

BUILDING A CAPABLE STATE THROUGH PROPER HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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UNIVERSITY
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CONFERENCE GREETINGS

AVUXHENI

SAWUBONA
GOEIE MÔRE

LOTJHANI

MATSHELONI AVHUDI

DUMÊLANG MMORONG

THOBELA DUMELA
MOLWENI

Good Morning!

Introduction

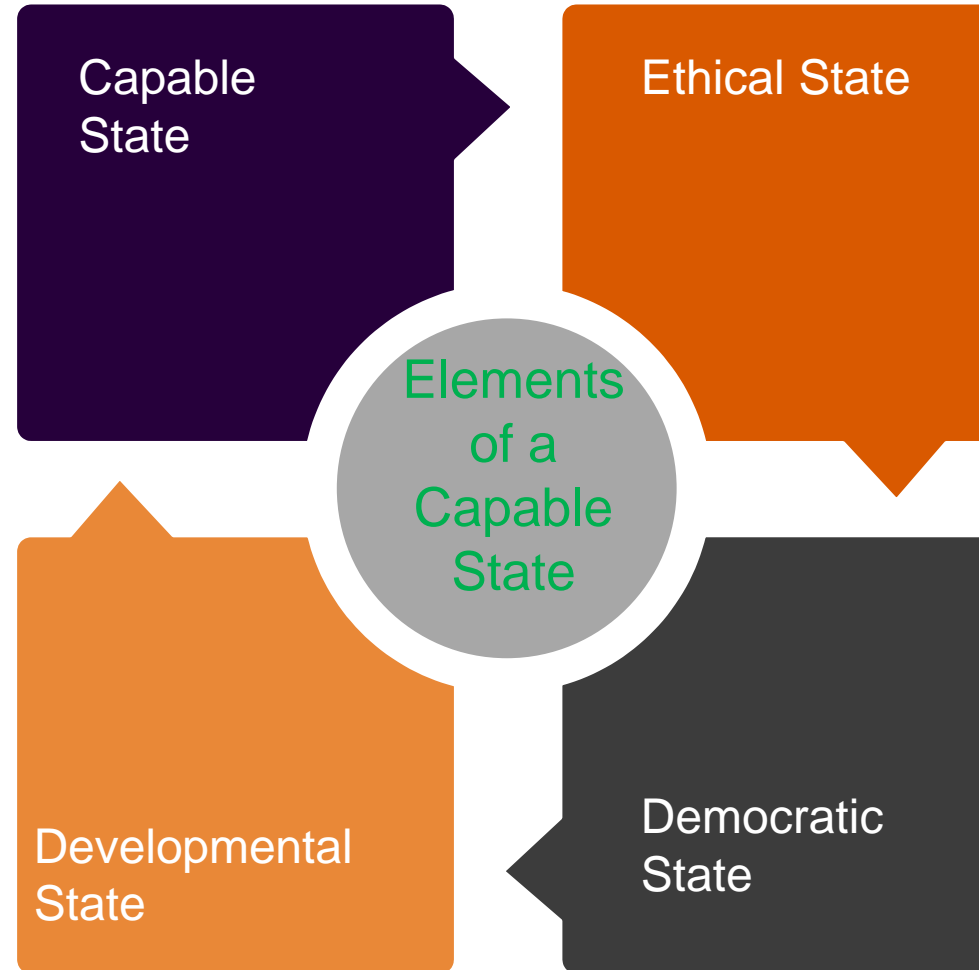
- Over the past 25 years, government has introduced a vast array of legislation, policies and programmes to achieve the vision of the RDP. It has introduced many public-sector reforms to create an efficient, effective, development-oriented, people-centred public sector to serve all the people of South Africa.
- A capable, ethical and developmental state should underpin all seven priorities of the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF). It is a vision of strong leadership, a focus on people and improved implementation capability. Facilitating this vision into action will involve a transition to a more functional and integrated government, which is capacitated with professional, responsive and meritocratic public servants to strengthen relations and efficiency. Intergovernmental and citizen engagements are also key enablers of this priority to ensure the joint pursuit of a capable state.
- The developmental state has to be embedded in society, build constructive relations, collaborate with all sectors of society and empower citizens to be active agents of change in communities. Improved communication, consultation and engagement by government with key stakeholders, particularly citizens, will give the state legitimacy and build public trust.



A Capable, Ethical, Developmental and Democratic State

A capable state has the required human capabilities, institutional capacity, service processes and technological platforms to deliver on the NDP through a social contract with the people

A developmental state aims to meet people's needs through interventionist, developmental, participatory public administration. Building an autonomous developmental state driven by the public interest and not individual or sectional interests; embedded in South African society leading an active citizenry through partnerships with all sectors of society



An ethical state is driven by the constitutional values and principles of public administration and the rule of law, focused on the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights and social justice as outlined in the Bill of Rights.

South Africa is a parliamentary representative democratic republic, wherein the President of South Africa, elected by parliament, is the head of government, and of a multi-party system. It consists of three branches.



Elements of a Capable State

- The public sector faces persistent challenges at an operational level, including declining public confidence and trust; skills gaps; weak accountability and poor local governance; uneven service delivery; an unsustainable wage bill; persistent corruption; a leadership skills deficit; and poor governance of ICT resulting in missed opportunities and efficiency gains.
- At a strategic level, government's administration must instill confidence that it has the capacity and commitment to deliver on policy objectives. The state wishes to achieve public value and trust, supported by an active citizenry, partnerships in society and participatory democracy.
- A developmental state needs strong leaders that can lead development planning, enabling policies implementation, legislation and budgets to trigger developmental change that reduce inequalities and improve the quality of life.
- A developmental state needs an effective governance and accountability capability that intervenes to deal with the structural causes of economic and social underdevelopment. It is accountable and responds to the expectations and needs of citizens.



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ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Ethical principles had been adhered to as a researcher, where: (a) obtain informed consent from potential research participants; (b) no risk of harm to participants; (c) their anonymity and confidentiality guaranteed and protected; (d) avoided using deceptive practices; and (e) gave participants information on the right to withdraw from the study



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



Beurocratic Theory of Max Weber, a German sociologist, concluded that bureaucracy was the most effective and rational model under which private companies and government offices could function. Although Weber's theory priorities performance, leaders do not automatically enforce best practice. While efficiency is prioritised by Weber's theory, it is not inherently the best practice for leaders to enforce



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



Qualitative narrative method that used documents and three semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with developmental state experts to develop a broader perspective on quality service delivery capability systems. Each of these interviews was purposely selected on the basis of the concerned person's area of expertise.



LITERATURE REVIEW



The severity of resource and capacity constraints varies across various levels of government. Some of these concern the underlying political appointments. As is clear from the reports of the Auditor General (2021) over the years, capacity deficiencies at the local government level are largely because of a lack of technical skills and failures in execution. Qobo (2020) agrees with Palmer et al. (2017) that there are expertise deficiencies found in almost all core fields, such as project management, recruitment, contract management and financial management.



TITLE

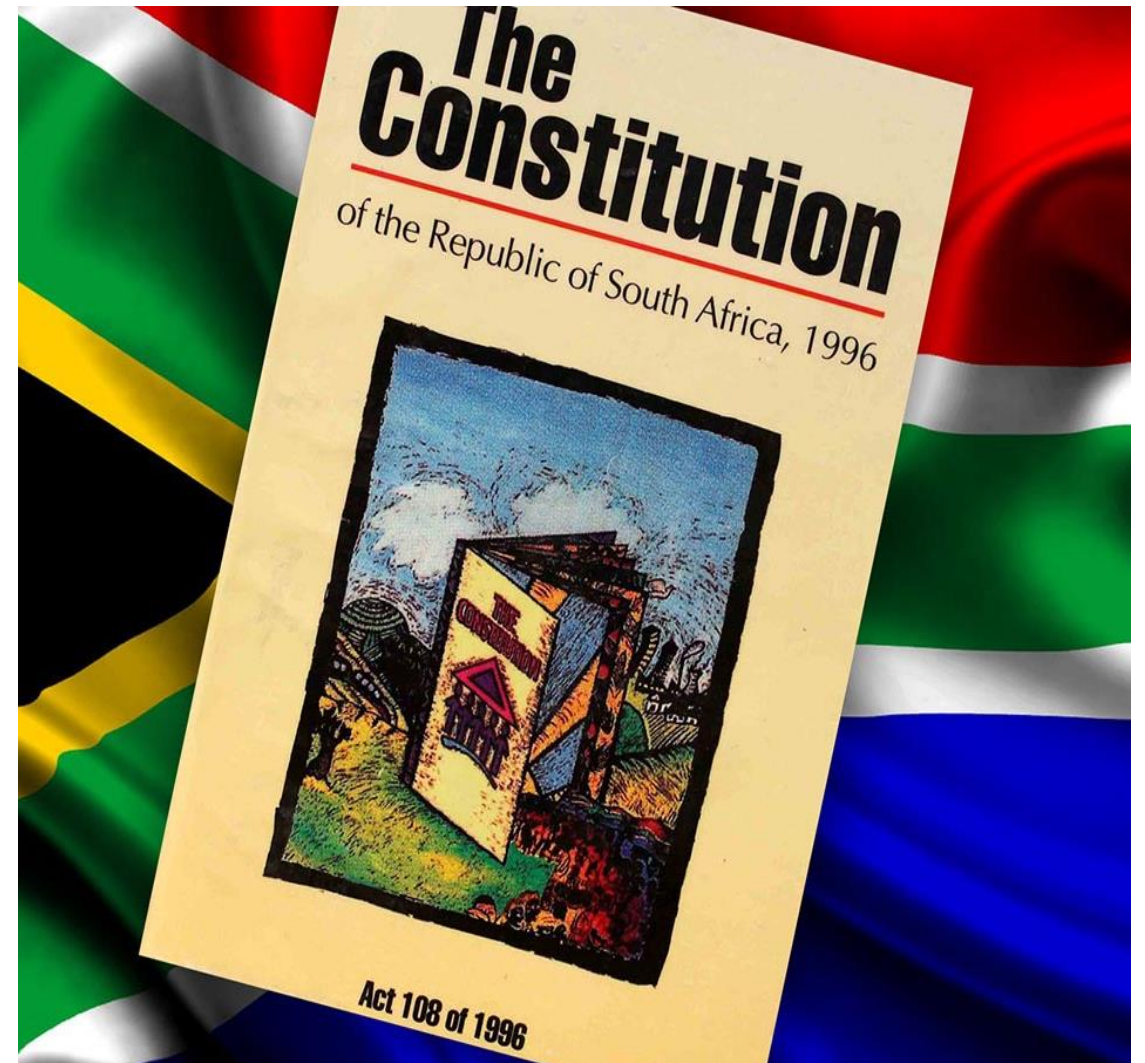


A nation may look good in terms of institutions and policies. Yet if they are not supported by capable and responsible leaders, they are destined to be ineffectual and not achieve their full potential. A capable state cannot be established outside an appropriate ethical structure and the required range of human capabilities at the disposal of a government. Currently, as argued by Qobo and Conversation Newspaper (2020), because of poor political management, South Africa is suffering from capacity deficiencies and institutional stasis.



Chapter 10: Public Administration

- ✓ It is everyone's business to work towards a capable state BUT the responsibility for its assurance is firmly in the hands of the state or the public sector with public representatives taking the lead.
- ✓ Service delivery is not a product of scientific and technological changes – its the role of social, political and management and commentators whose roles should be acknowledged & strengthened
- ✓ From a Public Administration and Management perspective few basic values, principles and practical issues stand out
 - a) High standard of professional ethics must be promoted & maintained
 - b) Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted
 - c) Must be development-oriented
 - d) Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias
 - e) People's needs be responded to and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making
 - f) Public administration must be accountable
 - g) Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information
 - h) Good human-resource management and career-development practices to maximize human potential, must be cultivated
 - i) Public Administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past o achieve broad representation



Implementing the NDP Vision 2030 – Capable State

- The achievement of this vision demands a cooperative relationship across national, provincial and local governments, and across the private sector, labour, and civil society, working with government as social partners.
- The five-year period ending 2024 must be seen in the context of the remaining six years of the NDP period to 2030, and as the second of three frameworks. These frameworks are roadmaps to achieving the NDP targets by 2030 and provide multi-year development plans for all three spheres of government. These roadmaps also need to be internalised by all public entities.
- Among the most important measures and targets set out in the NDP are those relating to growth, unemployment, employment, investment, inequality and poverty. The NDP 2030 targets are retained and the Revised MTSF 2019-2024 sets interim targets in these areas.



The NDP vision of a capable developmental state must be taken forward through:

1

Leadership

Strong leadership: The Presidency, as the centre of public-sector governance, must play a leadership role in building a capable developmental state through robust macro-policy planning and coordinated implementation.

2

People Centred Participation

A focus on people: People-centeredness (Batho Pele) means that government decisions are always tested against the principle of valuing human life and dignity.

3

Coordination

A capable state requires effectively coordinated state institutions with skilled public servants who are committed to the public good and capable of delivering consistently high-quality services, while prioritising the people in the achievement of the nation's developmental objectives. This vision requires a state that has the capacity to formulate and implement policies that serve the national interest and address the root causes of poverty and inequality

4

Performance

An efficient, effective and development-orientated public service can only exist in a capable state with a developmental and transformative role. Government must make radical shifts to correct previous mistakes, improve on its poor performance, and make the necessary impact on society.



Findings



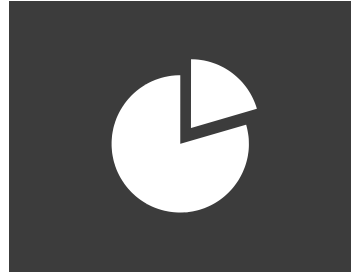
Project Management

Qobo (2020) & Palmer et al. (2017) agrees with me that there are expertise deficiencies found in almost all core fields, such as project management, recruitment, contract management and financial management. The capacity for implementing mandates and delivering services to communities is also low.



Political Management

What is crystal clear then is that when it comes to creating great institutions, the other half of a competent state's equation always matters to political management. The parlous condition of state-owned companies, such as the power provider Eskom and South African Airways, makes poor political management apparent.



International

As modern Singapore's founding father, Lee Kuan Yew, pointed out, you have to have good people in charge of government to get good governance. A nation may look good in terms of institutions and policies. Yet if they are not supported by capable and responsible leaders, they are destined to be ineffectual and not achieve their full potential.



Ethics & Capacity

A capable state cannot be established outside an appropriate ethical structure and the required range of human capabilities at the disposal of a government. Currently, as argued by Qobo and Conversation Newspaper (2020), because of poor political management, South Africa is suffering from capacity deficiencies and institutional stasis.



Leadership

Seemingly, Qobo and Parnell agree with me that the key lever of state craftsmanship for achieving results in a democratic society, has to act decisively in making things happen. It includes knowledge of one's power and authority, expertise in reading the political climate and a strong desire for decisive action



Career Pathing

Promote management leadership and place an adequate emphasis on providing stimulating career pathways that could ensure the replication of skills and promote a sense of shared professional intent.



Findings cont...

- **Politics-administration dichotomy** - According to the PSC, the mediocrity in performance in the public sector can be attributed to tensions in the political administrative interface (PSC 2007). The result is instability and internal conflicts in senior posts in the public service and reduced confidence in the leadership.
- **Skills deficit** - Professor Patrick FitzGerald (2016) of Wits School of Governance agrees with me that there is a deficit in skills and professionalism that affects most elements of the public service. There is not enough focus on providing stimulating career paths that could ensure the reproduction of skills and foster a sense of professional common purpose
- **Intergovernmental relations** - There are three spheres of government in the Republic of South Africa: national, provincial and local, which are interrelated (South Africa being a unitary state, with powers devolved to provincial and local spheres). There is, however, confusion about how responsibilities are divided, shared and monitored across the three spheres. Functionaries sometimes find themselves at a loss because at times there is no clarity in roles and functions.
- **Lack of professionalisation of public service and local government** - Focus should be on building a skilled and professional public service from the top to the bottom. The public service should attract and retain highly skilled people, cultivate a sense of professional purpose and a commitment to working towards development goals.
- **Poor organisational design** - In terms of the Public Service Act 1994, a number of human resource functions relating to organisational structure are in the hands of political heads of departments, who, at their discretion, may delegate these to administration heads.
- **The wellness of employees** - A critical human resource element that is almost always ignored or neglected by public institutions is the wellness of employees.



Findings cont...

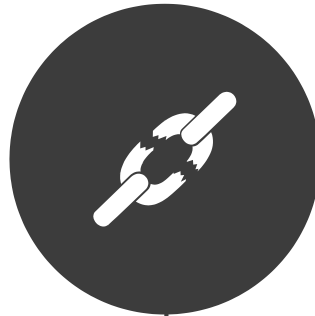
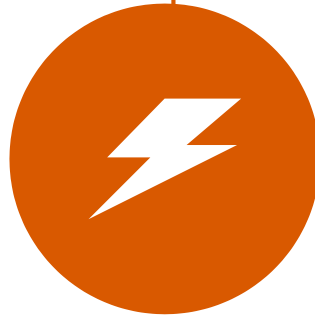
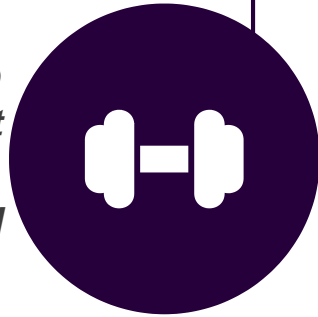
- **Career and Talent Management** - Provision of opportunities for employees to develop their abilities and careers in order to ensure that the organisation has the flow of talent it needs and to satisfy its own aspirations.
- **Strengthen accountability and responsibility of public servants** - Public servants should be made legally answerable for their actions (NDP 2011:402); procurement details, for example, should be made available to citizens. The actions of public servants must be above reproach, carried out in the open and not covered by a veil of secrecy, which may give rise to suspicion as against the Batho Pele Principles (1997)/ Labour Relations Act (66 of 1995).
- **The state capture by individuals and companies** - The Public Protector in the State of Capture Report revealed that employees, both political and administrative, in the South African public service, carry out their functions under the influence of individuals and companies who are outside the public service.



Recommendations

The state must foster strong collaborations with the institutions of higher learning for **attracting young ‘talents with scarce skills** before being snatched by the private sector and other provinces. Through these collaborations, the state must be able to **influence the curriculum taught at the institutions of higher learning** and advise on the courses that are on demand for the capable developmental state.

There is also a need for the state to strengthen and **market its recruitment and retention strategies** to attract and keep particularly young, **vibrant and highly qualified professionals** in the public sector. Make the public sector an employee of choice. **Avoid brain drain and migration to other provinces.**



Having the right people for the right functions helps the state to ensure that the exercise is undertaken by all government departments and **outcomes are implemented**. This has a potential of causing some tensions; however, it is necessary to ensure that human resources are utilised to the maximum.



Some government departments are still functioning with **obsolete organisational structures**, despite the dynamics, paradigm shift and complexities in government.

- Have a **clear succession plan** and get to the next level ready for the takeover when the time comes. Encourage the uptake of the government's offer of **voluntary early retirement**.



CONCLUSION

- In conclusion, if South Africa needs to be successful in transforming society into a state of capability and development, capable of formulating and implementing policies that serve the national interest, it needs to be developmental in that it should focus on those policies that would overcome the root causes of poverty and inequality and build the capacity of the state to fulfil that role. In Parnell's words, for South Africa to call itself Developmental Government must refer to being able to play a transformative role in tackling poverty and inequality. This requires well-run and effectively coordinated state institutions with competent public servants who are committed to the public good and able to deliver consistently high-quality services whilst prioritising the development goals of the nation.
- Build an enabling structure for local government (e.g., it may include organisational guidance for routine tasks) with strong national and provincial government support and oversight. It includes clarification of position, and prioritisation of participation by people. Create delegation, transparency and oversight. Make it easier for people to hold accountable for public servants and politicians, particularly for the quality-of-service delivery. There is a need for streamlined processes which maintain checks and balances and explain accountability whilst making decisions easier. Civil society can also play a role in monitoring government data, whilst government encourages this by ensuring that data are available in appropriate formats (Open Data)



RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, the NDP makes it clear that cooperation and communication are necessary for South Africa to transcend social and economic divides. This extends in all three integrated and concise policy domains, and in cooperation with the civil society and business sector. Individual initiatives, a tendency to move from one quick fix or tendency to another and frequent changes have generated uncertainty in organisational structures and strained power. It is needless to say that the nation needs to make local government stronger.



TOGETHER, WE CAN DO MORE FOR OUR POEPLLE

