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## Why Public Policy Implementation Fail in Africa?<sup>1</sup>

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### **Abstract**

*Africa's socioeconomic, cultural and historical context differs from Western developed countries. In addition, public policy implementation absorbs a large portion of countries' budgets. In addition, Africa is rich in all sorts of natural resources ranging from arable land, freshwater resources, oil, natural gas, minerals, forests, and wildlife. Despite this, even citizens in richer African countries still face poverty and inequality. Current research about the 5C protocol (which later became the 6C and then the 7C protocol has left a profound gap between why policy succeeds or fails in Africa. This paper undertakes a critical document content analysis of articles about why public policies succeed or fail to fill the gap in knowledge about the socio-economic, cultural and historical context that affects public policy implementation success or failure on the African continent. This research identifies ten causes of public policy implementation failure, including poor leadership, governance, and competent public managers, and suggests recommendations for improving policy implementation success in the African context.*

**Keywords:** Public Policy, Policy Implementation, Policy Failure, Policy Success.

### **Introduction**

Public policy initiatives are crucial for improving the well-being of citizens worldwide. Policy implementation consumed an estimated 16% of the global gross domestic product in 2017, or \$13 trillion (Andrews 2018:3). Africa is rich in natural resources such as arable land, freshwater resources, oil, natural gas, minerals, forests, and wildlife, is home to some 30% of the world's mineral reserves, 8% of the world's natural gas, 12% of the world's oil reserves, 40% of the world's gold, and up to 90% of its chromium and platinum (UNEP 2022:1). However, despite the abundance of minerals and other natural resources, about 490 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live under the poverty line of 1.90 PPP\$/day (UNEP 2022:1). Even wealthier countries like South Africa and Nigeria face poverty and inequality (World Bank 2021:1). The World Bank estimates that 55.5% of the population in South Africa is living in poverty at the national upper poverty line, while 25.8% is experiencing food poverty (World Bank 2021:1). Nigeria, the number one economy on the African continent and the number one in oil reserves (International Trade Administration 2023:2), but many Nigerians, especially in the country's north, need more education and access to basic infrastructures, such as electricity, safe drinking water, and improved sanitation (World Bank 2022:2). All these problems can be explained by the prevalence of public policy implementation failures globally. Public policy failures often occur between 25% and 50% of the time, depending on how one defines success and failure (Andrews 2018:4). This highlights the need for governments to invest in public policy initiatives to ensure their intended objectives are met.

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<sup>1</sup>This article is based on Prof DE Uwizeyimana's Professorial Inaugural Lecture presented at the University of Johannesburg on 19 April 2022. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtA1wbIrBCM>.

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The failure rate of public policy implementation in developing countries is a significant issue, with a high failure rate affecting less developed countries (Andrews 2018:4). The failure rate varies depending on the definition of success, with some projects achieving success while others fail (Andrews 2018:4). For instance, the Royal Academy of Engineering and the British Computer Society found that 84% of public-sector projects resulted in some failure, while only 16% were deemed successful (Andrews 2018:4). In 2017, a New Zealand government study found that 38% of government projects were successful, with 62% considered failing (PWC 2017:4). Furthermore, 59% of projects experienced problems that could lead to failure, while 3% were complete failures (PWC 2017:4). The Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) introduced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) have failed to achieve their intended objectives of diversifying the production base, improving efficiency, increasing competition, shifting towards the market system, and rapid economic growth (Uwizeyimana 2012:140). The socio-economic conditions of most developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, have worsened since the introduction and implementation of SAPs in the 1990s (Uwizeyimana 2012:140). Most Sub-Saharan African countries failed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015, leading to the Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) in the same year. Despite progress in some goals, the failure rate in less developed countries is most felt in less developed countries, as citizens rely heavily on the government for essential services such as water, health, and education (UNDP 2016:1). This high rate of policy implementation failure worldwide means governments' scarce resources are not well-spent, and the consequences of public failure in less developed countries are likely to have severe, devastating effects, prolonging many poor people's suffering and poverty (UNDP 2016:1).

This paper analyses the historical evolution of the 5C and 7C protocols, focusing on their effects on public policy implementation success or failure in the African context. It diagnoses historical, socio-economic, and political factors that are the natural causes of policy implementation failures in the African context. The paper provides recommendations for improving public policy implementation in the region.

### **Conceptual Analysis**

Policy is a deliberate plan chosen by a political party, government, business, or individual to guide decisions, actions, and behaviour (Hogwood & Gunn 1984). It applies to both private and public policies, with public policy focusing on government decisions to address public interest or concern (Twahirwa 2018:2). It also outlines the permissible actions of individuals or groups in public and the consequences for offenders.

### **Policy Implementation and Policy Implementation Effectiveness**

Brynard (2005:177) defines implementation as a noun and a verb, referring to the state of achieving or accomplishing policy goals. The verb "to implement" means a process that includes everything that happened while trying to achieve the policy goals and objectives. However, the fact that the objectives and goals have not been achieved does not mean that the implementation process did not happen (Brynard 2000:177). There are disagreements on what policy implementation entails or where it begins or ends as a process. Some define policy implementation as "faithful fulfilment of policy intentions by public servants of policy implementation," while others define it as "the process of converting input into outputs" (Calista 1994:117). Van Meter and Van Horn (1974:447-448) conceptualise implementation as actions by public or private individuals or groups to achieve objectives outlined in prior policy decisions. They distinguish

between the interrelated concepts of implementation, performance, impact, and stress. What this means is that every public official (a teacher, a police officer, a soldier, a nurse, a home affairs processing and issuing ID documents, etc.) and any authorised private person, CBOs, NGOs or private business entity authorised to perform a government duty or function (i.e., providing goods and services) is implementing public policy.

### **Policy Implementation Failure or Success and Why It Matters?**

Policy implementation failure is often viewed as a gap between intended goals and actual achievement, while success is the absence of failure (Simon et al., 2015:15). This assumption is problematic as public policy failure and success are not mutually exclusive concepts (Hillson 2010:1). McConnell's (2014) analysis identifies four policy failures and successes: Tolerable Failure (Resilient Success), Conflicted Failure (Conflicted Success), Borderline Failure (Precarious Success), and Total/Absolute Failure. Tolerable failure combines partial success and partial failure, with small failures outweighed by successes (McConnell 2014:11). Conflicted success is a combination of partial success and partial failure, with enough evidence to claim failure and success (McConnell 2014:11). Borderline failure combines partial failure and partial success, but more failure than success (McConnell 2014:11). Total/Absolute failure is when there is nothing to point to any hint of success, while absolute success is when there is no hint of failure (McConnell 2014:11). Munzhedzi (2020:90) argues that nothing good or bad can be caused by a public policy that has never been implemented.

Therefore, policy implementation is the first step towards success, as doing nothing is the only sure way to accomplish nothing. A policy that achieves one of its 100 objectives has partially succeeded in one objective (Andrews 2018). The direct link between public policy implementation failure and public programs and project failure is evident, as policy implementation is done through a series of public programs, which are then implemented through a series of public projects. Therefore, naturally, policy implementation failure or success anywhere in the world, especially in Africa, results from the success or failure of programs and projects through which it has been implemented.

### **Popularly Known Variables Believed to Influence Policy Implementation Success or Failure in the Literature**

The literature on policy implementation variables has been extensive, with Edwards and Sharkansky's 1978 model identifying four standard variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structures. Mazmanian and Sabatier's 1981 study included seven variables: policy formulation, policy design, target population behaviour, street-level bureaucrats, organisational and inter-organizational implementation behaviour, and the socio-economic context (Brynard & De Coning 2006:189). O'Toole's 1986 review found about 300 variables that scholars believed could affect policy implementation success (O'Toole 1986). The number of variables found suggests that scholars have been refining or expanding the list of variables left behind by their predecessors over many years. The 5C-protocol, a result of revisions by scholars like Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), Pressman and Wildavsky (1984), Cerych and Sabatier (1986), and Gornitzka, Kyvik, and Stensaker (2005:42), has been widely used since the 1970s. The 7C protocol, which includes each critical variable, is summarised in Table 1, with each briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

**Table 1:** The 7C-Protocol: Critical Variables for Explaining Why Policy Implementation Fails or Succeeds.

	Variable	This or a related variable is also considered critical to policy implementation by
The Initial 5c-Protocol (Najam (1995:35, 37))	Capacity	Smith (1973) van Meter and van Horn (1975) Edwards (1980) Williams (1982) O'Toole (1986) Goggin et al. (1990) Edwards (1980), Hargrove (1975)
	Context	Rein & Rabinovitz (1978) Barret & Fudge (1981) Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983), Sabatier (1986) Lindblom (1984), Maxim (2015), Hargrove (1975) Bardach (1977) Hanf(1978, 1982) Edwards (1980) Barret & Fudge (1981), Rein & Rabinowitz (1978), Hjern & Hull (1982) Lester et al(1987) Goggin et al. (1990) Mazmanian & Sabatier (1983), Sabatier (1986), Elmore (1985), Linder & Peters (1987),
	Commitment	Mazmanian & Sabatier (1981), Brynard (2007), Pressman & Wildavsky (1973), Van Meter & Van Horn (1975), Berman (1978), Scharpf (1978) Edwards (1980) Williams (1982)
	Content	Van Meter & Van Horn (1975) Lipsky (1978, 1980) Elmore (1979) Nakamura & Smallwood (1980) Warwick (1982) O'Toole (1986) Goggin, Bowman, Lester & O'Toole (1990), Pressman & Wildacsky (1973) Van Meter & Van Horn (1973) Glindle (1980) Hargrove (1983) O'Toole (1986) Wittrock & de Leon (1986) Lester et. al. (1987) Goggin et al. (1990)
		Lowi (1964, 1972) Smith (1973) Rein & Rabinovitz(1978) Barrett & Fudge (1981) Mazmanian & Sabatier (1981), Mazmanian & Sabatier (1983), Sabatier (1986) Elmore (1987) Linder & Peters (1987) Tummers, Steijn & Bekkers (2012), May (2003)

	Client/ Coalition	Brynard (2007) Percival (2009), Lowi (1963; 1972), Smith (1973), Van Meter & Van Horn (1975), Rein & Rabinowitz (1978), Barret & Fudge (1981), Elmore (1985), Mazmanian & Sabatier (1983), Sabatier (1986), Linder & Peters (1987), Barret & Fudge (1981), Nakamura & Smallwood (1980), Hjern & Hull (1982), Warwick (1982), Downing & Hanf (1983), Sabatier (1986), Wittrock & DeLeon (1986), Migdal (1988)	Pressman & Wildavsky (1973) Berman (1978) Lipsky (1978, 1980) Scharpf (1978) Grindle (1980) Barrett & Fudge (1981) Warwick (1982) Sabatier (1982) Migdal (1988) Bardach (1977) Hanf (1978, 1982) Rein & Rabinovitz (1978) Elmore (1979) Nakamura & Smallwood (1980) Hjern & Hull (1982) Downing & Hanf (1983b) Wittrock & de Leon (1986)
The 6 <sup>th</sup> C-protocol added by Brynard (2005)	Communication	Edwards (1980), Mazmanian and Sabatier (1981), Schofield (2004), Brynard (2005:21), Bouah (2016:132)	
The 7 <sup>th</sup> C- protocol added by Burger (2015)	Coordination	Mazmanian & Sabatier (1981) Mintzberg (1979) O'Toole and Montjoy (1984) Robinson, Hewitt & Harris (2000)	Panday (2007) Panday (2007), Bouah (2016)

Table 1 compiled by Uwizeyimana (2022) based on Najam (1995:35, 37), Brynard (2005:164-186), De Coning (2006:180-213), Burger (2018:206-212), and Munzhezzi (2020) research.

### A Critical Thinking and Analysis of the Above List of 7c Protocols Below their Table

The following discussion explains what the 7C protocol entails and why public policies continue to fail in Africa.

#### Content

Policies can be distributive, regulatory, or redistributive, with distributive policies aiming to share public resources for the general welfare of citizens (Brynard, Cloete & De Coning 2011:146). Redistributive policies change the allocation of resources or power by transferring power from one privileged group to the underprivileged, while regulatory policies specify rules and sanctions for non-compliance (Burger 2018:73).

The main argument for policy implementation is that success depends on the agreement of policymakers and implementers with the policy's objectives (Molobela 2019:313). However, many policies have not been successfully implemented, even if citizens are happy and willing to support them. For example, South Africa, known for its best constitution and policies, has been unable to successfully implement these policies, particularly during apartheid. The country's high levels of service delivery protests highlight the failure to implement public policies, leading some authors to argue that the public sector needs help to successfully implement any project (Goldfinch 2007).

From a redistributive point of view, South Africa has the best constitution. Still, it struggles to implement policies such as the Land Act, even though Section 25 of the South African Constitution (1996) gives the power to the state to redistribute land to previous owners of the land, i.e., black African people. The constitution prohibits arbitrary land expropriation but allows it to accomplish a noble general objective of doing justice to most South Africans, thus meeting the requirement for general application.

Policies do not implement themselves; people must be willing and capable to implement them. In South Africa, bad policies such as the Group Areas Act (1950) and the Land Areas Act were swiftly implemented by the National Party (NP) in power between 1948-1994 because the government took the initiative to implement them. The Group Areas Act (1950, 1966) in South Africa divided cities into racially segregated residential and business areas, requiring millions of Coloureds, Blacks, and Indians to be removed from areas classified for white occupation (Gazi 2016:1). The Land Acts (1913) restricted black people from buying or occupying land in urban areas, except as employees of a white master (Gazi 2016:1).

The impact of public policy content on policy implementation in less democratic countries is a critical global issue, particularly in Africa. Currently, 21 out of 55 African independent countries are authoritarian or dictatorships, with no functional opposition parties, civil societies, free media, freedom of speech, and excessive human rights violations by their rulers (Freedom In the World Report, 2022). In such a government system, the ruler dominates other government institutions, leading to severe consequences for those opposing their views.

In non-democratic states, it is unclear how any policy's content would matter in autocratic dictatorship regimes, which are dominant in Africa. The success of bad policies like the Group Areas Act (1950) in South Africa and the slow implementation of sound policies like Land restitution in South Africa weakens the argument that public policy implementation succeeds or fails in the African context due to its content.

### **The Context in Which Public Policies Are Made and Implemented**

Public policies are made and implemented within their ecological contexts, shaped by social, economic, political, legal, and technological realities (Zhou and Zvoushe 2012:213). The context refers to the internal, external, and institutional context, which is influenced by political processes, bargaining, and compromises (Uwizeyimana 2020:1). There are two categories of policy environments: "policies with publics" and "policies without publics" (May 2003:226).

Policy with the public involves well-developed coalitions of interest groups and civil societies surrounding specific policy issues (May 2003:226). These coalitions affect policy implementation but are generally found in well-developed democratic systems like the US, South Africa, and the UK. On the other hand, policies without the public involve limited or no participation of interest groups and non-state actors, with policymaking and implementation left in the hands of the ruler or ruling group. This type of governance is found in non-democratic autocratic and dictatorship systems like Rwanda, North Korea, China, and Asian Tiger states like Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia (Uwizeyimana 2019).

In "policies without publics" environments, weak policy communities and a dearth of vibrant coalitions around policy issues are common (May 2003:226). These rulers may kill or imprison opponents, remove freedom of speech, limit the press, and only allow the publication of what they want. These rulers change constitutions or restructure the government to give themselves unlimited powers, offering autonomy for implementation but may also lead to misdiagnosed target groups, misdiagnosed problems, and inappropriate policies.

### **Commitment To Public Policy Implementation**

Commitment to public policy implementation is crucial for determining the success or failure of a policy (Brynard et al., 2011:147). Policy implementers' commitment determines their willingness to take whatever

it takes to ensure successful implementation (Munzhedzi 2020:87). Warwick (1982:135) argues that the test of policy implementers' commitment is not whether they execute a policy when their superiors force them to do so, but whether they would still carry out a policy plan if they had the option of not doing so. However, Uwizeyimana (2016) argues that commitment, including political, administrative, and national and international funding and development institutions' commitments, is insufficient to ensure successful policy implementation. For example, President Paul Kagame, his administration, ordinary Rwandan citizens, and international development partners like the World Bank and IMF provided all the necessary administrative and financial support to implement Rwanda's Vision 2020.

The overarching objective of Rwanda's Vision 2020 was to achieve a Middle-Income Country (MIC) status in 2020. Despite the alleged unapparelled political commitment and Kagame's ability to get his entire Cabinet and ordinary citizens to follow through on policy implementation advice (Kamuzinzi 2015:1), Rwanda failed to achieve Middle-Income Status in 2020. Rwanda is still one of the world's most Highly Indebted Vulnerable Countries, with a GDP per capita of \$780 in 2022 (World Bank 2021a). Despite solid arguments about the effect of the "Commitment" variable of the 7C protocol on policy implementation, this argument does not explain why countries like Rwanda failed to achieve the Vision 2020 objective with such a level of political commitment and international support to public policy implementation in a country like Rwanda.

### **Capacity to Manage Policy Implementation.**

Capacity refers to the availability and access to tangible and non-tangible resources, such as human, technological, financial, logistical, and leadership (Brynard et al., 2011:148). It encompasses human, financial, material, and advanced technological capabilities in policy implementation (Munzhedzi 2020). The African continent has a severe capacity shortage in all aspects of policy implementation, affecting economically developed countries like South Africa and Nigeria, resource-rich countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, and poor countries like Burundi and Somalia (Mwambari 2019).

Senior government officials and public office bearers in all spheres of government in Africa are involved in policymaking, legislation development, commissioning, writing, research and analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and stakeholder consultation (Dlodlo 2011:1). Capacity is a necessary condition for any government, regardless of its democratic, autocratic, developed, or developing nature. Successful governments excel in planning, organising, staffing, directing, Coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting (PSDCORB) capacity (Luther et al., 1937).

Policy implementation is executed through programs and projects, and the capacity in all aspects of the project management body of knowledge (PMBOKs) is essential. The 10 PMBOKs include Project Integration Management, Project Scope Management, Project Time Management, Project Cost Management, Project Quality Management, Project Resources/Human Resource Management, Project Communications Management, Project Risk Management, Project Procurement Management, and Project Stakeholder Management (PMBOK. 1996). The lack of tangible, intangible resources and the entire set of POSDCORB and PMBOKs is a severe problem in Africa.

### **Clients and Coalition**

The introduction of sound governance principles in public management and public service delivery confirms that government is no longer the only institution responsible for dealing with socioeconomic issues alone (Brynard et al., 2011:150). Because of divergent interests among policy actors (also called policy stakeholders), some often support government actions while others do not. This means the policy

beneficiaries (clients) and implementation partners or stakeholders are complex. The government needs support from the beneficiaries and policy implementation partners for the policy to succeed.

However, the clients and coalition variable are like "Project Stakeholder Management", one of the abovementioned PMBOKs. In addition, the clients/coalition variable needs to explain what happens in autocratic regimes where civil societies and opposition parties do not exist. Globally, "There were 52 nations with a dictator or authoritarian regime ruling the country" in 2020 (Ranker 2020:1), and 22 of them were in Africa (Ranker 2020:1).

### **Communication**

As indicated in the above discussion, Communication was added as the 6C variable by Brynard in 2005. One of the reasons he added it to the 5C-Protocol is because it is integral to the 5C-protocol, but its importance qualifies it to be an independent variable. Communication cuts across the democratic-authoritarian and top-down vs bottom-up and hybrid divide because it applies equally in all of them.

However, like all the other variables in the 5C-protocol, Communication is also one of the generic management functions known as the PSDCORB (Luther et al., 1937). In addition, proponents of the Communication variable, such as Brynard (2005), Burger (2015), and Munzhedzi, (2020:98), did not explain why Communication would be more critical than other generic management principles, such as budgeting. As already mentioned in the section dealing with Capacity, public policy can only be effectively implemented with proper planning, suitably qualified staff (i.e., staffing), directing (like leading, leadership and involving Communication), and reporting and budgeting (i.e., POSDCORB).

As mentioned in the preceding section, given that public policy implementation is executed through a set of programmes and projects, Communication is also a significant component of the project management body of knowledge (PMBOKs) (PMBOK 1996). Hence there is no way that public policies can be implemented without sufficient Capacity in all the aspects of the POSDCORB and PMBOKs; it is unclear why Communication would be more important than other components of the POSDCORB or PMBOKs. Therefore, a lack of communication skills cannot be considered a free-standing variable outside the lack of other generic management functions and lack of Capacity in all the PMBOKs prevalent in most African states.

### **Coordination**

Coordination was added as the 7th and final C on the protocol created by Najam in 1995, and the 6th C was added by Brynard in 2005. Coordination is critical because many stakeholders and actors are involved in the policy implementation. Good governance requires proper coordination of stakeholders to ensure that everyone knows what they are supposed to do and how, when, and where to do it. In fact, "lack of coordination often leads to failure in creating proper alignments and partnerships during the implementation of municipal policies and programmes" (De Coning, Cloete & Burger 2018:214).

However, like the other Cs on the 7C protocol, coordination is also one of the general management functions, such as PSDCORB (Luther et al., 1937). Unfortunately, like communication and capacity variables discussed above, the proponents of "coordination" as a seventh variable of the 7C protocol have also not provided convincing evidence to prove that it can be a free-standing variable outside the POSDCORB or the PMBOKs. As explained in the section questioning why Communication was separated from other POSDCORB and PMBOKs, the implementation of public policies and the execution of public programmes and projects depends on the available Capacity in all the aspects of the POSDCORB and PMBOKs (PMBOK 1996). Therefore, in the absence of a solid argument to



demonstrate that coordination is more important than other components of the generic management principles (i.e., POSDCORB), and the PMBOKs, a lack of coordination skills cannot be considered a free-standing variable outside the lack of other generic management functions and the PMBOKs which is prevalent in most African states.

### **Why Public Policy Implementation Continue to Fail Despite the 7c- Protocol?**

The past 18 years, since 2005, when Brynard introduced the 6C protocol in the South African context, have dominated the policy implementation discourse. However, statistics have consistently demonstrated that public policies have continuously failed in Africa, which explains why most African governments have consistently failed to alleviate the living conditions of their citizens. The high poverty levels would not exist in Africa if African governments could implement policies successfully. The following is the author's attempt to explain why most countries on the endowed continent, in terms of mineral and natural resources, have struggled to implement public policies to better their people's socioeconomic standards from colonialism to today (Arieff 2015).

### **Poor or Lack of Leadership and bad governance in Africa**

Leadership is not a critical factor in public policy implementation in the 5C-protocol or 7C-protocol, but it is one of Africa's significant causes of policy failure. Leadership serves as a blueprint to transform Africa into a global powerhouse. However, many people in leadership positions should not be in these positions (Jones, Pillay, Reddy & Zondi (2022:1). Plato argues that an ideal state cannot grow into reality until philosophers become rulers and political power and philosophy come into the same hands (Lüdert 2017:1). Leaders should seek evidence and facts to inform their actions and those around them (Lüdert 2017:1). Leadership problems can be found in any country and continent. However, lacking leadership remains the biggest problem in less developed countries.

Bad leaders and bad leadership have been a severe problem in Africa since the colonial era. Colonialism had nothing to do with the well-being of African people. Colonialists were parasites, and Africans were hosts. The role of the parasite is to harm the host. According to the "*Letter from King Leopold II of Belgium to Colonial Missionaries, 1883*", all colonial policies were about exploiting African people, both materially, physically, spiritually and intellectually, to ensure the rooting of their raw materials and the exploitation of their human labour for the benefit of the metropole or colonising country (King Leopold II, 1883).

However, neither bad leaders nor bad leadership and colonialism have ended in Africa. The fact that most less developed countries continue to endure the suffering caused by poverty for many years after colonialism is said to have ended is a clear indication that "the importation of good administrative/management practices have failed to impact positively on developmental states in their quest for the development of their respective states" (Muhammad 2014:66). As Muhammad (2014:66) puts it, "public policy implementation competencies backed up by appropriate public leadership and public governance" are still lacking in many less developed countries.

Therefore, while leadership and the problem of lack of leadership in Africa seem to have been sidelined debate about the role of the 5C-Protocol or the 7C-Protocol on public policy implementation, it is impossible to ignore or minimise the role of the colonial and post-colonial era leaders in holding Africa back the success of public policy implementation in Africa.

Writing about Nigeria in 1983, Chinua Achebe argued that "the only trouble with Nigeria is the failure of leadership" to implement policies to solve the socio-economic and political problems facing Nigerian

citizens. According to Achebe (1983:1), with good leaders, Nigeria could resolve its inherent problems, such as tribalism; lack of patriotism; social injustice and the cult of mediocrity; indiscipline; and corruption" (Achebe 1983:1). Achebe (1983:1) argument focussed on his native country Nigeria, there is no doubt that his argument can be extended to all other African countries. Africa has yet to recover from the socio-economic problems caused by bad leadership or lack of leadership, many of which existed when Chinua Achebe lamented Nigeria's problems in 1983. A good leader sells his/her vision to the followers, and coalition/clients are easily created and managed because most people are willing to follow the leadership's vision in the public interest.

### **Lack of Capacity and Capable State to Manage Policy Implementation.**

Policy capacity means "the ability to: anticipate and influence change; make informed, intelligent decisions about policy; develop programs to implement policy; attract and absorb resources; manage resources; and evaluate current activities to guide future action" (Brenton, Baekkesko & Hannah 2022:1). This is because "Policy implementation takes place within a given institutional setting and requires specific structure and organisation to conduct it both of which allocate decision power and mint specific roles in the implementation process" (Sager & Gofen 2022:347). "Considerations of administrative (or organisational or operational) capacity re-emerged in the 2000s with reassessments of the state's management, programming, monitoring, and evaluation abilities after being "hollowed out" (Brenton et al., 2022:2). The importance of a capable state in managing policy implementation cannot be over-emphasised, especially in Africa, where most people still live in poverty.

As the founding father of modern Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, pointed out: "*To get good government, you must have good people in charge of government*" (Yew, cited in The Conversation.2020:1). Therefore, a capable state is a state where "Staff at all levels have the authority, experience, competence and support they need to do their jobs" (NDP 2012:71). Management skills, such as the seven generic management principles, commonly known as PSDCORB, across the board are critically important (Luther et al., 1937). One can also add communication (c) which has been listed in the 7C protocols by Burger (2018), and the capacity of the state and individuals, as argued by Cloete (1999). Both are included in the 10 Project Management Knowledge Areas (PMBOK). The PMBOKs are essential for public policy implementation success because the implementation of public policies takes place through public programmes (and sub-programmes), which are in turn divided and executed through public projects (which may have sub-projects) (Uwizeyimana 2013; Uwizeyimana & Maphunye 2014). Thus, competency in project management is a prerequisite for public policy implementers.

Sub-Saharan African countries need more capable (well-educated, well-trained) professionally mannered public officials who can assist in implementing public policy, irrespective of which political party is in power. The importance of professional public officials to execute public policies for the benefit of all citizens, irrespective of which political party is in power, has been a concern since 1887 when Woodrow Wilson wrote his famous article, "The Study of Administration", in which he vehemently advocated for detaching partisan politics and patronage from sound public management (Uwizeyimana 2013:165).

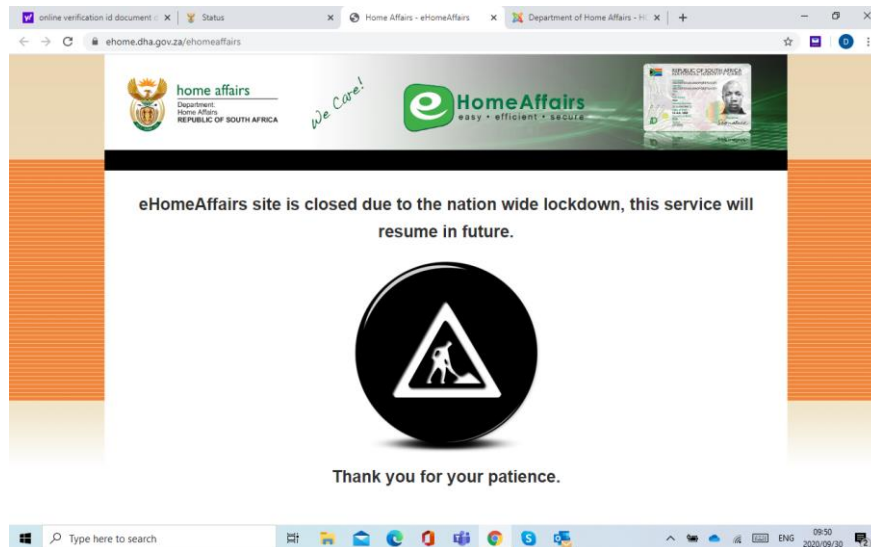
### **Icts Capacity (Availability, Access, Affordability, Reliability and Ability and Willingness to Use ICT)**

A review of historical literature shows that most African societies had developed technologies in almost all fields many millennia, long before the arrival of Western slave traders, colonisers, and settlers in Africa (Uwizeyimana 2022:12). Our black ancestors "dominated the technological advancements and innovations in what is called the pre-industrial revolution by Western countries" (Uwizeyimana, 2022:10). African societies have developed technologies in almost all fields for millennia. However, the

impact of the slave trade, colonisation, and Western religion on African people's technological development has been irreversible in many post-colonial African countries (Uwizeyimana 2022:12).

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that most governments in developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, lag 30 years behind the technological frontier (Basheka 2022:3). The importance of e-government in times of disruption demonstrates that ICT is no longer a luxury. Countries with widespread availability and use of technologies managed to provide essential public services, such as e-health and e-education, during the hard lockdowns related to the pandemic (Hanushek & Woessmann 2020:6). However, the availability of ICT infrastructure is not enough if there is no capacity or willingness to use it. For example, the Department of Home Affairs in South Africa suspended all online services during the Covid-19 pandemic, not due to technical problems or lack of technical skills and infrastructure but most probably due to a lack of willingness to use the available ICT infrastructure to provide e-HomeAffairs services during the time it was badly needed.

**Picture 1:** Screen Print Showing the South African Ehomeaffairs Site Was Closed During the COVID-19 Pandemic.



Source: Screenshot of Home Affairs notices taken on 30 September 2020 by the author during the Covid-19 lockdown.

### **The Pandemic of Corruption in Both the Private and Public Actors**

According to Williams (2012:2), “There is no universally accepted definition of corruption”. However, there seems to be a consensus in the literature that *corruption* can be “defined as individual actions that “abuse entrusted power for private gain” (Transparency International 2021:1). The AU/ECA (2010:13) argues that Illicit financial flows have been a development challenge for Africa since the first years of African countries’ independence in the early 1950s and 1960s. Even countries that recently gained some form of independence in the early 1980s, such as Zimbabwe and South Africa in 1994, have become synonymous with corruption (UNCTAD 2020). It has been estimated that the African continent has lost over \$1 Trillion in the past 50 years (between \$50 billion and \$90 billion annually) and is likely to continue to do so because of high levels of corruption in most African public and private sector

institutions (AU/ECA 2010:13). According to Kazeem (2020:2) while corruption is a global problem, it is the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa which scores very poorly (32% below the global average of 43%) on the corruption index. The entire continent is ranked behind other continents on the “Average regional scores on the 2019 Corruption Index” (Kazeem 2020:2). However, while corruption levels have reached a pandemic crisis on the entire African continent, the worst corrupt countries on the African continent are its most significant economies, such as Nigeria (26%), South Africa (44%), Egypt (35%), Algeria (35%), and Angola (26%) (see also Uwizeyimana & Ani 2023:21219).

### **Continued colonialism of Africa by Western powers of the African continent**

It is well documented that “before the *“Scramble for Africa,”* by the 14 European countries in Berlin in 1884 (Uwizeyimana & Ani 2023:21216), the African continent was thriving in every aspect of life. This is exemplified by the fact that Ancient Egyptians were far advanced in technology, medicine, agriculture, education and others (Settles1996:1). However, Western colonisers’ exploitation of African people and natural resources, which started at the time of slavery (1619-1884), through the different forms of colonialism (1884-1860s), is continuing under neo-colonialism which started in the 1950s (Monks 2018: 1). The fact there are countries which do not have their currencies, such as Ivory Coast, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo, Niger, Benin and Guinea-Bissau, and are still guided by the *Pact for the Continuation of Colonization* they signed before getting their so-called independence 1950s and still pay over \$500 billion continuation of colonisation tax (Hundeyin 2019). Even countries such as Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone” still use the French CFA (Tih & Tasamba 2019:1, see also Uwizeyimana & Ani 2023:21217). Many African countries are falling over themselves to join organisations established by their colonial masters, such as the French’s Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF, established in 1970) and the British Commonwealth of Nations (established in 1931) primarily because they cannot effectively manage their internal affairs without the support of their colonial masters (Lumumba 2021). Thus, as Burgis (2018:1) puts it: “the wholesale expropriation of resources during colonial times has barely slowed through the post-independence era, albeit with new beneficiaries” (Burgis 2018:1).

### **Over-indebtedness caused by crooked colonial economic systems designed to benefit colonial Masters at the Expense of African People.**

Over-indebtedness, dependency, and colonial economic systems benefiting Western masters continue to impact African people and countries negatively, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation and underdevelopment despite African countries' independence since 1950. Over-indebtedness in the top twenty African countries results from colonial economic systems that extract natural resources and keep people in bondage (Chaudhury 2021). These countries include "Rwanda, Benin, Burkina Faso, CAR, Chad, Comoros, Congo, D.R., The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, and Togo" (IMF 2020:1). Western countries, including China in Asia, provide loans to African governments or state-owned companies, with repayment either in-kind or from a resource-related future income stream (Uwizeyimana & Ani 2023:21222). This Western-based exploitative arrangement fixes commodity prices, leaving African countries permanently indebted to their Western and Asian debtors (Mihalyi, Adam & Hwang 2020).

### **Western-sponsored armed conflicts destabilise natural resources-rich countries at the expense of African people**

The abundance of natural resources in many African countries has led to a "natural resource curse" that causes slower development and constant wars, often sponsored by Western countries (Matambo 2021:10). Over 35 non-international armed conflicts (NIACs) have recently occurred in countries like Burkina Faso,

Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan (Rule of Law in Armed Conflict Online Portal (RULAC) (2023:2). People engaged in these conflicts often lack access to necessities such as water, food, health, and education, suggesting that these are proxy wars being instigated by former colonial masters and Western countries who want free access to mineral-rich areas by bypassing regular governments. For example, the war in Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique, is linked to natural gas exploitation by French company TotalEnergies SE (Prashad 2021), while the war being waged in the eastern part of the DRC by the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel is allegedly a proxy war by Western superpowers to limit China's access to mineral resources in the DRC. The continuation of Western colonial masters is responsible for the failure of policy implementation in Africa, as these wars still extract minerals from citizens and exhaust government resources.

### **Harmful Effects of Climate Change and Global Warming**

Climate change and global warming have caused widespread adverse effects worldwide, including increased natural disasters like tsunamis, cyclones, flooding, and draughts (Masud & Khan 2023:1). These disasters cost countries billions of dollars in human lives, infrastructure damage, and lost income (Durokifa & Ajadi 2022:16). African countries are particularly vulnerable due to competing priorities, limited budgets, and high levels of poverty and unemployment (UN Climate Change News 2020:1). Climate change is threatening human health, safety, food and water security, and socio-economic development in Africa, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where high dependence on natural resources and limited capacity to cope with climate variability and extremes make them more vulnerable (UN Climate Change News 2020:1).

### **Inability to deal with localised and Global Pandemics**

Localised and global pandemics are dangerous events where a disease outbreak is limited to a specific geographic area or community. Examples include the Zika virus outbreak in Brazil in 2015-2016, Bird Flu (H5N1), and Ebola outbreaks in West Africa from 2013 to 2016 (WHO n.d:1). Global pandemics, on the other hand, spread across multiple countries or continents, affecting a significant portion of the world's population. The most recent example of a localised pandemic that became a global pandemic is COVID-19, which started in Wuhan, China, and spread worldwide (Basheka 2022:3). This pandemic demonstrated that most African countries are ill-prepared to deal with global pandemics. Most countries had no access to the vaccines and were heavily dependent on their Western counterparts' generosity to donate vaccines, which happened, but only after having finished vaccinating their people.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This paper examines public policy failure in Africa, focusing on its unique socio-economic, political, and historical contexts. The 5C-protocol and 7C protocols are crucial for policy management teaching in South African universities. However, Africa's unique history, socioeconomic issues, culture, and people differ from Western industrialised countries, and the 7C protocol does not include African context-specific issues.

Based on the analysis in this paper, the African continent, with abundant natural resources, has remained the world's most impoverished for the following reasons:

The failure of public policy implementation in Africa is attributed to poor leadership and poor governance. Good leadership would have provided vision, galvanised people, and utilised abundant resources to implement socio-economic policies that would improve the socio-economic situation of Africans.

Failure to employ competent public managers and officials with expertise in POSDCORB and PMBOKs

to plan and execute public policy implementation. Hence the need to emphasise equipping staff with generic management competencies and the 10 Project Management Knowledge Areas (PMBOK) as prerequisites for public policy implementers.

Post-independence African governments' failure to professionalise public policy implementation. Professional public administration would ensure sustainability and avoid personifying and politicising policy implementation, irrespective of which ruling party or group.

African countries' failure to provide accessible, affordable, and reliable ICT infrastructure for public policy implementation. Such ICT infrastructure would enable E-Government and improve government, citizens, businesses and Civil Societies interactions. Such ICT would also assist during disasters, emergencies, and pandemics such as COVID-19.

African governments must combat corruption at all costs and in every sector. Corruption is responsible for hindering government implementation and affecting citizens' well-being.

African governments must address over-indebtedness caused by colonial economic systems, as resource-rich African governments often struggle to implement public policies due to over-indebtedness.

**End All Forms of Continuation of Colonialism in All African Countries:** Addressing Colonialism In African countries is crucial for a more equitable and prosperous future. Despite independence claims, African countries still depend on former colonial masters, resulting in heavy financial debt from the IMF, World Bank, Western countries and China.

Stop using natural resources as collateral for foreign debt and focus on using mineral and human resources for policy implementation.

Ending Western-sponsored armed conflicts in African countries is crucial for successful public policy implementation and improving living conditions for impoverished Africans, especially in mineral and oil-rich areas.

Combatting climate change and global warming will prevent natural disasters and pandemics and protect African countries from the adverse effects of these factors. Many African countries lack infrastructure and finance to handle natural disasters. When they happen, African countries are forced to use their limited resources to deal with emergencies, reducing public policy implementation.

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