The Value of Traditional Leaders in Advancing and Executing Municipal Integrated Development Plans: Is Rural Development Improving in South Africa?

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Abstract

The paper examines the value of traditional leaders in the advancement and execution of Municipal Integrated Plan (IDP) in South Africa. According to literature search institution of traditional leadership have been in place for a very a long time. To examines the value of traditional leaders in the advancement and execution of Municipal Integrated Plan (IDP) in South Africa, the paper employed the Behavioural theory of leadership. This paper used secondary data (through a literature review) to collect relevant information. It was revealed that differences between the local governance, and traditional leaders are depriving community members of the services that they should be getting from their respective municipalities. Despite the enactment of numerous constitutional laws to strengthen ties between traditional leaders and the local government, it is evident in existing literature that the lack in understanding of roles between traditional leaders and municipal councils remains a challenge. Traditional leaders are not able to participate fully in the IDP policy execution. The paper concluded by arguing that overcoming the undermining and including traditional leaders in all stages of development programs by municipalities is desirable to win the fight against poverty, unemployment, and income inequality through quality service delivery.

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1. Introduction

Traditional leadership is one of the most conventional types of leadership that prioritises the needs and aspirations of rural societies. Primarily this type of leadership exists to protect the culture, customs, and beliefs of indigenous people of Africa (Khunou 2009). The South African government has three spheres of government: national, provincial, and local. National and provincial governments were constituted in 1994, whereas local government was constituted as transitional local councils (TLCs) in 1995 (Mashau, 2014). In this light, in South Africa, numerous pieces of legislation have been passed to ensure that traditional leadership makes an important contribution in the local rural development. According to the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, section 29, municipalities are required to recognize and involve traditional leadership institutions in service delivery plans. Further, this is also found in the National House of Traditional Leaders Act, 1997 (Act 10 of 1997); the White Paper on Traditional Leadership and Governance of 2003; and the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 2003 (Act 41 of 2003).

Whilst this may be the case a central focus to this paper, lies with assessing the value of traditional leaders in the establishment of integrated development plans (IDP) and how this enhances rural development. To strengthen the collaboration between traditional leaders and municipal councils, legislation in South Africa have also been passed laws such as the Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998); and the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000). According to Baloyi, (2016) section 4 of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act 41 of 2003 promotes active participation of traditional leadership in developing and reviewing the municipal IDP within their jurisdiction. Interestingly, literature search suggests that traditional leadership recognised themselves as the custodians and legitimate owners of land in terms of communal land tenures, but now feel that the municipal council is stripping them of their powers and functions. Despite the enactment of the above laws the lack of understanding of roles between traditional leaders and municipal councils remains a challenge.

This paper critically assesses the value of traditional leaders in advancing and executing municipal integrated development plans in South Africa. The findings of this paper will significantly contribute to the body of knowledge by continuing debates in the academic space about traditional leadership's exact role in the local government and how these collaborations affect the rural development process. This paper is organized as follows: methodology, theoretical framework, literature review, and concluding remarks.

2. Methodology

The study relied on secondary data. Publications from organizations such as Oxfam, JSTOR, Oxford Sabinet African Journals, cooperative governance, and traditional affairs (COGTA), the International Labour Organization, and municipal IDPs made up the consulted literature. These parties have been noted to have published extensively on the role of traditional leaders in local government activities in the less economically developed countries. Further, to supplement the secondary data, the researchers gathered relevant and up-to-date academic papers related to the theme of this paper. The paper focused on investigating the value of traditional leaders in municipal IDPs by assessing how existing collaborations between traditional leaders and municipal officials' impact on service delivery in the rural areas of South Africa. Therefore, a qualitative research approach was used alongside a literature review.

3. Theoretical Framework

To examine the value of traditional leaders in advancing and executing municipal IDPs in South Africa, and further assess how this affect rural development. This paper employed the Behavioural theory of leadership. The focus of the theory is to assess how leaders behave. In this light, the theory assesses if leaders can dictate what needs to be done and is expected of them. Or do they involve their teams (communities) in decision-making to encourage acceptance and support? (Brevis et al. 1997). According to the dogmas of the Behavioural theory, no leader behaviour is innate, but it is learned through experience (Goff, 2003). The "effectiveness of a leader is

related to how the leader behaves or what he or she does"
(Northhouse, 2010). Because this paper wants to investigate the
value of traditional leaders in the establishment and execution of
municipal IDPs, Behavioural theory is suitable. According to this
theory, people can learn to become leaders through teaching and
observation, the theory is founded on the belief that great leaders are
made, not born (Baloyi, 2016).

In this context, as highlighted in the previous topic, there a
numerous legislative law that seek to merge traditional leaders with
municipal officials in local development activities. What is the value
of traditional leaders then? Literature searches suggest that
municipalities have an integral responsibility during the
establishment of development activities, to ensure public
participation. According to Sithole (2020) public participation is how
the government interacts directly with interested or affected
individuals and government entities, organizations, and entities
before deciding on developmental issues. The above-mentioned
theory enables the researcher to examine the extent to which the
public is valued through traditional leaders. The Integrated
Development Plan (IDP) is an approach to planning that involves the
entire municipality and its citizens in finding the best solutions to
local development issues (Manzini, 2016). In this context, traditional
leaders possess authority over the people of an area, or any other
persons appointed by the government's instrument and order to
exercise traditional authority over an area or a tribe, confirms
(Dlungwana, 2002). This is why examining their value is significant
to this paper.

4. Literature Review

There have been ongoing debates around regarding the role of
traditional leadership in local government. From a much wider
context, Baloyi (2016) points out that in Africa traditional leadership
is one of the most established types of community association that
prioritised rural societies' needs and aspirations. however, within
the new democratic administration, traditional structures remain
undermined (Binza & George, 2011). Local governments institutions
have two-folded purpose. Firstly, it is the administrative purpose of

supplying goods and services; and secondly it is to represent and involve citizens in determining specific local public needs and how these local needs can be met. There are debates about the role that traditional leaders play in local government institutions. Literature gathered in these sections seeks to examine the value of traditional leaders in community development plans in South Africa and less economically developed countries in general.

4.1 The Evolution of Traditional Leadership

With reference to Helen and Carol (1991) leadership is "a process by which members of a group are empowered to work together synergistically towards a common goal or vision that will create change, transform institutions, and thus improve the quality of life". Similarly, Nahavandi (2006) defines leadership as a process where one individual holds the ability to influences others to enthusiastically direct their efforts and abilities towards attaining defined group or organisational goals. Are municipalities able to encourage this from traditional leaders is the central theme to this study. According to Mpungose (2018), traditional leadership is regarded as the oldest method of leadership based on the needs of the populace, cultural development, and the preservation of customs. As it can be expected, traditional leadership is not unique to South Africa. Owing to the context of this paper, it is important to note that traditional leaders existed during the pre-colonial period. According to Zamisa & Mutereko (2019) history confirms that traditional leadership existed before colonial invasion and that it is the oldest form of governance in communal areas. In husk, during this period, traditional leadership was a common form of authority within communities. Literature search suggests that different types of traditional leadership and absolute kingdoms existed in most countries of the world.

As outline above, Traditional leadership is not unique to South Africa or Africa for that matter. According to the Department of Provincial and Local Government (2000), Almost every country in the world has been led by certain forms of hereditary leadership or absolute monarchies somewhere in their experience. However, it is the demand for representative forms of government, which were somewhat based on the struggles by countryside peasants and urban

factory-based workers for better wages and working conditions, and the struggles for gender equality, amongst many things that have resulted in the birth of the democracy movement all over the world. The extent to which the value of traditional leaders is held within the democratic governance space is also one of the main interests to this paper.

Considering the above, it is worthy to not that in various Eastern European states there has been several revolutions that have led to the complete elimination of systems of traditional rule. In countries like the United Kingdom, Spain, Holland, Sweden, and Norway traditional leadership have been to some extent mitigated or abolished and replaced with democratic governance systems. However, in the United Kingdom, the monarchy, still plays a significant role in national affairs. The House of Lords, which is the second and upper House of Parliament of Britain, although founded on the principles of traditional rule, has, over time, transformed and is generally seen as part of the democratic parliament of the United Kingdom (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2000). For the benefit of this paper, it is important to highlight that in Africa, prior to colonisation, systems of governance were characterised by traditional leadership rule, and traditional leaders and institutions dealt with a wide range of issues which related to traditional communities, whilst traits of these doing still exists, this paper explores the value of traditional leaders in the integrated development plan of municipalities.

4.2 Collaborations Between Traditional Leaders and Municipal Officials

In the context of South Africa, in 1994 the government established a framework to guide the roles of traditional leadership. This is known as the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (No. 41 of 2003), which was promulgated to regulate traditional-related matters in South Africa (Khunou, 2013; Hagg and Kanyane, 2013; Peires, 2014). The extent to which this has been effective in municipal plans is of central focus to this paper. Theoretically the above-mentioned Act is to foster collaboration between traditional leaders and government departments. It cannot be ignored that the institution of traditional leadership has been in place for a long time.

But, when the current government came into power in 1994, the direction of governance started to change to do away with the previous policies of apartheid. Such changes affected the status of traditional leaders in the country (Nekhavhambe, 2014).

With reference to Sections 19 and 20(1) of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, a specification is made on the roles of traditional leaders to be effective in promoting leadership and communal governance. Amongst many roles, Amoateng and Kalule-Sabiti (2011); Khunou (2013) and Mathonsi and Sithole (2017), outline that traditional leaders are entrusted with responsibilities of promoting arts and culture, promoting environmental activities and tourism, health services, home affairs, housing, and the promotion of justice among citizens. Ideally, traditional leaders close the communication gap between the government and communities as they are entrusted with disseminate information between the government and residents. Whilst this is the case, existing literature search also suggests that Traditional leaders were leading their communities before the present municipal system, however, today most do not understand what their current role and functions are, because it is not clearly spelt out to them. As such, in most cases traditional leaders do not accept municipalities, because they believe that this system is a way of excluding them from participating in local governance activities. Often, such misunderstandings and unclear policies on what the responsibilities of traditional leaders make it difficult for community developmental projects to get off the ground in rural areas (Nekhavhambe, 2014).

Further, according to the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 2003 (Act 41 of 2003), it is noted that municipalities and traditional leaders must have clear understanding because when they don't communities tend to suffer. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that with the Act at hand, to this day rural communities of South Africa do not have an adequate and reliable supply of necessities of life, for example, water, electricity, and proper roads. Traditional leaders are unable to provide their subjects with the above-mentioned services because they do not have the resources to do so. Misunderstandings and conflicts between municipalities and traditional leaders leave communities without proper and excellent services. It is therefore important to find a

solution as to how municipalities and traditional leaders can work together for better service delivery.

4.3 The Integrated Development Process

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is a management tool to align scarce resources to defined policy priorities in the broader framework of developmental local government. It ensures greater coordination and integration with other governmental spheres and promotes active citizen engagement (Valeta & Walton 2008). The IDP is one of the most critical tools for municipalities to ensure that development takes place. The IDP is currently seen as a municipal management function and is part of an integrated system of planning and delivery (Dlamini & Reddy, 2018). Further, an IDP is a framework guiding agency for activities from other spheres of government, including all critical stakeholders such as non-government organisations (NGOs), the private sector, and businesses within a municipal area (South African local Government Association, SALGA, 2003). This then suggests that there are numerous players that are key to the planning and execution of the IDP (Musitha, 2012), thus exploring the extent and value of traditional leaders is significant.

4.4 Challenges Faced by Traditional Leaders' During the IDP Implementation

With the IDP in the picture it should be highlighted that immediately after the current government took over, it decided to investigate the legitimacy of traditional leaders in the country. According to Wall, in Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (1997) the investigation was necessitated by the belief that government spends a great deal of money on traditional leaders' salaries and because of speculation that some traditional leaders appointed by the apartheid government were not rightful heirs to the throne. Also, on the side of the Traditional leaders, it is reported that when the current system of government was introduced, there were mixed feelings as to whether traditional leaders would accept or reject this system. Traditional leaders feared that the authority they exercised over their subjects would be taken away from them by municipal authorities. Nevertheless, most traditional leaders accepted the changes because

they wanted their communities to develop economically and socially (Nekhavhambe, 2014).

In a study conducted in Sekhukhune (Limpopo Province), it was reported that While South Africa recognises the institution of traditional leadership, the country faces a major challenge. This challenge is because there is a lack of common understanding on what role traditional leaders should play in local governments and other spheres (Bank and Southall 1996). It is also important to note that in South Africa, traditional authority competes with elected democratic leadership (Beall et al. 2005). Interestingly, South African communities have leaned towards supporting traditional authority because elected leadership has failed to deliver on their mandate (Oomen 2005). From a theoretical perspective the government views traditional authority as an important institution to complement elected local municipalities in service delivery activities, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and confirmed by the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 2003 (Act 41 of 2003) section 5 (1). The above-mentioned Acts compels both national and provincial governments to promote partnership between municipalities and traditional leaders. Further, to meet the objectives of local government, municipalities are assisted by integrated development planning (IDP).

According to literature search, traditional leaders are of the view that the inception of the democratic administration, included the issue of not recognising them to participate fully in municipal councils and being undermined by institutions such as civic associations that overlook them when initiating development projects in their areas (Thakhathi 1995). However, with the establishment of the IDP, the idea was to strengthen this stakeholder participation and ensure that there is space for communities to decide on their own development. Are Traditional leaders valued through this process? Is the central question to this paper. According to Musitha, (2012) the value and participation of traditional leaders in IDP policy implementation is currently not effective.

Traditional leaders are not able to participate fully in the IDP policy execution, mainly because they do not understand it. Majority of them are illiterate, since they occupy their position via hereditary means, and there is no democratic process followed in choosing

them (Musitha, 2012). Further, traditional leaders recognised themselves as custodians and legitimate owners of land in terms of communal land tenures, however, they also feel like the municipal councils are stripping them of their powers and functions. It is worth highlighting that the lack of understanding of the roles of the municipal council as the leading vanguard of government programmes by traditional leaders, and conversely, the responsibilities of the traditional leaders by the municipal council, gives rise to conflict and slows down service delivery (Baloyi, 2016). The following topic outlines the concluding remarks to this paper.

4.5 Shortcomings to Address and Yield Progress in the Value of Traditional Leaders

According to Eberbach et al. (2017) traditional leaders must be recognised, empowered, and provided with an enabling environment to be able to discharge their duties equitably. This comes after an assertion made by Mabunda (2017) that municipal councils do not provide an enabling environment to allow traditional leaders to function effectively. Often enough according to Shembe (2014) municipal workers often look down on traditional leaders as it is incorrectly thought that they only focus on the cultural heritage of their people and not on developmental issues. On the other hand, traditional leaders have been viewed to being instrumental in bringing grassroots governance to the people (Hagg and Kanyane, 2013). Overcoming the undermining and including traditional leaders in all stages of development programs by municipalities is needed. Further, Cele (2013) argues that whilst traditional leaders are well recognised in the Constitution, there is no clarification of the boundaries of the roles of traditional leaders in municipal governance. In response to this, literature search thereby indicates that in South Africa in the role of traditional leaders is very vague of their in municipal governance. Koenane, (2017), Hamusunse, 2015, and Cele, (2013) all suggest that most traditional leaders in South Africa are not satisfied with their roles and political positions as their duties are covered by municipalities and there in all development activities, they feel undervalued.

5. Conclusion

The paper examined the value of traditional leaders in the advancement and execution of Municipal Integrated Plan (IDP) in South Africa. The Behavioural theory of leadership was used as a primary theoretical framework to assess the value of traditional leaders in the IDP process. The theory was selected because it focuses on how leaders behave and know what is expected of them. The findings revealed that despite the enactment of numerous laws to strengthen relationships between traditional leaders and municipalities, there are huge misunderstandings of roles that exists. Traditional leaders feel that the municipal council is stripping them of their powers and functions.

It was further revealed that, whilst the government has established frameworks to guide the roles of traditional leadership in community development activities. This has not been effective as most traditional leaders do not understand what role they should play in the IDP process. Furthermore, Traditional leaders are not able to participate fully in the IDP policy execution, mainly because they do not understand it, as most of them are illiterate, since traditional leadership is inherited, and there is no democratic process followed in choosing them. It was also discovered that; municipal officials generally look down on traditional leaders as it is incorrectly thought that they only focus on the cultural heritage of their people and not on developmental issues. The paper also gathered that misunderstandings and conflicts between municipalities and traditional leaders leave communities without proper and excellent services. Most rural areas of South Africa are without the supply of reliable necessities of life, such water, electricity, and proper roads. Traditional leaders have an integral role in the rural communities of South Africa and strengthen relations with municipalities programmes cannot be over emphasized.

Considering the findings, the paper recommends a more detailed community entry approach from the side of municipalities during the IDP process. Traditional leaders feel that they have a limited role in the IDP process, yet this programme deals directly with communities. Traditional leaders have a crucial role to play owing to their authority and proximity to the people and their primary

mandate to preserve customs and traditions derived from the Constitution (Twigg 2015). Because of this belief the value of traditional leaders must be enhanced because a collaboration between municipalities and traditional leaders are key to service delivery and rural development activities. Therefore, the paper recommends that traditional leaders be recognised as a gateway to communities.

This paper also recommends both the local government institutions, and the traditional leaders be eager to develop strong. The paper finally recommends that traditional leaders adhere to the Behavioural theory frameworks. This will ensure traditional leaders learn through experiences, traditional leaders are not elected but rather inherit their positions, adhering to the behavioural theory will allow them the space to learn, and forge collaboration with service delivery institutions because the theory is founded on the belief that great leaders are made, not born. The paper concludes by arseting that overcoming the undermining and including traditional leaders in all stages of development programs by municipalities is desirable to win the fight against poverty, unemployment, and income inequality through quality service delivery.

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