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JOURNAL	International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science
p-ISSN	2544-9338
e-ISSN	2544-9435
PUBLISHER	RS Global Sp. z O.O., Poland
ARTICLE TITLE	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLICY, GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA
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ARTICLE INFO	Xolisile G. Ngumbela. (2022) The Relationship Between Policy, Governance and Service Delivery in Local Government in South Africa. International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science. 2(34). doi: 10.31435/rsglobal_ijitss/30062022/7810
DOI	https://doi.org/10.31435/rsglobal_ijitss/30062022/7810
RECEIVED	23 March 2022
ACCEPTED	04 May 2022
PUBLISHED	09 May 2022
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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLICY, GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.31435/rsglobal_ijitss/30062022/7810

ARTICLE INFO

Received 23 March 2022

Accepted 04 May 2022

Published 09 May 2022

KEYWORDS

municipality, governance, decision-making, governance processes, governance culture, service delivery.

ABSTRACT

In South Africa, the demands expected of local government appear to be beyond the capacity of many municipalities across the country, and the problem can be traced back to governance and service delivery capabilities. Municipalities face a variety of obstacles, yet they are all obligated by law and the public to be responsive and accountable to the public. The study of urban governance in South Africa is based on a multi-level analytical framework and an interpretivist paradigm, using a qualitative research methodology. Poor leadership at both the political and administrative levels has resulted in a lack of monitoring and responsibility, which has been abused for self-interest. This has resulted in a lack of capability to carry out the local government's mandate. Municipalities are characterised by disproportionate power distribution in decision-making. This does not allow for meaningful interaction or consultation with decision-makers, who are responsive to the needs and aspirations of the broader community in each municipality. These problems can be attributed to poor governance, resulting in service delivery failure. On a local level, this scenario has been exacerbated by internal disputes and broken politics, which has influenced governance procedures. Effective service delivery requires more than just efficient governance. It also requires a focus on the social structure and institutional norms that affect community members' ability to change their own lives. To put it another way, governance and service delivery are inextricably linked.

Citation: Xolisile G. Ngumbela. (2022) The Relationship Between Policy, Governance and Service Delivery in Local Government in South Africa. *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*. 2(34). doi: 10.31435/rsglobal_ijitss/30062022/7810

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1. **Introduction.** According to Nicholas (2018), the concept of governance is difficult and controversial from a theoretical standpoint. This view is supported by Canales (2015), Ley (2015), Millstein (2010), and Meuleman (2008), all of whom share similar thoughts concerning local governance. However, as Canales (2015) points out, the study of local governance has evolved over the years to embrace a diverse range of decision-makers and institutions involved in the functioning of local governments and local politics. Stoker (2009) elaborates that local governance is a complex interaction of decision-makers and their interests, which affect the development of local government and local policy. In other words, local government and society influence local policy decision-making and implementation through governance. In South Africa, the Constitution of 1996 provides the legal framework for local government. Local government is elevated to a significant domain in its own right by the Constitution. Therefore, the Constitution declares that a municipality has the ability to govern the local government affairs of its community of its own initiative, but subject to national and provincial laws.

The legislative framework mandated by the Constitution has two policy implications: (1) delivering services using a developmental approach to rectify the discriminatory legacy of apartheid and (2) participation. In both of these areas, local government has fallen short of expectations (Jolobe, 2014). In this regard, Jolobe (2014, p. 9) claims that the entire approach to local government “has remained ... top-down in its execution [and is] typified by sluggishness in service delivery [and has] failed to absorb the interest of communities in its ranks”. The issues that municipalities face suggest that local government in South Africa is far from being a responsible and responsive institution (van Donk & Williams, 2015). The situation of local government is frequently described as ‘terrible’, with the capacity to deliver and political will to pursue initiatives being the primary concerns (Booyesen, 2015). Despite interventions such as ‘Project Consolidate,’ ‘Local Government Turn-Around Strategy,’ or more recently, the ‘Back to Basics’ strategy, adverse audit outcomes have been pronounced for the majority of South Africa’s 278 municipalities, as reflected in the Auditor-General’s reports (Booyesen, 2015).

Tsakani Maluleke, the auditor-general, warned (AGSA,2021) that some municipalities were on the verge of bankruptcy. Local government finances remained under tremendous strain as a result of municipal debtor non-payment, bad budgeting methods, and insufficient financial management, according to the Auditor General, (AGSA,2021). Just over a quarter of municipalities are in such bad financial shape that they are unsure if they will be able to satisfy their responsibilities in the foreseeable future. Almost half of the municipalities show signs of financial distress, such as slow debt repayment, inability to pay creditors, and operational deficits. Only 27 audits were found to be clean across the country. Provinces are unable to provide basic services due to parallel government structures. They are also unable to meet financial and constitutional commitments. In understanding the Auditor General South Africa’s 2021 report with Ngumbela (2021) and Nicholas (2018) concurring that the government fully acknowledges the challenges it faces. This is reflected in various official documents, such as the National Development Plan (2015), the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (2014–2019) and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs’ (COGTA) ‘Back to Basics’ approach (COGTA, 2014). All these documents affirm that serious problems exist at local government capacity levels. Some of the key concerns include tensions in the political interface, inconsistent administrative leadership, skills inadequacy, poor organisational design, low staff morale and lack of accountability. Provinces are unable to provide basic services due to parallel government programmes and structures which are not meeting their financial and constitutional commitments due to silo mentality of operations. Corruption and maladministration are entrenched in some municipalities, according to the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) (2014-2019). This situation has been exacerbated by a lack of accountability and transparency in service delivery (The Presidency, 2014). Furthermore, the MTSF (2014-2019) specifically mentions the erosion of public trust in local government as a result of inadequate governance and accountability.

2. Research problem and objectives. Service delivery at local government level in South Africa is hamstrung by an inadequate relationship between policy, governance and service delivery. This study investigates whether there are governance issues, policy consequences and fundamental service delivery problems in South African municipalities as a result of poor service delivery to their communities. As previously stated, municipalities are unable to fulfill their constitutional obligations. A mix of political and administrative issues is to blame for this poor service delivery. According to Nini (2014), the situation in most municipalities has deteriorated to the point where the supply of services, particularly water, has necessitated action from both the provincial and national levels of government. As a result, this article investigates and describes the relationship and the connection, if any, between policy implementation, good governance and service delivery. It is argued that public services are delivered at a suitable level if a governance system is in place and responsive to the demands and ambitions of the people (Kanyane, 2014). Quality service delivery is dependent on governance mechanisms such as accountability, administrative capacity, internal operations and organisational culture in terms of the implicit norms and values that influence institutional governance operations. Kanyane (2014) asserts that for an adequate level of public services to be maintained, public officials must demonstrate honesty, transparency as well as both internal and external responsibility towards the general public.

This article explores how accountability manifests itself within the power structure and distribution among key decision-makers; the interactions between decision-makers; the decisions that are made; and how they are made. An exploratory and descriptive approach is used, drawing on urban governance theory. This study also investigates the contexts and interacting behaviours associated with the interface between administrative and political systems as well as how they influence service delivery.

Furthermore, the study describes how accountability manifests itself in coalition-building, network formation and the influence of stakeholder selection as well as how internal operations shape the relationship between the municipality and the citizens in the delivery of services. Finally, the research identifies the governing culture ingrained in municipalities, such as implicit norms and values and how these influence service delivery.

3. **Research methodology.** A qualitative research design was chosen for this study because it takes into consideration experience, perception and meaning. The first part of the study consists of a literature review, which provides the framework for an explanatory and descriptive interpretation of the issues experienced when providing services, good governance and policy execution. The second part of the study involves interviews, which verified whether the various themes identified in the literature matched those expressed by respondents. A contextual approach to data gathering and interpretation was adopted, together with inductive reasoning. The study is literature-based since it draws on a wide range of academic research that documents government strategies of developing and improving policy implementation, especially in poorer communities. Information was also gathered through the analysis of official documentation and annual reports obtained from COGTA. International best practices were used to identify successful models that could be transferred to South African municipalities to support better service delivery and good governance.

Purposive approach was used to select a sample of 15 municipalities. According to Zhou and Creswell (2012), this means that the researchers select individuals or research sites based on their suitability for the research goal. Participants are chosen if they met the study's objectives. In this case, the purpose of the research was explained to the participants, who were asked if they would be willing to participate. Nine out of 15 individuals (60%) who were invited to the interviews agreed. Ethical considerations were taken into account when the researcher outlined the scope of the project and its goals. The participants were assured that their comments would be kept private and anonymous and that they were under no obligation to take part in the interviews. The participants gave their informed consent to participate in the study. Before starting the interviews, the researcher enquired whether the interviewees had any questions.

These interviews were conducted in 2020 and 2021 with municipalities from the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, the Free State and the Western Cape provinces. A semi-structured list of questions to guide the interviews was sent to the participants a month before the interviews so that they could familiarise themselves with the key themes in the questionnaire and to consider their service delivery issues and challenges in terms of good governance and policy implementation. The researcher referred to a core set of questions that were asked of each participant during the interviews. This ensured that the questions posed were consistent. It also allowed the interviewees to ask questions where necessary whereas the interviewer had the option of asking follow-up questions to elicit further information. Guiding questions were not used to avoid bias (Berg, Karam and Laxton, 2006). The open-ended nature of the questions allowed the interviewees to express themselves freely. Each interview lasted about 15 minutes. The interview questions were sequenced according to (Berg, Karam and Laxton, (2006) approach of starting with factual questions, intended to put the interviewees at ease. The interviewees were then asked to explain their understanding of good governance and policy implementation and to comment on their experiences with good governance and policy implementation in the delivery of basic services. They were also asked whether they believed that good governance and proper policy implementation were feasible in their local government environment.

To decipher the patterns or themes that emerged from the qualitative interview data, a substance investigation was used. This involved following Creswell's (2014) six steps: (1) the data is organised and prepared for analysis; (2) the researcher reads the data to gain a general feel of the material and to assess its overall relevance and importance; (3) the information is classified into groups and labelled; (4) the emergent themes are coded; (5) the themes are elaborated on; and (6) the results are evaluated to determine what has been learned.

4. **Theoretical considerations.** The theoretical context of a study underpins the rationale for the analysis, the problem statement, the intent, the study contribution and the research questions. The theoretical structure, according to Grant and Azadeh (2014), serves as a foundation or anchor for the literature review, methodology and investigation. Due to altering paradigm shifts in the discipline of public administration, modern governments have become enmeshed in many ways of service delivery amid a rising demand for better services.

The topic of what exactly the government's role should be in service delivery is at the heart of modern governance debate. Good governance and public participation are the theoretical strands upon which this study is based. The principle of public participation, according to Davids and Theron (2018), indicates that people who are affected by a choice have a right to participate in the decision-making process. The term 'public involvement' suggests that the public's input will have an impact on the decision. Public development is a normative concept that is value-laden and includes choices about set goals, where goals can be encompassed by the core values (Goulet, cited in Todaro, 1994). Examples include life sustenance, self-esteem and freedom from servitude. However, good governance theory, according to Davids and Theron (2018), is a method of assessing how public institutions handle public affairs and manage public resources in a desired manner: "The process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented)."

5. **Literature review.** The literature review provides a structured analysis of local governance in the context of service delivery and the issues faced in basic service provision in South Africa. The review begins with a brief history of local government in South Africa since the inception of democracy in 1994; the legislative frameworks that underpin and regulate local government; policy guidelines contained in the White Paper on Local Government (1998); and governance challenges at the local government level in South Africa. The review also focuses on governance issues, administrative and political disputes and institutional participation challenges that suffocate community engagement at the local government level. The study then reflects on service delivery and basic services in particular in the context of policy imperatives. After that, the discussion turns to the service delivery protests at the municipal level in South Africa.

5.1 **Service delivery.** The concept of public service delivery is tied to the study of political science, and more specifically, to its public administration component (Kanyane, 2014). In the sense, it originally means the provision of essential communal services, such as housing, water and sanitation, power and infrastructure, to which communities are accustomed in their everyday life. Service delivery has worldwide relevance (Reddy, 2016). This definition also refers to the distribution of commodities or services by government or other institutions to individuals who need them (McLennan, 2009). Municipalities in South Africa are responsible for a wide range of essential services, including water, waste management, energy distribution, sanitation, storm-water drainage, municipal roads, land use planning and transportation planning. The role of local government has been expanded to provide services in relation to larger developmental objectives, which include fostering sustainable local economic development through infrastructure provision and maintenance as well as other supply-side economic support measures, (Petersen et al., 2008). However, Benit-Gbaffou and Rewal (2011) argue that the concept of developmental local government is problematic because it is not clearly defined. The broader function of local government includes not just the provision of essential services but also the promotion of sustainable communities through social and economic growth. In a similar vein, COGTA's (2014) Back to Basics study identifies pervasive rent-seeking and corruption among public officials, which reflects a deeper breakdown in the principles and values that should guide the conduct of local government officials. According to the State of Local Government in South Africa Report (COGTA, 2009), up to a third of municipalities is dysfunctional due to factors such as endemic corruption, dysfunctional councils, no structured community engagement or participation mechanisms, poor audit outcomes and poor record management. These sentiments are echoed by Reddy (2016), who points out that the dysfunctionality of local municipalities in South Africa has taken on various forms, including the failure to act decisively on contentious issues and a lack of political and managerial will to address challenges facing local government.

Koelble and LiPuma (2010) conducted a study on 18 municipalities in the Western Cape and Eastern Cape to identify where the problem of service delivery arises. One of the findings was that most people in political and administrative positions had a limited understanding of municipalities' purpose and function the study also indicated that national-level government did not adequately address poor performance. As a result, the worsening of these problems has been blamed on several factors: local politicians' lack of accountability to their constituents, administrative incompetence, corruption and a lack of communication (Koelble & LiPuma, 2010). According to the State of Local Government Report (2009), additional factors include noticeable strain between the political and administrative interface; inability of many councillors to deal with the demands of local government; and inadequate separation of power between municipal councils and political parties (COGTA, 2009).

The Back to Basics statement notes that local governments in South Africa have faced a number of challenges (COGTA, 2014). Institutional incapacity and widespread poverty have harmed the local government's long-term viability, resulting in a catastrophic breakdown of services in some cases. Communities' lack of faith in institutions and councils is linked to slow or ineffective responses to service delivery difficulties. Elected officials' social remoteness to their communities challenges is another source of concern.

5.2 Good governance. It has been argued that the concept of governance is divisive (Ley, 2015; Millstein, 2010). The inherent open-endedness, vagueness and lack of specificity of the concept generates debate as to its 'proper' meaning (Doornbos, 2010, p. 95), prompting multiple attempts to appropriate and define it in specific ways. A common denominator in this contestable area, according to Ley (2015), is the nature of decision-making processes, which are not confined to the state. Millstein (2010) notes that governance may be explained not just in terms of structures, such as hierarchies, markets or networks, but also in terms of management activities, such as steering, control and decision-making. Furthermore, according to Grindle (2007), it is critical to comprehend the institutional context and the aim of a given governance practice. The guidelines for governance, according to Thornhill (2008), are concerned with the developmental aspect of local government, the political structure of the new system, the core function of municipal government, administration in relation to service delivery and the financing of local government services. According to Thornhill, local government should be developmental, meaning that it should exercise its powers to optimise its impact on social and economic development. Furthermore, the developmental function should ensure that the public's roles are aligned with each domain of government as well as democratising development. Thornhill explains that policy also refers to the framework of the new local government system and that it should allow for leadership in the political structure. When it comes to good governance, Zybrands (2011) points out that the executive mayor must identify the municipality's needs and analyse these in order of priority. However, it is not clear how needs should be defined and prioritised. In line with the Municipal Structures Act (No. 117 of 1998), the executive mayor is responsible for monitoring the management of the municipality's administration in accordance with the council. This could lead to conflict with the municipal manager, who is the head of administration and the accounting officer. When a non-accountable executive mayor is being monitored, this can easily become prescribing, overruling or critiquing. Therefore, this gives rise to the question of how a municipal manager can comply with the laws included in these functions. The municipal manager, on the other hand, simply serves as a passive extension of the executive mayor. Such questions raise the possibility of conflict in the relationship between the executive mayor and the municipal manager, which could have an impact on municipal decision-making. Guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of councillors, political structures and officials were designed to remedy these issues (South African Local Government Association, 2011). The fundamental goal of these recommendations is to ensure that the duties and responsibilities allow for efficient and timely governance by minimising cross-referrals and overlapping obligations as well as offering guidance on conflicts between the different arms of local government (South African Local Government Association, 2011).

Decision-making at the local level appears to be a problem, as some councils have deteriorated to the point where they are deadlocked. Alternatively, they are based on ignorance or lack of experience, especially given the fact that many councillors had limited experience in modern organisations after the first democratic elections in 1995 (Atkinson, 2007). Municipalities' performance has been harmed by a lack of leadership in strategic management in corporate governance, a scarcity of skills and top managers being selected without the necessary qualifications (Kanyane, 2006). According to Southall (2007), the failure of good governance is due to political appointments, through which unqualified candidates are selected. Accountability is the cornerstone of any government, as public officials must answer to the public (van Niekerk & Dalton-Brits, 2016). Moreover, effective supervision and accountability lead to better governance and efficient service delivery.

5.3 Policy. Recent analyses of politics in Asia and Africa have revealed that, unlike in many Western countries, government actions are rarely the outcome of demands and pressures from interested parties (Smith, 1973, as cited in Nicholas, 2018). "The open fight of organised interests is sometimes noticeably missing during the formulation of legislation in these nations," writes James C. Scott, (1989). Indeed, official government activity may suppress the avenues for such influence (political parties and interest groups). Governments frequently implement policies without consulting interested or affected

individuals. However, it would be erroneous to assume that the public has little or no influence on the government's eventual 'output' (Scott, 1989). Between the passage of law and its actual implementation, there exists a completely different political arena that has a significant impact on policy implementation. When the policies are implemented by the government, the true involvement of interest groups and other interested, including political parties, emerges. The policy may be abandoned during the implementation stage of the policy process. Government policy is adjusted to fit the needs of those who are interested. However, according to the Nelson Mandela Bay LED strategy (2019), the attention is not necessarily on good governance nor and accountability but is primarily on policies and tactics adopted at the municipal level. Local governments are in charge of the policy formulation and implementation phases in their jurisdictions. Local government is also responsible not only for developing and implementing local policies and plans, but also for enforcing regulations established by other levels of government. The Nelson Mandela Bay adopted a toolkit which is also useful for the municipality in supervising the execution of policies and initiatives that have been developed and implemented at the national, regional and provincial levels. The toolkit for them makes it easy for oversight by politicians when trying to see if the officials are functioning as expected by the municipality. However, the attention is primarily on policies and tactics adopted at the municipal level. Local governments are in charge of the policy formulation and implementation phases in their jurisdictions. They can create workable models in the public and political spheres that are tailored to the local framework. No one else has the authority to choose these models. The toolkit may be useful in this regard. Existing institutions in government and administrations as well as regulations and rules could create obstacles to policy-making and implementation (Thornhill, 2008). For example, a government's structure may be outmoded or too rigid to address new difficulties.

Workable models in the public and political spheres can be tailored to the local framework. The policy guidelines outlined in the White Paper on Local Government (1998) are primarily concerned with directing and guiding how local government should be organised in terms of its perceived role and responsibilities, the form it should take and the required resourcing. Furthermore, the White Paper address the heart of municipal government and administration's existence in connection to service delivery and provide for a variety of service delivery choices. These include contracting out, public-private partnerships and other methods (Thornhill, 2008). If Thornhill's (2008) argumentation is any indication, it is difficult and time-consuming to initiate and implement structural and regulatory changes. It is frequently possible to improve work in existing situations. As a result, the white paper encourages municipalities to work within their existing structure and legislation. According to Dawn and McCarthy (2017), external and internal environments have an impact on each councilor's capacity to create and implement a policy or strategy successfully. Every municipality and government have evolved over time and policy within the municipal setting has its own style of thinking and doing things.

6. Discussion and analysis. After South Africa became a constitutional democracy in 1994, a new system of local government was implemented. Local government became a focal point of the country's transformation and development program. Local government functions were defined in the Constitution of 1996 as well as in related policy and legislation. An array of basic services primarily included the provision of water, sanitation and electricity as well as waste management, storm water drainage, land use planning and transportation planning (Pieterse, Parnell, Swilling & van Donk, 2008). Furthermore, the role of local government is to steer development, with the goal of constructing sustainable and integrated human settlements (Pieterse et al., 2008). Proper policy execution and effective governance are critical for local municipalities to be responsive to their mandate in terms of providing basic services and achieving developmental goals, as outlined in the White Paper on Local Government (1998).

According to Ley (2015), Millstein (2010) and Meuleman (2008), the concept of governance is hotly debated and has no universal definition. Van Kersbergen and Van Waarden (2009, p. 143) indicate that governance is best defined as "the process of decision-making and implementation, including the manner in which the organisations involved relate to one another" (p. 143). Using Razaghi and Finger's (2013, p. 6) definition, governance is "a kind of order that is achieved among several actors who are interacting with one another about a common issue that is of mutual interest for the involved parties, despite the fact that they may have conflicting interests".



*Fig. 1. The N2 freeway closure near Plettenberg Bay in July 2019 due to a service delivery protest
Source: Sunday Times*

The purpose of any government is to organise a society or a nation into a logical unit. It drafts legislation to create a fair, egalitarian and just society in which citizens may expect to live in safety while also contributing to and benefiting from sound policymaking. However, in South Africa, the post-apartheid local government and municipalities have been struggling to provide enough services to citizens in an equitable manner. This has increased the government's primary target group from about 4 million to 50, 1 million people (Cameron, 2010). Hence, there is a greater need for proper policies to guarantee the smooth, equitable provision of services for everybody's benefit. Policy has three main components: (i) policymaking, (ii) policy execution and (iii) policy analysis and evaluation. The goal of this study is to examine the first component, policymaking, with a specific focus on reducing South Africa's high service delivery rate. Policymaking can be broken down into three additional components: (i) policy initiation, (ii) policy formulation and (iii) policy approval. One of the six administrative functions that should be carried out in a systematic manner is policymaking.



Fig. 2.

First, the nature and role of policy in reducing South Africa's high crime rate is described and explored. Definitions are provided of key terminology to explain the concept of policy-making. Second, the first phase in the policy-making process—policy initiation—is examined with regard to reducing South Africa's high crime rate. The three steps of policy initiation are (i) being aware of the problem, (ii) describing the problem and (iii) gathering information on how to reduce the high crime rate. Third,

the second part of the policy-making process, policy formulation, must be studied in relation to the reduction of South Africa's high crime rate. Liaison with interested parties, information processing, establishing objectives, determining priorities, considering alternatives and a survey of financial resources are the six processes of policy making. Fourth, the final step in policy development is discussed, namely, policy approval for the reduction of South Africa's high crime rate.

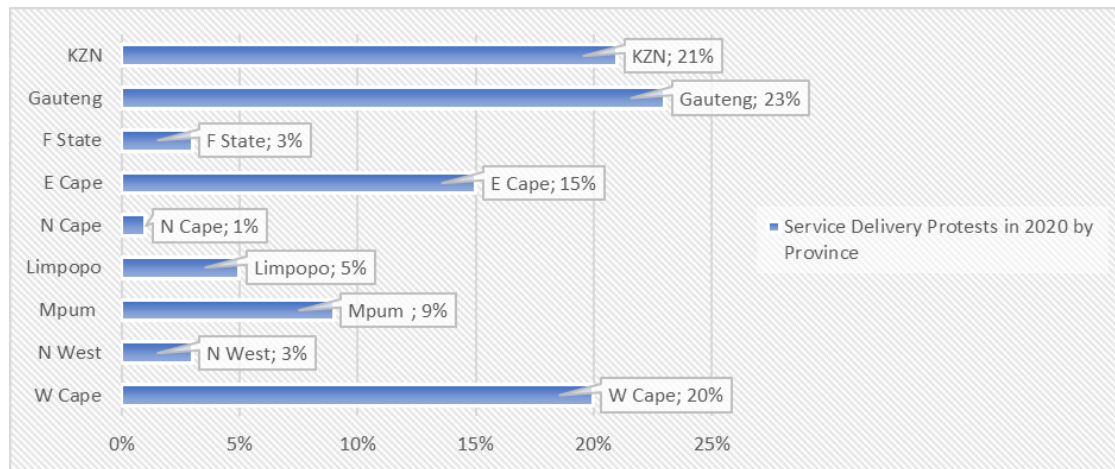


Fig. 3. Service delivery protests by province
Source: Municipal IQ (Municipal Data and Intelligence, 2021)

Figure 3 shows that Gauteng continues to be the province in South Africa with the greatest number of service delivery protests, closely followed by KwaZulu Natal and the Western Cape. Municipal IQ monitors community protests against municipalities as reported by the media or other publicly available sources, such as police press releases. The organisation (Municipal Data and Intelligence, 2021) stated that despite the fact that 2019 saw a substantial number of service delivery protests, particularly in the first few months of the year, these dwindled following May's general elections, putting the annual tally below [that of 2018. However, according to data on service delivery protests by province in 2019, Gauteng led with 24%, KwaZulu Natal was second with 21% and the Western Cape was third with 19%. The Northern Cape accounted for 1% of all protests tracked. Despite negative economic data, Allan (2020) argues that service delivery protests decreased dramatically between October and December 2019: "While the lack of service delivery demonstrations does not indicate that all is well in local government, communities do not appear to be taking their dissatisfaction to the streets as regularly as they did around the 2018 general elections". Karen Heese (2020), an economist, expressed similar concerns, stating: "It may be possible for 2018 to hold the record for the number of service delivery protests." According to Heese, democratic processes, such as ward committees, petitions and community meetings, provide an outlet for community engagement. Heese goes on to say that in order to avoid protests, councillors and administrators must work together to guarantee service delivery to consolidate this apparent goodwill, especially with a hard year (2020) ahead for local government.

This study takes a scientific approach. Each part begins with facts, followed by an explanation of the facts, the application of the theory to decrease the high crime in South Africa as an example, and finally, deductions. The information was gathered from a variety of literature sources as well as the internet. The nature and role of policy in reducing South Africa's high crime rate is examined in order to better understand the policymaking process.

One of the six administrative enabling functions for better service delivery is policymaking. The following concepts need to be defined to understand public policymaking. Public policy and policymaking are administrative enabling functions; 'administrative' is defined as a function that facilitates the work of others. "Enabling functions can be grouped into six basic divisions," according to Meiring (2001, p. 48), "for example, policy-making: the construction of structures and posts; money provision; people provision; setting work procedures; and determining control methods and standards." Meiring (2001, p. 47) continues: "Without the continual provision of indispensable and specialized means [such as resources], no activity can be carried out, no purpose pursued and no target realized." Policies must be implemented in order for service delivery to be effective. Policies are the goals of government; thus, resources must flow continuously and uninterrupted. The commodities employed in the creation of goods and services are

referred to as resources. In this scenario, the government provides a community service and so, requires resources to fulfill this commitment. Human and capital resources are the resources in question. Buildings, cars and finance are examples of capital resources. The use of auxiliary functions, such as the use of computers, is beneficial to service delivery and good governance.

Citizen participation is included in the Constitution (1996), specifically in Chapter 7, 152(1e), which states that communities and community organisations should be encouraged to participate in local government concerns. Both levels of government are responsible for operationalising and executing these provisions. Stakeholders provide input and share influence over development efforts, decisions and resources that affect them through citizen involvement. South Africa’s Constitution and legislative framework place a strong emphasis on citizen engagement.

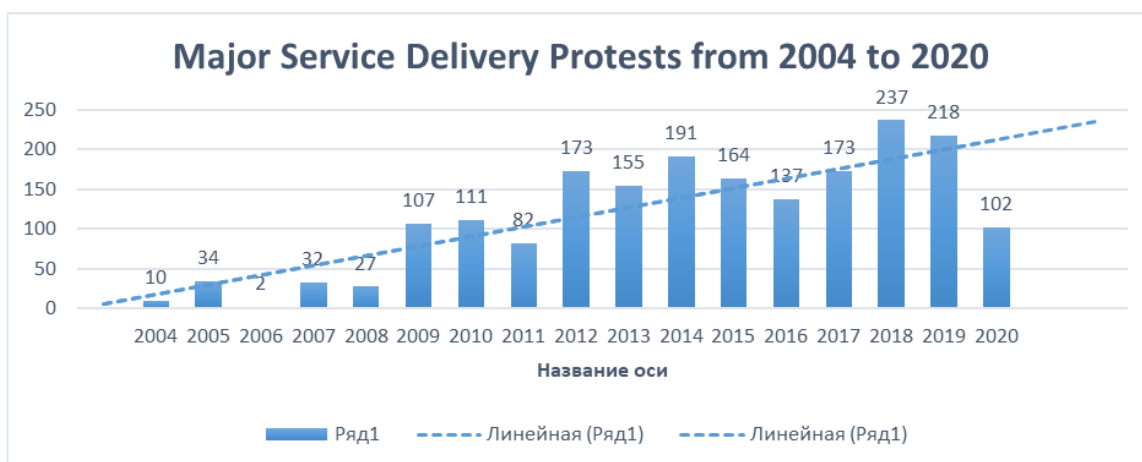


Fig. 4. Major service delivery protests from 2004 to 2020
 Source: *Municipal IQ (Municipal Data and Intelligence)*

The public involvement theory, the human rights theory and the good government theory are used in this study. Each one defines good governance, citizen participation, policy execution, enhanced service delivery and the relationship between the four. According to these theories, there is an interlocking, circular interdependence between the four variables (poor service delivery, non-payment of services, community needs neglect and service delivery protests) in which one difficulty leads to another and one problem causes another (Danaan, 2018). Everyone is affected by the multiplier effect, whether directly or indirectly.

According to Atkinson (2007), such problems appear at several points in municipal organisations: stalemates between councils and officials; rivalries between mayors and municipal managers; tension between junior staff; a loss of morale and a poor ethic of service delivery. Official government publications such as the National Development Plan (2012), the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (2014) and the Back to Basics document (COGTA, 2014) express similar thoughts. The National Planning Commission’s National Development Plan (2012) notes tensions at the political–administrative interface as well as insecurity at the level of administrative leadership, a skills gap, a lack of authority and responsibility and low staff morale. The Medium-Term Strategic Framework 2014-2019 cites a general lack of public trust in municipalities. This is because they have failed to manage resources efficiently, maintain basic services or collect money (The Presidency, Republic of South Africa, 2014). Weak political and administrative leadership, political interference in operations, unfilled critical posts, poor financial management application at municipalities with poor audit results, lack of transparency and accountability and weak platforms for public participation are all factors that contribute to such anomalies (The Presidency, Republic of South Africa, 2014).

Improvements in working patterns and routines typically involve changes in officials’ and politicians’ everyday work. And change is not always easy. It is necessary to comprehend and accept the actions committed. Processes that involve participants are required. From policy conception to implementation, all phases of basic services, good governance and policy implementation must be considered and improved. As seen in the discussion above, if each step is not embraced, the goal of change generates confusion, worry, resistance and dissatisfaction. The delivery of essential services, the practice of good governance and the implementation of policies appear to be a minefield. In the real

world, the peaceful and modern logic of giving the four tenants of public management like policy adherence, governance, management and accountability becomes soiled. Different municipal programmes are in direct competition with one another. And end up having most municipal priorities in conflict over another. This end up making it long time to make a simple decision. There is also a noted communication failure. The schedules have been blown. As Sundheim (2013) points out, the question is not whether these issues will occur; rather, when and to what extent they will occur.

Conclusions. This study explored the interaction between inadequate management, lack of good governance and lack of basic services in South Africa. It also considered citizens' responses to the lack of basic service delivery and the service delivery protests at the local government level. The Granger causality conclusion reveals that as the state of substandard services deteriorates, challenges increase. However, increases in the genuine provision of basic services are also a major driver of protests. Non-payment, on the other hand, has no immediate effect on the number of protests since people can still find means to contain their rage through service delivery protesting. The empirical findings also reveal that as the government spends more money on service delivery concerns, such as the Back to Basics project, the profile of South Africa's local government is not improving, and it does not seem to lower the prevalence of service delivery demonstrations. As more individuals fall into poverty, the rate of non-payment of basic services by customers rises, prompting the government to spend more money on basic services through Back to Basics interventions. The impulse response result shows that poor delivery of services and management responds significantly and positively to service delivery-related shocks, implying that an increase in service provision will lead to increases in both basic service provision and good governance in South Africa in the long run. Furthermore, the variance decomposition results show that among the model's variables, poor management and non-payment of services accounted for poor basic service provision and non-provision of services in the long run, despite the fact that unemployment has no immediate impact on the rate of service delivery protests. That is, a growth in non-payment of service costs and unemployment is largely due to the worsening of basic service delivery.

7. Policy recommendations. The study suggests that the government should act immediately to address the issue of inadequate service delivery. If this issue is taken more seriously, it will significantly minimise service delivery challenges and protests. This can be accomplished by imposing severe performance penalties on underperforming through municipal performance systems. To accomplish this, a powerful and committed armed force as well as a fair, unbiased and efficient performance appraisal system, are essential.

In addition, regardless of the security situation, the government must focus on creating jobs, even though studies reveal that the impact of non-payment of municipal services on service delivery protests is not immediate. People who are working, occupied and able to earn money are less likely to conduct acts threatening insecurity. Employment can be created through public-private partnerships, macro and microeconomic policies that allow both domestic and international businesses to grow and by supporting the formation of small and medium-sized businesses, particularly among the youth.

The study reveals that poor service delivery by authorities is the key motivation driving people to commit crime, protest and undermine national stability. These issues can be mitigated by tailoring policies to benefit the poor and previously disadvantaged, ensuring inclusive growth, narrowing the income gap and curbing corruption, particularly among government officials.

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