colleges to provide knowledge and expertise to students about its value in different institutions. It has been widely accepted as the development of knowledge which separate itself from politics engulfing the public institutions when implementing policies. Public administration with small letter (p) and (a) is an activity carried out by the public officials who have acquired knowledge on how to implement the policies and deliver as expected. In this paper, public administration is the main focus of this study in Southern African democratic regimes struggling to deliver the services as expected by different communities (Huber, & Shipan, 2002).

Factors influencing Public Administration in Southern Africa

The several factors significantly influence public administration in Southern African countries are:

Historical legacy: Surty, (2010) states that the majority of African countries were colonised by the European powers which shaped their histories in the current administrative structures and governance practices. As a result, many countries are still grappling with the effects of past injustices on public administration due to the patronage system inherited from the former colonial masters and decide the services to be delivered to communities (Ndletyana, *et al.* 2013). Parnell, *et al.* (2002) state that the nature of governance in Southern African countries, including the level of democracy and political stability, impacts public administration effectiveness. This has contributed to the lack of political will in formulating and implementing policy reforms to support public sector integrity in democratic regimes of Southern Africa (Hattingh, 1988).

Economic conditions: Shah, and Shah, (2006) state that the inability of Southern African democratic countries to promote economic stability and growth directly affect public funding and resource allocation to different institutions. This has led to the increase in high

unemployment and poverty rates create increased demand for public services (Wiseman, 2009). As a result, the cultural customs and societal norms influence public expectations and interactions with government institutions impacting communication and service delivery approaches (Sidel, 2010).

Legal framework: The effectiveness of laws and regulations governs the operation of public institutions influence public administration in Southern African democratic countries (Ndletyana, *et al.* 2013). Huber, & Shipan, (2002) state that the strong legal frameworks have restricted the public officials to operate freely to promote accountability and transparency. The international influences guided by the legal frameworks increases international partnerships which drive reforms and best practices in public administration (Mashele, & Qobo, 2014). This has allowed aid and investment from international organizations often come with conditions that influence governance in Southern African countries (Sidel, 2010).

Technological advancement: Surty, (2010) states that the adoption of technology enhance service delivery and improve efficiency through skills and competencies of public servants in different institutions. The training and development opportunities provided by the Southern African countries are crucial for building effective public institutions, yet, directly affect the quality of service delivery (Razin, 2003). In addition, the digital divide exacerbate inequalities for the communities living in different geographical areas to access services (Wiseman, 2009).

Regional dynamics: The regional cooperation and integration initiatives, such as those led by SADC, influence national policies and practices role in holding governments accountable (Parnell, *et al.* 2002). Shah, and Shah, (2006) states that the active civil society organizations play a vital role advocating for transparency and citizen rights influences public policy and administration supported by SADC. This has allowed the shared challenges, such as health crises or economic and political instability, caused by neglect and unnecessary delays without coordinated

responses provided to the public officials (Ndletyana, *et al.* 2013).

Citizen Participation in Southern African Democratic Regimes

The Southern African democratic governments frequently hold public consultations to gather input from citizens on proposed policies and projects approved by the public officials (Parnell, *et al.* 2002). Mashele, & Qobo, (2014) state that the citizen participation forums plays a crucial role in formulating and implementing policies that drive economic growth and reduce poverty. These forums allow community members to express their views, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making when implementing the policies in Southern Africa (Huber, & Shipan, 2002). However, in the case, public administration involve a set of standards which could clearly demonstrate regulatory commitment from the public officials in Southern Africa democratic regimes (Shah, and Shah, 2006).

Town hall meetings provide a platform for direct dialogue between citizens and government officials to ensure the efficient provision of essential services such as health, education, and infrastructure, improving citizens' quality of life (Sidel, 2010). It also translates government policies and programs into actionable plans, ensuring that objectives are met effectively during implementation. These gatherings foster transparency and enable public officials to address community concerns while receiving immediate feedback from the public institutions implementing policies (Huber, & Shipan, 2002). However, the public officials are unable to uphold the basic constitutional rights, showing less relevance to public administration to implement the policies in Southern Africa (Surt, 2010).

Participatory budgeting involves citizens in the allocation of public funds to foster democratic governance by promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in decision-making processes (Ndletyana, *et al.* 2013). It aim to promote social equity by addressing disparities in service delivery and

ensuring marginalized communities have a voice during participation on issues affecting the people. Wiseman, (2009) state that through this process, community members can propose and prioritize projects, empowering them to have a say in how resources are spent in their communities. Despite efforts to promote citizen participation, challenges such as limited access to information, apathy, and socio-economic barriers hinder engagement in different countries throughout Southern Africa (Shah, and Shah, 2006).

Governments often establish feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and suggestion boxes, to encourage ongoing citizen engagement in using these tools help residents voice their opinions and contribute to governance beyond formal meetings (Hattingh, 1988). Parnell, *et al.* (2002) state that it encourages active participation from citizens, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards governance. This contributes to national stability by maintaining law and order and addressing social issues, thereby reducing conflict and unrest in different countries unable to meet the needs of the communities (Sidel, 2010). However, this has led to some public officials to delegation authority knowingly they cannot achieve the outcome expected proportional to the legal framework designed in some Southern African countries (Surt, 2010).

Engagement with Civil Society in Southern African Democratic Regimes

Collaborative Policy-Making: Mashele, & Qobo, (2014) state that the Southern Africa democratic regimes actively engage with civil society organizations (CSOs) to incorporate diverse perspectives into policy-making. Developing collaborative skills in policy making improves competencies within public institutions, enhancing their ability to respond to societal needs and challenges (Rodriguez, Perez, & Godoy, 2012). This collaboration helps ensure that policies reflect the needs and aspirations of various community groups. However, the adequate resourcing has not been taken into account, a broader view of the sustainability,

effectiveness and impact on public administration in different institutions (Maserumule, 2007).

Advocacy and Representation: Ndletyana, *et al.* (2013) state that the CSOs serve as advocates for marginalized populations, providing a platform for underrepresented voices by engaging with different organizations, in Southern Africa. This help to better understand the challenges faced by different segments of society ensuring that all segments of societies participate effectively remains crucial in using public administration (Parnell, *et al.* 2002). However, the limited resources, allocated are guided by the political resistance hindering effective collaboration of public administration in Southern African countries (Wiseman, 2009).

Capacity Building for CSOs: Mashele, & Qobo, (2014) state that many democratic governments invest in the capacity building of civil society organizations, providing training and resources to enhance their effectiveness. The CSOs engage more effectively in dialogue to promote collaboration between government and community stakeholders in the policy development process in Southern Africa (Huber, & Shipan, 2002). However, the dismantling of separate 'funding boards' makes it difficult for the Southern African countries to be held to ransom by the regulatory boards monitoring and evaluating public administration (Shah, and Shah, 2006).

Public Consultations and Forums: Parnell, *et al.* (2002) state that the Southern Africa democratic regimes often hold public consultations and forums where citizens and CSOs express their views on proposed policies. These events promote transparency and allow for direct feedback from the community after participating in the formulation of the policies expected to be implemented by the Southern African governments (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012). This often led to the development of partnership which provide more relevant and effective policies that address real community needs in Southern Africa (Hattingh, 1988). However, there is no clear interest among the public

officials to encourage reforms in public administration because to patronage involvement to divert resources (Maserumule, 2007).

Collaborative Initiatives: Ndletyana, *et al.* (2013) state that the joint initiatives between the government and civil society can address pressing social issues, such as health, education, and environmental sustainability. The collaborative projects provide the leverage to strengthen both the public and private sectors to achieve greater impact in public administration in Southern Africa (Shah, and Shah, 2006). Sidel, (2010) states that despite the emphasis on collaborative initiatives, the challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, continue to pose a threat to public Administration. The public officials are unwilling to take decisions which would have quickened the implementation of the policies in different institution, fearing insubordination from the departmental heads (Surty, 2010).

Rule of Law in Southern African Democratic Regimes

Legal frameworks: Mashele, & Qobo, (2014) state that the Southern Africa democratic regimes establish comprehensive legal frameworks that safeguard citizens' rights for protection against the imbalances. These laws define individual freedoms, promote social justice, and provide mechanisms for redress against violations conducted by the public officials (Huber, & Shipan, 2002). However, the centrality of policy formulation in Southern Africa democratic regimes is a burden for the public officials to pay for effective policy implementation in different trends (Maserumule, 2007).

Independence of the Judiciary: Wiseman, (2009) states that a strong, independent judiciary is essential for upholding the rule of law to support public administration in Southern Africa democratic countries. The courts in Southern African countries do not operate free from political interference, allowing them to impartially adjudicate disputes and protect citizens' rights (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012). However, this illustrated the potential ways for developing public administration increasing cross border trade within the SADC, this trend constitute a minority

on boards of content to measure the outcome (Howell, and Jackman, 2011).

Accountability of Public Officials: Parnell, *et al.* (2002) state that the rule of law ensures that public officials are subject to the law, promoting accountability in different Southern African countries. Thus, using mechanisms such as judicial review and anti-corruption laws to hold officials responsible for their actions and decisions during policy implementation (Huber, & Shipan, 2002). However, the public officials' commitments to the rule of law, is challenged by the allegation of corruption, taking place in different institutions throughout Southern Africa (Maserumule, 2007).

Equal Application of the Law: Mashele, & Qobo, (2014) state that in Southern Africa democratic regimes, the law applies equally to all citizens, regardless of status or position to prevent abuses of power and fosters public trust in the legal system. However, some public officials do not respect equality before the law, political manipulation takes place on issues which are contrary to their claims, when implementing public administration (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012).

Access to Justice: Howell, and Jackman, (2011) state that the Southern Africa democratic countries ensure access to justice is a key component of the rule of law often used to implement measures to make legal services more accessible. This include the access to legal aid programs and simplified legal processes accepted in Southern African countries to provide the opportunity to the people and tell the side of the story (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012). However, the inadequate resources allocated by the different Southern African countries undermine its effectiveness, some public officials deliberately block the people to use the legal aid and find closure (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012).

Public Sector Reforms in Southern African Democratic Regimes

Merit-Based Recruitment: The Southern Africa democratic governments often implement merit-based recruitment processes to ensure that public sector positions are filled by qualified

individuals (Huber, & Shipan, 2002). This approach aims to reduce nepotism and enhance the professionalism of the workforce are necessary to strengthen legal institutions and uphold the rule of law (Howell, and Jackman, 2011).

Training and Development Programs: The ongoing training and professional development are crucial for improving public sector efficiency in Southern African countries to enhance transparency (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012). Dal B'o, (2006) states that democratic regimes invest in training programs to equip civil servants with the skills needed to perform effectively and adapt to changing needs. However, the civil society voices are genuinely considered in decision-making remains a critical challenge, they favour individuals who are not willing to be trained and acquire skills (Maserumule, 2007).

Performance Evaluations: Mashele, & Qobo, (2014) state that the regular performance evaluations help assess the effectiveness of public servants by establishing clear performance metrics. Huber, and McCarty, (2004) state that the Southern African governments identify high achievers and areas needing improvement, promoting accountability within the public sector. However, the head off threats of statutory regulation, there are adequate market incentives for resources to be allocated to self-regulatory activities (Wiseman, 2009).

Streamlining Processes: Huber, & Shipan, (2002) state that the public sector reforms may focus on streamlining administrative processes to reduce bureaucracy and enhance service delivery in Southern Africa. The public officials simplify certain procedures allows for quicker response times and improved citizen experiences when accessing the services provided by the governments in Southern Africa (Howell, and Jackman, 2011). However, the democratic frameworks, are affected by political patronage, which frustrate the public officials determined to promote public administration in different institutions implementing policies (Maserumule, 2007).

Citizen-Centric Services: Mashele, & Qobo, (2014) state that the emphasizing citizen engagement, reforms often aim to make public services more responsive to community needs throughout Southern Africa. This include feedback mechanisms that allow citizens to voice their concerns and suggestions regarding service delivery (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012). However, the legal frameworks in public administration operates within defined legal limits, which makes it difficult for the public officials to implement effective policies in different institutions (Maserumule, 2007).

Emphasis on Transparency and Accountability in Southern African Democratic Regimes

Transparency in Decision-Making: Wiseman, (2009) states that the Southern Africa democratic governments prioritize transparency by making information about decision-making processes accessible to the public. The most effective and skilled public officials promote transparency by the following issues taken into account when promoting public administration to help build trust between citizens and their government (Mashele, & Qobo, 2014). However, the lack of continuous vigilance and reforms necessary to strengthen transparency undermine public administration in most Southern African countries. This hinder the effectiveness of transparency and accountability measures in different institutions implementing policies (Maserumule, 2007).

Mechanisms for Accountability: The various mechanisms are employed to ensure officials are held accountable for their actions is fundamental in democratic regimes. These include:

- **Audits:** Dal B'o, (2006) states that the regular financial and performance audits help ensure that public funds are used appropriately and effectively involvement of public officials help to empower citizens and enhance accountability. Huber, & Shipan, (2002) state that sometimes the public officials encourage incompetence, they announce the date or dates when there will be audit, some may pretend to be sick other claim the documents are lost. Despite the push for

reform, challenges such as resistance to change, limited resources, and political interference can impede progress (Huber, and McCarty, 2004).

- **Public reporting:** Dubois, and Fattore, (2009) state that governments often publish reports detailing expenditures, project outcomes, and policy impacts, from different institutions. The continuous commitment and support are necessary to overcome the barriers to effective reporting and achieve meaningful reforms the Southern African governments need to sustain themselves (Howell, and Jackman, 2011). This allowed the citizens to track government performance facilitated through mechanisms like public consultations, compromise and accountability when implementing policies (Huber, and McCarty, 2004).

Independent Oversight Bodies: Huber, & Shipan, (2002) state that the establishment of independent institutions, such as ombudsmen, anti-corruption commissions, or auditor generals, is common in democratic regimes. These bodies investigate complaints, monitor government actions, and promote accountability addressing barriers to participation is essential for realizing their full potential (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012). However, the oversight institutions are limited by the political interference which is more concerned in saving the face of the ruling party than promoting public administration in different institutions (Huber, and McCarty, 2004).

Freedom of Information Laws: Wiseman, (2009) states that many democratic governments adopt freedom of information laws, allowing citizens to request access to government records are vital components of democratic governance in Southern Africa. This empowers citizens to seek information and hold officials accountable for their decisions contribute to more responsive and inclusive governance (Callander, 2008). However, Maserumule, (2007) state that the information laws used to curb corruption are ineffective, the whistle blowers are unable to come forward to present the reliable information, they fear for their lives. The laws protecting the whistle blowers are not enforced properly by the Southern African governments and some of them

do not have such laws to support public administration in different institutions (Howell, and Jackman, 2011).

Citizen Engagement: Mashele, & Qobo, (2014) state that encouraging citizen participation in governance through public consultations, town hall meetings, and feedback mechanisms enhances accountability. When citizens have a voice in the process, they demand greater transparency in managing resource constraints still affecting public administration (Huber, & Shipan, 2002). However, Botes, Brynard, Fourie, and Roux, (1997) state that the bureaucratic resistance from the incompetent public officials when engaging with the public, fear that their weaknesses will be exposed. This has led them to be selective when identifying the potential facts supporting public administration in most Southern African countries implementing the policies (Wiseman, 2009).

Relevance of public administration in Southern Africa democratic regimes

Public administration plays a crucial role in the democratic regimes of Southern Africa highlighting its relevance:

The implementation of policies guides effective service delivery using public administration to translate political decisions into actionable policies, ensuring that services reach citizens efficiently (Johnson, & Kwak, 2010). The local governance shows strong public administration at local levels enhances the responsiveness of government to community needs and priorities (Baron, and Myerson, 1982). The promotion of transparency mechanisms provide a robust public administration framework in government operations, allowing citizens to hold officials accountable for their actions accountability (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012). The effective public administration practices help establish systems to combat nepotism which encourages corruption and promote ethical governance (Gailmard, and Patty, 2004). Facilitation of citizen participation through engagement platforms allowing public administration to create structures for citizen involvement in decision-making processes,

enhancing democratic participation (Howell, and Jackman, 2011).

The feedback mechanisms establish the channels for public feedback helps ensure that government actions align with citizen expectations and needs (Huber, and McCarty, 2004). Capacity building through training and development: improves the quality of governance and enhances institutional capacity to address complex societal challenges. The institutional capacity strengthens public administration frameworks contribute to the stability and resilience of democratic institutions (Maserumule, 2007). Conflict resolution and social cohesion mediation roles play a key role in fostering dialogue among diverse groups, promoting social cohesion when implementing policies (Gailmard, and Patty, 2004).. The equitable resource distribution provide fair administration of resources helps address historical inequalities, contributing to national reconciliation and stability (Baron, and Myerson, 1982).

Policy innovation and adaptation is part of responsive governance in public administration which facilitates the development that respond to emerging challenges, such as economic changes and social issues (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012). The effective public administration relies on data and research to inform policy decisions, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of governance (Huber, and McCarty, 2004). The economic development attract investment Attraction for a well-functioning public administration create an enabling environment for foreign and domestic investment, contributing to economic development (Johnson, & Kwak, 2010). This has led to the infrastructure development that drive economic growth and improve quality of life in public administration which is vital for planning (Howell, and Jackman, 2011).

Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework provides a structured approach to understanding concepts, relationships, and principles within public administration, in Southern Africa (Huber, & Shipan, 2002). It helps guide research, analysis, and practice to analyze public policies and their

impact on governance and service delivery. Public administration uses the theoretical framework to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of public programs and initiatives to provide insights for practitioners on how to improve governance (Mashele, & Qobo, 2014). Maserumule, (2007) states that a well-defined theoretical framework in public administration is essential for guiding research, practice, and policy formulation such as governance, public administration, accountability, and efficiency. It helped to integrate various theories and concepts, it allows for a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in governance and public service delivery (Howell, and Jackman, 2011). Baron, and Myerson, (1982) state that the theoretical framework provide frameworks for understanding how public administration functions, how policies are implemented, and how organizations can effectively serve the public interest. This framework serves as a valuable tool for scholars and practitioner's alike, promoting informed decision-making and effective management in the public sector (Rodriguez, *et al.* 2012). The public administration theory emphasizes the significance of government, the role of bureaucracy, public affairs, and budgets. It aims to promote a superior understanding of government and its relationship with society (Huber, and McCarty, 2004).

Public administration theory

Public administration theory encompasses various frameworks and concepts that guide the organization, management, and implementation of government policies and services (Mashele, & Qobo, 2014). Huber, & Shipan, (2002) state that public administration theory is diverse, reflecting the complexity of governance and public service throughout Southern Africa, undermined by the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. It examines how public services are organized, managed, and delivered, drawing on various disciplines like political science, sociology, and management (Maserumule, 2007). Huber, and McCarty, (2004) state that public administration theory is the study of the principles and practices of government administration, including the organization, management, and delivery of public services. It

involves understanding the complexities of administrative systems and effective governance in Southern Africa (Aghion, and Tirole, 1997). Public administration encompasses various services that support societies through governmental roles which includes labour relations, ethics, legislative relations, public policy, financial management, and budgetary processes (Botes, *et al.* 1997).

Results and Discussions

Results

The challenges to public administration in Southern African democratic regimes are

Resource constraints: Public administration in democratic regimes face resource constraints that limit their ability to deliver services effectively in different institutions and resource sharing (Johnson, & Kwak, 2010). The budgetary limitations impact infrastructure development, social programs, and overall public service quality when implementing the policies in different institutions (Gailmard, and Patty, 2004).

Bureaucratic inefficiencies: The bureaucratic red tape exposes inefficiencies for the public officials to slow down in decision-making processes to deliver the services in various communities (Botes, *et al.* 1997). This frustrates the public in diminishing public confidence in government institutions using public administration public administration essential for the functioning and sustainability of democratic regimes in Southern Africa (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010).

Political patronage: The political patronage system adopted by public officials in distorting public administration by prioritizing loyalty over merit in appointments and resource allocation (Aghion, and Tirole, 1997). This practice often leads to inefficiencies and a lack of accountability within government institutions to enhance service delivery, citizen engagement, and overall governance quality (Cameron, 2004).

Weak institutional frameworks: In some cases, institutional frameworks may be underdeveloped or inadequately enforced, leading to gaps in

governance and accountability (Azongo, 2009; Baron, 2001). Strengthening these institutions is crucial for effective public administration constrained government spending on essential services and development projects, exacerbating economic challenges (Dubois, and Fattore, 2009).

Corruption: Corruption remains a significant challenge in Southern Africa, undermining public trust and diverting resources from essential services to manifests in various forms, including bribery, embezzlement, and nepotism (Gailmard, and Patty, 2004). The corrupt activities doesn't contribute to the stability and progress of the region hindering effective governance in fostering and share best practices facilitating coordinated responses (Christopher 2011).

Political instability: The political instability, is caused by the ineffective intergovernmental collaboration between the National, Provincial and local governments using the coordination frameworks to create mechanisms for aligning policies (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010). The well trained public officials will have the opportunity to set up joint initiatives with different departments to encourage joint projects that address common challenges. The frequent changes in leadership or government policies, disrupt governance and hinder long-term planning and implementation of reforms (Azongo, 2009; Baron, 2001).

Discussions

Public administration in Southern Africa faces several significant challenges discussed below.

Public administration provide the leverage technology for improved governance in facilitating collaboration among Southern African countries to address shared challenges, promoting stability and development in the region (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010). There is widespread corruption which undermines public trust and hampers effective governance in different institutions. As a result, the resources meant for public services are often misappropriated, by the greedy public officials

determined to unjustly enrich themselves from the limited resources allocated (Aghion, and Tirole, 1997).

Public administration in Southern Africa holds significant value across various dimensions driving innovation in public administration to deliver services adapting to changing societal needs (Crawford, and Sobel, 1982). Dubois, and Fattore, (2009) state that the Southern African countries suffer from the capacity constraints due to the disappointing appointment of public officials in different departments to govern the institutions. For example, a financial clerk appointed to be a Director – General, due to the patronage system in government institutions. The economic slowdowns in major economies reduce demand for African exports and lead to decreased foreign direct investment in high levels of public debt (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010).

The public officials uses the values underscore the importance of effective public administration in fostering sustainable development and enhancing the well-being of citizens in Southern Africa (Christopher 2011). Epstein, and O'Halloran, (1999) state that many public institutions in Southern African countries suffer from inadequate staffing, training, and resources, most of them are trained in surrogate schools not accredited by international bodies, yet, backed by some public officials as way of promoting consistency to protect them. As a result, the public officials trained in unknown surrogate schools, receive low salaries and accept working in poor conditions lead to high retention rates among the less skilled personnel (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010).

The Southern Africa democratic governments typically implement measures to increase transparency in decision-making processes requires comprehensive reforms engaging in understanding how to navigate the complexities (Dubois, and Fattore, 2009). Antwi-Boasiako, (2010) state that the political influence from both the ruling and opposition parties often compromise the independence of public institutions implementing the policies. The citizens often experience delays and inefficiencies

in accessing essential services to sustain their livelihoods (Crawford, and Sobel, 1982). The patronage systems may prioritize political loyalty over merit-based appointments to different institutions led to the urban-rural disparities exacerbate inequalities in service provision (Dessein, 2002).

The Southern African democratic governments receive increased investment, and a commitment to transparency and accountability in public administration implementing policies (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010). Dubois, and Fattore, (2009) state that managing the Southern African democratic regimes are more effectively, leading to improved governance, enhanced public service delivery, and greater citizen engagement. The overly complex regulations formulated in Southern Africa democratic regimes hinder efficient public administration to deliver the services to the people (Huber, & Shipan, 2002). The weak mechanisms for accountability allow corruption and mismanagement to persist in different institutions implementing the policies. Therefore, the bureaucratic red tape may slow down decision-making and implementation processes to limit transparency in decision-making processes fuels public distrust (Aghion, and Tirole, 1997).

The poor structures supporting participatory budgeting in empowering citizens and enhance continuous governance when implementing the policies in different institutions (Baron, and Myerson, 1982). Dubois, and Fattore, (2009) state that the Southern Africa democratic regimes tend to foster active engagement with civil society organizations to deliver the services to the people. The poor infrastructure affects service delivery, particularly in health, education, and transportation lead to resistance in reforming and innovation within public institutions which stifle progress (Antwi-Boasiako, 2010). The investment in infrastructure is often insufficient to meet growing demands in public administrations in which Southern African countries struggle to adapt to evolving societal needs and technological advancements (Dessein, 2002).

The mechanisms used in economy such as audits, public reporting, and independent oversight bodies aim to hold officials accountable, misusing the finances. This collaboration has led to more inclusive policy-making processes, ensuring that diverse voices are heard during public participation (Gailmard, and Patty, 2004). Crawford, and Sobel, (1982) state that the economic instability in Southern African countries lead to reduced government spending on public services leading to a disconnect between citizens and policymakers. The high levels of unemployment and poverty strain public finances and demand for services due to the lack of awareness about rights and responsibilities limits civic engagement led to public participation in governance is often minimal (Dessein, 2002).

Recommendations

While public administration is perceived as valuable components of effective policy analysis, they should not be viewed in isolation, integrated strategy must be used in different institutions.

- Invest in capacity building through training and development for public servants to enhance their skills and knowledge in governance, management, and service delivery, regardless of their previous qualifications. Offer training programs for policymakers and analysts on ethical decision-making, critical thinking, and effective communication to avoid public officials from resisting change and adhere to rigorous analytical standards. Professionalization of the public service establish clear standards and qualifications for public service positions to ensure a competent and committed workforce. This ensures that they adopt a balanced approach to incorporate external factors, collaborative efforts, and accountability mechanisms is essential for achieving comprehensive and effective policy outcomes.
- Encourage citizen participation through consultation processes involving citizens in policymaking through consultations, forums, and participatory budgeting initiatives to ensure their voices are heard. It help to establish accessible channels for citizens to provide feedback on public services and government performance of

democratic regimes in Southern Africa. Involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including civil society, academia, and the private sector, in the policy analysis process with the transparency measures that require the disclosure of the policy analysis process, data sources, and methodologies used. Establish and enforce clear regulations that protect the independence of policy analysis institutions from political interference which are better positioned to conduct unbiased analyses and provide objective recommendations.

- Enhance accountability and transparency when using the oversight mechanisms to strengthen the democratic institutions such as Intelligence Units, to monitor public administration and ensure accountability. It will create a feeling of fear that the public officials are being watched by an invisible force, as a result, they will promote open governance. The institutions with a broader engagement provide varied perspectives, reduce partisanship, and enhance the legitimacy of the analysis. Therefore, increased transparency fosters public trust and allows stakeholders to scrutinize and challenge analyses, reducing the likelihood of biased outcomes. This may also help to adopt policies that emphasize transparency, such as open budget initiatives and public reporting on government activities.
- Strengthen Local Governance using the decentralization policy to empower public officials with the authority and resources to make decisions that directly affect their communities, enhancing responsiveness. The capacity support for local authorities will provide technical and financial assistance to local governments to improve their service delivery capabilities. As a result, the e-government initiatives will implement digital platforms for service delivery, communication, and information sharing to improve efficiency and accessibility in different spheres of government. The public administration leverage technology and advanced data analytics to enhance the robustness of policy analyses for different institutions. The use of data analytics to inform policy decisions and enhance the effectiveness of public services to implement the policies as expected by different communities.

- Promote ethical standards and integrity through the code of conduct to promote integrity and professionalism in public administration in all spheres of government. Develop and disseminate clear guidelines and best practices for conducting policy analysis, emphasizing the importance of objectivity and evidence-based decision-making. This include the whistleblower protections to encourage reporting of corruption and unethical practices within public administration. Foster a culture of accountability within organizations by establishing mechanisms for reviewing and evaluating policy analyses during the implementation of the policies in different institutions. Accountability promotes adherence to ethical standards and encourages analysts to stand by their findings despite political pressures to provide the clear guidelines to help analysts navigate political pressures while maintaining analytical integrity.
- Ensure sustainable funding when advocating for consistent and sufficient budgetary allocations to public administration to ensure long-term sustainability of programs and services. The diversified funding sources explore innovative funding mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, to support public administration initiatives. Sustaining public administration in Southern African regimes requires a multifaceted approach that addresses capacity, accountability, and citizen engagement. As a result, emphasize the use of evidence-based methodologies in policy analysis, including rigorous data collection and evaluation techniques to provide a solid foundation for recommendations, making it harder for political pressures to sway decisions.

Conclusion

Public administration in Southern Africa's democratic regimes is characterized by efforts to decentralize power, enhance transparency, and engage with civil society. Democratic regimes in Southern Africa place a strong emphasis on accountability, employing various mechanisms to ensure government officials are held responsible for their actions. While challenges remain, the commitment to democratic principles fosters a more accountable and responsive governance

framework that seeks to address citizens' needs. By fostering an open governance culture, these regimes aim to enhance public trust and promote

effective administration, although ongoing challenges must be addressed to maintain these standards.

References

- Aghion, P and Tirole, J. 1997. "Formal and Real Authority in Organizations." *Journal of Political Economy* 105(1):1–29.
- Antwi-Boasiako, K.B. 2010. Public administration, local government and decentralization in Ghana. *Journal of African Studies and Development* 2: 166–175. 206 *Public Administration in Africa*
- Azongo, N. 2009. Local government and decentralized Ghana. From <http://www.ghanaweb> (accessed May 8, 2012).
- Baron, D.P. 2001. "Private Politics, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Integrated Strategy." *Journal of Economics and Management Strategy* 10(1):7–45.
- Baron, D.P. and Myerson, R.B. 1982. "Regulating a Monopolist with Unknown Cost." *Econometrica* 50(4):911–30.
- Botes, P.S., Brynard, P.A., Fourie, D.J., and Roux, L. 1997. *Public administration and management: A guide to central, regional and municipal administration and management*. Pretoria: Kagiso Tertiary.
- Cameron, R. 2004. South African local government: The limits of institutional reform? Paper presented at Hurst Seminar on Reform and Democracy in Local Government of Countries in Transition, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, Israel, May 23–24, 2004.
- Callander, S. 2008. "A Theory of Policy Expertise." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 3:123–140.
- Carpenter, D. 2004. "Protection without Capture: Product Approval by a Politically Responsive, Learning Regulator." *American Political Science Review* 98:613–631.
- Christopher, M., 2011. *Internet Co-Regulation: European Law, Regulatory Governance and Legitimacy in Cyberspace* (Cambridge University Press, 2011, forthcoming).
- Crawford, V. and Sobel, J. 1982. "Strategic Information Transmission." *Econometrica* 50:1431–1451.
- Dal B'ò, E. 2006. "Regulatory Capture: A Review." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 22:203–225.
- Curtis, H. E. (2009) *NGO Codes of Conduct: An Exploration of the Current Debate*. International NGOs Training and Research Centre.
- Dessein, W. 2002. "Authority and Communications in Organizations." *Review of Economic Studies* 69:811–838.
- Dubois, H.F.W., and Fattore, G. 2009. Definitions and typologies in public administration research: The case of decentralization. *International Journal of Public Administration* 32(8): 704–727.
- Davis, R., Nicolson, G. & Simelane, B. 2015. Mokopane: Tale of a town on the brink. Available at: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-01-21-mokopane-taleof-a-town-on-the-brink/#.Wgwcz39dCAg>. Accessed on 14 November 2017.
- Epstein, D. and O'Halloran, S. 1999. *Delegating Powers: A Transaction Cost Politics Approach to Policy Making under Separate Powers*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 33
- Gailmard, S. and Patty, J.W. 2004. "Slackers and Zealots: Civil Service Reform, Policy Discretion, and Bureaucratic Expertise." *American Journal of Political Science* 51:873–889. Gailmard, S and Patty, J.W. 2013. *Learning While Governing: Information, Accountability, and Executive Branch Institutions*. forthcoming.
- Gilligan, T.W. and Krehbiel, K. 1987. "Collective Information and Standing Committees: An Informational Rationale for Restrictive Amendment Procedures." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3:287–335.
- Gunningham, N., & Rees J., (1997) *Industry Self-Regulation*. Law & Policy, (19) 4, 363- 414.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2010. Reflection on Ghana's decentralization programme: Progress, stagnation or retrogression. From <http://www.ghanaweb.com>.
- Hattingh, J.J. 1988. *Governmental relations: An introduction*. Pretoria: Unisa Press. ILGS. 2010. *Local government system in Ghana*.
- Hirsch, A.V. and Shotts, K.W. 2011. "Policy-Specific Information and Informal Agenda Power." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1):67–83.

- Howell, W.G. and Jackman, S.P. 2011. "Inter-branch Bargaining over Multiple Outcomes." Typescript, University of Chicago.
- Huber, J.D. and Shipan, C.R. 2002. *Deliberate Discretion?: The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Huber, J.D. and McCarty, N. 2004. "Bureaucratic Capacity, Delegation, and Political Reform." *American Political Science Review* 98:481–494.
- Johnson, S. and Kwak, J. 2010. *13 Bankers: The Wall Street Takeover and the Next Financial Meltdown*.
- Jean-Jacques, L. and Tirole, J. 1986. "Using Cost Observation to Regulate Firms." *Journal of Political Economy* 94(3):614–41.
- Lax, J.R. and Cameron, C.M. 2007. "Bargaining and Opinion Assignment on the U.S. Supreme Court." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 23:276–302. 34
- Maserumule, M.H. 2007. Conflicts between Director Generals and Ministers in South Africa. 1994-2004: A 'postulative' approach. *Politikon*, 34(2):147-164.
- McCarty, N. 2004. "The Appointments Dilemma." *American Journal of Political Science* 48:413–428.
- McCarty, N. and Meirowitz, A. 2006. *Political Game Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mashele, P. & Qobo, M. 2014. *The fall of the ANC: What's next?* Johannesburg: Picador Africa.
- Ndletyana, M., Makhalemele P.O. & Mathekg, R. 2013. *Patronage politics divide us: A study of poverty, patronage and inequality in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Real African Publishers.
- Parnell, S., Piterse, E., Swilling, M., and Wooldridge, D. 2002. *Democratising local government: The South African experiment*. Landsdowne: University of Cape Town Press.
- Philippon, T., and Reshef, A. 2009. "Wages and Human Capital in the U.S. Financial Industry: 1909-2006." NBER Working Paper No. 14644 .
- Prakash, A., & Gugerty, M. K. (2010). Trust but verify? Voluntary regulation programs in the nonprofit sector. *Regulation & Governance*, 4 (1), 22–47.
- Razin, E. 2003. Needs and impediments for local government reform: Lessons from Israel. Unpublished paper. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University
- Shah, A., and Shah, S. 2006. The new vision of local governance and the evolving roles of local governments. In *Local governance in developing countries*, (pp. 1–46), ed. A. Shah. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Sharma, K.C. 2010. Book review: Local government and decentralization in Ghana. *Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance* 7: 240–245.
- Sidel, M. (2010). The promise and limits of collective action for nonprofit self-regulation: evidence from Asia. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 39 (6), 1039-1056.
- Steytler, N., ed. 2005. *The place and role of local government in federal systems*. Occasional papers. Johannesburg: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.
- Surdy, F. 2010. *The political/administrative interface: The relationship between the Executive Mayor and the Municipal Manager*. A masters dissertation. Cape Town: University of the Western Cape.
- Rodriguez, M., Perez, M., & Godoy, M.L. (2012). Determining Factors in Online Transparency of NGOs: A Spanish Case Study'. *Voluntas*, 23, 661-683.
- Wiseman, A. 2009. "Delegation and Positive-Sum Bureaucracies." *Journal of Politics* 71:998–1014.