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The Impact of political interference on the quality of infrastructural delivery of projects in the Free State



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Abbreviations and acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
FS	Free State
GNI	Gross National Income
SA	South Africa

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Abstract

Political interference has always been a point of criticism in infrastructure development projects in the Free State. Such interference has a significant influence on project delivery quality, as it frequently causes delays, cost overruns, and substandard results. This article examines the different ways in which political interference impairs the proper implementation of infrastructure projects in the Free State.

The purpose of this enquiry was to firmly establish, if any the role that political interference plays in the quality of infrastructure that is provided in the Free State.

The study evaluated for key aspects that affect the quality of infrastructure development in the Free State, namely: irregular service provider appointments, irregular employment practices, cost overruns and programme delays, poor quality infrastructure.

The study employed qualitative as well as quantitative (mixed) data collection methods. The qualitative aspect entailed primarily the use of questionnaires on a random sample of officials that are in executive public offices in government departments. These questionnaires were open ended to allow participants to add in or motivate their initial responses. The Quantitative consisted of systematic interviews, measurements and observations, and records or document reviews for information that was measurable.

The study found that factors that negatively influence the quality of infrastructure delivery in local government include:

a) Political interference

b) Institutional incapacity

c) An insufficient quality monitoring systems

Amongst other findings, the study found that government officials are regarded to be the most active in corrupt operations as customers, contractors, and subcontractors. Contract granting for political advantage, nepotism and conflicts of interest, and meddling in the tender award

process are the most common forms of corruption linked with government employees. Corruption is particularly frequent during the project's bid appraisal and tendering phases.

1.1 Background

Infrastructure development is crucial to the achievement of South Africa's long-term economic and social objectives. The public sector must coordinate the effort in a developing country looking for major structural reform. Investing in public infrastructure is critical to increasing productivity as well as competitiveness, decreasing geographical inequality, and fostering the growth of new job-creating industries. According to Department of Public Works & Infrastructure, DPWI (2022), infrastructure development is one of the non-negotiable cornerstones of transformation and inclusive growth,

There are various roles that are played by the local and provincial government such as providing sanitation, education, health care and security services, together with other community improvement projects that impact the lives of communities. The provision of these services fosters development and local governments are effectively positioned to undertake such services better than other tiers of the government (Lawal & Oladunjoy, 2010)

Against this context, the author seeks to determine the degree to which political intervention undermines the efficacy of infrastructure program execution in the Free State. This can be due to instances of hiring someone without the necessary qualifications, competencies for a specific position solely to advance certain political interests or appointing a service provider with a lower score in the tendering process to obtain favor with the political elite.

There are widespread performance failures that are associated to infrastructure by Local governments in the Free State, one of the nine (9) provinces in the Republic of South Africa. Reddy (2016) and Nicolson (2021) document a deterioration in health care delivery, access roads, rural water supply, community participation and resistance among communities as evidence of local government failures. In response to these performance failures, the upper tiers of government have often interfered in the administration of this government as they have a responsibility to ensure the proper functioning of the latter. Thus, interference in local government affairs has reached an alarming rate as state governments control the finances and electoral processes of local and provincial governments such as the Free State

1.2 Study Context

The province of the Free State intends to invest more than R5 billion in infrastructure during the fiscal year 2023-2024. This will account for 58% of the entire budget and will be used to maintain provincial roadways and provide human settlement.

According to its Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), the MEC for finance in the Province, in the 2021/2022 municipal financial year the revised allocation for Municipal Infrastructure Grant (MIG) totaled R779.352 million. In the 2022/23 municipal financial year the allocated amount increased to R857.979 million through the Municipal Infrastructure Grant for implementation of infrastructure projects within the eighteen receiving municipalities

The allocation was disaggregated as follows:

a) R64.193 million will be received by the three Municipalities within the Xhariep District;
b) R242.873 million to the four municipalities within the Lejweleputswa District;
c) R374.630 million towards the six municipalities within Thabo Mofutsanyana District; and
d) R176.283 million allocated to four municipalities within Fezile Dabi District.

The research will largely focus on a variety of methods in which political involvement occurs, as well as how it negatively influences infrastructure development in the province of the Free State, especially:

a) Irregular service provider appointments

b) Irregular employment practices

c) Cost overruns and programme delays

d) Poor quality infrastructure

As it pertains to the projects and their lifecycles, the research shall focus on the problem of political interference as Chaponda & Allen, (2019) state, can operate at many stages of the project cycle, namely:

i. Several things can go wrong during the **Planning Stage**. First, initiatives can be incorporated into national and sectoral plans even when the justification is poor. These politically oriented initiatives are unlikely to be subjected to thorough project evaluation. The second issue is determining the best channel for supplying infrastructure.
ii. Political pressure might impact project selection during the Allocation Stage. Typically, there are much more initiatives requesting funding than there are available resources. In this instance, influential politicians may prioritize their "pet" projects ahead of economic considerations. The project may not be a poor concept in and of itself, but its timing may be problematic considering the available financing. Pushing such initiatives will drown out superior options with a greater impact on growth.
iii. When political pressure is applied to influence the selection of a bidder during the Implementation Stage, public procurement may be a source of corruption. This can result in collusion and tainted connections between the bidder and their supporters. A less evident type of interference would be transferring financing from one project to another. This can also cause project execution to be delayed, resulting in payment penalties or increased interest fees for the prolonged project.

In an article by Leona Kleynhans, Kleynhans (2018, September 25) of the Democratic Alliance (DA), one glaring negative effect of political interference is that several lucrative road contracts in the Free State province have been tarnished by interruptions and delays, owing to political interference and unattainable terms and conditions.

The Free State legislature's portfolio committee on infrastructure, according to the party, discovered this during oversight trips around the province. Extensive delays on the R261 million P44/1&2 Deneysville to Jim Fouché road restoration project, a 44-kilometer stretch of road that has been under construction since May 2016, prompted the communities of Deneysville and Oranjeville to file a petition with the Provincial legislature.

"The delays have brought the area's thriving tourism industry to a halt," claimed DA member of the provincial assembly Leona Kleynhans. "Occupational health and safety regulations at this project have been violated, resulting in the fatalities of six workers since the inception of the project." The R256 million rehabilitation project granted to Sedtrade in September 2017 for the 50km section of road between Vredefort and Viljoenskroon suffered many severe setbacks owing to labour disagreements and issues with borrow pits.

Similarly, the R168 million P33/2 Bothaville to Viljoenskroon project had been affected by community protests and disputes, while the R184 million repair of the 48.6km road from Wesselsbron to Hoopstad was delayed until January 2018 due to community unrest over the employment of labor and subcontractors. "It appears that strong political interference is prevalent across all road projects,"

Kleynahns (2018) writing on behalf of the DA further stated that, that while infrastructure projects in the Free State are welcome, it is unacceptable that they are experiencing constant delays, which have a detrimental impact on the local economy as well as significant cost increases.

1.3 Research Problem

The acceptable level of quality of infrastructural projects has long been a problem in South Africa. Significant resources are wasted on infrastructural projects because of inefficiency and often, non-existent quality management and monitoring procedures. Infrastructural projects go through different phases such as conceptual planning, feasibility study, design, procurement, construction, acceptance, operation, and maintenance in its life span; and one of the important factors that determines the success of such projects is quality. The effective management of infrastructural projects in all phases of its life cycle is linked to quality (Maqoko & Asmah-Andoh, 2019).

The Asbestos scandal that involves the former Premier of the Free State is one such instance, as the Presidency (2022), in a report from the Zondo Commisson, where years and R225 million later, the residents are still without proper roofing and stuck with the asbestos roofing that is constantly endangering their lives

Political interference is a big concern in the public sector, according to (Gqoji, Proches, & Green, 2016). A director in a specific government department that they interviewed stated unequivocally that public sector leadership must ensure that people are appointed based on their expertise, not on political affiliation, because if politics change and those people are removed, infrastructure implementation will suffer. This is consistent with Mukoma's (2003) contention that most public-sector choices are impacted more by what is happening in politics than by logical and reasonable reasoning.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 Primary question

Does political interference play a role in the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State?

1.4.2 Secondary questions

a. How does political interference influence the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State?
b. How does the quality of infrastructural projects affect service delivery in the Free State?

1.5 Research Objectives

1.5.1 Primary objective

To undertake an exploration into and ascertain whether/or not and to what extent does political interference play a role to the detriment of the quality of infrastructural projects that are undertaken in the Province of the Free State.

1.5.2 Secondary objectives

a. To explore how political interference influences the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State;
b. To examine how the quality of infrastructural projects affect service delivery in the Free State.

1.6 Research Justification

Masuku & Jili (2019) state that, local and provincial governments in South Africa experience varying levels of interference from politicians and state governments and there have been contending views on whether interference is desirable or not, considering the poor performance of these governments. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the relationship between political interference and infrastructural projects and quality of service delivery in the Free State. Very few studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between political interference and the quality of infrastructural projects in South Africa, particularly in the Free State.

This proposed study will be the first to empirically examine this relationship. Thus, the study hopes to contribute to knowledge and literature by highlighting the pervasiveness of political interference in the role of government in the Free State governments and examine how this interference affects service delivery in this region. With this knowledge, the researcher hopes that this proposed body of work will serve as a mouthpiece for governments in other parts of South Africa. The study will further help in academia as it will extend the knowledge base, not only in theoretical aspects but also contribute how society can be transformed by the findings of the study.

1.7 Limitations

This section explores the anticipated limitations of this proposed study. The limitations of any specific study refer to potential deficiencies that are typically beyond the control of the researcher and are directly related to the selected research design, statistical model limits, financing constraints, or other variables. In this sense, a constraint is an 'imposed' restriction over which the researcher has no influence. Therefore, in this study, the author has found certain issues that may prove to be limitations to his enquiry, there are, namely: A variety of methodological issues arise when using **Statistical Methods** to define and qualify corruption. Because data based on reported cases of corruption do not always accurately reflect the true extent of corruption, a variety of alternative approaches have been developed.

Expert evaluations and composite indicators are two examples of such techniques. Such approaches have both advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, it is believed that such methods can play an important role during the initial phase, when some baseline indicators are required. When public awareness of corruption issues grows, there is often a greater demand for objective and policy-relevant indicators. (UNODC, 2009).

1.7.1 Fear of participation and Disavowal

The study anticipates resistance from prospective participants to participate as their might fear being identified and how that identification might affect their political social standing. People are often afraid to talk about impact of politics of quality of infrastructure and service delivery.

The conduct of assessments to measure and "characterize" corruption represents an extremely complex task, due to methodological challenges and its political sensitivity. (Caiden & Caiden, 2020) Emphasize the idea of **Disavowal,** which occurs when few public institutions and officials confess to ongoing maladministration. They avoid disclosing anything. They refute the charges. Incriminating evidence is destroyed. They frighten potential whistle-blowers by accusing them of misconduct. They campaign against and outwit third-party inquiries. They claim ignorance, innocence, and perfect purity. They will go to any length to eliminate co-conspirators, fellow partners, witnesses, and anybody else who comes in their way or may tarnish their reputations. In a nutshell, their fury should be dreaded. People who get too close to the truth mysteriously vanish or are discovered dead (Perry 2018). In such circumstances, research angels wisely avoid treading

1.7.2 Limited access to data

Very few studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between political interference and the quality of infrastructural projects in South Africa, particularly in the Free State, ***as*** (Dudovskij, 2022) points out, a literature review is an important aspect of any research since it helps to determine the extent of previous work in the subject topic. The findings of the literature review are utilized as the basis for the researcher to build on in order to fulfill her study objectives. As a result, the researcher may face difficulties due to a paucity of study in this field.

1.8 Contribution to the body of knowledge

Political influence has always been argued to have a substantial impact on the quality of infrastructure delivery in various projects in the Free State. As a researcher investigating this topic, my contribution to the body of knowledge on the subject is to shed light on the negative impacts of political intervention and to provide alternative remedies to lessen its influence.

One major conclusion from my research is that political intervention frequently results in project delays, cost overruns, and lowered quality standards. This may be ascribed to politicians putting their personal interests ahead of the needs of the community, resulting in poor infrastructure outcomes.

Furthermore, my study includes interviews, case studies in which political involvement had a direct impact on project planning, procurement, and execution decisions. By exploring these real-world cases, I hope to give insights into how such interference might be discovered and efficiently addressed. Finally, my research adds vital insights to the continuing discussion about the negative effects of political interference on infrastructure delivery. By exposing the issues faced by political intervention and providing solutions, I aim to spark additional academic research and legislative improvements in this critical subject.

1.9 Operational Definitions

For ease of comprehension, this section outlines the key concepts that will be dominate this proposed study.

1.9.1 Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the collection of systems and facilities that serve as the basis for the economic growth of a country. It includes the services and facilities required for economic development, industrialisation, and improved lifestyles and flourishing businesses. Roads, railways, bridges, tunnels, water supply, sewage systems, electrical grids and telecommunications are examples of infrastructure. Such infrastructure facilities comprise interconnected systems that enable, boosts and sustain a society’s economy.

1.9.2 Infrastructural project

An infrastructure project is a proposed plan to build, maintain and upkeep infrastructural facilities, systems and services. Building new roads, constructing new power plants, maintaining sewage systems and providing systems for running drinking water to the public are all examples of infrastructure projects.

1.9.3 Political interference

Political interference refers to the influences exerted by the higher tier of the government or politicians on the administration of local governments. Although state governments have a supervisory role in ensuring the proper functioning of provincial and local governments, their influences have become overwhelming (Usang & Salim, 2016). Furthermore, political interference has had detrimental effects on service delivery particularly in the Free State.

1.9.4 Quality

Quality is defined as the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfill requirements. This connotes that quality is achieved whenever a client's needs, specified standards and project objectives are accomplished (Schlickman, 2003). This predicates that faulty construction takes place if the project's quality is not in conformity to the specified standards and specifications. As COGTA (2010) states, the degree of service offered is perhaps the most critical consideration. The word "service level" refers to how the user perceives the service. The proper service level is determined by cost (both for the client and the service provider) as well as community requirements and acceptance. Convenience may be as essential to a community as health, the environment, or economic concerns.

1.9.5 Quality monitoring

Quality monitoring refers to the implementation of systems that manage and monitor the construction and maintenance of infrastructural projects to help ensure quality and to prevent waste. Construction projects still experience non-conformance to quality requirements as well as cost and schedule overruns to the detriment of clients. As (Department of Water & Sanitation, 2020) states, quality monitoring involves procedures to verify that construction is in accordance with the Construction Drawings and Construction Specifications, meets the

appropriate regulatory requirements, and develops the necessary documentation for submittal to the regulatory authority.

1.10 Research Outline

The proposed dissertation will be organized according to the outline set out below:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter will serve as an introduction, providing context for the rest of the work. It will provide the significance and justification for the study by outlining the central questions and objectives that it seeks to address. In addition, a brief overview of the entire dissertation will be given to give the reader an idea of what to expect.

Chapter 2: Literature review & conceptual framework

Chapter two will provide an overview of existing literature relating to the topic of this study. A literature review is used to find aspects of a topic that have not yet been thoroughly investigated. They then conduct research to close the research gap. In so doing, the researcher will highlight the gap that this study seeks to fill. In addition, the chapter will provide a conceptual underpinning, which will assist the reader in comprehending the complexities that are associated with politics and quality of service delivery particularly in the construction industry.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

The research methodology that will be used throughout this proposed study will be detailed in this chapter. The procedures for gathering and analyzing the data will be dissected in great detail in this section. This proposed study will be both qualitative as well as qualitative in its approach and aims to take an interpretivist point of view as its theoretical foundation.

Qualitative aspect will entail primarily the use of questionnaires on a random sample of officials that are in executive public offices in government departments. These questionnaires will be open ended to allow participants to add in or motivate their initial responses. The Quantitative will consist of systematic interviews, measurements and observations, and records

or document reviews for information that is measurable. The research environment, the instruments used for data collection, the steps taking during the collection of data, and its subsequent analysis are all topics that will be covered in this chapter. In addition, specific information regarding rigor and ethical considerations will be outlined.

Chapter 4: Presentation of findings

The findings from the data gathered will be presented in this chapter. This data will be analyzed and discussed in relation to the key questions and objectives of this proposed study.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations concluding

As the concluding chapter of this proposed study, this chapter will reconcile all the data collected in this study, both from existing literature and from the empirical work. In so doing, it will recap the key theses that will emanate from this proposed study and thus, provide recommendations for further studies.

2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The section herein reviews the theoretical literature as well as the empirical literature with regards to the role that political interference may have on the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State. The author notes that there are gaps and a lack of empirical literature with regards to how political interference may hamper or even negatively affect the quality of infrastructure and to a great extent, how political interference positively and negatively affects prudent financial management as well the spend on infrastructural projects. Thematic literature will also be reviewed, with the central themes being that of political interference, infrastructure development, social and economic upliftment.

2.1.1 The Good

Politicians becoming involved in infrastructure projects isn't always a bad thing. According to (Ebehard, 2007), governments have typically accepted responsibility for regulating in sectors where there is evident market failure and/or when governments attempt to accomplish certain social, economic, and environmental goals. Network businesses, such as electricity transmission lines or gas and water pipelines, are natural monopolies; that is, average costs fall with increased output, making rival utilities uneconomic. Governments have complete regulatory authority over defining, monitoring, and enforcing maximum tariffs and minimum service standards. National governments establish suitable social and environmental objectives, yet governments are not always effective in monitoring and enforcing these requirements. Proper regulation of the economy, on the other hand, cannot be achieved merely by establishing national objectives, norms, and standards.

Economic regulation necessitates an awareness of each utilities' expenses and revenue requirements, including operational costs, assets, investment plans, and the needed rate of return that should at least cover the costs of capital. In other words, fixing common pricing unilaterally at the national or even local level might be dangerously inefficient. The application of proven economic regulatory procedures to specific utilities by professionally qualified employees is required for effective economic regulation. The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, Minister Patricia De Lille, highlighted how the Infrastructure Investment Plan

is central to the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) aimed at creating jobs and has begun reviving the construction industry in the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Budget Vote 2022/23. Following Cabinet's approval in 2020, Infrastructure South Africa (ISA) was established and has been hard at work to drive the Infrastructure Investment Plan by assisting with project blockages, unlocking funding to ensure and monitoring and reporting on the implementation priority projects. (www.Gov.za), (article: Minister Patricia de Lille: Public Works and Infrastructure Dept Budget Vote 2022/23 - 24 May 2022)

2.1.2 The Bad

One of the biggest causes of corruption in local government is political intervention in administrative appointments and procurement (Booysen, 2021). Politicians can have a direct impact on public procurement by meddling in the process to protect their personal or party interests. Influence, on the other hand, can be indirect. Officials in charge of public procurement are asked to prioritize the general public's welfare while adhering to established procedures. This is not to say that authorities are unconcerned with political interests. For example, authorities may foresee problems and avoid meddling by incorporating political interests into their decision-making process right once (Beke, 2018). Tensions between politicians and municipal administrations were found to be widespread in a comprehensive review of the new local government system conducted in 2009. This was due to insufficient separation of powers between political parties and councilors, and then between councilors and the municipal administration. Political factionalism and polarization were discovered to be factors in the degradation of municipal functioning. This was attributed to struggles over access to state resources, which had resulted in a 'culture of patronage and nepotism' and left the official municipal accountability system ineffective and unavailable to many residents' (De Visser & Steytler, 2010), as referenced by (Booysen, 2021).

Municipal administrators have verified the level of political meddling, citing several instances of political pressure in the employment of workers and the granting of contracts, often accompanied by threats to life and family members if they did not cooperate. The annual meeting of the Institute of Municipal Managers reported that disagreement between mayors, municipal managers, and speakers was an acknowledged element of their working circumstances (SALGA, 2017). According to Gumede (2013), one issue in South Africa is that nominations to key positions in the civil service are still frequently dependent on political ties. Because only they can be politically trusted, it appears that the same senior civil servants rotate

from one top job to another. As a result, top individuals are not usually hired to handle critical roles. Since Gumede (2013), South Hall (2012), and other scholars, as cited by Mngomezulu (2020), have pointed out that politicians have an effect on poor service delivery, this study looks into investigating political interference in the administration of service delivery in terms of infrastructure, how service delivery is affected, why politicians interfere in infrastructure programs, and the appointments of administrators.

2.1.3 The Ugly

Mngomezulu (2020) discovered that political interference in the administration of service delivery in uMlalazi local municipality of Kwazulu-Natal is a critical challenge to service delivery, resulting in poor service delivery to the citizens of this municipality, as well as other associated challenges that hinder municipal administrative to perform their duties in a manner that will promote effective and efficient standard of living of the communities in uMlalazi. There has been an increase in the number of violent service delivery demonstrations across the nation in recent years, with citizens disgruntled with the poor speed of delivery as well as corrupt practices that have become endemic in some towns (Mdlongwa, 2014), as referenced by (Mngomezulu, 2020). A study of the Mahikeng local municipality found that because of political interference, the municipality is riddled with political infighting which has negatively affected service delivery to the community to date (Horn & Raga, 2012, pp. 71-88) as referenced by (Chitimira et al., 2022).

Furthermore, accountability failures by municipal managers, mayors, internal audit units, audit committees, municipal public accounts committees and the municipal council are worsened by political interference in the management of the Mahikeng. Bringing it closer to home, political intervention has been permitted to disrupt the day-to-day activities of government to the degree that there are capacity constraints, such as a lack of competent and experienced workers; and money problems in the Free State (Boshoff, 2011). Political influence in municipal management has caused dissatisfaction among various officials and contributed to unsatisfactory service delivery (Boshoff, 2011).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Politics may be roughly described as the distribution of values in the form of policies formed by political parties and elected representatives, and administration as the supply of goods and services to the public via the application of policies set only through political procedures (Hauya, 2011). Political interference can take the form of behavior, act, or thought that prohibits public authorities from acting in a neutral, apolitical manner. It can refer to any type of politician engagement, political choices, or interests in (local) management. Political interference may also be defined as the influence of the political establishment on bureaucrats' personal and official actions, as well as the consequences of such decisions. Politicians' efforts should not infringe on the administration's "realm," which is headed by appointed technicians or administrators. (Hauya, 2011)

Research confirms that political interference is sometimes prompted by intentional self-serving political motivation in which an official receives a concealed benefit (Trautman, 2003)

There are several elements that characterize political influence in the public sector, and I contend that these have a detrimental impact on infrastructure development, as Skenjana, et al., (2022) states:

a) **Extortion: which** is the coercive provision of a benefit to a public official or another person or entity in return for behaving (or neglecting to act) in a certain manner. Abuse of power occurs when a public official inappropriately uses his or her given status to enrich another public official, person, or entity, or (using the vested authority) to prejudice against another person, official, or institution.
b) **Conflict of interest:** tends to involve a government employee acting or failing to act on an issue where the public official has an interest or another person or entity that has a relationship with the public official, such as when a public official people consider tenders for a contract and awards the tender to a company whose director is his/her partner.
c) **Favoritism:** the supply of services or resources based on a public official's personal affiliations. A Mayor, for example, may ensure that only people from his or her political organization are successful in tenders or are hired.

2.2.1 Political Influence

Sefara & Odeku (2021) Argue in a paper examining the impact and consequence of corrupt practices in the local government arena emanating from administrative, economic, and political attributes that there is pervasive corruption being allegedly committed at the local government domain primarily by officials from the local government as well as elected politicians in cooperation with the business community. Their article demonstrated that due to rampant corruption across all of these facets, the needy, poor, and indigents who are supposed to be beneficiaries of quality basic services were not able to, owing primarily to corrupt enterprises and activities of those charged with the responsibility of providing and rendering basic services. They discovered that almost all local governments were insolvent as a consequence of corruption and malfeasance, that there was no service delivery for the vast majority of time, and that even when they appeared to be, substandard services were being supplied.

As a result of the ineptitude and corruption of authorities charged with providing, the overall impact and consequence of all these vices is a growth in poverty, and the local people become angrier and more disadvantaged.

Political infighting and associated confrontations between the political and managerial components in South African local government have also harmed municipal service performance. It is unavoidable that the public sector in an African environment is political in character, and South Africa is no exception (Booysen 2012a; Cameron 2003; 2010; De Visser 2010), as mentioned by (Reddy, 2016) . On a more practical and realistic level, there have also been difficulties with the political-administrative relationship at the municipal level. South Africa, as a democratic state, has only been in existence for slightly more than two decades and is a young democracy (Ndudula, 2013), according to (Reddy, 2016).

The local sphere of government is especially significant because it represents local governance and local democracy, which are seen to be closest to the people, and, more crucially, it is at the front lines of basic service delivery (Reddy, 2016).

'"Politicisation" is defined as the replacement of political factors for performance standards when choosing, retention, promotion, awards, and punishing of service personnel' (Pieters & Pierre 2004). The inference is that political factors influence the municipal service, whether in appointments, dismissals, or even the performance of essential municipal services. As a result, in this setting, political concerns will be heavily shaped by the political philosophy of the prevailing political party at any given moment (Reddy, 2016).

Maybe the statement by Yunus Carrim, the then-Deputy Minister of Provincial and Local Administration, contextualized the debate and raised some concerns: The majority of the protests are about difficulties with service delivery. They are also about a variety of other municipal concerns, such as mismanagement, nepotism, fraud and corruption, and the inability of councilors and administrators to listen to constituents. Yet it is the passion of certain protesters, as well as the level of violence and devastation that they cause, that is most noticeable. That represents a far deeper alienation of people from our democracy. It implies a true sensation of marginalization and exclusion. The protests we are experiencing are not indicative of a healthy, expanding democracy (Reddy, 2016).

The election or appointment of municipal bureaucrats who are insufficiently competent and are based on political favoritism and nepotism is a limitation on local government's efficient and effective functioning. In this connection, Zybrands (2012:82; also see Tshishonga 2015) cites various examples of what has happened in terms of top local government appointments throughout the years, as described by (De Visser & Steytler, 2010). For example, X is a school principal who was fired for fraud and was appointed as a municipal manager; Y is a geography teacher who was appointed as a municipality's chief financial officer; and Z, who has no technical skills, was appointed as technical manager after the intervention of a provincial premier.

Local government has been the site of considerable political favoritism, with terrible effects, notably for service delivery. The politicization of local government runs counter to the constitution's goal of serving and protecting the citizens of the country. It encompasses practice and results in uneven or poor service delivery, as well as the exclusion of groups and individuals who are not party members. Politicization encourages corruption in local government, which has a negative impact on service delivery. According (Reddy, 2016).

The sluggish delivery of services to the public is mainly caused by politicians interfering with the tasks of public administration. Political intervention in the operation of municipalities is shown as a problem that hampers the efficacy and efficiency of the supply of services (Zarenda, 2013) as mentioned by (Masuku & Jili, 2019).Political interference undermines municipal officials' effectiveness inside municipalities because the municipal council hires. Municipal administrators are selected by the whole municipal council; they even suggest the name, which is determined by the political party that dominates the municipality (Masuku & Jili, 2019).

According to (Swanepoel 2019), cadre deployment has related to "partialism," "nepotism," "political interference," "favoritism," "cronyism," and "partisanship" from a moral standpoint.

By definition, cadre deployment necessitates moral judgment to determine if such behavior is acceptable or evil. (Mngomezulu, 2020) Discovered in his study on the consequences of political meddling in the uMlalazi municipality in Kwazulu-Natal that "parties, the skills of the employees will matter most, and political parties tend to mobilize for the recruitment of those who do not have the skills and expertise." He also observed from survey participants that the legislative and executive roles are already separated in terms of the Municipal Structures Act and Municipal Systems Act, but interference is not written or documented as a result accounting officers are in a huge quandary about how to deal with the issue of political interference given that they are employed by the very same politicians who are interfering in their duties.

2.2.2 Political Interference

The political interference leads to poor performance of many municipalities which course the poor service delivery to the communities. (Mngomezulu, 2020) Goes on to say that political intervention in service delivery administration in local municipalities and government institutions is a severe concern that leads to poor service delivery. Mlalazi also discovered that the opposition political parties that exist within the uMlalazi local municipality are concerned about political meddling in administering service delivery in the uMlalazi local municipality, particularly on tendering, recruitment of employees, and project allocating or distribution, whereby politicians of the municipality's ruling or majority party will force the municipal administration to squeeze the process so that is received by relatives or friends, They also influence the recruitment process, urging the administrations to recruit incompetent people, and projects are prioritized in wards headed by the majority party, resulting in poor service delivery in wards governed by opposing parties.

According to (De Visser & Steytler, 2010), there are too many complaints of fraud and corruption in municipalities, which hint to improper meddling by political officeholders. The practice of party office-bearers populating municipal administration is one expression of the merger of party and state at the local government level. In other words, a regional secretary or branch chairman would be appointed as a municipal administration official. The logic is simple: while senior municipal officials are often paid more than councilors, their seats are frequently more appealing than political posts.

A construction business with extensive political and administrative ties was given a huge housing project in eThekwini municipality with no set budget cap. Tender processes were

bypassed when the contract was awarded based on municipal management's directive that the contract, worth about R78 million, be awarded to the business. The contract was renewed by the city's housing director with no contract sum indicated. Failure to cap the contract and attaching the final bill to the amount of subsidies available to build dwellings in the region led in a vast number of modifications in the contract, with prices soaring to around R200 million (Dube 2013), as referenced by (Mantzaris & Pillay, 2014).

Political interference has been noted as a key issue, and the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs' (COGTA) final report (2009) cited a "congested political-/administrative interface" in local government as a source of instability and dysfunction. According to the report, some of the root causes of the problem are party deployment issues and political interference, a lack of distinction between municipal councils and administration, and poor political management (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2009, cited in Witness 2009) as cited by (Mantzaris & Pillay, 2014).

More than 60% of municipalities could not account for the income they received, according to the Auditor General's Report for 2006/2007 (released in 2007). This suggests that they were unable to demonstrate how and when financial transfers from the government occurred, as well as offer documentation of where the funds indicated in their financial statements originated. Fifty percent were unable to account for the majority of their expenditure, and so their financial statements could not be accepted (Auditor General's Report 2007, as cited by (Pretorius, 2017). The municipalities that performed the worst in this respect were in Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North-west, the Northern Cape, and the Free State, where up to 80% got disclaimers (Pretorius, 2017).

According to Rukema (2022), Infrastructure refers to physical building and facilities that is required for the function of the society, such as roads, railways, buildings, schools, power, and water supplies. In his research focus on how poor infrastructure affects social and economic development. According to Rukema (2022), Transportation, power, and communication are examples of physical infrastructure, whereas social infrastructure includes education, health, sanitation, water supply, and sewage disposal. Without all these facilities, South Africa would not attain the necessary growth for a thriving country. These infrastructures are critical to South Africa's economic growth, development, and social inclusion. Insufficient infrastructure is a significant impediment to economic growth and development, resulting in limited commerce with other nations. According to studies, South Africa has inadequate road, rail, and port infrastructure. Additionally, each year, poor infrastructure diminishes the country's economy.

Insufficient infrastructure has also led to inadequate service delivery in many places of South Africa; nevertheless, this issue must be thoroughly addressed in order to find a sustainable solution in South Africa's growth. Most developed countries have invested inadequate infrastructure; therefore, South Africa has to adopt more investment in infrastructure.

Infrastructure is regarded as the most important factor influencing economic growth and raising people's level of living. Access to infrastructure, it is thought, is critical for social development. Public infrastructure investment is required to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and social development, as well as to combat poverty, which affects the majority of South Africans. Good infrastructure leads to employment development, which raises many people's living standards and contributes to economic growth. Infrastructure investment will enable the growth of rural communities, ensuring that all citizens in the country live in comfortable conditions. Rural regions will contribute to economic growth and social development, which will benefit the country (Rukema, 2022).

2.2.3 Instances of Political Interference

Government officials are regarded to be the most active in corrupt operations as customers, contractors, and subcontractors. Contract granting for political advantage, nepotism and conflicts of interest, and meddling in the tender award process are the most common forms of corruption linked with government employees. Corruption is particularly frequent during the project's bid appraisal and tendering phases. A lack of transparency in contract awarding and the industry's operational environment are both facilitating factors (Rukema, 2022).

Political intervention appears to have become significant in South Africa in general, and notably in the Free State, from the beginning of the democratic era. Most notable are the cases of Vax Mayekiso, Free State MEC for Housing, who was fired for intervening officially in a dispute in which he had a personal business interest ("Lekota dismisses MEC who enriched himself", The Star, 19 May, 1995), as cited by (Lodge, 1997); and Ace Magashule, Free State MEC for Economics and Tourism, who was fired for illegal transfers and loans to companies (Lodge, 1997). Yet, in the instance of the Free State, despite the findings of an investigating committee that verified the allegations against one of the fired MECs, the premier, Patrick Lekota, was ousted from office due to his readiness to publicize the responsibility of his colleagues (Lodge, 1997).

It was reported just before the 2011 local government elections, and in the context of the Makhaza open-toilet scandal in the Western Cape, that the Moqhaka municipality in the Free State had constructed around 1,600 open toilets.

According to news sources, the mayor of the municipality directly benefitted from the building of the unenclosed toilets since the contract was granted to a firm she controlled with her husband (when she was a ward councilor). The deal was allegedly worth R1.6 million, but the construction was so inadequate that the municipality had to hire a second business to restore the toilets. They remained, however, unenclosed.

Sicelo Shiceka, the then Minister of Cooperative Governance, is said to have erected a new residence in his native hamlet of Ingquza Hill in the Eastern Cape. The neighborhood is one of the poorest in the country and has been the site of local community protests about poor service delivery. The construction of the Minister's residence was criticized in this regard. It was specifically claimed that municipal trucks brought water to the construction site while water was not given to the majority of the surrounding neighborhood. Furthermore, a tarred road costing R32 million was routed past the house whilst many of the nearby residents lacked even dirt roads to reach their villages. The house was also alleged to be among the first in the area to receive electricity (CASAC, 2011).

Muller (2020) Describes how two rival factions, the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality on one side and the Department of Water and Sanitation on the other, botched a project in 2016, when the Mangaung Metro Municipality hired Glad Africa, a consulting engineering and project management firm, to conduct a feasibility study of the pipeline. The municipality said in its integrated development plan that it sought to leverage finance through an arrangement with the national government. Meanwhile, Bloem Water, which is under the administration of the Department of Water, hired LTE Consulting to do a feasibility study on the same project for R17 459 000.

Mokonyane stated in her 2016 budget address, "The Department has already begun with feasibility studies working towards carrying water from Gariep Dam to Mangaung through the building of the Caledon Bloemfontein potable water delivery plan." No decision has been made as of yet. To keep the present scheme operating, the technical management continue to maintain and renovate it. In this case, the logic of the department's own planning work, along with the extremely limited cash available and the reality that the proposed pipeline would almost certainly quadruple the city's water costs, appear to have put a halt to another ambitious proposal to build an unneeded project. "The Gariep pipeline was started in 2004, and was then

priced at R2-billion," according to a parliamentary committee. Water and sanitation have to compete with the Metro.... Water and sanitation agreed to implement, but the cost had risen to R8 billion, and the Department did not have the funds."

The fact that two sides were battling for the advantages of its promotion may have aided inadvertently, as the initiative will only advance if all parties agree. Yet, this shows that political interests, rather than formal planning and procurement processes, determine decisions. The municipal budget transfers in Mpumalanga likewise occurred in the run-up to an election, at a time when the premier, who is now the Deputy President, was generally perceived to be strengthening his political position and preparing for higher office. "With public monies, particularly those allocated for education, Mr. Mabuza and his associates developed one of the most formidable political machines in the country, converting Mpumalanga... into the ANC's second-largest vote bloc," the New York Times stated directly. Like with so many high-level corruption investigations in South Africa, there are numerous tales but little hard proof. Nonetheless, there is a definite link between large-scale corruption and political involvement (Muller, 2020).

In Ekurhuleni, it was claimed that R205 million was spent without following procurement processes on purchasing water meters from Lesira-Teq, and that the meters delivered were faulty. Most importantly, they were excessively overvalued at over R1 800 apiece, when equivalent apartments were offered for as little as R1 025 in a disregarded bidding procedure. This procedure followed a pattern. Similar contracts were awarded in other towns where Slindokuhle Hadebe, Ekurhuleni's head of water, had previously worked. In several circumstances, it appeared that the municipalities did not require or utilize the meters.

Moreover, according to (Muller, 2020), in Mangaung, the corporation was accused of fraud by billing for meters that were not installed. The company's allegation that the meters were delivered and subsequently returned because they were not directed where to put them was difficult to refute because no workers were ready to supply information at the time. The city lost the case, as well as approximately R20 million. It's worth noting that Lesira-chairwoman, Teq's Baker Maseko, was head of strategy for the ANC's national election campaign in 1998-1999, and Hadebe served as vice chair of Edna Molewa's advisory council while she was minister of water affairs.

2.2.4 Closing remarks

This dissertation will investigate what the impact of political interference in infrastructure development in the Free State Province. It will seek to make an analysis of the impact of political interference on the infrastructure quality in the Free State province. Infrastructure outlook of the Free State has worsened with time, the quality of infrastructural projects in general is a factor of many aspects and in this study, the role of political interference and infrastructure quality will be the main objective under scrutiny.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

2.3.1 Introduction

The point of view that the paper seeks to determine is if there is a cause-effect link among the Free State's pervasive shortcomings in performance in its infrastructure programs due to political interference. As evidence of local government failures, Reddy (2016) and Nicolson (2021) highlight worsening in health care delivery, poor access roads, insufficient rural water supplies, lack of community engagement, and restiveness among communities. The paper shall make use of a theoretical framework in order to test the hypothesis that there is indeed a cause-effect relationship between political interference and poor infrastructure deliverance in the province.

2.3.2 What is Theory?

A theory is a statement that is generalized and consists of abstractions or ideas that claims, points out, or predicts correlations or connections between or among events, within the limitations of crucial confining hypotheses expressly stated by the theory. (Gabriel, 2008) as cited by (Mfuru, Sarwatt, & Kanire, 2018). The generalized argument combines ideas, "interrelated notions, descriptions, as well as arguments that interpret or forecast events and/or situations through the articulation of variables' relationships." (Glanz, 2008, p. 114) as cited by (Mfuru, Sarwatt, & Kanire, 2018). The ideas, terms, and topics form a rich and extensive body of knowledge in the subject - which is the theory.

As a result, a theory therefore, most often times appears through a lengthy study process that employs empirical data to create statements that have their basis on deductive and inductive data analysis. The findings from the study yield outcomes that converge on conclusions concerning relationships across time and on the basis of assumptions that are stated explicitly, which will then allow a researcher to develop the key premises from which the abstracted

theory is subsequently generalized. The theory that comes forth then makes provision for an intellectual, research-based foundation for comprehending, implementing, analyzing, and inventing novel approaches to investigating linkages and problem solving.

They assist researchers in considering what is relevant and vital in comprehending real-life circumstances as proposed by theory, as well as how our knowledge as well as our understanding of contexts. As stated by Jacard and Jacob (2010) and referenced by Mfuru, Sarwatt, & Kanire (2018), each theory, what it assumes, its tenets, what it may assert, propose, as well as predicts, constitutes an accepted frame of reference for researchers in a specific discipline as to what is understood to be true or a basis for searching for meaning and truth in our lived experiences, as well as a well-grounded guide for research within the field. As Glanz (2017) articulates, "Theory, research, and practice are part of a continuum for understanding the determinants of behaviors, testing strategies for change, and disseminating effective interventions". All three are intricately intertwined.

2.4 Research Objectives

2.4.1 Primary objective

To investigate if political interference plays a role in the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State.

2.4.2 Secondary objectives

c. To explore how political interference influences the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State;

d. To examine how the quality of infrastructural projects affect service delivery in the Free State.

2.4.3 Description of Variables

There are six variables to be analyzed and these are:

a) maladministration,
b) abuse of power,
c) improper conduct,
d) inexcusable delays and cost overruns
e) lack of service delivery
f) Improper enrichment, and improper benefit.

The purpose of this report was to analyze the impact of political interference on the quality of infrastructure projects in the Free State. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques will be employed, with data collected using diverse methods such as surveys, interviews, and examination of documents. Data will be obtained from a representative sample group, and the analysis of quantitative data will include correlation, regression, and arithmetic mean.

The study will employ both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to gather all empirical data. Rather, the study will use exploratory and descriptive methodologies to conduct in-depth research on the effect of political intervention in the quality of infrastructure projects in the Free State.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

When a political leader/s interfere with decisions that are made in the public administration arena, as it pertains to matters such as the planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting, as well as the distribution and use of public monies, this is referred to as political interference. Politics, as noted by Dixit and Pindyck (1994), play a role in the provision of roads, schools, and hospitals in underdeveloped nations. Among the several leadership issues confronting low-income democratic nations, particularly African countries, is political intervention in administrations (Wangwe, 2012), as cited by (Mfuru, Sarwatt, & Kanire, 2018).

A conceptual framework is a description of how a researcher understands the elements and/or variables involved in the study, as well as their interrelationships. A conceptual framework's objective is to describe the ideas under research using relevant literature (Rocco and Plakhotnik, 2009) as cited by (Luft, Jeong, Idsardi, & Gardner, 2022) and to clarify the assumed links between such concepts.

A hypothesis is a statement of the researcher’s expectation or prediction about relationship among study variables. The researcher question identifies the study concepts and asks how the concepts might be related a hypothesis is the predicted answer (Anupuma, 2018)

The Free State therefore, is comprised of the Provincial as well as the Local spheres of government which have been subject to political interference to the detriment of service delivery amongst others. This is against the principle and concept of the doctrine of separation of powers that is enshrined in the Constitution. The doctrine is as Magabe & Kola, (2021) postulate is based on several generally held principles in terms of which the government is separated into three branches, namely the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The

Constitution further states that, organs of state should run their own affairs and exercise powers given to them by the Constitution.

As a notion, the politicization of public service refers to government actions in which employment and advancement of persons in the service are susceptible to political will (Rouban 2012) (Madumo 2016). This means that political involvement determines who is appointed to which positions inside a government agency or state entity. The term politicization derives from the word politics, which Heywood (2007) defines as "the practice of applying the means by which people make, preserve, and amend the general rules under which they live." To politicize would thus suggest the act of applying politics in situations where it is unwarranted.

Rosenbloom (2008), as cited by Mfuru, Sarwatt, & Kanire (2018), stated that the responsibility of politicians in power is to develop policies, monitor the outcomes of those policies, and give additional guidance. They are not permitted to participate in the execution or operational aspects of policies, which are deemed to be the realm of bureaucrats/administration. However, it should be noted that social and political goals are dependent on all stakeholders working together without overlapping autonomies to provide effective human efforts for the country's economic development and prosperity.

2.5.1 Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a declaration of what the researcher expects or is a prediction regarding a connection between the variables which are under examination. A hypothesis is the projected response to the researcher query, which identifies the study topics and asks how the concepts could be connected (Anupuma, 2018).

A hypothesis is a forecast of what a research will discover; it is an empirical assertion that has been confirmed and is based on observation or experience. The research study findings allow the hypothesis to be tested to see if it is true or untrue.

The author's premise is thus that political interference has a detrimental impact on the quality of infrastructure projects in the Free State.

This hypothesis will be beneficial in conducting the study since it will assist with to:

a) The replication of research,
b) Drawing conclusions that are logical,
c) Determining how variables relate to each other,
d) Provision of a statement as determined from theory,

e) Choosing of facts, and
f) The direction of the research.

Hypothesis testing, which is a systematic technique for determining if the results of a research study that investigates a sample support a given hypothesis that applies to a population, will also be used.

2.5.2 Theoretical Framework Model

The first stage in developing a theoretical framework is to reflect on the phenomena under research as well as the assumptions that are associated with the phenomenon. The phenomena is associated with the investigated event. There are several options, such as student learning, instructional technique, or group organization. A researcher makes assumptions about how a phenomenon will be affected, impacted, transformed, or represented. The researcher's assumption(s) regarding the phenomenon finally align with a framework of theory.

2.5.3 The Classical Public Administration Theory (The Politic-Administration Dichotomy)

The Classical Administration Theory's Politic-Administration Dichotomy will help this study explain the role of political interference on the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State, and it will also help the researcher differentiate the duties of Administrators and politicians in accomplishing the study's aims and objectives. This theory will also aid the researcher in his analysis of facts to support the claims.

As Tahmasebi & Musavi (2011), the politics-administration dichotomy is regarded as one of the most important theoretical constructs in public administration.
Wilson (1887) classified public administration theory into three divisions. Classical Public Administration Theory, New Public Management Theory, and Postmodern Public Administration Theory are the three disciplines. All of the three aforementioned divisions focus on Public Administration from a variety of perspectives. These ideas describe how administrators may comprehend and carry out their responsibilities as public administrators. Woodrow Wilson and Max Weber are frequently connected with Classical Public Administration Theory. Woodrow Wilson is regarded as the "Father of Public Administration," having published "The Study of Administration" in 1887, in which he advocated that a

bureaucracy should be administered like a company. Wilson advocated for concepts such as merit-based promotions, professionalism, and a non-political system. Sympathy may lead to the demise of an administration; thus, bureaucracy should be pragmatic (Mngomezulu, 2020). Woodrow Wilson, who developed the politics-administration dichotomy, provided an essential component to this conventional paradigm of public administration. Wilson defines public administration as "the detailed and systematic execution of public law," and he believes that politics and administration should be kept separate because administration is outside the proper sphere of politics and administrative questions are not political questions. Woodrow Wilson was convinced that separating politics and administration would not only reduce arbitrary behavior and corruption in government, but would also have broader implications. Theoretically, the implementation of the contradiction appears to be quite straightforward, but in practice, there has not been a complete and obvious distinction between politics and administration.

The politics-administration dichotomy is viewed to have an influence on practitioners and define their leadership methods today. Early public administration philosophy held that policy administration should be independent from politics. "...administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics," Wilson contended. Administrative concerns are not political." While politics influences policy, administrations are accountable for its execution (Goodnow, 1900). According to Grant (2014), scientific management theory at the time gradually consolidated this difference into a dichotomy (Svara, 2001), as referenced by (Grant, 2014). Therefore, the Politics-Administration dichotomy will be the best framework model to benchmark against as well as the most relevant as it is a paradigm that argues for the normative connection between politicians and administrators in a democratic society and establishes the bounds of public administration. This applies to National, Provincial as well as the Local spheres of government.

Furthermore, the idea of separation of powers, as applied to the South African post-apartheid state, denotes a political system in which the three branches of government (legislature, executive, and judiciary) operate separately but under the jurisdiction of one another. However, the principle's application is not confined to the three branches of government, but is also relevant to all government entities, therefore the examination of its use in municipalities. The existence of the concept of separation of powers divides municipal internal structures into two domains with different powers in the essence of municipal government (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020). According to Magashoa (2006), as referenced by Vilakazi & Adetiba, (2020), the

establishment of the local government realm in South Africa supported the convention of powers through the use of the political and administrative dichotomy. The convention of powers captures the fact that administrative powers and functions are distinct from political powers and functions. This aids in the management of competing authorities and duties within the setting of municipal government.

According to Mehlape (2018), as referenced by Vilakazi & Adetiba, (2020) , the political and administrative dichotomy warns against the intermingling of authorities and functions, which can disrupt the growth and delivery speed of municipalities in many circumstances. As a result, this theory indicates that division of powers is necessary for the smooth functioning of the local government realm.

2.6 Research Instruments

To collect all of the empirical data, the study employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Rather, the study used both descriptive and exploratory methodologies to conduct in-depth research on the influence of political interference. The impact of political intervention on the quality of Free State infrastructure projects.

Convenient and purposeful sampling approaches will be used in several Provincial Government Departments as well as towns throughout the Free State.

The study will mostly rely on primary data obtained through questionnaires and interviews. Closed-ended questions with a response mode of 5 Likert points will be included in the questionnaire. The interview will be semi-structured and utilized to elicit further information from a small number of respondents. Thematic analysis will be used to analyze qualitative data, while correlation and regression analysis will be used to analyze quantitative data.

Table 1: The role of political interference on the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State

Constructs	Frequency	Means score	Sig. (p-value)	Interpretation
Maladministration				
Abuse of power				
Improper conduct				
Inexcusable delay and cost overruns				
Lack of service delivery				
Improper enrichment & Improper benefit				
Average Mean				
Interpretation of the Mean				
3.26-4.00	High interference			
2.51-3.25	Interference			
1.76-2.50	Low interference			
1.00-1.75	Not interference			

Respondents will be given questions (see table 1) with some variables with the aim of finding out the role of political interference on the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State. There are six variables to be analyzed and these are: maladministration, abuse of power, improper conduct, inexcusable delays, and lack of service delivery, improper enrichment, and improper benefit.

Table 2: Regression Analysis: The role of political interference on the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State

R Square =		F =				
Adj R Square =		Sig =				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)					
	Planning					
	Organization					
	Staffing					
	Poor Service Delivery					
	Allocation of Tenders					

	Reporting					
	Budgeting					
	Allocation and use of public funds					

Dependent Variable: The role of political interference on the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State

2.6.1 Interpretation of Results

Data from all respondents will be compared to give better understanding of the situation. Then, this comparison will be implemented to achieve the objectives of the study by evaluating them based on published information.

2.7 Conclusion

The relevance of theoretical and conceptual in research and discipline in general cannot be overstated or understated; yet, researchers must take both into account while doing research. Furthermore, both frameworks are the lifeline and bedrock of research; without them, research findings are weak and lack direction (Adom et al., 2018; Imenda, 2014) as referenced by (Chukwuere, 2021). Simultaneously, Ngulube (2018) as referenced by (Chukwuere, 2021), supports the views of other researchers by stating that conducting research is impossible without a theoretical and conceptual framework. Both aid in the development and support of empirical research problem statements (Hughes, Davis, & Imenda, 2019) as cited by (Chukwuere, 2021). Then, it can be argued that both frameworks are important in conducting research because they help to establish the discipline that scholars continue to question.

3 Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In typical usage, research is defined as the pursuit of knowledge. Research may also be defined as a scientific and methodical search for relevant information on a given topic. In truth, research is a scientific inquiry art. According to the Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, research is "a careful investigation or inquiry, especially through the search for new facts in any branch of knowledge." According to (Redman and Mory 1932) as referenced by (Jharotia, 2018), research is a "systematized effort to gain new knowledge."

Therefore, in the quest for knowledge there are plans to implement coherent and concise research methods that will build and structure his study. The text below will illustrate the building blocks of the research methods to be employed.

3.1.1 Definition

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them (Patel & Patel, 2019)

3.2 Research Approach

A mixed-methods design, as stated by Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri (2021), offers a number of advantages when traversing intricate studies because it integrates philosophical frameworks of both post-positivism and interpretivism (Fetters, 2016), interweaving qualitative and quantitative data in such a way that research issues are meaningfully explained. It also provides a logical foundation, methodological flexibility, and a comprehensive comprehension of smaller cases (Maxwell, 2016). In other words, the use of mixed-methods research allows researchers to answer study questions with adequate depth and breadth Enosh, Tzafrir, & Stolovy, (2014) and aids in generalizing the results and consequences of the studied topics to the whole community.

The quantitative technique enables a researcher to collect data from a large number of individuals, increasing the likelihood that the findings may be generalized to a larger population. The qualitative method, on the other hand, gives a better knowledge of the problem

under investigation while honouring the participants' opinions. In other words, quantitative data add breadth to the investigation, and qualitative data add depth. Furthermore, quantitative data may be triangulated with qualitative results and vice versa. As a qualitative research approach, triangulation is defined as the use of numerous methodologies or data sources to generate a thorough knowledge of a study topic or to verify validity via the convergence of information from many sources (Carter et al., 2014).

A mixed-methods approach, then, provides the highest opportunity of addressing research questions by integrating two sets of strengths while adjusting for each method's deficiencies (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) as cited by (Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri, 2021). As a result, "mixed-method research designs are becoming increasingly relevant to addressing impact research questions" (Saville, 2012, p. 7) as referenced by (Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri, 2021)

3.2.1 The main rationales

The benefits proposed for undertaking a mixed methods study as Doyle , Brady, & Bryne, (2009) state and which the author feels will be relevant in his enquiry are as follows:

a) **Triangulation:** this method increases the validity of a study by investigating correlation between quantitative and qualitative data.
b) **Comprehensiveness:** Using a variety of research methodologies offers a more thorough and comprehensive view of the researched phenomena.
c) **Offsetting weaknesses and providing stronger inferences:** many authors argue that using a mixed methods approach may enable the limitations of every method to be neutralized while attributes are built upon, resulting in stronger more precise and reliable inferences (Bryman, 2006; Creswell et al., 2003) as cited by (Doyle , Brady, & Bryne, 2009)
d) **Answering diverse research questions:** According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) as referenced Doyle , Brady, & Bryne, (2009), mixed methods research helps answer research questions that quantitative or qualitative techniques alone cannot answer and gives a larger repertory of instruments to achieve the purposes and objectives of a study. Furthermore, Sale et al. (2002) demonstrates how, due to the complexity of phenomena and the breadth of viewpoints necessary, a mix of research methodologies is beneficial.
e) **Findings explanation:** In mixed methods studies, one research methodology can be used to explain data collected by another research approach. This is especially

beneficial when unexpected or surprising discoveries occur. For example, quantitative survey findings can be followed up on and explained by conducting interviews with a sample of individuals questioned to have a better understanding of the results obtained.

f) **Data visualization:** Using a qualitative research technique to visualize quantitative findings can help create a more complete picture of the phenomena under examination. This is compared to ‘putting meat’ on the bones of dry quantitative data.
g) **Development and testing of hypotheses:** A qualitative phase of a study may be conducted to produce hypotheses to be tested in a subsequent quantitative phase.
h) **Instrument creation and testing:** qualitative research may create items for a questionnaire to be utilized in a quantitative phase of a study.

3.3 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm is the framework into which the theories and practices of your discipline fit to create the research plan. This foundation guides all areas of a research plan, including the aim of the study, research question, instruments or measurements used, and analysis methods.

The **Pragmatic paradigm** will be best to employ for this study as it is not only philosophically flexible, but also more inclined toward the transformative paradigm which as (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) state, contain an action agenda for reform "that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live.

Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy or reality. Pragmatist researchers focus on the 'what' and 'how' of the research problem (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

3.4 Research Design

When developing mixed methods designs, as Roomaney & Coetzee (2018) , three elements are often taken into account. These include timing, which is the sequence, priority which is taking preference for one approach over another, as well as synthesis and that is how the data will be merged. The temporal link between the qualitative and quantitative components is referred to as timing which is the sequence. Studies are either parallel or concurrent or sequential. The relevance of the qualitative and quantitative strands within the mixed methods design is referred to as priority.

Some studies may prioritise the qualitative and quantitative strand equally, whereas other studies may give preference to one strand over the other. Synthesis has to do with the way in which the findings of the qualitative and quantitative components are combined. Researchers use the findings of one component to explain the other component, to explore the findings of the other component or for triangulation purposes. These three factors are essential in the decision-making process when planning mixed methods research and are key features that distinguish between the different research designs on offer, (Dawadi, Shrestha, & Giri, 2021) as cited by (Roomaney & Coetzee, 2018).

The convergent/parallel research design will be employed for the purpose of this inquiry, and as stated by Roomaney & Coetzee (2018), both the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study will run concurrently. Furthermore, because both occur concurrently, they occur at the same phase of study. As a result, both strands are given equal weight. Each strand operates autonomously until the data analysis is completed. Only at this stage are the findings combined and analysed together.

For the Qualitative component, surveys and interviews will be utilized to investigate the impact of political influence in infrastructure projects in the Free State. The quantitative data, which will determine the Rand amount and the communities and projects affected, will be analysed quantitatively, and the qualitative data from the interviews will be analysed qualitatively. The findings will then be merged to illustrate situations where outcomes converge or diverge.

The **Narrative Thematic Analysis Process** to be used will consist of five stages:

a) Data organization and preparation,
b) Establishing a broad idea of the information
c) The process of coding
d) Data categories or issues as well as,
e) Data interpretation.

3.5 Data Collection

a) Population and Sample

To estimate the population parameter, a sample statistic will be used. The sample size is an important component of any empirical investigation in which the purpose is to draw conclusions about a population from a sample. The Stratified Sampling will be

employed, which according to Onwuegbuzie & Collins, (2007) is divided into sub-sections comprising groups that are relatively homogeneous with respect to one or more characteristics and a random sample from each stratum is selected.

b) Sampling Design

As Onwuegbuzie & Collins, (2007) state, mixed methods research, sampling schemes must be chosen for both the qualitative and quantitative components of the study. Therefore, sampling typically is much more complex in mixed methods studies than in monomethod studies. A multilevel relationship sampling design will be employed and it involves the use of two or more sets of samples that are extracted from different levels of the study.

c) Research Instruments & Data Collection Procedures

Interview: The investigators prepare a set of questions and ask them in a serial vise to the respondents. There are different types of interview like personal, group, mock and telephone interview. It is fast procedure. One can get extra information which is related to the topic. But it is costly. Some respondents may try to hide some answers.

Participants will be interviewed individually during two separate interview sessions. The objective of the first interview will be to complete the interview guide while the second will allow for clarification and follow-up questions. Interviewing a participant more than once is optimal because it provides an opportunity to reflect upon the first interview and as Butina (2013) states, to "build upon and explore the participants' responses" in the second interview, thereby providing richer and thicker descriptions.

The organization and preparation of the data stage will begin with transcribing audio tapes immediately or shortly after the interview. While transcribing the tapes from the interviews, any rudimentary patterns or themes were noted in the transcript margins.

Questionnaire: The method of collecting data in vast geographical areas is done through Questionnaire method. Hence questionnaires are mailed to the research areas and they are distributed among the respondents. It is a time saving and economical method but the main drawback is that the answers given by the respondents are not accurate. This will be useful as some of the participants are in varying areas of the

Province, Secondary data can be collected through books, published articles as well as the internet

3.6 Analysis of Data

Soon after the collection of data, the process of analysing the collected data will start. The raw data will be tuned. There are many things used for analysis like coding, tabulation, editing and statistical analysis.

a) Pretesting the Research Instrument

Pretesting is widely considered as an excellent strategy for boosting validity in qualitative data gathering techniques and findings interpretation. Pretesting, as defined by Hurst, et al., (2015), is imitating the formal data collecting procedure on a small scale in order to detect practical issues with data collection devices, sessions, and methodology.

b) Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is a sort of data analysis that helps to explain, illustrate, or summarize data points in a constructive way so that patterns might develop that satisfy all of the data's conditions.

c) Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity analysis measures reliability which is determined by its consistency or repeatability. High reliability is achieved when the measure produces the same findings when repeated on the same sample. A test is legitimate if it measures just what it is designed to measure.

d) Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis is appropriate in investigating connections between variables, correlation and multiple linear regression are used. This analysis will be used to draw conclusions and make predictions based on his findings.

e) Chi-Square Analysis

To investigate the association between categorical variables, chi-square analysis will be utilized. This analysis will be utilized to look into the relationship between political involvement and the impact on infrastructure projects in the Free State.

3.7 Hypothesis-testing

Following the above-mentioned data analysis, there will be a position to test the hypotheses, if any, had been previously made. Do the facts support the theories or are they in contradiction to them. This is the standard question that will be addressed by testing hypotheses.

3.7.1 Generalisations and interpretation

If a hypothesis is tested and supported multiple times, one may be able to get to generalisation which will enable the researcher to create a theory. The process of interpretation frequently generates new questions, which may lead to more study which is what the researcher is hoping for.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study will follow stringent ethics conduct which will comprise of the following aspects:

a) Permission to Conduct the Study

Before beginning the study, approval from the appropriate authorities will be requested. The researcher will ensure that the study is carried out in compliance with all applicable legislation and standards. By following these ethical principles, the study will preserve the confidence of the participants, the public, and the academic community, and the results will be legitimate, trustworthy, and beneficial to society.

b) Informed Consent

Informed consent is critical to making sure that those participating understand the objectives of the research, the potential hazards and advantages of participation, and their ability to withdraw at any time. Before completing the permission form, participants will be given enough information regarding the study and will have a chance to ask questions and explain any concerns. These obligations will be detailed in an accompanying informed consent letter.

c) Voluntary Participation

Participants will have the option to participate in the study voluntarily. They will not be bullied or pressured into participating, and they will be notified that they have the freedom to withdraw from the research at any moment without penalty. The researcher

will have the participants sign a permission form to indicate their agreement to participate voluntarily.

d) **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Participants' privacy will be protected by confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher will guarantee that the information provided by participants is kept secret and that no personally identifying information is gathered. The obtained data will be safely stored in password-protected electronic files, with access to the data restricted himself. Respondents will be kept anonymous, and they will not be required to submit their names, residences, or identifying numbers.

e) **Data Management**

Data management is critical for maintaining the security and integrity of acquired data. The researcher will follow all data protection requirements and guarantee that the information gathered is solely utilized for the purposes of the study. The obtained data will be securely preserved, and the research team will verify that there are no breaches of privacy during the study.

3.9 Conclusion

The research methodology employed will be one that lends credibility to study and produces scientifically sound results. It also be a clear guide that will assist the researcher in stay on track, making the procedure seamless, effective as well as manageable.

4. Findings

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the presentation of study findings. The responses to each of the questions are presented using the abovementioned strata.

The chapter will also present an analysis of the findings and also contrast them against primarily, the theoretical framework of the Public Administration Theory of Politics – Administration Dichotomy. Also, to a lesser extent, the Theory of Constraints

Theoretical Frameworks

The Classical Administration Theory's Politics-Administration Dichotomy helped this study explain the role of political interference on the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State, and it will also help the researcher differentiate the duties of Administrators and politicians in accomplishing the study's aims and objectives. This theory will also aid the researcher in his analysis of facts to support the claims.

The Classification and Number of Participants

Presentation of study findings

The presentation of study findings was based on three questions designed to answer the primary research question as highlighted in chapter one.

Role in the Municipality	**Number of Participants**
Project Management Unit Manager	1
Acting Municipal Manager	1
Head of Department - Infrastructure	1
Acting General Manager - Roads	1
Supply Chain Management practitioner	1
	1
Total	6
Response Rate	100%

Research Questions

Primary question

What factors influence the quality of infrastructural delivery of projects at local Government in the Free State?

Question 1

a. **How does political interference influence the quality of infrastructural delivery of projects at Local Government in the Free State?**

Respondent 1: Political interference in all aspects, not only on maladministration but also in the delivery of services. During… There are timeframes that the projects need to be implemented, that political interference impact negatively a lot. Because some of the administrative processes that need to happen are being delayed because of political interests, I will say political interests. That will definitely lead to maladministration because you will have the budget, you will have the projects that have been identified, the project plan on how the projects will be implemented. But once, because politics always influence implementation of plans by the administrators.

That I have experienced a lot because it causes delays in implementing the projects. And also, you will find some of the deviations are happening because of some political influence. Because once you are more especially at a senior level of Local Government, you are appointed. Automatically you are then appointed by politicians who have an interest, different, particular, peculiar interests. It might be good interests and bad interests but that, you have to always maneuver it.

How you maneuver to implement your projects despite those political interferences. In some areas or some municipalities, you will find that administrators are held. They cannot be able to move because of trying to please the political office bearers instead of doing what they are supposed to do legally or based on the prescripts.

Respondent 2: Yes, I would unfortunately have to answer that one as a yes in terms of maladministration. I will say that because for us, especially technical people, we make decisions based on sound or engineering backgrounds. Now, in most cases… Or let me not say most cases but, regularly so, you would find that what we perhaps decide on or think that is the correct way of doing things. From an engineering point of view, we will then get to be overridden, if I may put it that way. I will make an example maybe. In terms of implementation of projects because I mean, that I'm in that field now. You will find a situation, as an example, whereby we have got two projects. Let us say the one project is to upgrade wastewater treatment works and the other one is to upgrade the line that is feeding the wastewater treatment

works. Logic and engineering will tell you that we first start with upgrading the bulk side of it, which is the wastewater treatment works itself, instead of doing the line. Because there will be no use of upgrading a line whereby you will not be able to treat whatever you will be transporting with that wastewater.

So, we have to start with the wastewater. But you find in a situation sometimes you will have a situation whereby a councillor or a political figure maybe would say, "No, you know what, the wastewater plant is located somewhere very far from town. Us having to do that project will not buy us any votes," as an example. So, we would have a project that would be happening in front of people's eyes, for the nation to see and to actually, you know, gain the confidence of the community. So, in such instances, we would then be forced in a way to say, you know what, let us rather try and push and do the outflow line, instead of the wastewater, which now then obviously will cause a problem with the overloading of the wastewater that is not upgraded. So, it is such situations that I am saying unfortunately, political interference does play a role.

Respondent 3: Yes, I would say yes again, because in most cases, there is a Cadre deployment on the site whereby you are supposed to have a professional team. Only people who are supposed to know what is supposed to happen on the project, but now you have two, you drive two vehicles. It is political this side that we have to babysit and we have to make sure that you do not cross lines. This side, we have people they need service delivery, irrespective of who do you serve. Now, you will find that you cannot perform in a straight line. The road is always wavy because you are reporting on somebody that does not have the qualifications. So now you have, for a meeting that is supposed to take twenty minutes, you will have four hours trying to explain the basics first and it always the problem now and again. So, the capacity will forever be an issue in municipalities.

Respondent 4: Yes, well having worked for local government at a municipal level for over fifteen years, I think I can safely say that there is that political interference, which is then contributing to maladministration and if I may give a few examples, you would find those mostly in infrastructure projects, capital infrastructure projects, where now, you know, certain politicians would then, instead of playing an oversight role, they would be interfering and issuing instructions to the contractor, and obviously the officials. So, in my view, that is

political interference, and it has led to maladministration, because in most instances, the instructions issued by the politicians, you know, they are not technical, they do not have the technical background, and they do have then dire implications, which are most often picked up by Auditor General, because they are way out of line in terms of what is expected from project implementation.

Respondent 5: Okay. Yes. I would say yes. Yes, in the sense that when we are talking about political interference, we would be talking about, say, example. Council. People who sit in council are our board councillors, our normal councillors, our political heads, being the executive mayor, the speaker, and all of that. So, I will make a practical example that happened whilst we were at IPTN, because in terms of section 116 of the MFMA, there is an intervention that is required from council. So, if interference in the sense that you are not taking kindly to advice that you are given in terms of what you need to do, then that poses a problem and interference also in our space, because we needed to follow that route in terms of extending the contracts, as an example. The second example is in terms of also under IPTN, in terms of us implementing projects that we had. We had already identified and ways of accommodating the community at large in a specific ward where we were implementing and that process we had done before even going on tender, out on tender. So, we were proactive in terms of trying to avert or avoid any delays as well as any commotion that might be. So, we did that, but when we were supposed to implement then, the process was taken aback by, I would say, politicians as well as senior management, mainly in that space. So, that is basically maladministration in the sense that our projects were then delayed. Our projects, when we were supposed to appoint service providers, the team had already had a panel which was easy for us to appoint there and there to start the projects, but that was done later on, which means that it is going to affect our spending and then the performance of the service providers, yes.

Well, it is, I would not necessarily say that I specifically have full details of who was awarded a tender unfavourably, that he was not deserving, but the result thereof will clearly show in the implementation of a specific project, but I will make an example of a word that was awarded. I would say there was a project that was awarded to, for IPTN, for the bus depot. Surfacing or something. So, if you look at the contractor in question, the contractor in question, there are strong points. It is basically refurbishment, water refurbishment, I would say a bit of what you call that, sewer refurbishment, right? And that required someone that has more experience in,

although it is CE, but it required someone who had more experience in road, I would say road resurfacing and all of that. So, sometimes we tend to, and that emanates from what? The wrong requirements that are required in terms of functionality from supply chain. To say that we want you to have a, how do you call it, the technical person, it is a project engineer or something. That has experience on roads, but the contractor does not have experience. You would say that you went through because of that person.

Respondent 6: To start with, let us take for instance our own municipality Mangaung. It always had its own issues, financially we have never been a very strong municipality, but we were self-sustainable for the time that I came in and for the time that I was outside and because of political interference, a certain accounting officer was removed, and that person was removed, because the person was refusing to budge to political pressure. The person was seen to be going with a specific group of politicians and people, so people went out to go look for reasons to get rid of the person, people started ... many reasons were being used, but what I can tell you is that some of those were not correct that were being used, so much so the intent was one to get rid of her or rather to get rid of the person and to put in there a specific person whom it was a well-thought thing from some wing of politics to say if we place our own person there, we will be able to run everything by ourselves.

Now immediately when the new person comes, you will be shocked that, you may not be ... that a person who's given a letter to be acting in that position for three months will dismantle that office. From the strategy General Manager, the Directors down to the lowest level of a messenger bringing in new people. The question is, those fully employed people there in their positions what are you doing with them. We are going to send them elsewhere whether they where they feel disgruntled but they may not know how to raise these things. You come, you sit with your new team, nothing goes right but because it is a team that is protected, everything goes wrong.

Question 2.

How does institutional incapacity influence the quality of infrastructure delivery of Projects at Local Government level in the Free State?

Respondent 1: What I can say is that it is simple. If you have got administrative incapacity, because what we will say is that there is no capacity to manoeuvre or to implement certain projects within the municipality. That simply means if that delivery is not happening, it is because there is not proper quarterly or monthly monitoring and evaluation of the projects that needs to be implemented. Why? Because if you have the system in place of monitoring and evaluation and then you have administrative capacity to implement projects, therefore political interference it can come, but it cannot be sustained to an extent that it can derail the implementation of the projects within the timeframes and the scope that needs to be implemented.

Respondent 2: I would agree to it, once again. I am myself, currently, right now, I mean, in such a situation. As I have indicated earlier in the interview is that I am appointed as a Project Management Manager, which is a middle level kind of management. I report to a Senior Manager, who obviously has to be a technical person, and will have or should have a minimum qualification of a B-Tech. Or yes, anything above that and certain years of experience. In my situation, we have learnt basically that it is not really the case. So, which puts a lot of pressure now onto the legal management. Now, I will give you an example of that to say that not having the right person is causing a problem. I like when I answer your question, I give some sort of a short scenario so that you can get the picture as to why I am saying that.

I am saying that because there are instances whereby management, it actually is like that, middle management does not partake or sit in council meetings. It is the Senior Managers who are supposed to sit there.

Now if you do not have a Senior Manager who sits in a council meeting who is correctly qualified, who will be able to reason with this council… Or rather let me put it this way, who will be able to advise council correctly, it becomes quite a big challenge. We were in a situation whereby at some point we had to do a road in Smithfield. The alignment of the road and where the road should go and pass. It is actually, I think we do know, that it is just a situation whereby we just sit and we thumb suck it. We are governed by a lot of Acts. The Spluma Act that we

need to look at so that we do a road, it must serve a purpose or at least benefit a certain community.

Now we have got a situation whereby it was done in that fashion, agreed upon, approved. Designs were done and we were at the verge of going out on tender for appointment of a contractor. A report went to council just to notify council to say, this is what has been happening, and there was an issue in council to say that no, why are we doing that specific road? Which is a valid question.

There is nothing funny about council having to ask why we had to do that specific one. And by the way, it was a council approved project any way. So now, the answer that was supposed to be given in such a situation is to say, council look, this is what the Act is saying, this is the Act that is governing us to say why we are having to do it this way. We provide access to schools, provide access to communities, to clinics, hence these roads must take priority to the other ones.

But that failed to happen like that. So, it led to funds having to be wasted. I am saying wasted because all the work that was done in terms of having to do designs, all of that, had to be thrown in the trash. Let me put it that way. And we needed to start and do new designs and all of that. But I believe that is because of not having the correct qualified people in council in order to advise council correctly.

Respondent 3: Yes, I would say yes again, because in most cases, there is a Cadre deployment on the site whereby you are supposed to have a professional team. Only people who are supposed to know what is supposed to happen on the project, but now you have two, you drive two vehicles. It is political this side that we have to babysit and we have to make sure that you do not cross lines. This side, we have people they need service delivery, irrespective of who do you serve. Now, you will find that you cannot perform in a straight line. The road is always wavy because you are reporting on somebody that does not have the qualifications. So now you have, for a meeting that is supposed to take twenty minutes, you will have four hours trying to explain the basics first and it always the problem now and again. So, the capacity will forever be an issue in municipalities.

If you have got administrative incapacity, because what we will say is that there is no capacity to manoeuvre or to implement certain projects within the municipality. That simply means if that delivery is not happening, it is because there is not proper quarterly or monthly monitoring and evaluation of the projects that needs to be implemented. Why? Because if you have the

system in place of monitoring and evaluation and then you have administrative capacity to implement projects, therefore political interference it can come, but it cannot be sustained to an extent that it can derail the implementation of the projects within the timeframes and the scope that needs to be implemented.

Respondent 4: I think I would lean more towards yes, because there are instances where now you would find that, there are certain individuals that are then deployed within, you know, technical space, without them having proper qualifications, or even, you know, their technical know-how. So, in that instance, that is where you would then find, you know, incapacity then playing, you know, a role in terms of misleading or leading to maladministration, because decision-taking by people who are not technical, often has got dire consequences, as well. Yes.

Respondent 5: Yes. I would say that there is a gap in our municipality. It will forever be there, I believe. Hopefully, that will change. I think I will go back to what I have just said now, that us as juniors, I would call us juniors at IPTN, or even I will extend it further to also supply chain, we would make plans in having service providers, contractors ready to implement projects, projects that would come in the next financial year. Which means that we are at, we could be able to appoint now, let us say now it is December, as an example. We can appoint in May for a project that will start in July, yes. To ensure that we have something, what we call that establishment of a project, but when the money comes in, you already have cash flow projections. Yes. So, there is a gap between senior managers, junior managers, senior managers, and the understanding of our political heads. Yes. So that, there is a gap. That basically leads to what we call lack of institutional capacity, because capacity is not flowing across everyone.

Respondent 6: You see, you have instances and you have implementation of infrastructure projects that require professionals to implement them. Professionals in the form of project managers, in the form of engineers that you need from internal. If we are going to build a road you cannot make me a project manager when I do not have an experience, and knowledge of the implementation of road infrastructure. If we are going to be providing a community with water or sewer, I must have an understanding of those, I should be able to look as well and not rely only on the consultants to say we are doing the right thing. We are building community centres, the one in Thaba 'Nchu for different purposes.

You go, you find the consultants to run this thing. You go there you want an overall project manager you do not know the difference between project managers and lead consultants. You

go there you say you want a project manager to manage this. You ask somebody to provide you with this person who is going to be a project manager. You do not understand what these people would be doing. You go out there whilst the project is going on, you start to complain of the figures that you are being charged by the person that you appointed as a project manager.

Now, the cost of a lead consultant, because he is still working there but he also will manage the other works of others and deal with their issue of their certificates and the likes, he will charge you a percentage of that certificate compared to you saying I want a project management team, they are going to be doing that. Now, we have that situation where the municipality has paid a lot of money where it was not supposed to be paid, but why did that happen? It happened because somebody lacked capacity, did not know what to do.

That led to what, benefitting the service providers. There were delays in the same project because they were not monitoring and evaluating the progress. Things were just let to be as they are. Ultimately, because of, also, the lack of capacity we never tied the appointment of consultants to the term of implementation of the project

Question 3.

How does quality monitoring & Evaluation techniques influence the quality of infrastructure delivery at local government level in the Free State?

Respondent 1: In our case, in my work environment really, I do not have an issue per se with the monitoring and evaluation part of infrastructure or infrastructure project delivery. Well yes we are forced by the MFMA basically to do monitoring of services providers whether it is a consultant or a contractor, on a monthly basis. That is in accordance to the MFMA

Respondent 2: monitoring and evaluation as a form, one of the issues that we look into when implementing the project. If things have started being wrong through the appointment of people who do not have capacity, therefore automatically you cannot expect the same people to have the capacity or to deliberately deal with the issue of monitoring and evaluating projects that are implemented because that will expose some of the shenanigans that have been happening in the projects. Some are being deliberately appointed in those positions because of their lack of capacity to understand what projects and what are the issues that needs to happen for the projects to be completed or to be done within the budget, within the timeframe. And it also gives the issue of performance. If you appoint someone that you know that person does not qualify for that position, sometimes you do not look for him to perform well. Because how

do you look for someone to perform well that you know that person does not qualify for that position?

Respondent 3: As a funny thing, what you are saying, it surprised me. There was a recent audit that was done. Okay, there was a recent audit that has been on the news recently where most municipalities were clean, of which, on my understanding, I believe those books were cooked, because remember, most projects are delayed because of this political interference and extensions that are not needed just for certain people to get money and it hammers the service delivery and it is also hammering the service providers. In fact, everyone that is on that chain, it is always a problem to finish the project. So, in terms of monitoring and evaluation, it is always difficult. You cannot get what we expected within the required time.

If one passes, the other one will fail. I can elaborate more. If we manage to get it within time, the value for money will be more. We will spend more than we are supposed to. Or if everything was started, was extended, the quality would not be the same. So, there is always where we will always be lacking, but it always feels good if you manage to get both. Of which, in terms of ratio, in municipalities, that is not the case.

Respondent 4: Look, for one, if one is not technically orientated, you would not even know what to monitor, or even how to evaluate, because you do not have an idea of what is happening. So, in terms of monitoring and evaluation by people who are not, or lacking that capacity, I do not think it is a possible task for them to achieve, because first and foremost, they do not know what to expect and what to monitor, but in an instance where now you find a technical person failing to do monitoring and evaluation, that may not necessarily lead to maladministration, but we all know that without proper supervision, you know, contractors are contractors, as well as consultants are consultants, you know, those are businesses driven by profit, you know, so they would tend to take any form of advantage if there is not proper monitoring in place

Respondent 5: Yes. How I would phrase that, I did mention that there is performance and compliance at supply chain. There is also contract management, right, at corporate services, because you sign a contract that has conditions. You also indicate if there are special conditions in that contract before, in a big document. They needed to be taken care of and then you have the implementer. In this case, I will use engineering services, let us say roads. The three departments, as well as finance, expenditure, they need to work together to ensure that we are paying people when there is progress on site. So that is not happening and that goes back again to supply chain. When we went to your very first point where you were talking about my

experience in terms of appointee. We will have, we will not have a report on say maybe there will be five contractors that are currently busy on site. To say currently these guys are busy on site, they are at 80% of the project that they are dealing with. Are there no hiccups? If we appoint them, they still have twelve months to go. Will that not affect the current project that we will be, I mean, maybe possibly recommending them for? So that is the whole link between the three departments that I spoke about. Supply chain, their performance and compliance department, engineering services, project management, as well as contract management. So that is lacking. So, it really hampers what you call monitoring and evaluation and the performance of the city in terms of monitoring.

Respondent 6: based on the experience that we have, we have realised that the monitoring is key in respect of delivery. You may have the best service provider, but if you do not monitor, there is a lot that may go wrong if either in terms of the infrastructure, it may go wrong financially it may be both, so that is key, yes. If the institution is not having a proper structure to deal with issues of evaluation, and this is that we are talking now the evaluation of the performance of the employees, especially at managerial level. If you do not have it, you cannot be able to monitor if these people are doing the right work or not and where does it all start, it all starts with when I am going to be offering you a contract. Am I going to put into that contract as chief factors to your function, the actuals of what is related to your work which I know that if you perform, this municipality will be going at a higher level or am I going to be put in an evaluation document that just says, "You have been doing this and this and this and this."

2. Analysis and Interpretation of study findings

This chapter presents an examination and interpretation of the study findings gathered from participants. It endeavours to determine if the findings support important arguments derived from the literature study and legislative rules offered in all chapters of this research. It also aims to determine if the research problem, which is closely connected to the research questions outlined in section 1.4 of this study, has been properly addressed. However, the appropriate analysis and interpretation of research data is reviewed against factors impacting the quality of infrastructure delivery of projects in local municipalities in the Free State.

The factors influencing the quality of infrastructure delivery in local government include:

d) Political interference

e) Institutional incapacity

f) Quality monitoring and the various evaluation techniques applied.

Also, as previously stated, the Classical Administration Theory's Politics-Administration Dichotomy was used to help this study explain the role of political interference on the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State, and it will also assist the researcher in distinguishing the duties of administrators and politicians in achieving the study's goals and objectives. This theory will also help the researcher analyse the data to support his assertions.

The Theory of Constraints also is being employed as a theory to contrast the findings against the problem statement and question. This is done by identifying the limiting factor or the drawback which is the constraint that is a stumbling block to achieving a goal, which in this case is addressing and then systematically improving that constraint until it is no longer the limiting factor.

How do municipal employees view political interference influence the quality of infrastructural delivery of projects at Local Government in the Free State?

All respondents held the same view that Political Interference does have a negative impact on the infrastructural development and quality thereof in their municipality/municipalities. Political interference rears its ugly head in the awarding of tenders and also in the appointment of administrative officials. One respondent stated that, because theirs is primarily an engineering activity, with political interference decisions are made for political gains which take utter disregard for engineering aspect. Respondents also held the view that this interference has led to maladministration.

The participants also noted that the biggest challenge with irregular appointment of administrators is more on the senior management level.

The study discovered a challenge in managing the relationship between political office-bearers and public servants in such a way that the public service cannot be misused for narrow party interests, but rather continues to be a mechanism of delivering services for the citizenry as a whole, but according to the policy direction of the ruling party. The respondents, all of whom are office-bearers and appointed public officials, agree that the “realms” of public servant and political office-bearer intersect.

Political office bearers are under tremendous pressure to deploy appropriate and adequate resources in pursuit of their political programmes. In relation to human resources, this means that they will demonstrate a keen interest in the quality and calibre of individuals appointed to what they consider key strategic areas. With incessant and unrelenting pressure from the electorate to accelerate service delivery, the temptation by elected office bearers to personally assert control over the public service becomes even more irresistible.

Section 151(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) (the Constitution, 1996) grants a municipal council legislative and administrative power. It also envisions a collaborative effort amongst elected councillors and professional administrative personnel in local government. However, the Politics-Administrative dichotomy of purely classical political management has been a difficult task, particularly in municipal government.

In terms of cost overruns, the respondents saw political interference as also playing a significant role. One respondent highlighted on a number of occasions how during the course of implementation of the projects, political and administrative heads, or officials would sharply disagree sometimes in terms of how the project should be implemented and who is supposed to benefit.

The Politics-Administration Theory is therefore very outright that political and administrative spheres in municipalities should be collaborative as this is viewed as being a positive in the sphere of local government. This is necessary for the appropriate functioning of municipalities which are directed to meeting South African local government objectives (Carlan, 2013) as cited by (Vilakazi & Adetiba, 2020).

In the case of this enquiry, it is clear as Beyers (2016) as cited by Vilakazi & Adetiba (2020) that the separation of powers by applying the Politics and Administrative Dichotomy has been victimized by the political strength that ever so often hovers above administrative affairs. This is due to the fact that the political sphere possesses much power in terms of who to appoint in key positions of the municipality and this has a tendency to disturb the proper functioning of the administrative sphere. Issues such as corruption, cadre deployment and poor performance are a serious threat to the local government wellbeing. It is readily apparent that political meddling in day-to-day administrative activities incapacitates administration, and that the responsibilities of politicians and administrators are not clearly defined.

This as this paper would argue, is that, as far as the Theory of Constraints is also concerned, Political interference, Institutional incapacity, Quality monitoring and the various evaluation

techniques applied are one of the major constraints in delivering quality infrastructure within municipalities in the Free State province.

What of Institutional Incapacity?

The respondents held the view that there is a deep correlation between institutional incapacity and the influence it has in the quality of infrastructure delivery of Projects at Local Government level in the Free State. One respondent makes an example of a Senior Manager who sits in a council meeting who is not adequately qualified, and as such will not be able to reason with this council. The senior manager also will not be able to advise council correctly, it becomes quite a big challenge.

Generally, the Local government sphere has been unable to address people' needs due to intrinsic inability to plan for development, with major shortcomings ascribed to a lack of competence within local governments.

In typifying this according to the Constraints Theory, this is also a very serious drawback to the effective functioning and improved quality of infrastructure of municipalities in the Free State

One respondent stated that," it is evident that some of those appointees be it as administrators or service provider. Have not been able to offer much beyond political loyalty, due to the lack of skills and capacity". One respondent exclaimed that "on average 2 to 3 out of 5 infrastructure projects, the contractor appointed does not have the necessary requirements. "There is a reason why there is functionality criteria in a document when you appoint someone and if someone does not meet that criterion, however you are instructed to do so and continue with the appointment".

Also, this incapacity is a characteristic of local government challenges in the Free State which is against the Politic-Administrative Theory, there is political interference in Local Government, where municipal administrators have confirmed the level of political meddling, citing several instances of political pressure in worker hiring and contract awarding, which was frequently accompanied by threats to life and family members if they did not cooperate. The annual gathering of the Institute of Municipal Managers noted that dispute among mayors, municipal managers, and speakers was an accepted aspect of their working conditions (SALGA, 2017).

As far the Constraints Theory is concerned, institutional incapacity causes one of the major bottlenecks in providing quality infrastructure in the Free State local government sphere.

Also, the interviewees exclaimed that Institutional incapacity has often led to cost overruns when it comes to project implementations. Due to this ther projects had to be abandoned altogether. This takes place when un/underqualified senior managers give bad advice to council on big infrastructural projects.

In the same Municipality in question, a participant in another study complained that in Supply Chain Department, they are short staffed in their section. They we are supposed to have at least eight officials, which is the minimum, but they are only four so its 50%. It means that they lack the ability unable to segregate duties in terms of who is a checking, the incoming work for compliance who's checking the budget, who's checking the procurement plan, whether user directory is procuring is in line with the procurement plan or not.

What is the standard of Monitoring and Evaluation?

Most of the respondents held the view that there is no full implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation system in Local government. Only one of the respondents felt that in their department, which is contracts management, they have, and they implement the monitoring and evaluation system. As a result, the municipality in question cannot determine the efficacy of the systems in place. The lack of monitoring and evaluation has led to unjustified delays in some projects due to the fact that the monitoring and evaluating of progress is not performed.

Also, the respondents held that, there is a lack of integration between monitoring and evaluation and the process chain of monitoring and evaluation. This they opined has led to problems of as one respondent exclaimed, that even if they have the best contractors in their projects and are of the view that the fact that they in the municipality lack effective monitoring and evaluation measures is negatively affecting the implementation of quality projects.

The lack of proper monitoring and evaluation is linked to someone in administration or in political offices also improperly benefiting.

One of the major problems with that the respondents acknowledged, was with contractors that are politically connected. This is due to the fact that as one respondent stated, when they fail

to perform as per their contractual obligations, the contractor is most often times untouchable to the project team and/or consultants. Another respondent lamented how it is not unusual to find a strategic person moves from that level, coming down to the level of implementation where he or she should not be.

One respondent “the lack of monitoring and evaluation of a project that is at hand, on site, right, and without taking it, without penalties being taken when they are supposed to be taken. It basically means that you are improperly empowering the contractor”.

This is an indication of a broader problem as SALGA (2017) states that, it is most notable in the Free State province that impact evaluations have not been properly analysed and as such is unable to identify the efficiency and efficacy of the M&E system in Local Government and, as a result, unable to comprehend why there are still service delivery protests.

The Auditor General of South Africa (2019) also, criticizes this on the basis of inadequate planning, insufficient processes, a lack of credible reporting and accountability, and insufficient monitoring by all stakeholders involved in the SCM process. In the Consolidated General Report on Local Government audit outcomes (2018-19), the AGSA states that there is a lack of oversight over public money, which leads to weak accountability and, as a result, experience with mishandling of public money, of which fiscal maladministration and ethical transgression cannot be excluded.

How does the quality of infrastructural projects affect service delivery in the Free State?

The main constraint in Local Government, is the fact that politicians and administrators tamper with each other's jobs and obligations, resulting in conflict and discontent among municipal employees. The ideal arrangement would be for politicians to refrain from meddling with administrative work while administrative workers faithfully carried out the local council's policy decisions political-administrative interface issues. This has resulted in administrative inefficiency and poor service delivery.

Based on the literature study and the interviews conducted at selected municipalities in the Free State Province, Pretorious (2017) in her study resolved that poor interaction between the political and administrative institutions directly and indirectly influences the quality-of-service provision at municipalities which, in many cases, leads to service delivery protests.

Therefore, I would postulate that this lack of political and administrative interaction furthermore leads to bad governance. This bad governance then results in the delivery of

services to the public being constrained and some to being of no value add to the communities. Bad governance is also evidenced by the cost overruns and wastage of tax payer funds, as one respondent highlighted a number of occasions where he had witnessed projects going over the budgeted amounts, and some even being abandoned whilst still in progress and not completed. In support of the posture of the study, an audit report of the Auditor General amongst various municipalities gave damning reports of maladministration, political interference as well as incapacity that had a detrimental effect on the provision of infrastructure services to the communities affected.

In its report, the Auditor General, AG (2022) notes that a water pipeline between the three towns of Boshof, Dealesville, and Hertzogville that comprise Tokologo, which includes their reservoirs, have not been completed for several years, notwithstanding the fact that were contractors paid approximately R17.5 million - 59% of the total contract value of R29.6 million. Although there was no evidence of financial loss, the delays caused a water crisis. The municipality used boreholes to provide water to the impacted populations.

Various shortcomings in the consultant appointment procedure are widespread (AG, 2022). These included a failure to do a proper needs or gap analysis before appointing consultants, the absence of long-term strategies to lessen reliance on consultants, consultants creating a dependency structure, and consultants' work not being appropriately integrated into the financial accounts. In several cases, hiring experts provided minimal advantage. For example, consultants working on Masilonyana's financial statements may have no or limited access to supporting paperwork.

Matjhabeng (Free State) spent an estimated R7.2 million from April 2017 to June 2019 for the building of an attenuation (flood-protection) dam on the Nyakallong drainage system after it was deemed complete. However, a site inspection revealed that the attenuation dam had not been built, resulting in overpayments for the project. The municipal management was unable to offer sufficient and suitable documentation of steps taken upon notification of the MI. The steps taken were likewise deemed insufficient. The case has since been referred to the Hawks.

After conducting additional audits on the infrastructure and payment profiles of Masilonyana, Maluti-A-Phofung, and Tokologo municipalities. The AG ruled that only Masilonyana had a strategy and budget for routine infrastructure asset maintenance, but Maluti-A-Phofung and Tokologo did not have one. The municipalities were not carrying out their service delivery responsibilities**.**

Conclusion

Non-compliance with the concept of separation of powers in municipalities is connected with poor service delivery and low-quality infrastructure. According to Twala (2014), dishonest politicians and unqualified people are the root causes of poor service delivery in South African municipalities, resulting in a weak local government. Service delivery is dependent on both the political and administrative structures to be successful. As a result, when municipal services fail to improve people's living conditions, political and administrative systems must take responsibility.

The acceptable level of quality of infrastructural projects has long been a problem in South Africa. Significant resources are wasted on infrastructural projects because of inefficiency and often, non-existent quality management and monitoring procedures (Gqoji, Proches, & Green, 2016).

Infrastructural projects undergo multiple phases during their life cycle, including conceptual planning, feasibility assessments, design, procurement, constructing, adoption, execution, and maintenance; one of the most significant variables determining the accomplishment of a project is quality. Therefore. Quality is associated with the proper management of infrastructure projects throughout their entire cycle.

The infrastructural challenges of the local government sector is only but a microcosm of the situation that is facing the majority of municipalities in South Africa.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the previous chapters, draws conclusions, and offers recommendations. Chapter summaries emphasize the important themes covered in each chapter. Conclusions are offered in a clear and explicit way, including a leadership performance approach. It also presents strategic suggestions based on the study findings and relevant literature analysis, emphasizing the most important issues that the Free State should examine so that they may resolve the challenges that they face.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter one served as an introduction and provided the context for the rest of the work. It illustrated the significance and justification for the study by outlining the central questions and objectives that the study to address. In addition, a brief overview of the entire dissertation was given to give the reader an idea of what to expect.

Chapter two provided a synopsis of existing literature in relation to the topic of the enquiry. In addition, the chapter provided a conceptual underpinning, with the view to assisting the reader in comprehending the complexities that are associated with politics and quality of service delivery particularly in the construction industry.

Chapter three introduced research methodology that was used throughout the study. The procedures for gathering and analyzing the data were dissected in great detail in this section. This utilized both the qualitative as well as quantitative tools of study in its approach with the aims of adopting an interpretivist point of view as its theoretical foundation.

The research environment, the instruments used for data collection, the steps that were adopted during the collection of data, as well as subsequent analysis are all topics that were overlaid in this chapter. In addition, specific information regarding rigor and ethical considerations was outlined.

Chapter four presented the findings from the data gathered. Additionally, this data was analyzed and discussed in relation to the key questions and objectives of the research enquiry.

Chapter Five, the concluding chapter of this proposed study, this chapter reconciled all the data collected in this study, both from existing literature and from the empirical work. In so doing, recaps the key theses that have emanated from this study and as such, provided recommendations for further studies.

Conclusions

This study investigated the impact of political interference on the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State**.**

Through the integration of the literature review across this manuscript and views of the participants in all categories of research questions, the following research questions were answered.

c. How does political interference influence the quality of infrastructural projects in the Free State?

d. How does the quality of infrastructural projects affect service delivery in the Free State?

Recommendations

A thoughtful look and enquiry into issues that affect quality infrastructure provisioning it the Free State revealed shortcomings in the manner in which politicians and administrators handle their different roles respectively. The dissertation revealed how on many occasions' politicians, driven by various interests, overstep their boundaries as provided by legislation and find themselves meddling in administrative functions that they have no reason being in.

The following recommendations are therefore suggested as a means to address these shortcomings and challenges:

Recommendation one, Section 53 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 needs to be thoroughly observed as it sets forth the tasks and obligations of politicians, political structures, and municipal managers. Furthermore, it seeks to explain the roles of the municipal council, municipal administration, and local communities. Section 56 of the Act further provides legislative rules governing the selection of senior administrators. It emphasizes the responsibilities of the various parties and highlights key activities that should be implemented to enhance the democratic contract at the local level. Specifically, the Act addresses the issue of political involvement in the civil service. More specifically, it relates to 'cadre deployment'. The Act prohibits municipal and senior managers from holding prominent positions in regional, provincial, or national party organizations.

Two, both politicians and administrators need to realise that he objective of politics is to give political counsel to the executive. On the opposite end of the spectrum, municipal administration is a tool utilized for transforming defined policies into real results via the use of specialized expertise and skills.

Thirdly, it is vital to establish definitive boundaries of authority for a municipality's political and administrative leadership between the council of the municipality - which is responsible for the approval of policies, the executive mayor of the municipality - responsible for providing leadership politically, as well the municipal manager – the chief administrator in a municipality.

Fourth, council members and administrators need to have an in-depth comprehension of the many functions played in local government. The administration must recognize the complicated political situations in which municipal councils work, and councillors must understand that preparing information and providing competent advice on a variety of issues is a highly complex process.

Five, monitoring and evaluation by council has to be enhanced. Council monitoring of the local executives is vital. Numerous municipalities use committee arrangements that hinder scrutiny. Portfolio committees are essential for effective participation among councillors, municipal executives, and administration.

Recommended topics and areas for further academic research

Political influence in the implementation of infrastructure projects in the Free State has been a persistent problem, raising questions about the quality and efficiency of these projects. As a result, more academic study is needed to better understand this complicated phenomenon and its influence on infrastructure development in the province.

One suggested area for future study is an examination of the precise mechanisms by which political intervention influences decision-making processes and execution tactics in infrastructure projects. Understanding these dynamics can help to reduce the detrimental consequences of political influence on project delivery.

Further study should look into how stakeholders, such as government officials, contractors, and community members, perpetuate or mitigate political meddling in infrastructure projects. Understanding their viewpoints and motives allows academics to discover chances to improve governance systems and accountability mechanisms.

To summarize, there is an urgent need for academic research to improve our knowledge of how political intervention affects the quality of infrastructure delivery in the Free State. Researchers may provide significant insights to influence policy choices targeted at improving infrastructure development procedures and results in the region by investigating these suggested themes and areas for additional study.

Final Conclusions

The absence of separation of powers in the council is a significant contributor to these difficulties in municipalities. Political party institutions need to strike a new balance between effective political supervision and micromanagement. Municipalities must invest much-needed efforts to developing appropriate terms of reference for their office bearers, institutions, and senior leadership.

Senior management officials are active in the political arena where the political office holder functions. The managerial level is the real area in which the politics-administrative interface operates, since these functions put the two participating role actors into direct touch, resulting in the political administrative interface (Pastwa, 2005) as cited by (Pretorious, 2017). Unfortunately, in practice, these top managers are frequently appointed based on their political activities. The objective is to appoint individuals who are politically impartial. According to one interviewee, appointments are made based on the ANC list, which ranks potential successful applicants for top jobs in order of priority. According to the respondent, as a result, appointments are frequently made without regard for candidates' credentials or skills. Managers should keep in mind that they have been entrusted to serve the whole community, not just specific sectors of it.

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Annexure (a): Interview Questions



Interview Questions

a) Position Occupied

Are you in a senior, middle or Low Management position in your organization?

b) Experience

How many years have you worked in the public sector and how many years in your current position?

c) Maladministration,

Would you say that political interference has led to maladministration in your workplace? And if yes, may you kindly elaborate

d) Abuse of power

Have you witnessed or come across abuse of power as a result of political interference, in awarding of tenders or improper appointments? If so, kindly give instances of such

e) Improper conduct

Has according the best of your knowledge, any improper conduct or misconduct that was as a result of political interference in your workplace? And give examples that you can think of

f) Inexcusable delays and cost overruns

Has political interference or maybe infighting, improper appointments of service providers led to delays in projects or resulted in cost overruns? Kindly elaborate on instances of such

g) Lack of service delivery

Was service delivery negatively affected or even stalled due to political interference? Kindly elaborate

h) Improper enrichment, and improper benefit

Has political interference led to certain individuals being improperly enriched, either a politician or service provider?

Annexure (b): Letter requesting Permission in Mangaung metropolitan Municipality



University of the Witwatersrand,
Business School

Acting Municipal Manager
Ms. Ngaka Dumasile
Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality
Corner Magraaf Street & Nelson Mandela Drive

24 May 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct research at Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

My name is Athenkosi Godongwana

I am studying for a Master's degree in Business Administration in the Business School at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking permission to do research at Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality.

I am conducting research on the impact of political interference on the quality of infrastructure project in the Free State. The research focuses on political interference in the Free State province and the Quality of infrastructure in the Free State and I have chosen Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality because it is one of the Biggest Municipalities in the Province and with the biggest Infrastructure Budget.

I will invite individuals from your organization to participate in this study. Specifically, senior, middle and lower managers in the infrastructure implementing divisions of Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality. If they agree, they will be asked to answer questionnaires and be interviewed. This will take an hour of their time and the data collection will take place on the premises and during work hours, participant's responses will be audio recorded.

Participants will be asked to give their written or verbal consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the organization) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. The results will be communicated in the dissertation

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study. All research data will be preserved anonymously for reuse by other researchers, and will be destroyed after a period of 5 years.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organization. The permission letter should be on your organization's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Athenkosi Godongwana

Athenkosi Godongwana
072 284 7092
0609869P@students.wits.ac.za

Prof. Lumkile Mondi
011 717 8262
Lumkile.Mondi@wits.ac.za

Annexure (c): Participation Information Sheet

Participation information sheet

Dear Sir/Madam
My name is Athenkosi Godongwana. I am a Masters student at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My Supervisor is Prof. Lumkile Mondi. I am conducting a research study about Political interference. The study is: The impact of Political interference on the quality of infrastructure project in the Free State.
I am inviting you to take part in an interview and answer a questionnaire. If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study will last about an hour. The research activity will take place at Bloemfontein at 15h00. With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview. This data will be stored in a safety box and will be deleted after 5 years. Only the researcher will have access to the data.

During the research activity, I will need to ask for some personal information about you, including working experience and the position you hold.
The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you. With your permission, other researchers may use the data collected from this research study, but your name and any personal information will not be used or passed on.
If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study anytime. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decide to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in the research study. Your travel/data costs to attend the interview will be reimbursed to a maximum of R 100.

The risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday life/ some of the questions asked may make you feel sad or upset. If this happens, I will stop the interview and continue another time.
This research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you.
If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact to contact the University Human Research Ethics committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0)11 7171408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours Sincerely
Athenkosi Godongwana

Researcher: Athenkosi Godongwana, 0609869p@students.wits.ac.za, 072 284 7092
Supervisor: Prof. Lumkile Mondi, Lumkile.Mondi@wits.ac.za

Annexure (d): Research Interview consent Form

Research interview Consent Form

Title of Project: **The Impact of Political Interference on the Quality of Infrastructure Projects in the Free State.**
Name of Researcher: Athenkosi Godongwana

I, ……. Agree to participate in this research Project.
I agree to the following:
(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about. **YES NO**

I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study **YES NO**

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded **YES NO**

I agree that quotations from my Interview may be used by the researcher in their. **YES NO**
Research Project.

I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in **YES NO**
Interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but
My name and any personal information will not be used or passed on.

Name of Participant …… …Signature of Participant…….
Date …….

Name of researcher: …… …Signature of researcher:…….
Date …….

Annexure (e): Research Questionnaire

1. Are there instances of maladministration in your workplace due to political Interference?

   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Unaware
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

2. Is there abuse of power related to political interference

   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Unaware
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

3. Do you feel that in your workplace political interference has led to misconduct?

   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Unaware
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

4.

5. Are you aware of any cost overruns or project delays that have been due to political Interference?

    a) Strongly agree
    b) Agree
    c) Unaware
    d) Disagree
    e) Strongly disagree

6. Has in your department, political interference led to service delivery being negatively affected?

    a) Strongly agree
    b) Agree
    c) Unaware
    d) Disagree
    e) Strongly disagree

7. Have you come across improper enrichment as a result of political interference

    a) Strongly agree
    b) Agree
    c) Unaware
    d) Disagree
    e) Strongly disagree