

https://dspace.org/

African Parliaments: Evidence systems for Governance and Development (vol 1)

CLEAR-AA

2021-06-01
Sun Press
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/40735

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS

Evidence systems for governance and development

1

Linda Khumalo
Candice Morkel
Caitlin Blaser Mapitsa
Hermine Engel
Aisha Jore Ali

Editors

SUN PRESS

African Parliaments: Evidence Systems for Governance and Development

Published by African Sun Media from Stellenbosch under the SUN PReSS imprint

All rights reserved

Copyright © 2021 African Sun Media and the editors

This publication was subjected to an independent double-blind peer evaluation by the publisher.

The editors and the publisher have made every effort to obtain permission for and acknowledge the use of copyrighted material. Refer all enquiries to the publisher.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any electronic, photographic or mechanical means, including photocopying and recording on record, tape or laser disk, on microfilm, via the Internet, by e-mail, or by any other information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission by the publisher.

Views reflected in this publication are not necessarily those of the publisher.

First edition 2021

ISBN 978-1-991201-44-7
ISBN 978-1-991201-45-4 (e-book)
https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991201454

Set in Avenir Light 10/15
Cover design, typesetting and production by African Sun Media

SUN PReSS is an imprint of African Sun Media. Scholarly, professional and reference works are published under this imprint in print and electronic formats.

This publication can be ordered from:
orders@africansunmedia.co.za
Takealot: bit.ly/2monsfl
Google Books: bit.ly/2k1Uilm
africansunmedia.store.it.si (e-books)
Amazon Kindle: amzn.to/2ktL.pkL
JSTOR: https://bit.ly/3udc057

Visit africansunmedia.co.za for more information.

Contributing Authors vii
List of Tables and Figures xiii
List of Acronyms xiv
Acknowledgements xvii
Foreword xix
Dugan Fraser

Introduction to the Volume 1
Linda S. Khumalo

CHAPTER 1 Context of Evaluative Institutions and Governance 11
Candice Morkel and Gavin Bradshaw

CHAPTER 2 An Analytical Framework for Systematic Evidence Use in African Parliaments 41
Babette Rabie and Tania Ajam

CHAPTER 3 A Systems Thinking Perspective on Evidence Use in Parliaments 79
Steven Masvaure, Angelita Kiwekete, Hermine Engel and Boikanyo Moloto

CHAPTER 4 Parliaments in National Evaluation Systems: Current Practice, Future Potential 103
Takunda Chirau, Ian Goldman, Josephine Watera, Abdoulaye Gounou, Damase Sossou and Elias Segla

CHAPTER 5 The Politics of Evidence in Parliamentary Oversight 131
Linda S. Khumalo, Kieron Crawley, Donald Manyala and Ahmed Hassan

CHAPTER 6 Parliaments Looking Forward: Technology, Fourth Industrial Revolution and Complex Problems 161
Aisha Jore Ali, Kobena T. Hanson and Angelita Kiwekete

CHAPTER 7 Parliamentary Evidence Use in Representation 183
Abraham Ibn Zackaria, Jacqueline Thomas, Ressida Begg and Caitlin Blaser Mapitsa

7.1 Notes from Practice: Representation through Constituency Offices in the Parliament of Zambia 200
Japheth Chanda

CONTENTS

7.2 Notes from Practice: Parliamentary Constituency Offices to Strengthen Representation in South Africa 204
Ressida Begg and Jacqueline Thomas

CHAPTER 8 Challenges and Opportunities to Citizen Engagement in Africa 209
Nagnouma Nanou Kone and Caitlin Blaser Mapitsa

8.1 Notes from Practice: The Use of Citizen Evidence in Parliamentary Oversight in Ghana 226
Abraham Ibn Zackaria

8.2 Notes from Practice: Efforts to Strengthen Citizens' Engagement in Parliamentary Processes in Kenya 229
Humphrey Ringera

CHAPTER 9 Positioning African Parliaments to Use Evidence Effectively in Shaping Developmental and Democratic Futures 235
Tania Ajam

The editors would like to thank CLEAR-AA for their support in compiling this volume. We appreciate the efforts of all contributing authors, as well as the partners that CLEAR-AA has worked with in its programme on strengthening evidence use in parliaments.

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

clear
Centers for Learning on Evaluation and Results
ANGLOPHONE AFRICA

Tania Ajam (PhD) – School of Public Leadership, Stellenbosch University

Tania Ajam is an Associate Professor in Public Policy, Finance and Economics at the University of Stellenbosch School of Public Leadership. She is a public policy analyst and an economist with broad experience in the design, analysis and implementation of fiscal policy, intergovernmental fiscal relations and government-wide monitoring and evaluation systems.

Aisha Jore Ali (MM) – Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford University

Aisha Jore Ali is a Research Officer working with the People in Government Lab at the Blavatnik School of Government where she is involved in establishing a global state-of-the-art knowledge centre, driving a dynamic research agenda and convening a network of scholars, public and private practitioners to improve the public sector workforce. She holds a Master of Management degree in Public and Development Management from the University of the Witwatersrand.

Ressida Begg (BA LLB) – Parliament of South Africa

Ressida Begg is the Division Manager: Core Business Support at the Parliament of South Africa. She holds a BA LLB degree and is a qualified and admitted attorney. She has further obtained an Honours degree in Public Administration cum laude. She is finalising her Master in Public Administration degree. Ressida has 21 years' experience in the legislative sector having started out as a legal adviser in 1999, progressing to the position of Director of Legislation and Oversight and then Deputy Secretary: Procedural Services in the Western Cape Legislature. She joined Parliament in December 2015.

Gavin Bradshaw (DPhil) – AEON Research Associate at Nelson Mandela University

Gavin is a consultant in the fields of Conflict Transformation and Political Risk. He established the Masters programme in Conflict Transformation and Management at NMU. With more than forty years experience in academia, he has also lectured in international relations, and political science more generally. He has served as the president of the South African Association for Conflict Intervention, and has written extensively in the field of social conflict and its management. He has provided assistance to parties in conflict in South Africa, elsewhere on the continent and beyond. He has developed useful models of conflict and its management.

Japheth Chanda – Parliament of Zambia

Japheth Chanda is the Senior M&E Officer for the Zambian Parliament. Before joining Parliament, he worked for the Examinations Council of Zambia where his last position was Senior Research Officer. Previously, he served as M&E Officer for Family Health International. He holds qualifications in Social Sciences and Business Administration.

Takunda J. Chirau (PhD) – The Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA), University of the Witwatersrand

Takuda Chirau is the Deputy Director at CLEAR-AA. He is also responsible for convening country programmes aimed at strengthening country M&E and evaluation systems in English-speaking African countries. He holds a PhD in Sociology from Rhodes University and other degrees from Stellenbosch University and University of Fort Hare.

Kieron Crawley BSc, M Des (RCA), DIC, MM – Consultant

Kieron has worked extensively within the INGO sector developing and managing multi-sectoral poverty alleviation programmes in Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia. His work with CLEAR-AA has included the provision of technical advice to a range of African governments and he has been involved with programmes in African legislatures developing interventions to strengthen the use of evidence as a function of parliamentary oversight.

Hermine Engel (MA) – CLEAR-AA / Independent Consultant

Hermine Engel served as M&E Technical Specialist for CLEAR-AA's Strengthening Legislatures programme between 2018 and 2020. Previously, she worked in the civil society sector on various social justice issues. She holds an MA in Development Studies (International Institute for Social Studies) and an MA in English Literature (University of the Western Cape).

Ian Goldman (PhD) – The Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA), University of the Witwatersrand

Ian Goldman is an international advisor on evaluation and evidence systems, working with CLEAR-AA and the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town. Previously Ian led the establishment of South Africa's national evaluation system, as well as Twende Mbele, a partnership of African governments on monitoring and evaluation.

Abdoulaye Gounou (MSc) – Bureau of Public Policy Evaluation and Government Action Analysis (BEPPAAG)

Abdoulaye Gounou is head of BEPPAAG at the Presidency of the Republic Benin with 25 years' experience in evaluation and development management. He holds a Master of Business Administration and Project Management degree from Senghor University (Egypt) and is a PhD candidate in programme evaluation at the University of Cape Town.

Kobena T. Hanson (PhD) – African Development Bank (AfDB)

Kobena T. Hanson is Principal Evaluation Capacity Development Officer at the AfDB, Cote d'Ivoire. Dr Hanson holds a PhD from Queen's University, Canada. He is co-editor of Disruptive Technologies, Innovation and Development in Africa (Palgrave, 2020), and has published in journals such as Environment & Planning, GeoJournal, Journal of African Development, and Africa Today.

Ahmed Hassan (LLB) (MA) – Parliament of Kenya

Ahmed Hassan is a Principal Research Officer. He heads the Governance and Political Affairs Division of the Parliamentary Research Service Department. He has over 12 years' experience in governance and parliamentary operations having worked at the Parliament of Kenya since 2008. Ahmed takes a keen interest in policies and programmes related to governance and the role played by actors in influencing policy and legislative processes.

Linda S. Khumalo (PhD) – The Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA), University of the Witwatersrand

Linda is a seasoned M&E professional and social researcher with a keen interest in participatory development, active citizenship and social change in communities. She has been actively involved in CLEAR-AA' s programme on strengthening systems of evidence use in African parliaments since 2016. She holds a Master in Industrial Sociology and Labour Studies from the University of Pretoria and a Doctoral degree in Development Studies from the University of the Witwatersrand.

Angelita Kiwekete (PhD) – Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR-AA), University of the Witwatersrand

Angelita Kiwekete has worked on various development and research initiatives. Her research projects include two postdoctoral fellowships; economic policy-making landscape in democratic South Africa as part of IDASA's economic governance programme; and peacekeeping interventions in Africa at the University of Witwatersrand. She served on the board of Refugee Children's Project (2016-2018). She has a PhD from the University of the Witwatersrand.

Nagnouma Nanou Kone (MSc) – Water Integrity Network

Nagnouma Kone is an International Development Expert. From 2016-2019 she was the coordinator of the African Parliamentary Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE) of the African Development Bank. From 2013-2015, she was the UNEP Country Manager, overseeing the implementation of UNEP Strategy for Rwanda. She is currently based at the Water Integrity Network, in Berlin, Germany.

Donald Keya Manyala (PhD) – Parliament of Kenya

Donald Manyala holds a PhD in Leadership and Governance from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Kenya. He also holds a Master in Business Administration degree from United States International University (USIU). He currently serves as a researcher in the Parliament of Kenya and specialises in policy analysis and generation of evidence-based research to aid decision-making and legislation.

Caitlin Blaser Mapitsa (PhD) – Wits School of Governance

Caitlin Blaser Mapitsa is a senior lecturer in monitoring and evaluation at the Wits School of Governance. She has 15 years' experience as an evaluator and has been involved in understanding how power dynamics shape processes of change in complex socioecological systems and how to measure these changes. Her current research interests are transboundary resource management and how evaluation systems can support changes in governance.

Steven Masvaure (PhD) – The Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA), University of the Witwatersrand

Steven Masvaure is a Senior Researcher working at the University of the Witwatersrand's Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results – Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Boikanyo Moloto (MA) – The Centre for the Study of Violence & Reconciliation (CSVR)

Boikanyo Moloto is an Industrial Sociologist/Researcher who holds a Master of Arts in Industrial Sociology (Cum Laude) degree from the University of Johannesburg. Prior to joining the CSVR, she worked as a junior researcher and was a Young Emerging Evaluator (YEE) at CLEAR-AA, in the strengthening legislatures business line where she worked closely with the African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE) executive committee.

Candice Morkel (PhD) – The Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA), University of the Witwatersrand

Candice Morkel is the Director of CLEAR-AA and a Senior Lecturer in M&E at the Wits School of Governance. She has over 20 years' experience in government, academia and the non-profit sector, specialising in M&E systems, capacity building, social policy and public sector governance. Candice has served both as the chair of the South African M&E Association and on the Board of the African Evaluation Association.

Babette Rabie (PhD) – School of Public Leadership, Stellenbosch University

Babette Rabie is a professor in policy analysis and public sector M&E. She has reviewed draft policies and M&E frameworks for various government entities and currently supports the World Bank with the development of national M&E systems for the governments of the Seychelles, Botswana and Mauritius. She currently serves on the management board of SAMEA (the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association) and is a past chair of the association.

Humphrey Ringera (MA) – Parliamentary Research Service, Parliament of Kenya

Humphrey Ringera is a Research Officer and a Policy Analyst in the Senate of Kenya. He has worked at the Parliament of Kenya for the last 6 years where he is charged with the duty of evidence synthesis and analysis to assist members of parliament in making evidence-informed decisions.

Elias Segla (MSc) – Bureau of Public Policy Evaluation and Government Action Analysis (BEPPAAG)

Elias Segla is a Senior Evaluation Officer at BEPPAAG with 18 years' experience, including 13 years in management and 5 years in promoting evaluation at national level. He holds a Master in Governance and Public Management degree from Senghor University (Alexandria, Egypt) and in Human Resources Management from the National School of Administration (Benin).

Damase Sossou (MSc) – Bureau of Public Policy Evaluation and Government Action Analysis (BEPPAAG)

Damase Sossou is Senior Evaluation Officer at BEPPAAG with 12 years' experience designing and implementing impact evaluation and process evaluation of policies and programmes. He holds a Master in Applied Statistics degree from the African School of Economics (Benin), and a degree in economics of public policy from the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics.

Jacqueline Thomas (MEd) – Parliament of South Africa

Jacqueline Thomas is the Unit Manager: Public Education Office in the Parliament of South Africa. She has a Master of Education degree and is in the final stages of a PhD degree in education. She has 25 years' experience in the adult education and development sector and joined Parliament in March 2018.

Josephine Watera (MME) – Parliament of Uganda

Josephine Watera heads the Monitoring and Evaluation Division in the Parliament of Uganda. She has 13 years' public sector experience in programme design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and performance management and reporting. She is a doctoral candidate in programme evaluation at the University of Cape Town.

Abraham Ibn Zackaria (PhD) – Research Consultant at the Parliament of Ghana

Abraham Ibn Zackaria holds a PhD in Geography and Resource Development and a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Administration. He is currently a Senior Research Officer in the Research Department. He has 14 years' experience in providing research services to committees, individual members, and the leadership of the Parliament of Ghana. His research interest is evidence in policymaking in the legislature, land tenure security and public policy.

TABLES

Table 2.1	Overview of models	46
Table 3.1	Systems thinking versus reductionist approaches	83

FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Appropriate evidence for policy context	48
Figure 2.2	The Six-Sphere framework	50
Figure 2.3	The macro and micro governance context of parliament	51
Figure 2.4	Considerations in parliamentary committee decision-making	53
Figure 2.5	Parliamentarians' compass MP level model	56
Figure 2.6	Increasing the capacity of evidence users at multiple levels	58
Figure 2.7	Six contextual factors that influence evidence use in public sector institutions	59
Figure 2.8	Integrated framework to assess and promote evidence use	61
Figure 2.9	WBI conceptual framework for measuring parliamentary performance	63
Figure 2.10	Linking parliamentary tasks and performance results across a value chain	64
Figure 2.11	Role of the legislature	65
Figure 3.1	Components of the system(s) of evidence use in parliaments	89
Figure 4.1	Supply, demand and knowledge brokering for evidence	106
Figure 5.1	Parliamentary Compass	146
Figure 6.1	Confirmed Covid-19 cases in selected African countries	174
Figure 7.1	Authors Adaptation of A Typology of parliaments (based on Nelson Polsby)	186
Figure 7.2	Global State of democracy conceptual framework	189
Figure 7.3	How evidence use can strengthen the representative role of parliamentarians	195

LIST OF ACRONYMS

3D	Three-dimensional
4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
ACRES	Centre for Rapid Evidence Synthesis
AFIDEP	African Institute for Development Policy
AFLI	Africa Leadership Institute
AfrEA	African Evaluation Association
ALP	African Legislature Project
APNODE	African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BEPP	Bureau of Evaluation of Public Policies
BEPPAAG	Bureau of Evaluation of Public Policies and Government Action Analysis
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CDFs	Constituency Development Funds
CSC	Committee Score Card
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DPME	Department of Performance (later planning) Monitoring and Evaluation
DRS	Department of Research Services (DRS)
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIDM	Evidence-Informed Decision-Making
ETWG	Evaluation Technical Working Group
EVI	Electronic Voter Identification
FES	Friedrich Ebert Foundation
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Government Evaluation Facility
GNPBO	Global Network of Parliament Budget Offices
GPFE	Global Parliamentarians' Forum on Evaluation
GTAC	Government Technical Assistance Centre
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HR	Human Resources
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDS	Institute of Development Studies

IIAG	Ibrahim Index of African Governance
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
IoT	Internet of Things
IPAB	Benin Parliamentary Institute
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
KEWOPA	Kenya Women Parliamentary Association
KEWOSA	Kenya Women Senators Association
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MEJN	Malawi Economic Justice Network
MPs	Members of Parliament
MPL	Members of Provincial Legislatures
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NEDLC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NES	National Evaluation System
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NMETWG	National M&E Technical Working Group
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PARMAN	Project for Support of the Strengthening and Modernization of the National Assembly
PBOs	Parliamentary Budget Offices
PC-EIDM	Parliamentary Caucus on Evidence-Informed Oversight and Decision-Making
PCOs	Parliamentary Constituency Offices
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
POT	Parliamentary Oversight Tool
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PRS	Parliamentary Research Service
RSP	Revolutionary State Party
RTS	Results Transmission System
SADC-PF	Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum
SCOA	Standing Committee on Appropriations
SCOPA	Standing Committee on Public Accounts
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation

UNACEB	State Budget Control and Assessment Analysis Unit
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
VOPES	Voluntary Organisations of Professional Evaluators
WBI	World Bank Institute
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZEPARU	Zimbabwe Economic Policy and Analysis Research Unit

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Linda S. Khumalo on behalf of the editorial team

The work of the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) on strengthening evidence use in parliaments has involved extensive collaboration between various partners across the African continent resulting in rich insights into the critical role of parliaments in EIPM. It has been observed that parliaments are often closed institutions which, while very important to understanding democratic governance, can be very difficult to access and understand. We are very grateful for the rewarding relationships we have established since the programme's inception in 2015 and for the receptiveness to our work which has enabled us to gain access to a number of African parliaments, with the African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE) being a primary partner.

We are immensely grateful for the parliamentary collaborative peer-learning programme which took place in 2018 and for the resulting experiences and shared learning that prompted the need to document our experiences on evidence use in parliaments. This collaborative initiative included partners from across the continent that have been involved in capacity strengthening towards evidence-informed policymaking in Africa. We extend our gratitude to Twende Mbele, the African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE), the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), the African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA), the Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training (CPST), UN Women, International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), the Institute of Parliamentary Studies (IPS) and CLEAR-GIMPA for the insights gained throughout the regional peer-learning programme. This book would certainly not have been possible without the committed group of MPs, parliamentary researchers, content advisors, M&E officers and other parliamentary staff who champion evidence use in African parliaments. The book on systems of evidence use in African parliaments would not have been possible without our partner organisations and the valuable relationships we have built with national and regional parliaments across the continent. We are deeply indebted to parliamentary representatives from Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia, Ghana, Malawi, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

This book would, of course, not have been possible without the dedicated team of authors who have been committed to seeing the book come to fruition. Thank you to the parliamentary researchers, practitioners and CLEAR-AA staff who took time out of their busy schedules to contribute their rich insights to this initiative. Thank you for your patience and for working tirelessly with the editorial team to refine your chapters.

We would like to especially acknowledge our incredible team of reviewers who took the time to provide detailed feedback to help shape the direction of the chapters and the flow of the book as a whole. Thank you Mine Pabari, Matodzi Amisi, Carspar Merkle, Cara Waller and Kobena Hanson. Our gratitude is also extended to the CLEAR-AA research team led by Steven Masvaure, who worked tirelessly to assist the editorial team with the preparation and formatting of the manuscript. Thank you, Tefo Mosienyane and Boikanyo Moloto, for the support provided.

We extend our special thanks to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) for their support for the collaborative peer-learning initiative in parliaments. Without this support, these two volumes would not have been possible. Furthermore, this work would also not have been possible without the financial support of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands under the CLEAR-AA Accelerated Regionalisation (Acer) Project.

To everyone else who believed in the vision of this book and supported us to make it a success, Asante Sana! We have no doubt that the findings shared will nurture ongoing discussion and more collaborative approaches in strengthening evidence use in parliaments.

The events following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated unequivocally that the future is likely be characterised by unprecedented challenges and consequences. The African continent has been hard hit by the effects of the pandemic which have negatively impacted development outcomes and worsened poverty levels. Effective recovery requires the making and implementing of sound policy decisions aimed at achieving equitable development results. The importance of evidence-informed policymaking is irrefutable and the requisite means to achieve sound decisions must be harnessed. Informed and sound decisions are those that effectively and authentically prioritise the needs of poor and vulnerable populations.

Africa's decision-making ecosystem comprises a range of different actors. These include government entities (at national and local levels and within departmental structures), higher education institutions, civil society, and monitoring and evaluation practitioners operating in public and private systems. These various actors sometimes operate collaboratively but often work independently and are unaware of others' processes and products. National parliaments play a pivotal role in decision-making systems as they are able to promote a culture of evidence use. However, insufficient work has been done on exactly how parliaments can participate in evidence-based decision-making or how parliamentarians can effectively use evidence to optimise their mandates. African parliaments are complex institutions, and each is a unique product of their specific national history and local traditions. Parliaments are highly contested entities, actively engaging in political processes and serving as vibrant contributors to governance. In more authoritarian states, parliaments continue to function as rubber-stamping entities and have largely been reduced to facilitators of executive will.

African parliaments generally play three key interrelated roles. Their most explicit function is the making of laws, which they do in accordance with their constitutional mandates and historical practices. Parliaments also conduct oversight of state institutions and hold the executive to account. An additional and often overlooked role is that of representation, serving as the voice of voters and citizens in governance processes and structures. In performing these functions, parliaments consume and generate a broad range of different types of evidence. The use of

this evidence, both its utilisation and generation, is the subject of this book which is a response to the need for additional scholarship on the important subject of African parliamentary processes and the ways in which parliaments use evidence. This volume is the product of extensive collaboration between a wide range of organisations and specialists (including parliamentarians) with whom CLEAR Anglophone Africa is honoured to have worked. We are deeply grateful to the contributors and convenors whose efforts and extensive work made the publication of this volume possible.

The work is intended to stimulate ongoing conversations about how the use of evidence by parliaments in Africa can be enhanced and improved and to deepen readers' understanding of the complex and rich dynamics at play in parliaments. The CLEAR centres are driven by the long-term objective of strengthening and growing the systems that support the use of evidence in decision-making in Africa and elsewhere.

Strategies for enhancing parliamentary evidence practices are already in use in many places and relate to building their capacities to synthesise, use evidence and act as knowledge brokers. This book comprehensively highlights the critical role of a systems focus to evidence use and the need for multi-stakeholder interaction if parliaments are to continue their trajectory in improving the use of evidence. Importantly, the book highlights the critical importance of the need for improving evidence use in policymaking to be a stated and conscious intention for African parliaments. Without this intention development progress cannot be made.

Dugan Fraser
Program Manager, Global Evaluation Initiative (GEI)
Former Director (CLEAR-AA)

INTRODUCTION TO THE VOLUME

African states are increasingly recognising the primacy of accountability mechanisms and the value of citizen representation and transparency in cultivating democratic governance and ensuring equitable development outcomes. The Evidence-informed Policy Making (EIPM) discourse has intensified in the past decade with practitioners and academics arguing for the importance of evidence use in policymaking. While the non-linearity and intricacies embedded in EIPM have been alluded to, little is known about how parliaments, as political institutions, manoeuvre the complexities inherent in the policymaking process and the implications on evidence use. Moreover, the implications on the broader development context and political contestations within the context of parliaments that shape decision-making are not well understood. In addition, an examination of the micro factors focusing on the values and incentives that drive individual MPs to use evidence in conducting their mandates needs to be examined. Parliaments play a critical role in development, accountability, and democracy across Africa yet there is a dearth of evidence around their structure and function. Furthermore, the push to strengthen informed decision-making across governments, understanding the role of evidence within parliaments as they legislate, represent constituents, and hold the executive to account, provides a fundamental understanding of the functioning of African states.

This is the first of two volumes examining evidence systems in African parliaments. Volume 1 locates African parliaments within the context of governance and development. It is premised on a systems thinking perspective, which involves looking at the different components of a system such as the [internal and external] functions, purpose, principles, incentives, boundaries and processes surrounding evidence use in parliaments and how these different elements interact. The authors recognise the key evidence stakeholders (such as CSOs, academia, media, VOPEs, donors) and how these are engaged/disengaged, as well as the implications of these interactions on the flow and use of evidence in parliaments. Recognising the importance of the responsiveness of ecosystems to change (Stewart, Dayal, Langer & Van Rooyen, 2019), this volume harnesses parliaments' adaptabilities to the micro and macro political contestations that influence their use of evidence. Importantly, the book examines how parliaments manoeuvre complexities such as the

Fourth Industrial Revolution and global and national crises such as Covid-19. Equity and inclusion in policymaking and the roles of parliaments in enabling citizen engagements in their core mandates are further recognised.

The two volumes on systems of evidence use in African parliaments build on the experiences gained from collaborative capacity development work carried out between 2017-2019[1] among the national parliaments of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Malawi, Zambia and Ghana, as well as the regional parliaments of ECOWAS and the East African Legislative Assembly. It draws extensively on critical analyses of secondary data, authors' experiences gained primarily as parliamentary research/support staff or governance and M&E practitioners supporting the work of parliaments, academics, as well as Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) providers. By presenting various frameworks that provide critical analyses of systems of evidence use in African parliaments and documentation of parliamentary experiences across the continent, this volume seeks to facilitate ongoing theorising and learning about parliaments as key institutions of democratic governance.

The chapters in this volume seek to address the dearth of theoretical understanding of parliaments' critical roles in democratic governance through strengthening systems of evidence use in policymaking as parliaments perform their core mandates of legislation, representation, oversight and budget appropriation. Some key research questions pertaining to parliaments' roles in evidence use and their contribution to good governance that this volume seeks to contribute to the broader discourse include:

- What is the significance and role of parliaments towards ensuring that EIPM contributes to transformation and equitable development?
- What contextual factors drive how parliaments use evidence?
- How does the relationship between parliament and other arms of the state, particularly the executive, influence evidence use?
- How do evaluative systems within parliaments help to determine parliamentary effectiveness?
- What is parliament's role in brokering knowledge on national governance priorities and evaluating long-term development planning?

[1] Partners involved in the collaborative peer learning initiative from which the interests of the Volume emerged included CLEAR-AA, Twende Mbele, The African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE), the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), African Centre for Parliamentary Affairs (ACEPA), The Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training (CPST), International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP), UN Women and CLEAR-GIMPA.

- What are the linkages between accountability, governance, evidence use and public participation?
- How are parliamentary institutions located within national ecosystems of evidence and governance?

In tackling these key questions, the authors seek to facilitate continued learning across parliaments and other institutions of governance by examining different accounts of how parliaments manoeuvre the complexities embedded within their micro and macro processes while seeking to deliver on their mandates. In addition to detailing the structures and systems that influence evidence use, the volume critically considers the existing barriers to and potential opportunities for strengthening parliamentary evidence systems-related implications for evidence use and thereby provide a foundation for future research in the area.

The structure of the volume

Volume 1 is structured into nine chapters. In Chapter 1, Morkel and Bradshaw set the tone by outlining the contextual overview of the systems of evidence production and use in African parliaments in the execution of their oversight, representation, and law-making mandates. The chapter paves the way for examining the institution of parliament and its contribution to evidence use for policymaking. It does so by locating parliaments within a broader understanding of state formation marked by Western political thought domination in post-independence Africa. Moreover, the pre-eminence of the New Public Administration discourse prompted an awareness to the importance of systems of accountability, monitoring and oversight which have increasingly been embedded in the operations of African state institutions. Parliaments have thus been shaped by transformation in the broader development context and an understanding of how they engage with evidence for policymaking must, therefore, be viewed from this perspective.

In Chapter 2, Rabie and Ajam, in an attempt to capture the complexity of parliaments' fulfilment of their core mandates, present the components of an analytical framework of evidence use in African parliaments which include lawmaking, oversight and representation, and the role of evidence use. They present various models in an integrated framework to demonstrate the potential role of evidence to improve and promote accountable policy decisions. Drawing on a selection of evidence-use frameworks developed and

applied in the African context, the analytical framework addresses evidence use at individual, organisational and system levels. The models aim to create a shared understanding of the myriad factors, contexts and requirements that should inform initiatives to strengthen evidence use in African parliaments.

The analytical framework outlined in Chapter 3 speaks to the intrinsically interconnected internal and external evaluative functions of parliament and closely aligns to the interactivity anchoring systems perspective. The components of the analytical framework expanded upon later in the book are fourfold: First is the macro context which involves the political context and broader external structures and processes of evidence use e.g. media, CSOs and other state institutions. Second is the micro context. This includes the internal structures of parliament such as the structure of portfolio committees and the resources and other capacity allocated to support the evidence function and also includes factors that shape MPs as individuals, such as constituency demands and the value systems that shape decision-making. Third are the interventions to systematically strengthen evidence use i.e. mechanisms to enhance parliaments' abilities to fulfil their mandates within a complex, unpredictable, and rapidly changing policy environment and last is the internal Monitoring and Evaluation function of parliaments which relates to measuring parliamentary performance towards meeting its key roles and objectives e.g. through parliamentary M&E frameworks and other internal assessment tools. These components seek to support stakeholders' understanding of evidence systems in parliaments and lay the groundwork for further research in the area.

In Chapter 3, Masvaure, Kiwekete, Engel and Moloto explore the critical conceptualisation of characteristics of a systems-thinking perspective in the parliamentary context. The authors locate evidence use within the broader parliamentary system and the related external factors that influence parliamentary operations. Embedded in a complexity thinking analysis, the chapter recognises that parliamentary evidence systems are composed of diverse, dynamic webs of interaction that affect evidence use in parliaments. Key components of parliamentary evidence systems include the interconnectedness between myriad role players and their roles in the evidence use process. The nature of the demand for evidence, sources of evidence, the evidence type/ nature of evidence, the brokering of evidence, the users of the evidence, if and how the evidence is used and, ultimately, how it influences the policymaking process are some key considerations addressed in this book. While the

trend in the EIPM discourse has been to closely associate parliaments' roles with the *evidence use* process associated with a reductionist approach, the chapter grounds the systemic focus of the two volumes which sees parliaments' interactions with other critical stakeholders and processes in the evidence-informed policymaking process.

In Chapter 4, Chirau, Goldman, Watera, Gounou, Sossou and Segla present a critical overview of parliaments' engagements with national evaluation systems and how the interaction between parliaments and the executive can be enhanced to strengthen evidence use. Using case studies of three countries with established national evaluation systems i.e. Uganda, South Africa and Benin, the authors illustrate the importance of national evaluation systems in institutionalising evaluations and their use. Chirau et al. argue that when the relationship between parliaments and national evaluation systems is anchored in the executive arm of government this results in limited use of evaluations for executive oversight. Therefore, this interaction should be formalised to strengthen evaluation systems across parliaments and the executive. Chirau et al. further highlight the central role of parliamentary committees in fostering demand for evaluations for policy decision-making and emphasise the critical role that the committees play in ensuring that evidence is in accordance with the ideals expanded upon in the chapters of this volume.

A critical discussion on the politics of evidence in parliamentary oversight is dealt with in Chapter 5. In this chapter, Khumalo, Crawley, Manyala and Hassan deconstruct *the politics of evidence* and how it shapes parliamentary decision-making with a focus on the oversight function. The chapter shows how the complex political space at both macro and micro levels influences decision-making in parliaments. At the macro level, Khumalo et al. scrutinise neopatrimonialism which manifests in traits such as clientelism and patronage behaviour as MPs operate within a broader politically driven state. Parliaments have complex institutional arrangements and multi spheres of power and influence, for example, power imbalances between governing and opposition party MPs are important considerations shaping policy decision-making.

Through application of the Compass framework to a case study of MPs in Kenya, Khumalo et al. examine MPs' individual incentives for decision-making. The Compass framework ascertains the extent to which MPs' decisions to use evidence are informed by tensions across four micro factors: MPs' constitutional roles, their personal and professional interests, constituency demands, and political party obligations. The chapter illustrates how the prevailing political environment and MPs' political party allegiances often sway MPs decision-making. This adds to the complexities of the constitutionally mandated expectations of MPs – to perform the necessary oversight, lawmaking, representation, and budget appropriation responsibilities. Evidence use is of fundamental importance to these functions. Political party allegiance which is enforced by the political whipping system is central to MPs' retention or renewal of their respective positions and/or to be promoted to more prominent party positions and seats. On the other hand, constituency demands are central to MPs' legitimacy and potential re-election and these needs may conflict with party positions.

In Chapter 6, Ali, Hanson and Kiwekete adopt a forward-looking framework which considers the implications of technological changes, and they analyse how parliaments are engaging with technological changes brought about by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). The technological changes inherent to 4IR can potentially enable parliaments' adaptability to the fast-paced information and digital revolution and shift the traditional operations of parliaments with consequent implications on how MPs engage with evidence and, in addition, could allow for greater innovation in their constituency engagements. Notably, the move to a more virtual form of parliament which engages by means of web platforms such as social media, has the drawback of further exacerbating socio-economic disparities by excluding marginalised groups from democratic governance and policy decision-making.

Ali et al. demonstrate the ways in which parliaments have innovated and adapted in response to the Covid-19 lockdown regulations. While technological advancements have enabled capitalist economic progress, their disruptive effects on the African continent are evident in the exacerbation of global inequalities, poverty, etc. which have been revealed by the global pandemic. Technological transformation has adverse effects on policymaking and on the critical role of parliaments in advocating for the inclusive representation of citizens. Ali et al. illustrate how MPs' constituency engagements have

experienced noticeable shifts during the Covid-19 pandemic, for instance, citizens interacting with MPs through social media platforms such as WhatsApp groups and Twitter. While these alternative spaces of engagement bring some hope for increased youth engagement in democratic governance, limited accessibility to these platforms has grave implications for citizen inclusivity and further expose the problematic digital divide on the continent which risks the exclusion of underrepresented groups from decision-making spaces. Therefore, issues of access and inclusivity are critical considerations in ensuring that the digital revolutions are transformative and do not leave anyone behind.

Chapters 7 and 8 – *Parliamentary evidence use in representation and Challenges and Opportunities to Citizen Engagement in Africa* – are concerned with the role of citizens in public policy and decision-making processes and the role of parliaments in facilitating this. In different ways, the chapters examine the concept of citizen participation in parliaments and its effects on systems of democratic governance in the African context. Citizen participation is a key requisite of constitutionally mandated democratic governance which was part of the democratic transition of many African states such as Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. In Chapter 7, Zackaria, Thomas and Begg examine the representative role of parliaments as key democratic institutions. Locating representation within a democratic governance framework, they highlight the importance of credible evidence as a means to ensure that MPs are performing their representative roles and ensuring that all citizens, including the most marginalised, are represented in planning and policymaking. Zackaria et al. also reflect on the challenges facing several African parliaments which hinder effective representation. Amongst these are executive dominance in policymaking and inadequate evidence systems to facilitate quick turnaround times for the provision of robust evidence to MPs. Systems of patronage and clientelism further complicate effective representation by MPs and also hinder the ability of citizens to understand this role. These discussions seek to contribute to the discourse on improving citizen engagement in evidence generation and use in parliamentary processes as a prerequisite for healthy democratic governance and development outcomes. The chapter is accompanied by two practice notes from Zambia and South Africa detailing practice on the effectiveness and challenges of constituency offices in parliamentary representation.

In Chapter 8, Kone and Blaser Mapitsa examine the parliamentary structures that facilitate citizen engagement and how these interact with various evidence systems. The chapter contributes to an understanding of the mechanisms and processes of engagement that are used by citizens in various parliaments to interact with MPs and how MPs engage with their constituencies. Kone and Blaser Mapitsa highlight the various innovations such as civil society groups, citizen barazas and various media and social media platforms used by citizens to participate in their community governance issues through MPs as their representatives. They highlight the need to promote inclusivity of citizen engagement processes which should be effectively targeted to ensure that citizens from diverse backgrounds and socio-economic statuses have a say in decision-making spaces. In addition, the need for citizens voices to inform planning and policymaking is expressed.

Ajam concludes the volume with an overview of African parliaments through a transformative lens i.e. positioning parliaments strategically to use evidence more effectively towards improved development outcomes. Lessons drawn from the themes highlighted in the volume point towards the need to invest in building effective parliamentary institutions which function as key institutions of good governance in the state. The volume draws attention to the resource constraints faced by most parliaments on the continent and highlight the pressing need to build an enabling infrastructure to support evidence use. The ineffectiveness of parliaments in performing their mandates is intrinsically tied to macro challenges such as a dominant executive that undermines the function of parliaments, effectively rendering the notion of the separation of powers redundant. Much still needs to be done to reconfigure the current landscape of institutional incentives to ensure the state and other critical stakeholders in the evidence ecosystem invest in and value the work of parliaments.

Conclusion

The volume seeks to initiate meaningful discussions across a broad range of stakeholders in the governance space towards enhancing parliaments' roles in contributing towards the good governance of evidence i.e. an evidence-use culture embedded in systematic evidence use which informs policymaking and contributes to the improvement of development outcomes.

The need to continuously cultivate networks and multistakeholder engagements in supporting the work of parliaments is highlighted. This underscores the importance of leveraging evidence champions and continuously creating leadership buy-in for effective evidence systems among MPs and other critical parliament administrative and leadership structures. Critical considerations around inclusion, equity, and gender framing to parliamentary systems need to be made more apparent. The Covid-19 pandemic has accentuated the importance of parliaments being able to be more adaptive and responsive to change and this is key to their sustainability. This involves parliaments being more innovative and transformative in the Fourth Industrial Revolution while remaining true to representing constituents and the mandates that they represent. Consideration of 'values-based' evidence decision-smaking is crucial. This embraces the non-linearity of evidence use and therefore the need for creating negotiated spaces where no one is left behind, particularly the more vulnerable populations, in evidence-informed policymaking processes. Developing evidence use systems requires an understanding of the structure of the parliamentary institutions which are diverse and complex and differ across parliaments. Factors such as institutional arrangements, ownership, and buy-in in the wider ecosystem of parliaments, are thus critical considerations in supporting parliamentary systems.

1

CONTEXT OF EVALUATIVE INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNANCE



Candice Morkel and Gavin Bradshaw

Introduction

This chapter examines how efforts at building systems of evidence in African parliaments are influenced by historical and contextual factors around the state and state formation, alongside global development imperatives and increasing pressures to strengthen evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM). The history of pre-modern, colonial and post-colonial state formation in Africa and the rise of democratic regimes across the continent as well as their intersection with an increasingly globalised development agenda have carved a pathway for the rising popularity of EIDM in the state. Inseparable from a broader definition of the state, parliaments have experienced a concomitant growing demand to strengthen their use of evidence to execute their roles effectively, particularly in the areas of oversight and representation. Generally, however, insufficient attention has been paid to a critical, contextual and historical view of the role of parliaments as evaluative institutions in addressing the challenges to their effective use of evidence. These challenges include the peremptory nature of the relationship between the executive and parliament and the limits on the freedom of the latter in decision-making, particularly in electoral or Westminster-type systems. This chapter therefore examines parliaments and their use of evidence[1] in their role as evaluative institutions. It addresses the complexity of the challenges that parliaments face in lawmaking, representation and oversight in respect of the political and governance systems to which they are tethered, how these are influenced by national and international development agendas, and the evidence systems they exact.

One of the major concerns associated with the evaluative and objective use of evidence in parliaments is the extent to which party political and electoral systems constrain legislators in their work, and therefore the extent to which they may use evidence to be critical of or question the work of the executive, particularly of an incumbent regime. Parliaments in electoral/representative systems, in particular, are often challenged by party-political patronage and risk falling prey to neopatrimonialism and state capture. Post-colonial African states are often criticised for birthing a bureaucratic elite, fostering party-political allegiances as well as individual interests of private wealth accumulation,

[1] The term 'evidence' is conceptualised broadly in this chapter, and therefore includes a variety of types, including evidence derived from Monitoring and Evaluation [M&E] activities. However, it is acknowledged that M&E has been gaining popularity in state-based EIDM in Africa over the last decade and a half. It also has a particularly close relationship with the international development sector, as well as a visceral relationship with some of the historical aspects around the introduction of performance-based measurement in the public sector.

as evidenced in states such as Sese Seko's Zaire, Amin's Uganda and, more recently, Mugabe's Zimbabwe, as well as South Africa under Jacob Zuma. This chapter examines how the protection of interests (political and private) may affect individual representatives in the execution of their work, pointing to the complexity of the politics of evidence use in parliamentary systems.

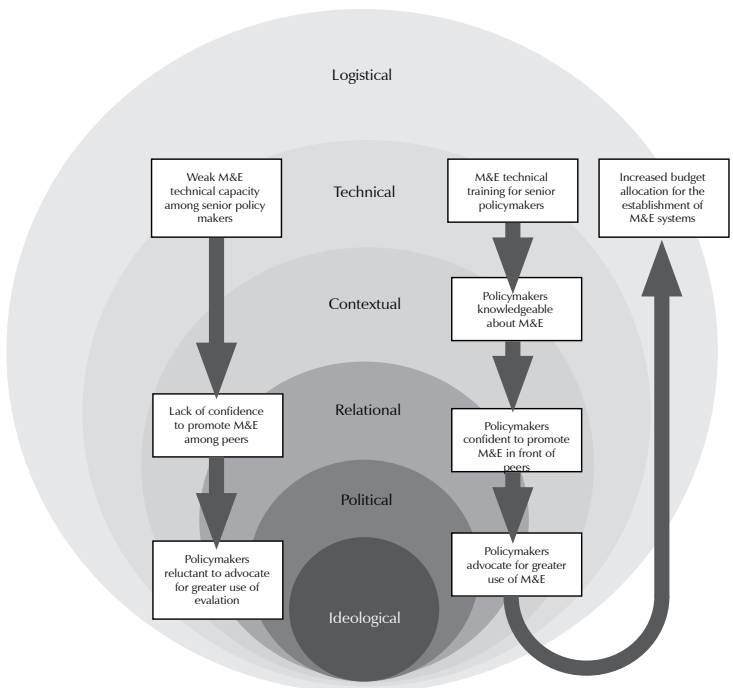
This chapter further analyses the intersection between democracy, state formation, the global development agenda, and the institutionalisation of systems of evidence production and use in parliaments. Very few would disagree that evidence systems are important and carry great potential for strengthening governance and democracy by providing information for policy and decision-making. Their potentially positive net effect on development results is often seen as a foregone conclusion, as evidenced by the 2019 award of the Nobel Economics Prize to Duflo, Bannerjee and Kremer, for their contributions to evidence-based policymaking using randomised, controlled experimental trials. In particular, the production and use of evidence from M&E activities have been extolled in recent years as intrinsically valuable to achieving development outcomes. The relationship between development and evidence is therefore seen as inextricable, yet scholars and practitioners alike have paid very little attention to the existing critiques of and challenges in the discourse around evidence systems including, for example, their embeddedness in political systems and international development practices that may not necessarily strengthen systems of democracy and governance and may even be harmful. Using Crawley's Six-Sphere Framework (2017) as a frame of analysis, the chapter therefore examines how historical and contextual issues relating to the inter-linkages between state formation, political systems and the international development sector (particularly in Africa) affect parliamentary systems of evidence production and use. It provides a critique around evidence systems as transformative agents for strengthening democracy and governance within parliaments and offers some insights into the implications for fulfilling its potential as a harbinger of the achievement of democracy and social justice.

In closing, the chapter focuses its attention on how building and institutionalising robust systems of evidence and the capacity to use them effectively may help parliaments address the multiple, complex challenges they face. The intention is to look at potential remedies that address more than the techno-legal fixes that the institutionalisation of M&E systems usually provide. These include looking at the political, economic and ideological context of the state, the prioritisation of party-political and individual interests that drive state behaviour, as well as

the preoccupation with authoritarian accountability and compliance within the state, all of which have had an impact on parliamentary systems in contemporary democracies. The ultimate question is: what role can EIDM play in being an agent of transformation and equitable development, within the context of the role of parliament in contemporary systems of democracy and governance?

Framework for analysing the political, historical and contextual influences on parliamentary systems of evidence

In Chapter 2 of this volume, various models and frameworks are described that may provide a useful framework for understanding the propensity of parliaments to adopt and utilise systems of evidence for policymaking and oversight. Three of these frameworks (Crawley, 2017; Weyrach, Echt & Suliman, 2016; Langer, Goldman & Pabari, 2020) each provide especially useful lenses to consider the factors that align with the potential levers of, or obstacles to, evidence use in parliaments discussed in this chapter. Of particular importance in each of these is the role of the macro context on parliamentary systems of evidence, and these include both internal and external characteristics and a spectrum of other influences including the political, the social, values and culture, the economic, and the relational. See below the author's adaptation of Crawley's Six Sphere Framework (2017). This is explained elaborately in Chapter 2.



Crawley's Six-Sphere Framework (2017) is particularly useful in that it acts as both an analytical and diagnostic tool that can help deepen our understanding of the key issues raised in this chapter around the factors that influence parliaments' use of evidence in executing their roles.[2]

It portrays the various aspects that influence the production and use of evidence in systems as a set of concentric, nested circles or spheres. At the core, the ideological, political, and contextual spheres help provide a frame for understanding the enduring influence of colonial and post-colonial state formation, contemporary political and governance systems as well as the global development context on parliaments and their work. Moving in a hierarchy of significance towards the outer periphery of the framework, the relational and contextual spheres provide a lens through which to view the influence of contemporary (democratic) systems of government and governance in parliamentary systems of evidence use. The outer technical and logistical spheres represent the more visible elements of systems of evidence in institutions; for example, the resources, structures, the technical capacity to produce and use evidence as well as the quality of evidence that is produced. These are the aspects that are also most often prioritised in thinking about, valuing, diagnosing, and designing systems of evidence production and use.

The focus of evaluation capacity development and efforts to institutionalise M&E systems often revolves around interventions that focus on the outer spheres (the technical and logistical aspects) even though the success of M&E systems is often heavily dependent on the condition of the spheres towards the core of the framework. It may be that the focus has remained on technical aspects such as the provision of resources, capacity to produce evidence, and the development of tools and systems as these aspects are easier and less complex than the efforts needed to influence building a culture of evaluation. Technical solutions have continued to shape EIDM capacity development and institutionalisation interventions and this is due, at least in part, to the orthodox application of democracy building, public administration and governance approaches. Their intersections with, and influence on neo-liberal economics are also worth considering and are therefore explored to some extent in this chapter.

[2] Crawley's Six-Sphere Framwork (2017) is discussed comprehensively in Chapter 2 by Rabie and Ajam, and therfore, to avoid duplication, a full depiction of the diagram is not provided in this chapter.

Examination of the ideological and political issues at the core of parliamentary systems of evidence production turns our attention to creating more holistic accounts of the challenges in EIDM in legislatures, and to the designing of more appropriate and impactful interventions as these relate to the outer, technical and logistical spheres. Understanding the ideological, political, contextual, and relational issues helps us to understand the significance of their influence on parliaments' approaches to evidence use today and may help us to design interventions that address issues at the root of the challenge.

One such under-examined core issue is the global preoccupation with economic power and control intertwined with orthodox views on economic growth and development. Indicators of economic growth, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) tend to dominate the narrative on what development means and looks like. Such indicators stem from the history of state-making which itself is entrenched in the history of capitalism. These ties between economic and political systems have governed thinking around growth and development and directed state behaviour in Africa. Several key features of this symbiosis are well documented in political studies and public administration yet are rarely linked to the evolution of Monitoring and Evaluation, particularly in African systems of governance. These features include the wave of New Public Management that infiltrated and influenced systems of governance in developing countries, linked to the growing popularity of modernisation and neo-liberal views on development and the Third Wave of democracy, which upheld Weberian efficiency and private-sector approaches to governance as the ideal bureaucratic machinery with which to govern. This created conditions that facilitated a financial accountability-driven approach to development, financed largely by international finance and Bretton Woods institutions in developing countries in Africa, and a fetishising of performance auditing and financial accountability. Parliaments in newly democratised states, particularly in electoral systems inherently built on patronage and loyalty to the ruling party, consequently acted as agents of this agenda. This trajectory has continued to the present era of African statehood, particularly where democratic consolidation and party-political systems prevail. Parliamentarians, although the most directly linked to the populace through election, are often also constrained by patronage and political allegiances which may take precedence over their accountability towards the citizens of the country and may largely shape which evidence is used, and how. Growing aid dependency for the delivery of public goods, the globalisation of the development agenda, and the powerful hegemony of

Western methods and approaches to science, research and M&E, have also crowded out much of the room for states to self-determine their approaches to EIDM. The result has been a teleological approach to establishing evidence systems by parliaments which acknowledges the need for their existence but fails to harness their potential for achieving development outcomes through improved oversight and lawmaking.

Contemporary challenges, including the global Covid-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, and the widening inequality gap, have pushed states (and, by extension, parliaments) to acknowledge the need for systems of evidence-informed decision-making and mechanisms for effective monitoring, evaluation and action to avert the global crises affecting the very existence of the planet and its inhabitants. There is therefore some optimism that authentic efforts are being made to ensure that parliaments in Africa become real agents for development change as well as champions for justice and equitable development through the use of evidence. Examples of these are the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation that was established in South Asia in 2013, the Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation, established in 2014/2015 and the establishment of a variety of regional parliamentarians' fora after that in Africa, East Asia, Latin American and the MENA regions.[3] The establishment of the African Parliamentarians Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE) at the AfrEA conference held in Yaounde, Cameroon in March 2014 also signified the growing global commitment by parliamentarians to elevating the importance of evaluation to development results.[4] These efforts demonstrate a growing vision and leadership amongst parliamentarians to elevate the importance of evidence, and in particular, monitoring and evaluation. The Six-Sphere Framework helps to focus attention on the significance of properly situating the challenges in relation to the production and use of evidence in parliamentary systems within the political, ideological, and historical contexts of these institutions of the state and to identify areas of leverage to effect change where needed.

Examining state formation at the core: Ideological influences on EIDM

Parliaments, far from being neutral spaces, are sites of power and contestation that are embedded within the political regimes and systems that helped shape them. They are influenced by the broader political context within

[3] https://bit.ly/3zjCSRW
[4] https://bit.ly/398uXfl

which they operate which, in turn, influences how evidence is used within parliaments (Latib, 2016, p. 206). The historical foundations of state building in commanding territorial power and control provides an important point of departure for critically analysing the function of parliaments in the institution of the modern state. Historically, states were formed as a direct result of an increase in conflicts over territory and resources, which led to the creation of institutional structures of control and governance, with the ability to use force being borne out of necessity (Hall & Ikenberry, 1989; Hay & Lister, 2006, p. 5). The protection of elites and their property therefore characterises the origin of states more accurately than the securing of the rights of citizens and the provision of public goods, which are relatively recent hallmarks of liberal democratic states. Contemporary research on states (cf. Carbone & Memoli, 2015) re-affirms Charles Tilly's timeless remark that states make war and wars make states (Tilly, 1985) and puts into perspective the centrality of coercive power in modern conceptualisations of the state and its institutions (See also Morris, 2015). These historical roots remain entrenched in parliaments and their actions in the machinery of the democratic state and influence the work of parliaments. The umbilical cord between parliamentary systems, particularly in post-colonial African states, remains connected to the historical notion of the state as agent of power and control. Yet, parliaments remain the most tangible relation between government and the governed and are therefore vital in the alignment of the policies of the former to the basic human needs' satisfactions of the latter.

State power, control and the ability to use coercive force therefore remain distinct markers of state formation, even in modern democratic states (Carbone & Memoli, 2015, p. 7; Rose & Miller, 2010, p. 274). Although this outlook on the state is not without controversy (Hay & Lister, 2006, p. 8), the Weberian definition that states are "compulsory associations claiming control over territories and the people within them" (Evans, 1995, p. 5) remains buoyant. Parliaments are also shaped by the dominance of Western political thought on colonial and post-colonial state formation in Africa. Over the last four decades in particular, newly independent African states often adopted the nature, forms and machinery of governance they had been accustomed to in the narrow interstices between colonial and post-colonial state formation. Building strong states, with the ability to wield both territorial and economic power, as well as the enduring Weberian notion of bureaucratic authoritarianism and efficiency, have continued to determine the nature and role of institutions of the state,

including parliaments, in Africa. Therefore, such orthodox conceptualisations of the state and development in Africa may actually drive parliaments to prioritise performance management and monitoring for the end-goal of bureaucratic control, governance and accountability, and for strengthening the executive. This has come at the expense of learning, reflection and protecting the socio-economic rights and needs of citizens.

The economic and fiscal role of parliaments has risen alongside the increasing complexity of the modern economy and the role of the executive in government, to the extent that the public sector is now a key agent in contributing to and driving the national economy. In South Africa, for example, roughly a third of all economic activity in the country is conducted by government in the form of public goods, service delivery and regulation, employment of civil servants, and state procurement. As a result, the fiscal and economic oversight role of the legislature has become commensurately more challenging. This is even more prevalent in the context of the emergence of a strong pursuit of a developmental state by African nations which has gained traction owing to its massive success amongst what are commonly known as the 'East Asian Tigers'.

The Global Network of Parliamentary Budget Offices (GNPBO), for example, also signals an acknowledgement of the growing importance of the role of parliaments in budget oversight.[5] The GNPBO is a network of national Parliamentary Budget Offices established in 2013/14 and acts as a forum where knowledge may be shared and lessons learned around improving the effectiveness of PBOs.[6] The members of the GNPBO include parliaments that have invested in Parliamentary Budget Offices including established PBOs such as Uganda, Canada, Kenya, Liberia and Nigeria.[7] PBOs extend the fiscal oversight reach of parliaments in that they perform detailed budget analysis, examine the impact of fiscal decision-making by the executive, and provide alternative fiscal forecasts.[8] This is a much more directive role of parliaments in the economy, rendering them both a product and a producer of its society and its economy.

This historical production of the state in Africa and its various institutions (including parliament) brings into sharp perspective the importance of state orientation and its architecture in relation to the various competing interests

[5] See https://bit.ly/2XqzY0F
[6] https://bit.ly/3Ag1M5V
[7] https://bit.ly/3Ag1M5V
[8] https://bit.ly/3Ag1M5V

in society. This history influences the position of parliaments (more generally) with respect to governance and development and, therefore, with how they have traditionally engaged with evidence in performing their roles. In the context of the post-colonial state in Africa and the need to develop both effective and authentic systems of democratic governance, there is a need for strong, independent legislatures. Yet, parliaments remain the most tangible relation between government and the governed and are therefore vital in the alignment of the policies of the former to the basic human needs' satisfactions of the latter. In this regard, parliamentary systems in Africa can only benefit from a greater focus on evidence-based oversight. However, some might argue that many of the parliamentary systems in Africa have built significant systems of evidence-based oversight through their processes, rules, and procedural codes which have emerged over time as part of innovations introduced over the last half a century since the wave of independence started in the early 1960s. These innovations can be linked to the wave of New Public Management that became a feature of the bureaucracies of post-independent African states and which favoured governance systems based on fiscal restraint, accountability, and compliance. Parliamentary systems of evidence of this nature (that drive a bureaucratic agenda with an audit and efficiency orientation) are embedded within a state that values the production and use of evidence for accountability and compliance, as opposed to being a citizen-focused agent of social justice and equitable development. This is especially prevalent in proportional systems of representation where legislators are representative of the party (and, by extension, the ruling party in the state) rather than of the constituents they are meant to serve. This is the nature of many post-colonial African bureaucracies that adopted the systems of governance they had inherited from their colonial predecessors. Without addressing the ideological and political drivers of development, any bureaucratic, technocratic or administrative-based systems of evidence may simply reproduce the past into the future and maintain the inequalities inherent in the old order. Therefore, perfectly functional, efficient systems of evidence production and use may, in fact, not be citizen-focused or authentically development-oriented.

The ideological, political, relational and contextual spheres of Crawley's framework help us to understand how the history of state formation influences contemporary state institutions in Africa and the ways in which parliaments use evidence. For example, the deeply held values underpinning state institutions' views of the role of the state (i.e. maintaining power and control) may affect

the ways in which parliaments perceive the role of evidence in decision-making. The primary concern with evidence use may be rooted more deeply in maintaining a strong state and, in so doing, override concerns around the achievement of development outcomes. If the beliefs, values and principles of the political system are dominated by concerns over political, territorial and economic power, these will have a direct influence on the driving factors behind the establishment of evidence systems. Such evidence systems will be focused on ensuring that the state maintains power and control at the expense of social policy concerns. In this context, the implications for evidence production and use in the broader state and parliament evidence ecosystem may be framed within the boundaries of the ideological sphere in Crawley's diagnostic framework. The fact that the history of state formation is rooted in the pursuit of power and monopoly over the use of violence and control perhaps explains why building a culture of evidence use for social justice and the promotion of the public good is such a challenge. With all systems of the state at the behest of its ideological posture, in cases where the prioritisation of economic and political power takes precedence over securing development outcomes for citizens, concerns over the latter may not necessarily be the drivers of EIDM.

The link between post-colonial state formation and contemporary positions around evidence use in parliaments

African states continue to be plagued by the shadows of their colonial past. The historical events of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Western Europe laid the groundwork for the adoption of governance systems in African colonies after the scramble for Africa (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009; Hay & Lister, 2006; Poggi, 1990; Lachmann, 1989) which continue to form part of the governance machinery in the modern African state (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009; Hay & Lister, 2006; Smith, 2006). These include territorial control as well as strong bureaucratic centres (ibid.).

The geopolitical conflict over economic power and resources across Europe was exported to African states (Adebajo, 2010, pp. 10 & 17; Bond, 2015, p. 30) and has now taken deep root in contemporary African systems of policymaking and governance. It is a historical fact that parliaments also drove the economic projects of slavery and colonialism. The multi-national Dutch East India Company, for example, drove the project of colonisation in South Africa,

whereas its counterpart, the British East India Company colonised West and East Africa. Many other European countries had their own state- (then monarch) sanctioned private colonising companies which implemented slavery and colonialism. The case study on Ghana in this volume, for example, illustrates how parliament evolved from a colonial legislative council that was specifically set up in 1850 to advise the colonial governor on matters of legislation and was never intended to represent the needs of the people (FES Ghana and HRAC, 2011, p. 5). Colonialism was, therefore, as much an economic project that depended on racial subjugation and slavery to achieve its nefarious ends.

Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006, p. 80) posits that post-independence some African leaders have been "content with playing the neo-colonial role of intermediary between Western capitalism and their people". However, this is not necessarily an exclusively African problem. Damgaard (1995, p. 308) reflects on how the actions of parliamentarians in Western Europe are predicated on their individual interests in climbing the party-political ranks. Strom (1995, p. 60), in a similar reflection on parliament in Western Europe, draws on neo-institutionalism to illustrate how the agency and actions of members of parliament are scuppered by various conflicting interests.

Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006, p. 72) provides an excellent exposition of the impact of the West on post-colonial state-building in Africa stating that "… post-colonial rulers have not transformed the inherited structures of the state and the economy to serve the deepest aspirations of their peoples instead of the interests of the dominant classes of the world system, with which these rulers tend to identify. In the current context of globalization, in which there is increased pressure to align state policy with the demands of the major world powers and international financial institutions, the challenges of state building in the interest of the majority of the people are even more formidable today than they were thirty or forty years ago".

In post-colonial Africa, the neo-colonial project of imperialist states was to use the class aspirations of African petty bourgeoisie for their continued dominance and control (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006, p. 74). An authoritarian style of rule was also easier to adopt as the elites to whom power had now been bequeathed were thoroughly accustomed to "legally strong, hierarchically organised and centralized, and economically intrusive governing systems" (Nellis in Herbst, 1998, p. 435). 'Neo-patrimonial multi-party systems' (Erdmann & Engel, in Lodge, 2014, p. 4) were created out of the limited options that political elites

had at their disposal in shaping the new post-colonial state and its bureaucratic machinery, notwithstanding the additional allure of self-enrichment, which also required an increasingly authoritarian-style rule (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006, p. 75). Engelbert (2000) argues that the post-colonial African state relies so heavily on political patronage and extensive networks of political support, because of a lack of authentic legitimacy that is borne out of the alienation of citizens from the political system and power relations. Neopatrimonialism[9] has therefore become commonplace, alongside patronage and corruption (Engelbert, 2000) anchored in and shaped by the legacy of colonial rule.

Political connectedness and patronage, however, still play significant roles in African politics, where private wealth continues to influence party politics and the selection of political leadership (Economic Commission for Africa, 2009, p. 3) effectively reducing citizen participation to electing "representatives of the bourgeoisie and members of illustrious families" into power (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006, pp. 85-86). The rapid transitions to independence facilitated a dependence on political relations and alliances with notable individuals and securing their allegiance to political parties, giving rise (in some cases) to 'Big Man' or 'Big Chief' politics (Di John, 2010, p. 17). Electoral systems are particularly susceptible to neopatrimonialism where there is an intensity in embeddedness and weaknesses in autonomy between political parties, their leaders, and their parliamentary representatives. In Ghana, for example, the executive appoints the majority of the members of Cabinet from amongst the members of parliament (see Legal Resources Centre and FES Ghana, 2006 as per Chapter 1 of this volume). In a representative system where the majority party wins the majority of seats in parliament, the Head of State (and other senior executives) are essentially the 'party bosses' of elected MPs. It is therefore perilous for individual MPs to be seen to be transgressing the 'party line', and in the hierarchical system of power and patronage, it is near impossible for them to hold their senior political leaders accountable for their performance – and even more so for corrupt activities. In fact, parliaments themselves were recorded in the 2006 Report of the Global Corruption Barometer as exceptionally corrupt institutions, and ranked second in South Africa, third in Kenya, fourth in Cameroun and Nigeria, and fifth in the DRC, Gabon and Morocco (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2007, p. 17).

[9] Neopatrimonialism is a hybrid concept that implies the merging of patrimonialism with legal-rational domination, where a patron, who is typically an office holder uses political power and public funds to build a personal following, enabling their continued stay in power. The client parties receive material benefits in exchange. It is useful to think of neopatrimonialism as a continuum between the two poles of rational-legal, and patrimonial government.

Africa's perceived perpetual doom and the failed state narrative is, however, sometimes carelessly applied without considering how the political and economic hegemony of the West is enabled by this kind of analysis (Hill, 2005, p. 139). Indicating a break from its colonial (and post-colonial) shackles and concomitant socio-political challenges, there have been some indications that governance is improving on the African continent, and it is particularly significant that Africa's long-term plan for development, Agenda 2063, has emphasised that one of its primary aspirations is an "Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law" (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019, p. 43). The 2019 African Governance Report (ibid.) reflects this growing consolidation of democratic governance across the continent, where positive trends in the areas of Safety and Rule of Law have been registered since 2014 in more than half (29) of the African states measured by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance [IIAG] (ibid.). The specific areas of Rule of Law and Transparency and Accountability have been at the forefront of shifting the improvements (ibid.) which have been on an upward trajectory from 2014 to 2017.

The ideological and political spheres of Crawley's Six-Sphere Framework help to contextualise post-colonial state formation as a formidable challenge to the propensity of African parliaments to develop effective systems of evidence production and use. The core principles and values at the core of the institution – political leadership and commitment to championing results-based systems of evidence, and ensuring that a culture of evaluation exists – are all affected by the fact that parliaments are embedded within the state and are often unable to separate their own ideological position from the state in general. This is particularly true where parliamentarians owe their allegiance to the political (governing) parties that ensured their position in parliament. Prevailing individual interests and private capital accumulation also define the relational sphere. The degree of trust, commitment and collaboration amongst key stakeholders (as producers, users and 'transmission agents' of evidence) are all influenced by the core ideological position of the state and its emanating structures and institutions (Crawley, 2017).

Waves of democratisation have influenced nation-states for the last four or five decades with the creation of multiparty democracies taking the lead in this mass expansion (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006, p. 71) alongside a growing realisation that political emancipation is tied to economic and social emancipation (Nzongola-

Ntalaja, 2006, p. 76). It is not possible for a country to achieve its development aspirations by relying solely on the political act of democratisation. Democratic consolidation involves the inclusion of the voices of vulnerable and marginalised groups and in securing their fundamental human rights (including economic, social and cultural) (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006, p. 77). In South Africa, for example, with increasing levels of deprivation spurred on by decades of public service delivery failures, the failure to provide communities with basic services and myriad public sector inefficiencies in all sectors, communities and organised civil society, has resulted in various levels of protest and demands including both violent and non-violent displays of public protest.

There are growing expectations that governments need to do more to ensure that basic human rights, particularly the socio-economic rights of citizens, are upheld. Representatives in parliaments are seen as being alienated from citizens and their constituency work is becoming increasingly difficult. Communities that they visit are desperate for advocates who will act on their behalf and mediate and advocate for improvements in public sector delivery. Therefore, there is significant pressure on members of parliament to demonstrate their ability to perform their oversight duties effectively. The demand for evidence is therefore not only endogenous to the parliamentary system as it responds internally to party-political pressures and public demands for accountability from the state, but also as it represents an outward-facing means of accountability to citizens to drive the need for improvements in oversight. The growth in popularity of M&E within the state is attributable to both external and internal demands and has become the tool recognised for its potential to help parliaments become more adept at their oversight role including the aspects of compliance, accountability and governance, as well as for genuine learning and performance improvement in the state.

Examining context and relations: International development, aid, power and influence

There are fundamental problems with the international development sector that continue to perpetuate a form of neo-colonialism (particularly in post-colonial African states) through the proxy of development aid and its links to power and patronage. An examination of these influences on parliamentary systems of evidence falls within the realm of the contextual and relational rings of the Six-Sphere Framework.

Crawley's contextual sphere consists of three main considerations: structure; linkages and networks; and a culture of evaluation. All three considerations are influenced by the diffusion of what occurs in the ideological and political spheres. For example, the placement and positioning of coordinating units or departments responsible for M&E (i.e. the structures, as well as the linkages between them) are influenced by whether or not evidence systems are shaped by the sole need for information for fiscal control and accountability or if they have a more expansive role in informing policymaking. In the parliament of Zambia, for example, there is a distinction between the work of the M&E unit which is responsible for internal accountability and the research coordinators who are responsible for ensuring that evidence is available to legislators (through the committee system) for their oversight work.

In contemporary geopolitics, where territorial power is tied to economic power, a military-industrial complex has been fashioned that has locked nations into the rules of the game of global capital, located mostly in the North. Much has been written on the asymmetries of the relationship between the Global North and the Global South, in which a set of powerful nations at centre-stage of the world system are in control of capitalist relations, and nations at the periphery are at their behest (Redner, 1990, p. 641; Huntington, 1991-1992). Nations in the Global South are therefore bound by the mechanics of the international capitalist system and encumbered by orthodox conceptualisations of economic growth and development. Poorer nations in Africa, many of whom are highly indebted to international finance institutions and wealthier nations, are barely able to provide public goods to their citizens without external financing. Parliaments, therefore, are also engaged as part and parcel of the instruments of the global capital regime to which states are harnessed and may be compromised by serving an agenda that does not necessarily prioritise the use of evidence for decision-making but is rather for budget control and accountability. Concomitantly, the culture of evidence use that favours fiscal accountability and budget control (or even sees itself separate from such) develops over time and is influenced by the structures, networks and linkages that develop in systems of evidence.

The prevailing global development agenda has therefore influenced the integration of M&E into systems of evidence use in parliaments. The new and exacting demands of the SDGs has placed enormous pressure on most countries to pay attention to how they will measure their progress towards the

attainment of these global goals. The value and impact of addressing the SDGs are not in question as these are unquestionably both laudable and desirable. However, Africa is playing catch-up. Although wealthier nations (largely located in the Global North) and poorer nations (in the Global South) are all exposed to the new concerns (SDGs, climate change, Covid-19), the conditions of under-development place even more pressure on achieving the intended goals. The recognition of the importance of monitoring and evaluation has also placed further pressure on countries to implement measurement protocols. This places African governance systems at risk of isomorphism and designing M&E systems with teleological features for the sake of reporting and compliance. Crawley acknowledges that the linkages and networks between the M&E units or departments responsible for evidence production and use in parliaments can provide a "potential catalyst for demand" (2017, p. 4). This means that the potential exists for the growth and strengthening of evidence production even within this context. However, the impact of these kinds of systems for widespread change in the culture of evidence use is usually limited.

At the level of National Assemblies, for example, there is an innate level of distrust between political parties. The building of collaboration and trust between the users and producers of evidence in parliamentary systems is therefore incredibly difficult. In many cases, parliaments such as those in Kenya and Uganda also rely (at least in part) on evidence produced by the executive. Depending on the political-administrative interface and the inherent power imbalances, the 'transmission points' or 'gatekeepers' of evidence may be seen in a hostile light by parliamentarians and this also has an adverse effect on attitudes towards evidence which could regard the evidence process as burdensome or punitive (Crawley, 2017, p. 4).

One of the proposed solutions to the challenge of instituting effective systems of evidence use in parliaments is to address the issues around capacity and the need for capacity building. It is held that weaknesses in supply (i.e. weaknesses in the production of evidence) and demand (the ability to understand the value of and use evidence in decision-making) may be remedied through capacity building, but in actuality the problem may be more complex. Building evidence systems is complex and cannot simply be reduced to a single set of conditions (for example an absence of technical capacity, or even historical and post-colonial state formation, culture or ideological posture and political leadership). Each of these serve as multiple, complex and intersecting strands

that contribute to the way in which evidence is deployed in parliamentary systems of EIDM. The implications for systems strengthening and capacity development cannot therefore ignore these complexities and therefore require an appropriate multi-dimensional set of interventions that will address each of these areas.

Implications for EIDM in the context of democracy, governance and equitable development

The increasing demand for evidence has driven governments and public actors towards seeking new and alternative ways to measure and track performance and to provide certainty on the value and impact of investment in development initiatives. All institutions have been compelled to pay closer attention to their ability to gather, synthesise and use evidence for decision-making. This has become particularly important for states which have been at the receiving end of development assistance for decades. Since the era of Structural Adjustment Programming, the ability to account for expenditure and results has been made conditional to the financing package. Countries that have been at the behest of these packages have not had the luxury of designing these financial and non-financial accounting systems for themselves but have had to endure the performance metrics and matrices imposed upon them by donors. These have often been onerous and have had very little to do with a learning agenda and were perhaps overly concerned with accounting for financial expenditure. Moreover, the targeted recipients of such information were largely external (i.e. the donors) rather than recipient states themselves.

Earlier systems of M&E are also to be found in the history of institutions of the state and the political aetiology of these institutions. New public administration replaced the old public administration roughly around the time of the wave of independence in Africa. This also coincided with the popularisation of the modernisation theory of development and a growing obsession with improving the economic growth trajectories of newly independent states which were also heavily funded by Bretton Woods institutions as part of public sector reform processes. They were meant to boost economic growth, address issues of poverty, and ensure that African countries could 'rise from the ashes' of under-development and poverty. Orthodox conceptualisations of the definition of 'development' drove the economic growth narrative, and this found an easy alliance with more Weberian notions of the state which pushed for a lean,

efficient bureaucracy that was more concerned with compliance, administrative and technical efficiencies and financial accountability than it was with human and social welfare. The economic growth theory of development postulated that poverty and inequality would best be addressed if GDP growth remained the point of departure, and was accompanied by obsessions with financial accountability, rather than developmental outcomes. How this has been counter-productive is explained by the assertion of Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006, p. 84) that the efforts to cope with the liberal global agenda, particularly in the shape of its Human Development Index, prompted the weakening of African states engineered by excessive dependence on donor assistance and resulting in high levels of debt. Of necessity, institutions of the state adopted stringent public sector finance management regulations which anchored M&E in a policing/accounting/compliance narrative, rather than in results- or outcomes-focused and learning agendas.

There is a protracted link between the unwavering pre-eminence of principles of New Public Administration in modern democracies and their contribution to systems of accountability, monitoring and oversight throughout institutions of the state. This has bred an output-driven model of accountability which has contributed significantly to defining the concept and use of evidence in parliaments today. With the rising popularity of M&E in parliaments, what can be done to ensure that these institutions of the state do not fall prey to this model?

States (and, by extension, parliaments) are therefore anything but neutral bodies that represent the 'masses'. A strategic-relational perspective rejects the notion that the state is neutral or that it represents the interests of citizens in general, and instead it proffers that the state serves the interests of the dominant, ruling class (Filippini, 2017, pp. 44-45; Hall & Ikenberry, 1989, p. 7) and are, in fact, "manifestations and materializations of power" (Arendt, 1972, p. 140; Ince, 2016, p. 418). The characteristics of interest revolve around the state's monopoly over the use of power, force and coercion with the emergent risk that parliaments begin acting as instruments of the powerful elite.

Such a strategic-relational perspective questions the assumptions of the inherent legitimacy of parliaments in liberal democratic regimes and highlights the likelihood that they may be negatively influenced by the ideological positioning of the state and its leaders. Evidence use is therefore politically embedded and the legitimacy of the role and function of parliaments in terms

of potential abuse of power and evidence use, is therefore always at risk. Any interventions that seek to strengthen evidence use must be cognisant of this and should seek ways in which to legitimise the use of evidence to ensure that the best possible result is achieved for the benefit of citizens, rather than becoming a handmaiden of the political elite and those in power, or simply a matter of bureaucratic form and function.

Implications in respect of trust, commitment and building a culture of EIDM

In light of the political and ideological constraints facing parliaments in the evidence-ecosystem, to what extent is authentic evidence use then possible in African parliaments? Strategic-relational theories of the state which posit that the state operates as an instrument of (and in relation to) the dominant forces in society, help provide an analytical framework to answer this question. Tsolakis (2010, p. 395) contends that the state "reproduces and coercively expresses the power relations between the social forces constituting it and that it necessarily organises; hence it is the organisational and coercive constitution of domination itself". It is suggested that the state exercises this coercive domination over all its institutions (both state and non-state) with only minor limitations over its power and control (Poggi, 1990). The challenge that parliaments face is to reconcile the pressures of being bound to such power relations with the responsibility of representing the rights of citizens; being agents of people's power as well as agents of governance, democracy and the rule of law.

Therefore, although there has been a steady rise of multiparty politics and an expansion of democratic regimes across the African continent, the incumbent ruling party remains the dominant force despite the presence of a multitude of opposition parties. Factors such as access to the media and state funds play a significant role in enabling the ruling party's domination (Economic Commission for Africa, 2009, pp. 1, 2). Parliaments are meant to provide a critical checks and balances mechanism on which legislative democracies depend to prevent the abuse of power within the system of governance. However, parliaments are often thought of as being the weakest link in African systems of government, either due to unfettered authoritarianism or inertia (Economic Commission for Africa, n.d., p. 1). Applying a strategic-relational framework of analysis, parliaments are inherently compromised due to the fact that their members are also members of the ruling party. The electoral systems of parliaments are

particularly exposed to this type of influence due to the fact that parliamentary representatives may be susceptible to patrimonial relations within the party to which they belong. A simple example may be the inability of parliaments to deal with corruption committed by members of the executive who are their political allies or seniors. Ajam's (n.d.) analysis of the role of parliamentary services in supporting effective legislative oversight in South Africa highlights that one salient pre-condition to the effective functioning of parliament is the stability of relations at the political-administrative interface (Ajam, n.d., p. 12). In the parliamentary system of South Africa, the executive is made up of individuals who are generally politically senior to Members of Parliament (MPs) and this creates a degree of discomfort in this relationship. MPs therefore face the difficult challenge of requiring accountability from their political seniors in the executive, who may regard the oversight process as encroachment onto their own turf (Ajam, n.d., p. 10). The view of Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006, p. 83) that "this is a political culture in which opportunism takes precedence over principle" resonates with this challenge in the parliamentary system.

Although these challenges cannot be resolved without addressing systemic issues of power and interest, parliaments have various mechanisms and instruments at their disposal to ensure accountability. These include public hearings, committees of inquiry, oversight visits, constituency outreach committee hearings, hearings in plenary sessions of the parliament, questions, urgent questions, written questions, the ombudsman, auditors-general, and the public accounts committees, amongst others (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2007, p. 13; Ajam, n.d., p. 8). These instruments and mechanisms of accountability ensure that the effectiveness of the state apparatus is placed under scrutiny to function effectively and to ensure the exposure of matters detrimental to public interest such as maladministration and corruption (Carbone & Memoli, 2015, p. 10). However, they are rarely unfettered by disabling political, economic and individual interests.

The modern democratic state is expected to provide public goods to citizens, and part of the definition of 'safety and security' is not merely the ability to protect its citizens from wars and attacks on its security or to wage war in protection of its national interests (although having the monopoly to use such force may contribute to its hegemonic power over other nations). The main concern for citizens is whether or not the state is able to fulfil its obligations in terms of the protection of human rights and thereby allow all citizens to prosper

equally. In the case of systems of parliament as institutions of the state, they are entrusted to legislate, provide oversight and represent the public to that effect. Parliaments need to have the necessary autonomy from other centres of political power to ensure that there are sufficient checks and balances against the abuse of power as they are the first form of defence against the power of the executive. Conditions must be in place to prevent them from being short-circuited by parliament and to ensure that they do not become spaces for party political patronage to be extended. In order to do this, there is a need to address the perception among citizens in most African countries that parliamentarians only engage the public during an election campaign and that once they have been elected that they lose interest in local concerns (Economic Commission for Africa, n.d., p. 4). Improved use of evidence must not simply become a tool that is misused by the ruling elite, or even by the opposition, for the scoring of political points, but should be a mechanism for decision-making to support governance, development, and the protection of the rights of citizens. Crawley (2017, p. 4) illustrates, through the relational sphere, the importance of collaboration and trust between both the producers and users of evidence in addressing this challenge. Although not explicitly stated as such by Crawley, one could extrapolate that users should include the public as consumers of the evidence and information that is used in the representation of their rights and interests in the work of parliament. The Global Parliamentary Report (2012) recorded poor levels of trust in parliaments globally, proclaiming them as less trusted than any other government institutions globally (Power, 2012, pp. 3-4). Crawley (ibid.) suggests that such a low level of trust "is likely to lead to evaluation evidence that is diverted, delayed or even discarded within the system" and potentially even creating hostility to the use of evidence.

The case studies in these two volumes provide insights into how parliaments in a few selected countries on the continent are attempting to address this challenge (recognising, however, that it is limited to English-speaking Africa, and the inherent limitations imposed by this selection). In Kenya, parliamentary committees are mandated to engage with the public through open hearings and public enquiries, and thereby serve as a link between the legislature and the people. The regular inflow and outflow of information is meant to ensure that the public are continuously informed about the work of parliament thereby keeping them informed about matters of national importance. In the case study on Uganda, it is recorded that citizen participation is protected by, in the first instance, the Constitution, as well as other rules and regulations both at

plenary and committee level. Amongst the various initiatives undertaken by the Parliament of Uganda is their 'Annual Parliament Week' which is discussed in greater detail elsewhere in these two volumens The aim of the event is to increase opportunities for public engagement in the work of parliament. The question remains whether these initiatives are sufficient to address the low levels of trust which the Global Parliamentary Report argues must be addressed through the establishment of mechanisms of engagement between the electorate and parliaments, alongside a sense of awareness of and responsiveness to the needs of the people (Power, 2012).

Crawley's Six-Sphere Framework (2017) helps to highlight how the various traditional, fallback mechanisms of trust-building (e.g. regulatory and procedural) are insufficient in the context of the intervening levels at which change needs to happen (i.e. at the political, ideological and relational levels). It provides a reminder that single-track solutions will not be sufficient to address the complexity of the challenge of EIDM in parliaments and that strengthening the system means that interventions are required at each of these levels of engagement.

In pursuit of remedies and the transformation in evidence use by parliaments

In the first instance, for transformation to happen and EIDM to take authentic hold in parliaments, much more needs to be done to dismantle the hegemony of a Western gaze on knowledge production and the use of evidence in evaluation. While the developments in the 'decoloniality movement' (Cloete & Auriocombe, 2018, p. 1) are a start, a more conscious effort is required to break down harmful ways of thinking and the practices that carry the vestiges of a colonial past. Diagnosing and characterising EIDM systems in parliaments in Africa and the interventions required to strengthen them must take care to adopt a posture of understanding that the external characteristics of such systems are a reflection of the political and ideological core of the state. Building or strengthening evaluation and evidence use in parliaments cannot be instrumental. New concerns prompt the need for greater adaptation and capacity building and require transformation from the traditional use of evidence in parliaments tempered by an understanding of the strategic-relational parameters within which they operate. A re-orientation to the valuable role that evidence can play in politics and governance is needed but should not comprise a purely

technical solution limited to the pursuit of Weberian-esque efficiencies. This is where capacity development needs to adopt a change management approach where the culture of performance, accountability and measurement is linked to concerns around the selection of the best policy options, oversight, and the representation of citizen's rights and the public good. It should not simply take a limited view of oversight being a policing or auditing process. As stated by Ajam (n.d., p. 28), "oversight capability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for oversight effectiveness" and political will remains important. This is also linked to a need for what Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006, pp. 85-86) calls a "paradigm shift on the nature of the state, which needs to be seen not as a private network of relations built around the ruler and his entourage, who have their turn to 'eat' the national cake, but as a set of impersonal institutions serving the general interest".

Turning our attention to the relational features of Crawley's framework, work is needed in the context of ensuring the efficient flow of evidence between 'producer and user' as well as anyone whose role is that of 'gatekeeper' or 'transmission point' of evidence (Crawley, 2017, p. 4). This requires that any shortages of trust or enmity must be overcome. This would require gargantuan efforts to achieve a wholesale sweeping away of any mistrust between inherently agonistic actors with divergent political and ideological positions. As Latib offers, the "political economy of representation" must be considered when designing interventions to build the capacity of parliamentarians and parliamentary officials (2016, p. 207) as there are existing "political antagonisms and related positional contestations" that shape parliamentarians' choices and actions (ibid.). The knowledge and skills required are not purely technocratic and at parliamentary level cannot only be focused on addressing the ability to use and/or produce better evidence for decision-making. While this would be necessary, it would be insufficient in this context. As such, capacity-development programmes need to both acknowledge the limitations placed on the ability to develop complete trust, whilst simultaneously remaining convinced of the value of dismantling chronic shortages of trust which Crawley (2017, p. 4) suggests could lead to "evaluation evidence that is diverted, delayed or even discarded within the system". Crawley (2017, p. 4) states that the creation of "environments that are hostile towards the use of evidence and lead to perceptions that evaluations are tools designed to punish poor performance" must be avoided. Such concerns assume even greater relevance in an age

which has been dubbed the 'post-truth era' when deceit and dishonesty in the public domain assume proportions unheard of in the democracies of the post-war era.

In terms of the contextual, technical and logistical spheres of Crawley's framework, it is clear that there are weaknesses in the capacity for evidence production and use, the institutionalisation (including adequate resourcing) of evidence systems, as well as in the coordination between the various actors in the system. Studies have shown that one of the main challenges in African parliaments is the lack of capacity, especially in terms of human resources such as advisors and research personnel who could effectively support the work of parliamentarians (Economic Commission for Africa, n.d., p. 4). However, the capacity weaknesses will not be ameliorated with the addition of support staff who lack the requisite skills and competencies to provide the kind of support required by parliamentarians. In South Africa, despite interventions to expand the availability and capabilities of human resources to support members of parliament, a review of parliament in 2009 found that MPs were not receiving the type of support they required in order to perform their duties effectively (Ajam, n.d., pp. 15-16). The review found that researchers lacked the capacity or skills to provide MPs with the requisite support and their numbers remained insufficient despite an increase in the number of researchers appointed (Ajam, n.d., pp. 15-16). The types of capacity challenges in South Africa include the lack of a system to track resolutions (although one is in the process of being rolled out), no/poor capacity for monitoring, and poor reporting (Ajam, n.d., pp. 25-26). This situation has been exacerbated by patronage-related phenomena such as cadre deployment and a lack of consequences for poor performance.

Work is also needed to develop effective oversight tools to assist in the improvement of parliament's ability to execute its oversight duties effectively and thereby allow it to both monitor and evaluate the viability of planned government interventions and to optimise the implementation of policies, programmes and plans it has approved (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2007, p. 12). Research has shown that "in African countries the availability of oversight tools is more important than the country's level of democracy in promoting GDP per capita or life expectancy, it is a better predictor of adult illiteracy than good governance, and it is a better predictor of both democracy and good governance in promoting social equality" (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2007,

p. 16); and "the relationship between good governance and development is remarkably stronger and more significant than the relationship between democracy and development" (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2007, pp. 1, 2). Capacity-development interventions must be systemic and institutional and the education and training of individuals is only part of the solution (Latib, 2016, p. 205). The creation of strong institutional systems of evidence production and use at the level of processes, structures, procedures and functions is necessary. Parliamentary services should, ideally, also be a model for evidence use in monitoring, evaluating and learning from their own implementation strategies (i.e. M&E of their oversight, lawmaking and representation). Cloete and Auriocombe (2018) recommend "mainstreaming culturally sensitive and responsive, contextualised participatory research and evaluation designs and methodology implementation in all facets and at all stages of research and evaluation projects".

The evidence-gathering methodology or approach also deserves attention, so that it is not dominated by the purely quantitative/positivist paradigm, or by big data only, and is leavened by more nuanced, triangulated and qualitative data. Banerjee and Duflo (2011, p. 22) make the point in their Nobel prize-winning work that evidence needs to be quite granular and specific and must be supported by randomised control trials. It is important that the voice of the ordinary citizen is heard. The increased use of focus groups, the hearing the opinions of ordinary people, and a generally more reflective/reflexive approach is therefore advised.

Of course, this is not the responsibility of government or parliament alone. Politics is always predicated on struggle. It is beholden on citizens, through civil society, to make their voices heard and to demand reforms to that end. A recent instance is that of the successful efforts of the New Nation Movement in South Africa to overturn the Constitution (Khumalo & Naidoo, 2020) so that parliamentary representation no longer only takes place through the agency of political parties and this outcome is likely, at least to some extent, to reverse the domination of parties and the concomitant executive patronage that all too frequently accompanies it.

Conclusion

Parliaments around the world and in Africa have recognised that M&E is a critical lever in facilitating policymaking, supporting decision-making around

policy alternatives, and assisting in learning and improving for the achievement of development results. Parliamentarians representing the ruling party have a vested interest in the government improving its service delivery performance as this will secure public votes in the election process and will secure parliamentary seats for the winning party. Generally, mechanisms in support of strengthening evidence systems in parliaments have been welcomed. However, despite substantive research on the rise of governance mechanisms in the state and how these operate within government (Jessop, 2010, p. 163), little has been written about parliamentary systems in Africa and their systems of evidence use in oversight. Crawley's Six-Sphere conceptual frame provided a particularly useful scaffolding upon which to begin to address this lacuna. The framework provides a hierarchical series of concentric circles of influence which may be used to 'diagnose' and 'treat' parliaments in relation to their production and use of evidence for oversight, representation and lawmaking. Political and ideological influences are at the core of the framework. As institutions of state, parliaments are not immune to political and ideological influences and this chapter examined how these may influence the work and functioning of these state institutions and, in particular, the use of evidence in parliaments.

The chapter found that current pressing concerns related to the global Covid-19 pandemic, the climate change crisis, as well as protracted socio-economic problems of Africa and the Global South have elevated the need for transformation from the traditional use of evidence by parliaments. Likewise, the way that 'capacity building' of parliamentary services is conceptualised needs re-orientation. Rather than treating capacity building as a purely technical issue, it needs to recognise that issues of trust, collaboration, context, culture, systems, structures, ideology and politics all play an important role in determining the extent to which parliaments, as institutions of the state, would adopt and use systems of evidence.

The strong link between political regimes and the form of the state and its institutions calls into question how the predominance of the monopolistic use of force (and domination of economic power) underpins the way in which we think about institutions of the state and how they behave as well as the evidence systems designed to prop these up. Some of the main ways in which these state institutions are challenged in contemporary African democratic regimes include the bifurcation of economic growth imperatives and social policy objectives which are often in tension with each other. Neo-liberal marketisation of the state

and the focus on managerialism and its links with entrenchment of economic growth (GDP) as the primary indicator of development and modernisation theories of development have supported such notions. Structural Adjustment Programmes in newly independent African states exacted a particularly onerous type of accountability with reporting formats and requirements that resonate with the language of M&E of today (e.g. logical frameworks, performance metrics, results frameworks and logical modelling). This proceeded to breed both the promise and threat of certitude.

The ultimate challenge is to institutionalise evidence systems in such a way as to recognise the inherent complexities in evidence production and use in parliaments and to focus attention on building an appropriate value proposition over time. Although research has shown that the presence of oversight tools is positively correlated with democracy and good governance, it is clear that the weightier influence of politics, ideology, context, culture and relationships have a strong pull on the institutionalisation of evidence systems in parliaments. It is only with continued activism and by recognising this notion and integrating it into capacity- development interventions in deep and extensive ways that change would happen.

Reference List

Adebajo, A. (2010). *The Curse of Berlin: Africa after the Cold War*. London: Hurst.

Ajam, n.d. Future-proofing the State against Corruption and Capture: the Role of the Parliamentary Service in Supporting Effective Legislative Oversight in South Africa. Unpublished paper.

Banerjee, A. & Duflo, E. (2011). *Poor economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. New York: BBS Public Affairs.

Bond, P. (2015). South Africa: Exploding with Rage, Imploding with Self-Doubt – but Exuding with Socialist Potential. *Monthly Review*, (June):21-40. https://doi.org/10.14452/MR-067-02-2015-06_2

Carbone, G & Memoli, V. (2015). Does Democratization Foster State Consolidation? Democratic Rule, Political Order, and Administrative Capacity. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, 28(1):5-24. https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12056

Cloete, F. & Auriocombe, C. (2018). *Revisiting Decoloniality for More Effective Research and Evaluation*. Presentation to the 13th EES Biennial Conference: Evaluation for more resilient societies. 1-5 October 2018: Thessaloniki, Greece. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v7i1.363

Crawley, K. (2017). The six-sphere framework: A practical tool for assessing monitoring and evaluation systems. *African Evaluation Journal* 5(1), a193. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v5i1.193

Di John, J. (2010). The Concept, Causes and Consequences of Failed States: A Critical Review of the Literature and Agenda for Research with Specific Reference to Sub-Saharan Africa. *European Journal of Development Research*, 22(1):10-30. https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2009.44

Dryzek, J.S. & Dunleavy, P. (2009). *Theories of the Democratic State*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-36645-9

Economic Commission for Africa. (2009). *African Governance Report II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available from: https://bit.ly/2XsYXQP

Economic Commission for Africa. (n.d.). The role of parliament in promoting good governance. Unpublished document of the Governance and Public Administration Division. Available from: https://bit.ly/395R46i

Engelbert, P. (2000). *State Legitimacy and Development in Africa*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner.

Evans, P. (1995). *Embedded Autonomy: States & Industrial Transformation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400821723

FES Ghana & HRAC. (2011). *The Law-making Process in Ghana: Structures and Procedures*. Accra: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Ghana.

Filippini, M. (2017). *Using Gramsci: A New Approach*. London: Pluto Books. https://doi.org/10.26530/OAPEN_625289

Hall, J.A. & Ikenberry, G.J. (1989). *The State*.Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Hay, C. & Lister, M. 2006. Introduction: Theories of the State. In C. Hay, M. Lister & D. Marsh. (eds), *The State: Theories and Issues*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-80227-8

Herbst, J. (1998). The Structural Adjustment of Politics in Africa. In: P. Lewis, *Africa: Dilemmas of Development and Change*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Huntington, S.P. (1991-1992). How Countries Democratize. *Political Science Quarterly*, 106(4):579-616. https://doi.org/10.2307/2151795

Illing, S. (2018). A philosopher explains America's "post-truth" problem. *Vox*, Aug, 14(8).

Ince, O.U. (2016). Bringing the Economy Back. In: H. Arendt, K. Marx & the Politics of Capitalism. *The Journal of Politics*, 78(2):411-426. https://doi.org/10.1086/684596

Jessop, B. (2010). Cultural political economy and critical policy studies. *Critical Policy Studies,* 3(3-4):336-356. https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171003619741

Khumalo, M. & Naidoo, S. (2020). *Electoral Shake Up: South African Constitutional Court Opens Door for Non-Partisan Candidates in Lexology*. 17 June 2020. United Kingdom: Covington & Burling LLP.

Lachman, R. (1989). Elite Conflict and state formation in 16th and 17th century England and France. *American Sociological Review*, 54:141-162. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095787

Langer, L., Goldman, I. & Pabari, M. (2020). *Analytical framework used to guide case study research.* In: I. Goldman & M. Pabari (eds.), *Using evidence in policy and practice*. Lessons from Africa. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007043

Latib, S. (2016). Enhancing capacity for legislative oversight. *Journal of Public Administration*, 51(2).

Lodge, T. (2014). Neo-patrimonial politics in the ANC. *African Affairs,* 113(450):1-23. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adt069

Mo Ibrahim Foundation. (2019). Agendas 2063 ad 2030: is Africa on track? *African Governance Report*.

Morris, I. (2015). *War. What is it Good for? The Role of Conflict in Civilisation, from Primates to Robots.* London: Profile Books.

Nzongola-Ntalaja, G. (2006). Challenges to state building in Africa. *African Identities*, 4(1):71-88. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725840500268374

Pelizzo, R. & Stapenhurst, R. (2007). *The Role of Parliament in Promoting Good Governance in Africa.* Available at SSRN: https://bit.ly/3hx4r48 and https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2101133

Peters, G. & Pierre, J. (2006). Governance, Government and the State. In: C. Hay, M. Lister & D. Marsh (eds.), *The State: Theories and Issues*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-80227-8_12

Poggi, G. (2001). Theories of state formation. In: K. Nash & A. Scott, *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology.* Massachusetts: Blackwell.

Power, G. (2012). *Global Parliamentary Report: The changing nature of parliamentary representation*. Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Programme. https://bit.ly/3kj8AdP

Redner, H. (1990). Beyond Marx-Weber: A Diversified and International Approach to the State. *Political Studies*, XXVIII:638-653. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1990.tb01507.x

Rose, N. & Miller, P. (2010). Political power beyond the State: problematics of government. *The British Journal of Sociology*. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2009.01247.x

Smith, M.E. (2006). How Do Archaeologists Compare Early States? *Reviews in Anthropology*, 35:5-35. https://doi.org/10.1080/00938150500535497

Strydom, W., Funke, N., Nienaber, S. & Nortje, K. (2010). Evidence-based Policymaking: A Review. *South African Journal of Science,* 106 (5/6). https://doi.org/10.4102/sajs.v106i5/6.249

Tilly, C. (1985). War Making and State Making as Organized Crime. In: P. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer & T. Skocpol. *Bringing the State Back*. Cambridge: Cambridge Uviversity Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511628283.008

Tsolakis, A. (2010). Opening up Open Marxist Theories of the State: A Historical Materialist Critique. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 12:387-407. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2010.00414.x

Von Soest, C. (2010). *What Neopatrimonialism Is – Six Questions to the Concept*. Hamburg: German Institute of Global and Area Studies.

Weyrauch, V., Echt, L. & Suliman, S. (2016). Knowledge into policy: Going beyond "Context Matters". Available from: https://bit.ly/3kemEFq

2

AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR SYSTEMATIC EVIDENCE USE IN AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS



Babette Rabie and Tania Ajam

Introduction

A proliferation in the amount of information available has heightened the awareness of the potential importance of evidence use in policy decision-making. In early writings on evidence in policymaking, Davies, Nutley and Smith (1999) describe evidence-based policymaking as an approach that uses various evidence sources to take informed decisions on policies and public programmes, integral not only to the process but also in the evaluation of policymaking (Boaz, Davies, Fraser & Nutley, 2019, p. 1). Evidence-based policymaking adopts a rational approach to policymaking. Using this approach, the policymaker views policymaking as an analytical process in which assumptions are developed that assist in systematising and programming the actions that need to be taken (Bekkers, Fenger & Scholten, 2017, p. 118). It presents a countering viewpoint to opinion-based policymaking that is often based on "the selective use of evidence […] or […] the untested views of individuals or groups" (Segone, 2004, p. 27).

While the importance of evidence is certainly acknowledged in an information era, what is defined as 'evidence' within a contested political space and in dealing with socially complex phenomena often depends on the viewpoint adopted by both the producer and the user of the evidence. Parliaments are designed to be arenas of political contestation and they routinely legislate on complex social, economic, environmental and technological policy conundrums. Policies generally have 'winners' and 'losers' and distributing the intergenerational burden of costs and the assignment of benefits is conditioned not only on the objective merits and demerits of particular policy options, but also on political values. Politics is concerned with "norms, values, ideology, power, influence, authority" and stands apart from scientific inquiry concerned with "facts, objectivity, and empirically warranted descriptions and explanations" (Mathison, 2005, p. 320).

The origins of the evidence-based approach emphasised a rationality that regarded the scientific community as "the producer of relevant, non-disputed and authoritative knowledge" (Bekkers et al., 2017, p. 304) that can produce pertinent and appropriate evidence for policymaking processes through the gathering and analysing of empirical data in a systematic and transparent manner (Boaz et al., 2019). The study of complex social interventions, however, presents a range of "methodological difficulties, including uncertainty in demonstrating causation and the strictures of valid and reliable measurement"

(Boaz et al., 2019, p. 2) that renders contradicting evidence from different members within the scientific community. Furthermore, policymakers receive information from other sources including "economic, attitudinal, behavioural and anecdotal evidence" offered by "lay persons, propaganda, judgements, insight/experience, history, analogies, local knowledge and culture" (Strydom, Funke, Nienaber, Nortje & Steyn, 2010, p. 1) or routine data from departmental monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems or internal research units (Marais & Matebesi, 2013, pp. 363-364). Generally, the mainstream media is also influential as a source of evidence. More recently the internet and online social networks enable citizens to create their own knowledge base which Lievrouw refers to as "commons knowledge". This "provides an alternative and complement to the expert-driven, disciplinary, institutionalised and authoritative process of knowledge creation, distribution and gate-keeping" (Lievrouw, in Bekkers et al., 2017, p. 305).

In moving from evidence-based policymaking to evidence-informed policymaking, policy analysts acknowledge the inherent limitations of the evidence-based approach. Choices are inevitably limited by the information that is available, the time available, inherent uncertainty about the future, and the capacity to process the information so that the costs and benefits of all the various alternatives can be assessed (Bekkers et al., 2017, p. 45). Evidence often only presents description(s) of the situation as it is, rather than providing information on the basis of which strategic decisions can be made (Marais & Matebesi, 2013, p. 365). Choices may be limited by practical circumstances and the complexity of decisions (Dunn, 2018, p. 50).

Evidence rarely offers a single, uncontested solution to a complex public problem but needs to be interpreted in the context of the political decision to be made (Shergold, 2016, p. 485). When policies are characterised by a variety of values, conflicting goals, and causal processes that are uncertain, clear solutions to the problem are difficult and contentious (Peters, 2015, p. 9). In this context "evidence is harnessed to competing arguments about ends and means, and the political decision-making process is inherently marked by conflicts, trade-offs, and compromises" (Lindblom, 1979, in Head, 2015, pp. 472-473).

In practice, the politics of policy decision-making draws on a mixture of science, value preferences, and practical judgements on feasibility and legitimacy (Head, 2010, p. 13). The policymaker is obliged "to take account of the ethical values, social mores, community attitudes, behavioural consequences, and political ideologies that influence government decisions" (Shergold, 2016, p. 485). These considerations may lead to the uptake of evidence contradictory to the accepted codes for ethical, objective and scientific research and therefore objectivity is demanded of researchers when conducting scientific research. The process of value clarification may sometimes mean that while the policymaker concurs with research findings and proposed actions, the pragmatic considerations, such as the available financial, organisational or human resources; the political and managerial buy-in required for successful implementation; and the inevitable trade-offs against other pressing priorities, may lead to decisions that contradict what the evidence dictates.

Therefore, while evidence-influenced policy practice advocates that policy decisions should consider rigorous evidence as far as possible, it is unrealistic to expect that the availability of evidence will always give rise to policy decisions that are completely objective and rational (Cloete, 2018, p. 327). It should rather be concluded that policy evidence is a multifaceted concept which includes methodologically sound and defensible scientific evidence, contextualised internal monitoring data, observations of contemporary media reports and opinions, and an understanding of the 'commons', being the shared communal understanding of the issue at the grassroots level. While internal monitoring data, media reports and commons knowledge may be limited in generalisability or reliability of method, they offer the benefit of immediate, contextualised and value-laden insights and observations, in contrast to the delay that characterises the production of scientific evidence.

Several conceptual models of frameworks have sought to capture and present the complexity faced by parliaments in fulfilling their political, social and economic mandates. The frameworks capture the complexity of parliamentary lawmaking, oversight and representation functions and they demonstrate the potential role of evidence in improving and promoting accountable policy decisions and advising how evidence-use can be strengthened at individual, organisational and systems levels.

This chapter commences with an overview of a selection of models and frameworks developed for the African context that focus on three factors – the macro context that shapes the work of parliament, the microenvironment that influences evidence use, and interventions that may improve evidence use in parliament. It reflects on these models to create a shared understanding of how the various factors, contexts and requirements presented in the frameworks could inform initiatives that aim to strengthen evidence use in African parliaments. This provides an important lens for the rest of this book and provides a basis for a common understanding of important concepts discussed in later chapters and the ways in which they fit together to strengthen evidence-use capacity of African parliaments.

Conceptual models for evidence use in legislatures

In recent years several conceptual models or frameworks have been developed in an attempt to explain different dimensions of the complex relationship between the macro and micro governance contexts for evidence uptake in parliaments. They also shed some light on how evidence use can be promoted to enhance the ability of parliaments to fulfil their political, social and economic mandates within a complex, often uncertain, and rapidly changing policy environment.

This section cannot provide a comprehensive overview of all available models, but rather aims to capture some of the key motifs in contemporary understanding of the African parliamentary context as presented by prominent scholars and practitioners in the field. The discussion of the various models and frameworks presents an analysis of the current status quo. The purpose is not to critique the existing models, nor to present a new model that better integrates the external, internal and capacity building context.

At present, there is no single over-arching integrated model of evidence use in African parliaments. Since models are designed to focus on specific research questions and abstract and simplify to render the analysis of complex dynamics more tractable, this is not surprising. The analysis of these frameworks draws on the following dimensions:

- **Sources of evidence** in the legislative space;
- The **macro governance context** that affects evidence use;
- The **micro governance factors** that affect evidence use;

- Integrated models to **promote effective, systematic evidence use by parliaments;** and
- Models for measuring the **performance** of parliaments.

Table 2.1 below provides a brief introduction to each model which will be discussed further in the relevant sections.

The current information era means that information from various sources is readily available to parliaments with varying degrees of relevance and reliability. There is a continuum of information useful for legislative and oversight decisions, which range from more objective data (such as statistical evidence from surveys or administrative data, economic and econometric evidence, information from evaluations and research studies) to more value-laden information based on the intuitive/tacit knowledge of stakeholders, their perceptions, or evidence that considers the ethical implications of policy decisions (see Goldman & Pabari, 2020, p. 15).

The uptake of available evidence however depends on the appropriateness of the information, as Parkhurst demonstrates in the following model.

Table 2.1 Overview of models

Sources of evidence	- Parkhurst (2017) advise that evidence must be 'packaged' to inform possible solutions to the policy issue. - Goldman and Pabari (2020) advise that evidence is more likely to be useful if it is accessible, timeous, credible, relevant to the policy process and aligned with the context. - The Weyrauch and INASP models consider the internal and external context of evidence use.
Micro governance factors	- Rabie (2019) discuss various pragmatic, political, personal and evidence-review considerations that may influence decision-making. - The parliamentarian's compass models drills down to the motivations and factors which influence the inclination and ability to individual MPs to use evidence in discharging their responsibilities.

Table 2.1 Overview of models (continued)

Macro governance factors	◗ Crawley's Six-Sphere framework (2017) assess the readiness of a parliament to adopt a more evidence-informed and accountable decision-making approach in terms of the "technical" and "logistical" readiness, the political environment, relationships with key stakeholders and ideological principles and values. ◗ The INASP governance context framework (2017) acknowledge the influence of macro governance factors such as developments in civil society, the market and the broader political space as well as the institutional culture, organizational arrangements and performance. ◗ Organisational factors that affect evidence include the political and organisational culture of parliament, the values and performance expectations of parliamentarians (Parliamentary Centre & the World Bank Institute, n.d.). ◗ The capacity of leadership, senior management and other human resources; the existence of formal management processes that access, interpret and use evidence; and available time and financial, technology and knowledge infrastructure to source and present evidence influence the political and administrative organisational capacity of parliament (INASP, 2017).
Integrated models for strengthening evidence use	◗ Capacity for evidence use should strengthen the evidence user and internal demand to take-up available evidence (Steward, Langer & Erasmus, 2019). ◗ Contextual factors that influence evidence use include the external political, economic, social and cultural systems in society that present opportunities or barriers to evidence use, the stakeholders that produce knowledge or campaign for policy changes, the internal culture, organisational capacity, management and processes; and other resources that explain how members of an organisation think and behave (Weyrauch, Echt & Suliman, 2016). ◗ The integrated framework by Langer, Goldman and Pabari (2020) acknowledges the importance of strengthening both the government-focused demand-led response to assess and stimulate the demand for evidence by decision makers and evidence users, as well as the factors that influence the generation or supply of evidence to inform specific programmes, instruments, strategies or activities that support and encourage evidence use.
Performance of parliament	◗ With due consideration of the context, the performance of parliament can be assessed in terms of its financial performance, compliance to the rule of law and internal procedures, efficiency, effective oversight, response to relevant issues and promoting sustainable governance. ◗ Parliament in terms of its information need can range from the rubber stamp legislature, to the emerging legislature , the informed legislature and finally the transformative legislature.

Source: Authors: sources of evidence in the legislative space

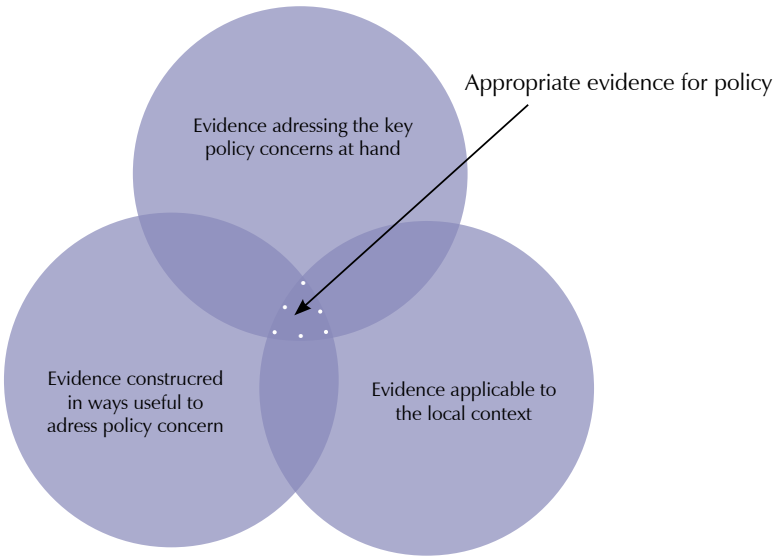


Figure 2.1 Appropriate evidence for policy context

Source: Parkhurst (2017, p. 118)

The model demonstrates that for evidence to be appropriate to legislatures, such evidence must also be constructed or 'packaged' in a manner that is useful to inform possible solutions to the issue, rather than simply describe the issue and, in addition, should be applicable to the specific local context where the evidence will be applied.

Goldman and Pabari (2020, p. 25) agree that evidence is more likely to be useful if it is readily accessible to the policymaker, is available in time to inform the policy decision, can render credible information that is relevant to the policy process, and is aligned with the context within which the policy will be implemented.

In the legislative space, particularly in parliamentary or Westminster-derived systems, the information provided to parliament for its law-making function and its oversight scrutiny is derived from the executive. To assert their independence and hold the executive to account, it is critical that parliaments develop their own capacity to identify their information needs and acquire independent sources of information and analysis. Here institutions supporting democracy, such as supreme audit institutions (auditors-general), human rights commissions and ombuds can play a crucial role, as can academia, think tanks and civil society.

Ensuring that appropriate evidence is available for use by parliaments depends both on factors within the macro governance context that determine the production and transmission of evidence, as well as on factors within the micro context that influence the uptake and response to evidence. These will be discussed in the next two sections.

The macro governance context that affects evidence use in legislatures

Crawley (2017) presents a ***Six-Sphere framework*** (see Figure 2.2) to assess readiness of a parliament to adopt a more evidence-informed and accountable decision-making approach, or to identify areas that should be strengthened. While the framework recognises the importance of the immediate 'technical' and 'logistical' readiness, it also advocates for macro "considerations of the political environment, trust and collaboration between key stakeholders and the (ideological) principles and values" that shape to context of the evidence system (Crawley, 2017, p. 3).

The six spheres can be summarised as follows:

- At the outer level, the **logistical** sphere considers the availability of time and resources to generate evidence, as well as considerations of factors that may prevent information from flowing through the demand and supply chain to the evidence users.
- The **technical** sphere complements the logistical space in considering the technical capacity of individuals and departments to generate information on the supply side and to locate and process useful information on the demand side.
- The **contextual** sphere considers the organisational arrangements, hierarchies, linkages and networks within the organisation and among organisations that facilitate the production and use of evidence, including the culture and willingness to acknowledge both positive and negative performance information.
- The **relational** sphere considers the levels of trust and collaboration among the producers and users of information, extending also to those who transmit the information or act as gatekeepers along the chain. Building strong trust and collaboration relationships helps to avoid delays, diversion or discarding of relevant information.
- The **political** sphere considers the commitment of political heads, including senior managers and heads of departments, to an evidence-based approach. This commitment creates a conducive context that strengthens the production and transmission of relevant information in the outer spheres discussed above.

- The inner **ideological** space considers the extent to which the use of evidence resonates with the core principles and values at the heart of the organisation at a wider level, the ideological underpinnings of the state or, on a very personal level, the principles and values of the individual decision maker.

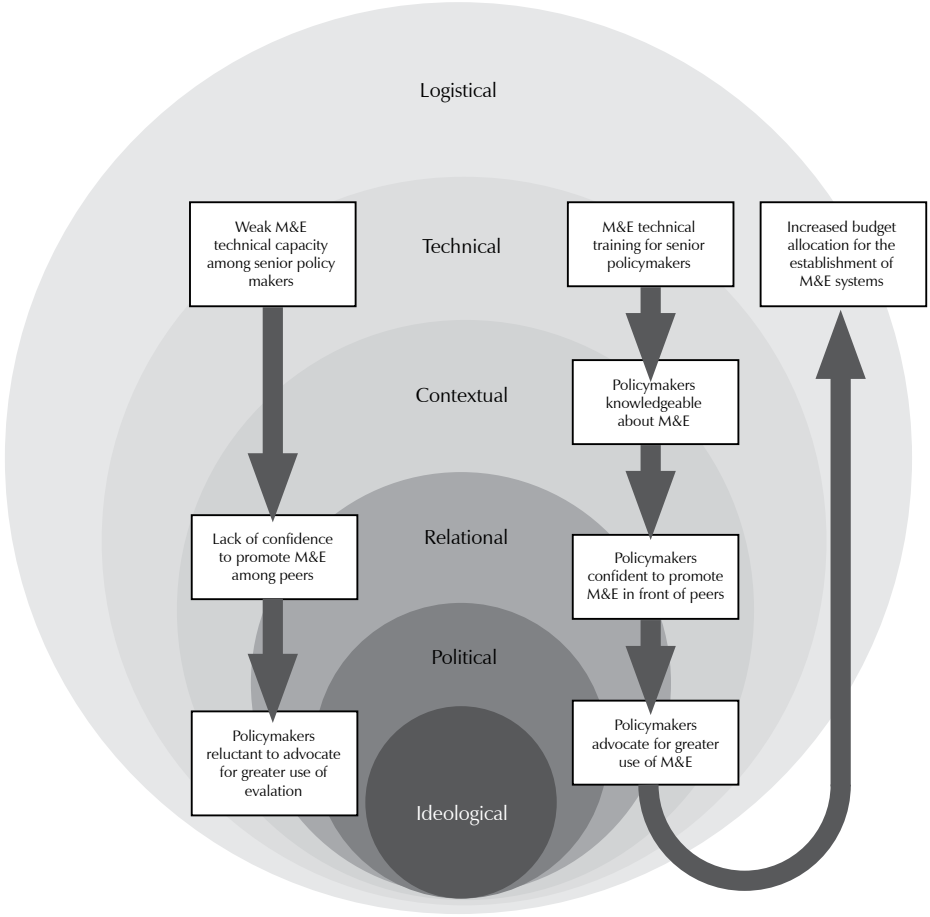


Figure 2.2 The Six-Sphere framework

Source: Crawley (2017. p. 7)

The interaction between the macro and micro contexts of parliament is also demonstrated in the ***INASP governance context framework*** (see Figure 2.3). "At the macro level parliaments influence and are influenced both by wider developments in civil society, the market and the broader political space and by their own institutional culture, organizational arrangements and performance." (INASP, 2017, p. 15) The relationship between state, the market and civil society and the degree to which active engagement by citizens in

governance matters is encouraged or enabled shape the macro governance context in which parliaments operate. At the micro governance level, the organisational factors that affect evidence use include the political and organisational culture of parliament and is strongly influenced by the values and performance expectations of parliamentarians (Parliamentary Centre and the World Bank Institute, n.d., p. 7). The organisational capacity of parliament, both the political and administrative components, is influenced by the capacity of leadership, senior management and other human resources; the existence of formal management processes that access, interpret and use evidence; and the available time, financial, technology and knowledge infrastructure to source and present evidence (INASP, 2017, p. 14).

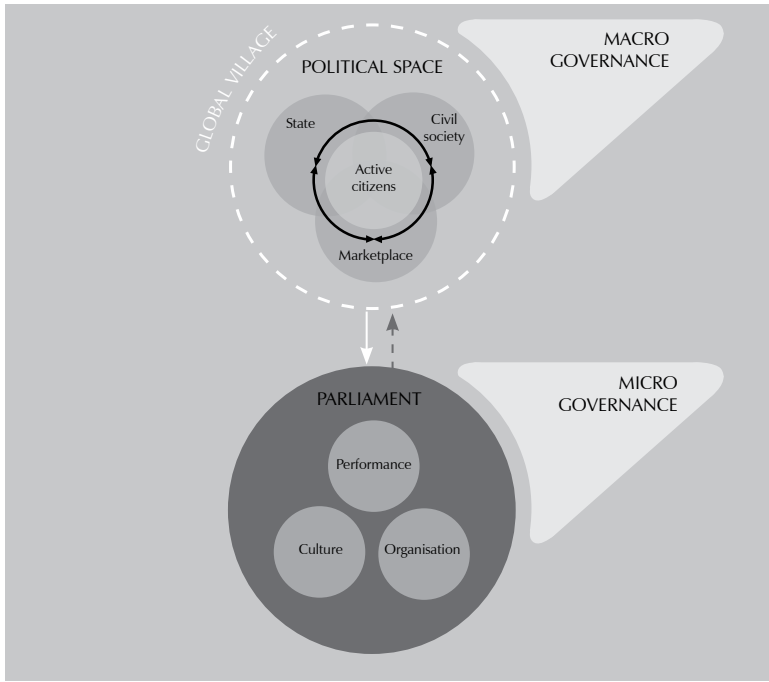


Figure 2.3 The macro and micro governance contexts of parliament

Source: INASP (2017, p. 15)

Strengthening the macro governance context (for example through legislative provisions for access to information, transparency, and access to information) increases citizen oversight both over parliaments and by parliaments by, for instance, encouraging the application of evidence in decisions to improve their responsiveness and accountability. In governance systems characterised by executive dominance and a submissive legislature, demand for evidence

is likely to be minimal, and its application is unlikely to be impactful. Similarly, institutions such as a free media, robust electoral competition, and vibrant NGO engagement could create incentives for effective evidence use.

In turn, a conducive environment for evidence use requires administrative support and access to sufficient resources, time and technical capacity; efficient corridors that facilitate access to information; and an appreciation of evidence by members of parliament (MPs) (see Crawley's diagnostic questions, 2017, p. 7). Equally important is the commitment of the parliament to genuine public participation, rather than just paying lip service. For this, the necessary resources must be allocated to ensure meaningful engagement. This may be challenging in developing country contexts where the executive often exercises tight control over the budgets of legislatures.

It should also be noted that there are considerable power relations embedded in the provision of evidence. The provision of evidence is not only technical but political, and is shaped by the power relations within the broader political system and society (e.g. who is able to provide evidence, which forms of evidence are regarded as authoritative). As will be discussed further in the section below on "The network/relational level of governance", the poor and marginalised may face significant language barriers or be unable to effectively give expression to their evidence. On the other hand, sophisticated lobby groups may afford to commission research to justify their advocacy efforts. It is therefore important for parliaments to solicit as broad a range of diverse sources of evidence as possible.

The micro governance factors that affect evidence use in legislative settings

Narrowing the lens on the micro governance perspective and based on research on the decision-making variables considered in South African portfolio committees, Rabie (2019) proposes a model that captures the ***considerations in decision-making***. It would be useful to test the extent to which this model is appropriate for other parliamentary contexts and where amendments may be useful to deal with the idiosyncrasies of different micro-governance contexts.

The decision-making model spans both rational and ideological considerations and is grouped into four quadrants, namely:

A) Pragmatic considerations;

B) Evidence;

C) Political party commitments; and

D) Personal opinions, values and beliefs.

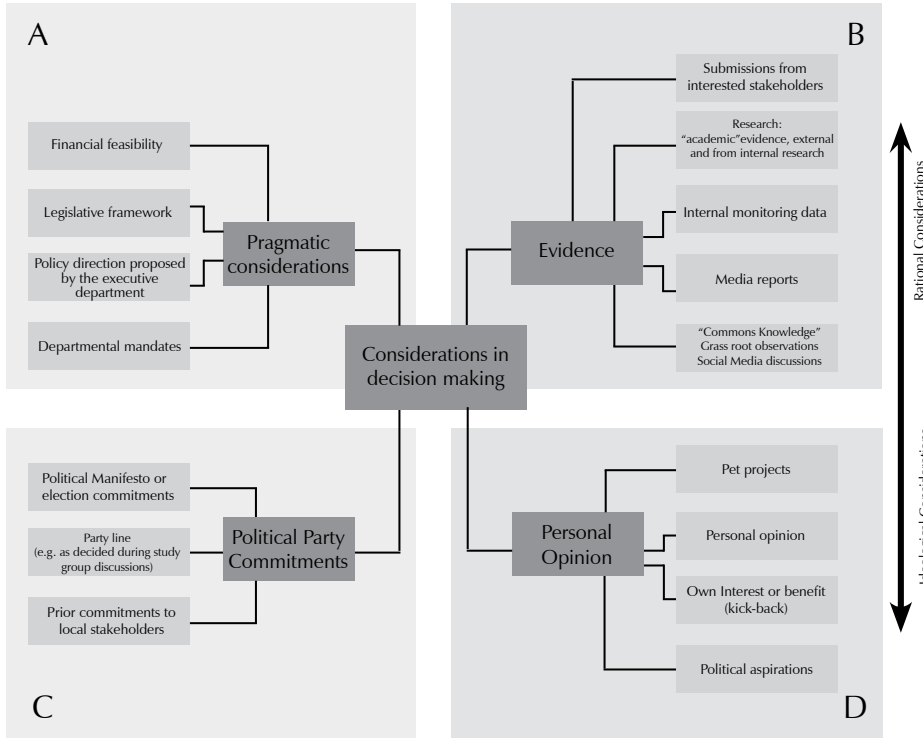


Figure 2.4 Considerations in parliamentary committee decision-making

Source: Rabie (2019)

Within each of the four quadrants, a set of decision-making considerations are proposed.

Quadrant A: Pragmatic considerations

This quadrant captures four decision-making criteria:

1. Pragmatic considerations that reflect on the financial implications and feasibility of the policy decision.
2. Alignment with the legislative framework including the Constitution, as well as prior policies and approved legislation on the issues.
3. The policy direction proposed by executive departments led by ministers or senior managers who are also senior members of the political party exerts a strong influence

on the adopted viewpoint and the deliberations of the committee. As such, executive departments set the policy direction and often draft first versions of new Bills.

4. The alignment of the policy with the approved mandate of the department, given that policy typically has its origin in the executive sphere for further consideration by policymakers.

Quadrant B: Evidence

This quadrant provides for five additional decision-making criteria:

1. Oral or verbal submissions from the public or interest groups which may include direct petitions or points raised in public hearings regarding new information that the committee could consider during deliberations.
2. Scientific research evidence produced by academics and researchers within the context of rigorous research principles that specify and promote the reliability and validity of findings. The research briefs produced by the parliamentary support staff were also regarded as instrumental in informing the discussions of the committee.
3. Internal monitoring data produced by departments during their routine quarterly and annual monitoring and reporting or through research and evaluation studies.
4. Media reports that may include rigorous research or emotive observations on the world reflecting a particular viewpoint or perspective on reality for consideration by the policymaker.
5. Grassroots understanding or 'commons' knowledge that may derive from community engagements, site visits or other outreach programmes or from community discussions in popular media or from social media platforms.

Quadrant C: Political party commitments

Three decision-making criteria are added in this quadrant:

1. Political party commitments reflecting the longer-term commitment of the party on the issues as set out in the political manifesto or election promises. At times this may also be observed as a path dependency where historical or past courses of action predict the future stance of the party.
2. The party line is a shorter-term agreement that the party caucus reaches during the study group preparation in the days prior to the committee meeting. Members of the party will support the adopted stance during the committee's deliberations.
3. Treaties with international donors or agreements with commitments to local stakeholders, such as promises to influential groups (e.g. unions) or local agreements (e.g. such as the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) in South Africa).

Quadrant D: Personal opinions, values and beliefs

This quadrant concludes with the four three decision-making criteria:

1. Specific declared interests or pet projects that the policymaker pursues actively, either openly or more obscured.
2. The personal opinion of the policymaker on the policy issue which may or may not be aligned with the ideology of the party.

3. Non-declared personal interests or potential benefits to be derived by the individual.
4. Future political aspirations of the member or chairperson within the political party or executive.

Content advisors and researchers at the Parliament of South Africa were asked to select the five decision-making criteria most prevalent in shaping the deliberations of the committee and the follows list of eight factors emerged as most prevalent:

1. The department's mandate;
2. Alignment of the issue with the political manifesto of the party;
3. The existing legislative framework with which new legislation will align;
4. Financial feasibility of the proposed decision;
5. Grassroots observations and alignment with 'commons' thinking;
6. Information from internal monitoring data;
7. Information and viewpoints from media reports; and
8. Alignment with the adopted party line on the issue (see Rabie, 2019, pp. 41-42).

With a similar micro-governance focus but with a greater emphasis on individual MPs rather than parliamentary committees, the ***parliamentarians' Compass*** model identifies the factors that influence the decisions of parliamentarians. The model places parliamentarians at the centre while factors that serve to shape MPs' decision-making are represented at each of the cardinal points (see Figure 2.5).

To the north is the MP's constitutional role a legislator and custodian of oversight, with the responsibility of upholding the constitutional principles such as truth, integrity, equality, transparency and accountability.

To the west lie MPs' obligations to citizens and constituents. The priorities of constituents may not necessarily align with those of the political party, and MPs must be seen to deliver to constituents or risk losing the support of their voters where parliament is constituency based. To the east lies personal and professional ambition of a higher office either within the party or within government. Parliamentarians may either use or ignore evidence during debates or may vote to advance career possibilities within the party. These incentives would also be shaped by macro governance characteristics such as the electoral system (e.g. a party list system or a constituency system, an open or closed party list etc). In a closed party list system, for instance, overly critical or independent minded use of evidence in holding political seniors to

account could be extremely career limiting for a backbencher MP. To the south of the parliamentarian's Compass lie obligations to the political party and the political manifesto that captures the policy aims of the party. Again, to deliver on the promises of the manifesto, parliamentarians may either pursue actions aligned with the evidence, weakly aligned with evidence, or in contradiction with evidence.

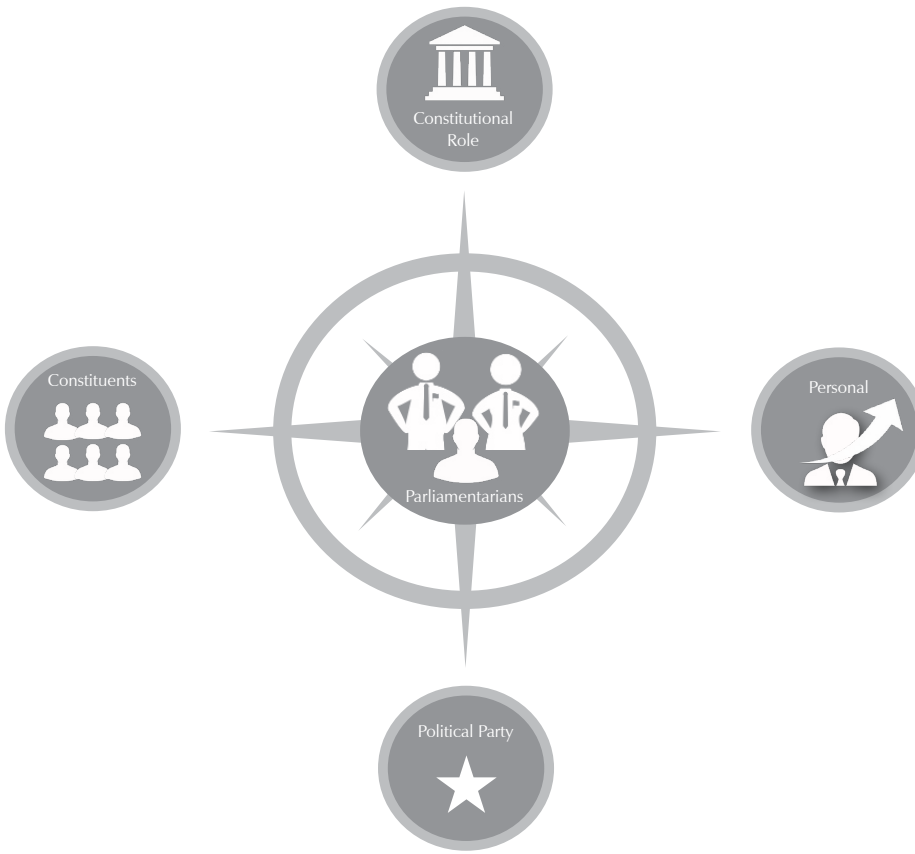


Figure 2.5 Parliamentarians' Compass MP level model

Source: Crawley and Ali (2017), unpublished, used with permission

MPs' decisions are influenced by these four factors and attempts to meet the interests of multiple demands may pull MPs in different directions. The politician constantly needs to make decisions that maximise individual political benefits while minimising negative political fallout which may result in their removal from the party ranks.

It is not clear how the gender of MPs could influence decision-making since this does not appear to be an explicit variable in the model. This would be a fruitful avenue for further research.

Models to understand how systematic evidence use can be improved

With appreciation of the micro and macro level factors that promote or hinder evidence use, several integrated models pursue changes at the personal/individual level, the interpersonal/organisational level, and at the system level to encourage the use of evidence. Steward, Langer and Erasmus (2019, p. 625) focus on strengthening the ***capacity for evidence use***. The model emphasises the evidence user and interventions that may increase evidence use by the actors during decision-making. This signifies a shift in focus from the producers of the evidence (Steward et al., 2019, p. 625). The model specifically focuses on strengthening the internal demand side that determines the uptake of evidence to counter a perceived overemphasis on strengthening the external supply side of evidence. The model emphasises the need for multiple levels of engagement, a combination of interventions, a spectrum of outcomes, and a detailed consideration of context (see Figure 2.6). It provides for a range of different interventions (e.g. training, mentoring, organisational change, co-production) that encourage decision makers to use evidence. Instead of a single approach to develop evidence capacity, the model encourages flexibility and multiple approaches in a continuous cycle to facilitate and reinforce evidence use.

To stimulate the demand for evidence, interventions should be appropriate in terms of the individual decision-maker's existing capacity to consider evidence, the need for evidence in a particular decision, and the individual, team and organisational role of the decision-maker. Ultimately, multiple approaches should reinforce the incremental development of the decision-maker to consider evidence (Steward et al., 2019, p. 627).

Weyrauch, Echt and Suliman (2016) identify ***six contextual factors*** that influence and determine the use of evidence. Two external dimensions are (1) the macro-context; and (2) intra-and inter-relationships with state and non-state agents (see Figure 2.7).

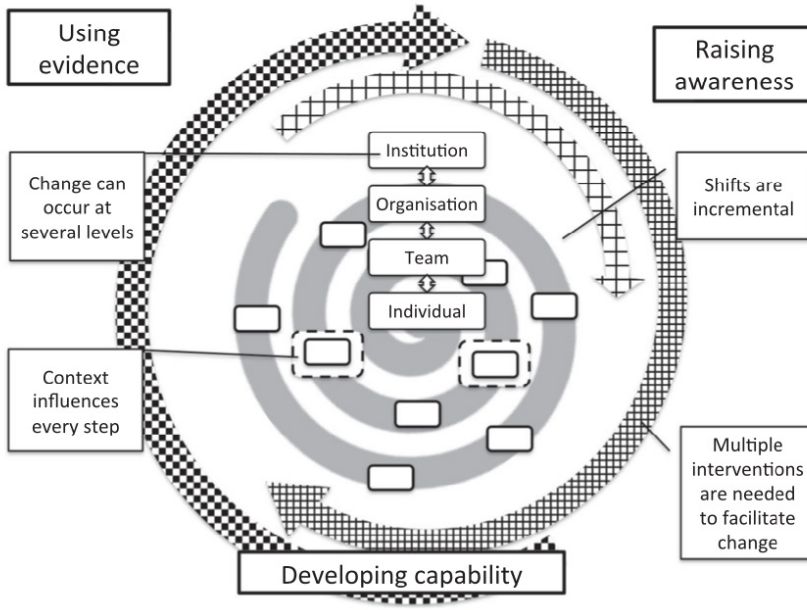


Figure 2.6 Increasing the capacity of evidence users at multiple levels

Source: Steward, Langer and Erasmus (2019, p. 626)

The macro context refers to the political, economic, social and cultural systems in society that may present inherent structural or varying circumstantial opportunities or barriers to the use of research in the policymaking process. (Weyrauch et al., 2016, p. 22). This is similar to the macro governance dimensions of the Six-Sphere model and the INASP governance context framework discussed earlier. The Weyrauch et al. (2016) model adds more nuances in relation to the network of formal and informal linkages between parliaments and an array of external stakeholders. Internal and external linkages refer to stakeholders that directly interact with parliaments and may include research organisations that produce knowledge or policy advocacy groups campaigning for specific policy changes (Weyrauch et al., 2016, p. 23).

The four internal dimensions of the Weyrauch et al. (2016) model are: (3) culture; (4) organisational capacity; (5) management and processes; and (6) other resources. These dimensions explain how members of an organisation think and behave. Culture is a shared set of assumptions and values (both explicit and implicit) that inform how members of the organisation will perceive, think about, and respond to organisational problems, and this may determine the

role of research in the policymaking process. Organisational capacity refers to the ability of an organisation to use available resources within accepted legal parameters to execute its mandate successfully, while organisational management and processes refer to established processes and mechanisms that determine how work is organised that may open or close specific opportunities to introduce evidence into policy discussions and decisions. Finally, other resources include budget, technology, infrastructure or the time needed to enable the organisation to perform well and to generate, assess, and use evidence in decisions (Weyrauch et al., 2016, p. 23).

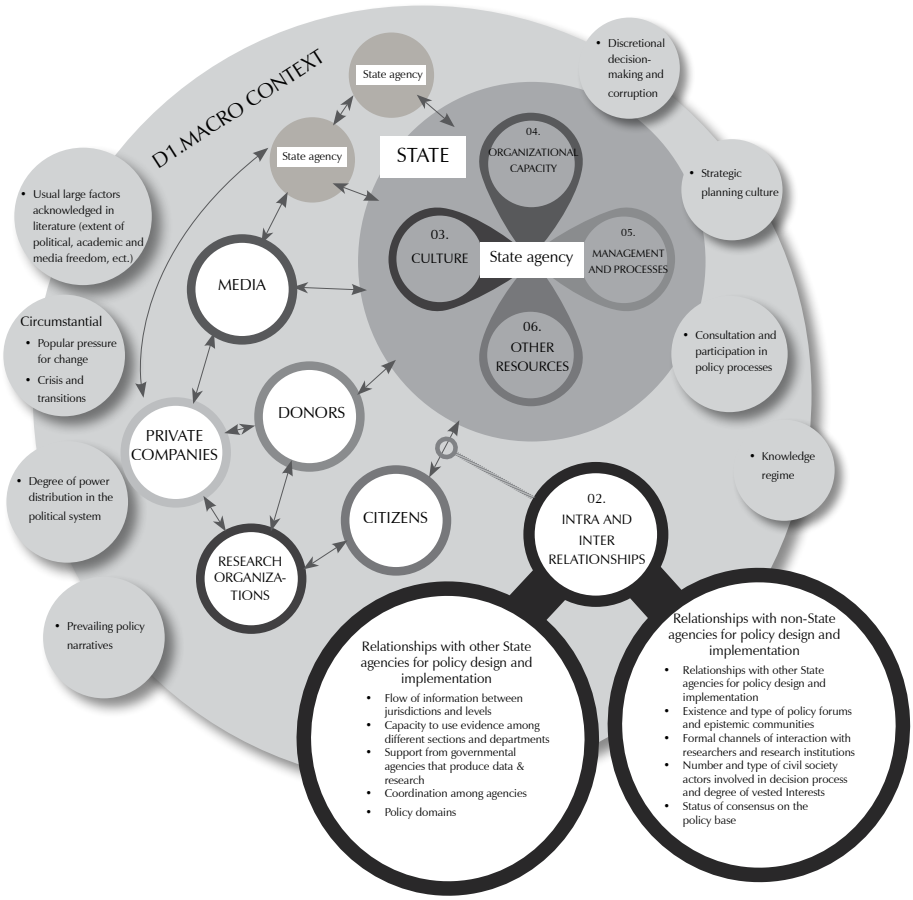


Figure 2.7 Six contextual factors that influence evidence use in public sector institutions

Source: Weyrauch, Echt and Suliman (2016, p. 24)

While the authors acknowledge that a restrictive macro context will limit room for change in the internal context dimensions, they also emphasise that leadership by individual decision makers, a conducive organisational culture, and staff incentives and motivation to use evidence all play important roles in the creation of opportunities for evidence use within the organisation (Langer & Weyrauch, 2020, p. 44).

The ***integrated framework*** by Langer, Goldman and Pabari (see Figure 2.8) builds on the prior two frameworks using a behaviour change lens to understand the evidence process from generation to intermediate changes and development impact, including the internal and external contextual factors and specific mechanisms that produce the desired changes (Langer & Weyrauch, 2020). The framework offers a lens to assess current capacity for evidence, identify weaker areas, or systematically pursue the outcomes and impact through interventions appropriate to the context (Langer & Weyrauch, 2020, p. 49).

The first section of the framework (illustrated in Figure 2.8 overleaf) acknowledges the importance of a government-focused demand-led response that assesses and stimulates the demand for evidence from decision makers and evidence users. Two overarching boxes indicate factors in the external and internal context to assess where potential for change for evidence-use may be greater or where barriers may be more significant (Langer & Weyrauch, 2020, p. 44). Internal context dimensions, such as organisational culture and capacity, exert a strong effect on the demand for evidence in the organisation (Langer & Weyrauch, 2020, p. 48).

The second section of the framework focuses on the factors that influence the generation or supply of evidence. The three key factors that influence the uptake of produced evidence are the quality of the evidence, the type of evidence and its relevance to the specific policy decision and, finally, the specific evidence claim (Langer & Weyrauch, 2020, p. 46).

The third section of the framework considers specific programmes, instruments, strategies or activities that deliberately support and encourage the use of evidence. A variety of interventions may be adopted to trigger one or more of the change mechanisms listed in section 4 of the framework. Changes in awareness, access or ability produce an intermediate motivation, capability or opportunity to use evidence (see section 5) leading to actual increased

use of evidence (intended outcome) at the individual level, organisational or system level (Langer & Weyrauch, 2020, pp. 46-47). Finally, section 7 traces the final impacts, namely whether the increased use of evidence enhanced the performance of the policy or effected systemic change across decision-making sectors (Langer & Weyrauch, 2020, p. 47).

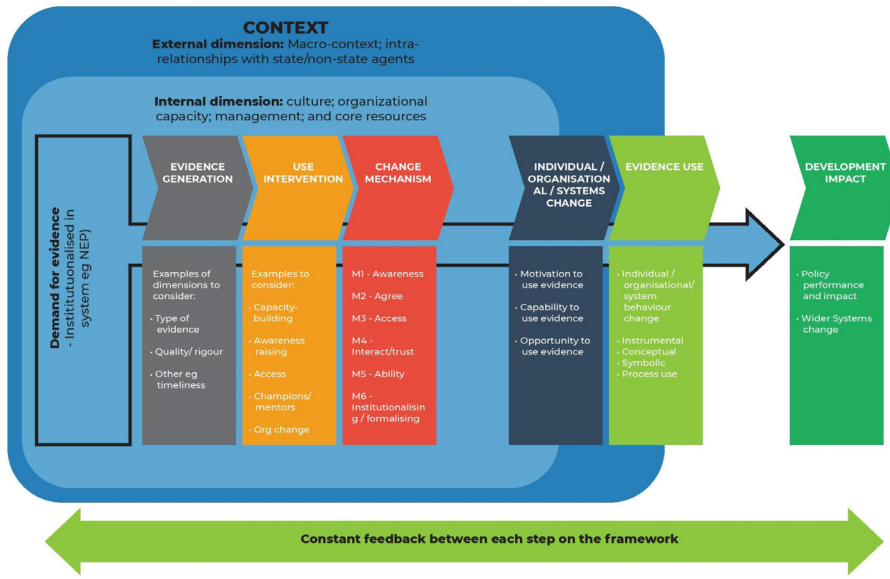


Figure 2.8 Integrated framework to assess and promote evidence use

Source: Langer, Goldman and Pabari (2020, p. 45)

As the change process expands, the direct effect of increased evidence use on the outcomes becomes more difficult to pinpoint. While it is easier to determine the increase in capacity and awareness of the individual decision maker to appreciate and seek evidence, changes at the system level or the effect on the overall performance of the policy becomes harder to ascribe to a specific intervention. It is therefore also useful to consider possible criteria for measuring the success of parliament as an independent entity, removed from any one specific intervention or policy decision.

Models for measuring the performance of parliament

As with the research and findings of the frameworks already presented, the World Bank laments that programmes for parliamentary strengthening are often "politically naïve and technocratic, conspicuously ignoring the surrounding

environment within which parliaments operate" (Parliamentary Centre and the World Bank Institute, n.d, p. 7) alluding to the tendency to ignore the real drivers of behaviour. The ***performance of parliament*** cannot be assessed without understanding and appreciating the broader context that enables or impedes the success of parliament. Bearing in mind this context, the performance of parliament can be measured against the following performance standards (Parliamentary Centre and the World Bank Institute, n.d., pp. 7-8):

- **Financial performance**: Operations of parliament adhere to acceptable financial administration standards.
- **Compliance**: Operations of parliament uphold the rule of law and adhere to internal rules and procedures.
- **Efficiency**: Operations of parliament are efficient and relevant.
- **Effectiveness**: Oversight activities of parliament have an impact on government and society.
- **Relevance**: Oversight responsibilities of parliament focus on the most important issues in society and the economy.
- **Sustainability**: Parliament has the resources and political influence to promote good governance.

These criteria align with the revised Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria (OECD, 2019) that focus on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of interventions. It also adds internal and external coherence to ensure that interlinkages between interventions ensure synergy and align with other actors' interventions in the macro context (see OECD, 2019).

Figure 2.9 presents a proposed conceptual framework that captures the oversight, law-making, representation and budget control functions of parliament. It is best read in conjunction with Figure 2.3 that presented the macro and micro governance context of parliament.

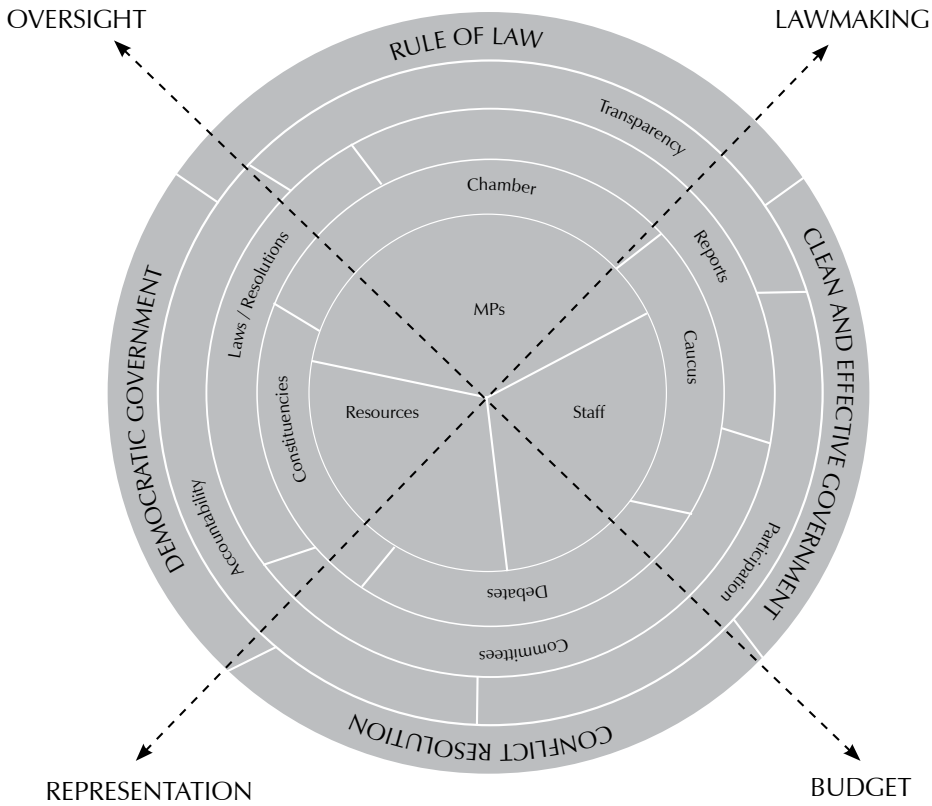


Figure 2.9 WBI conceptual framework for measuring parliamentary performance

Source: Parliamentary Centre and the World Bank Institute (n.d., p. 19)

The overall performance standards can be linked to the specific activities, tasks and responsibilities of parliament to allow for the tracking of progress across the entire performance framework that specifies how inputs, activities and outputs will contribute to the attainment of desired performance standards at the outcome and impact levels (see Figure 2.10).

DIAGRAM 2
CRITERIA OF PARLIAMENTARY PERFORMANCE

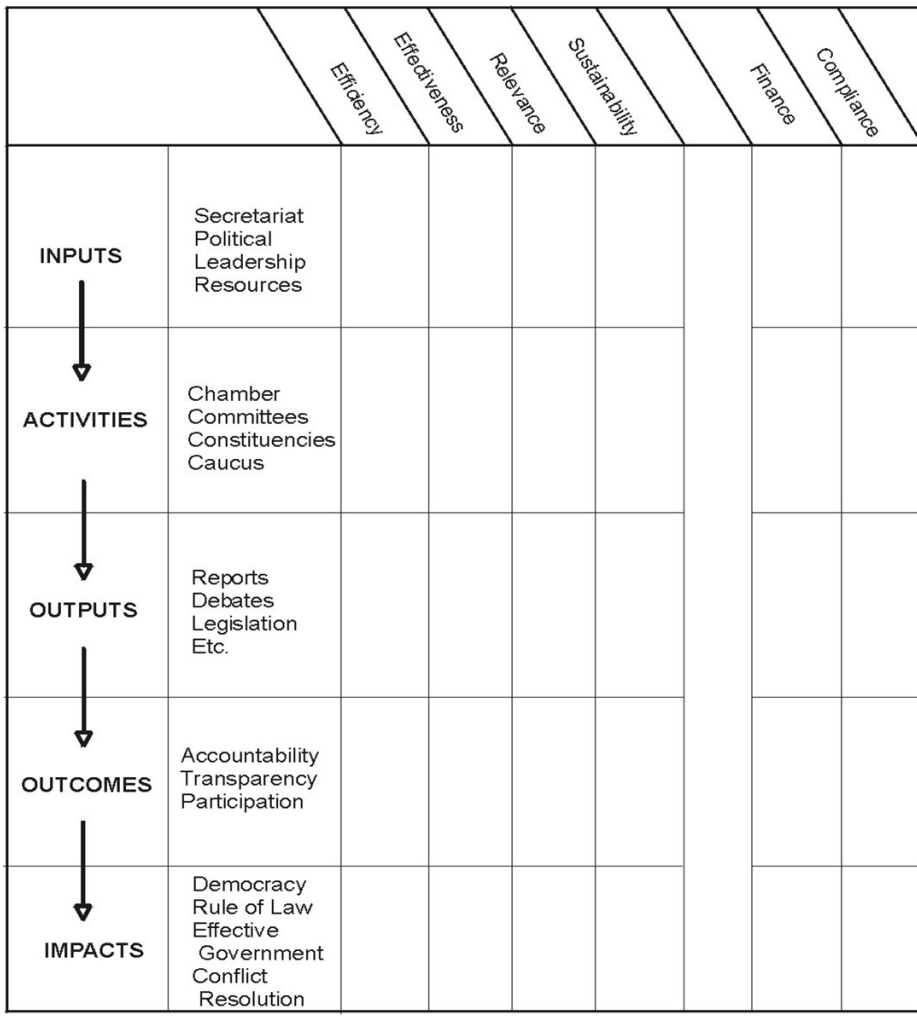


Figure 2.10 Linking parliamentary tasks and performance results across a value chain

Source: Parliamentary Centre and the World Bank Institute (n.d., p. 18)

The model presents a simple change framework. However, one should take care not to limit outputs only to products, but rather see these as building blocks towards the outcome. Given that changes or long-term outcomes and impact may take time to manifest, it would also be useful to add short-term outcomes (e.g. changes in capacities and evidence support systems)

and medium term outcomes (e.g. changes in behaviour or early evidence of performance improvements) to assess early indication of progress towards the longer-term outcomes.

The performance of parliament can inform the ***nature of parliament*** in terms of its role in policymaking and its corresponding need for information (see Figure 2.11).

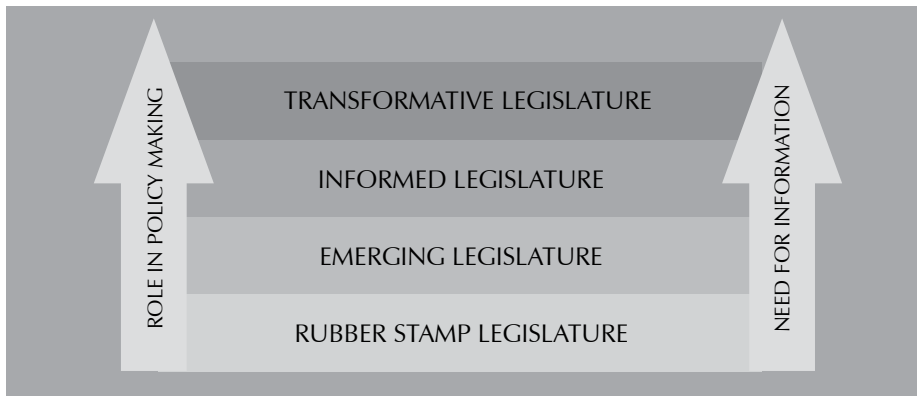


Figure 2.11 Role of the legislature

Source: Miko and Robinson in INASP (2017, p. 26).

The various types of legislatures are described as follows (INASP, 2017, p. 25):

- The rubber-stamp legislature has little need for information as they essentially meet to endorse the decisions and work of the ruling party. There is little demand for independent information and research by individual parliamentarians.
- The emerging legislature participates more actively in the legislative process and has some demand and use for information by the parliamentarians and the parliamentary committees. Access to reference material through an internal library or a research service that can respond to information requests from parliamentarians should be facilitated.
- The informed legislature has access to a parliamentary library and research service that provides research services, tailor-made reports and progress reports on key legislation. However, the depth of the research and analysis service may fail to identify policy options and their impacts.
- Finally, the transformative legislature has substantial demand for evidence in all aspects of their work. This demand is matched by a generous allocation of support staff, strong and well-staffed committees, and large research groups capable of developing policy options.

On the continuum of parliaments, the rubber-stamp parliament "exercises little autonomy from the executive, which limits its oversight and scrutiny function in policymaking". At the other end of the continuum, members of a transformative legislature have access to "internal structures and mechanisms (that) facilitate a proactive approach to the use of evidence and allows parliamentarians independent oversight and influence over policymaking (INASP, 2017, p. 26).

The demand for information by members of parliament, the financial investment in providing supportive infrastructure and staff, and the degree of deliberation in parliament discussions on Bills, government agreements or budget decisions, all indicate an upward movement on the continuum (INASP, 2017, p. 26). However, it is not uncommon that a parliament may represent a different 'type' of legislature in relation to specific issues and the influence of factors in the micro and macro governance context, or in the individual level considerations of the policymaker.

The frameworks demonstrate the complexity of evidence and the plethora of macro and micro factors that promote or hinder systematic evidence use and also provide insights on how evidence use can be strengthened at the individual, organisational and system levels to promote accountable and transparent decision-making and the overall performance and legitimacy of parliament. Some final observations regarding potential use are shared in the conclusion of this chapter. The final section of this chapter presents a set of initial lessons or focus areas for building the capacity of parliaments.

Building the capacity of parliaments to use evidence systematically

The range of models discussed above presents options for alternative theoretical lenses through which practice may be observed. Which model is most relevant depends on the questions being asked (i.e. to describe, explain, predict or improve), the unit of analysis (parliament as a whole, parliamentary committees, individual MPs, the administration by the parliamentary service, political parties, the interface with civil society), the level of disaggregation, and the time period under study (short-, medium-, or long-term).

Future model-building will enable the development of more integrated general models or more granular specialist models. For the purposes of this volume, the following five key dimensions will be employed in understanding

the context-specific dynamics of evidence use in legislatures in Africa and in customising strategies to build the capability for evidence use both by parliaments themselves and the demand by civil society of evidence use by parliaments:

1. The macro governance perspective;
2. The organisation (micro governance) perspective;
3. The portfolio committee perspective;
4. The individual MP perspective; and
5. The network/relational level of governance capital.

Each chapter of this book contributes different perspectives to one or more of these dimensions. The analysis below draws from South African examples.

The macro governance perspective

This dimension deals mainly with the ideological, political and contextual elements relating to the macro governance context and the relationships between state, markets and civil society at national, global, regional and local levels, as well as the relationships between parliaments, the executive, the judiciary, and other organs of state. These are largely outside the control of individual parliaments but shape their incentives to acquire and apply evidence in their legislative, budgeting, oversight, and representation functions. These include the nature of the electoral system, transparency in the funding of political parties, and statutes on the representation of women legislators, for instance. Trends such as commitment to international goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa Continental Free Trade agreement, as well as global challenges such as the climate emergency in the longer term and dealing with the coronavirus pandemic and its aftermath are also pertinent. Civil society organisations could advocate vigorously for reforms in areas such as these which may strengthen the incentive of individual MPs and political parties to exercise their law-making and oversight functions effectively, and to engage in meaningful public participation rather than merely paying lip service.

The organisation (micro governance) perspective

This dimension focuses on systems of evidence use within parliaments as institutions: interlinkages and dynamics among institutional arrangements, resources, flows of information, organisational units, people and roles, as well as the different sources of evidence and the incentives created for their use.

It is useful to clearly differentiate between the organisation and the institution as the terms are sometimes used interchangeably. An organisation is an entity with a shared purpose directed by a set of internal processes and with a shared culture. Institutions are wider than organisations and in the context of this publication refer to the 'rules of the game' – the rules and constraints adopted by societies which shape and human interaction and structure incentives in political, social or economic exchange (North, 1990). In the context of public governance, institutions may therefore be defined as "the laws, procedures and rules that determine and regulate the behaviour of public officials and organizations" (North 1990, p. 3). Formal institutions have traditionally been the focus of public administration, public economics, legal research, and related disciplines. Informal institutions, traditionally the preserve of sociologists, anthropologists and organisational psychologists, also exercise a powerful influence over individual, organisational and societal behaviours (North, 1990).

For portfolio committees and individual MPs to use evidence optimally requires the parliamentary service to provide the requisite support. The types of support necessary include research support, libraries and digital information sources, legislative drafting and procedural expertise, relevant and practical oversight training with tools and materials geared to local governance and socioeconomic contexts, management of the logistics of onsite committee oversight visits, support to committees of inquiry, systems for processing public submissions and petitions and supporting constituency work and other forms of public participation (Yamamoto, 2007). A more recent trend has been the establishment of independent budget offices to strengthen legislative fiscal oversight. From an anticorruption and prevention of state capture perspective, the ability of the parliamentary service to support special committees of inquiry with powers of investigation to summon witnesses, call for submissions and hold public hearings is crucial (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017). This may require access to skills such as forensic and computer auditing skills that may not currently be readily available to many parliaments.

The portfolio committee perspective

Parliamentary committees are frequently referred to as the 'engine rooms' of parliament. The portfolio committees provide an important platform for the detailed discussion of Bills and are regarded as important focus points for exploring the effective functioning of parliament in terms of the discussions,

decisions, or recommendations of the committees in executing parliament's dual mandate. The remit and functioning of parliamentary committees differ from country to country and it should be noted that this section focuses on parliamentary committees in South Africa, which may also be of relevance to parliamentary committees in other countries with Westminster systems.

In South Africa, parliament's mandate is two-fold – the review and adoption of legislation through its committees and houses of parliament, and oversight of the executive departments. The process of drafting legislation in South Africa starts with the formulation of a Bill by a government department under the direction of the relevant minister or deputy minister. The Bill is introduced by a member of the executive to Cabinet and is then submitted to parliament for processing. Once introduced, a Bill is referred to the relevant Portfolio Committee within the National Assembly, where it is debated in detail and amended if necessary (Parliament, 2019a).

Manona (2015), reflecting on the oversight activities of the education portfolio committee, concludes that these activities leave much room for improvement. The observations of Chaka and Manona (2015, p. 86) indicate that the committees seldom invite written submissions or participation of the public in public hearings in legislative oversight matters, except where the Bill is already contested. As invitations to participate are not widely or timeously dispersed, public participation in the legislative oversight of parliamentary committees is limited. Regarding oversight over the strategic and financial management of departments and statutory bodies, the author concludes that oversight is usually limited to financial appropriation, and fails to interrogate whether the outcomes of the department have been achieved effectively and have brought about changes and improvements in the lives of communities (Manona, 2015, p. 87). The same applies to site visits which often only take place retrospectively when a crisis has been identified, rather than serving as a proactive means of identifying areas of potential concern (Manona, 2015, p. 88). While committees have the opportunity during the review of annual reports to hold the executive accountable for found failures, in practice the "committee does not do follow-ups on concerns raised nor does it monitor officials of the Department and Statutory Bodies" (Manona, 2015, p. 87). While the committee may summon the accounting officers of the department to account for financial transactions, the committee has "only selectively held Senior Executives or Ministers accountable for their ineffectiveness, maladministration and misuse of government expenditure" (ibid.).

This extends also to the scrutiny administered by the Public Service Commission, Public Protector, the Auditor-General and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA). While recommendations have been made to Parliament to ensure accountability, only a few cases have been acted upon. The author concludes that "failure to take action against cases of omission … bring questions about the effectiveness and efficiency of the oversight role of the Committee, which compromises good governance and democratic accountability in the Public Service" (Manona, 2015, p. 88).

As noted earlier, the structure of parliamentary committees, their resourcing and operations differ across African countries. These are examined in more detail in the parliamentary case studies in Volume 2 of this series.

The individual MP perspective

As discussed earlier, particularly with reference to the Compass model, the micro-level frameworks demonstrated that the role of the individual parliamentarian may be influenced by allegiances to the constitution, constituencies, the political party manifesto, personal development goals or even pragmatic considerations such as available time and other resources.

The individual opinion of the decision-maker, which may manifest either explicitly in defined interests or implicitly in considerations of access to power, resources or personal benefits (e.g. promotion) influences the policy decision adopted. On the one hand, "policy makers use two shortcuts – emotions and beliefs to understand problems and 'rational' ways of establishing the best evidence on solutions – to act quickly in complex, multilevel policy-making environments" (Cairney, Oliver & Wellstead, 2016, p. 399). Beliefs help to reduce ambiguity and enable policymakers to exercise a choice based on limited evidence. On the other hand, personal ideology and beliefs may also lead the policymaker to reject research based on "method, metatheory, paradigm, the results or even simply because decision makers dislike the original researcher" (Marais & Matebesi, 2013, p. 370). Policymakers may use evidence in a selective manner to ensure a longer political career for certain individuals, or they may be motivated to promote goals that are politically driven (Marais & Matebesi, 2013, p. 360).

Cloete (2018, p. 328) concludes that, in practice, policy decisions are the result of normative judgements, emotional preferences or prejudice, and the rational consideration of data to present an acceptable compromise on the policy issue. Evidence and observations on world problems are explored through scientific methods to produce method-specific evidence. The political value-clarification process selects and filters the available information in terms of its appropriateness to the context, pragmatic feasibility, alignment with political priorities, and personal ideology to inform the policy decision that will shape the world of the future.

Within the political party system, the role of the individual policymaker is often strongly shaped and even limited by the prior priorities and preferences of the political party that has nominated the individual to represent their viewpoint in specific committees or on particular platforms.

Commitments by the political party are informed by its political manifesto or election promises and may also be directed in terms of prior agreements with local or international stakeholders or may even exhibit a path-dependence tendency to maintain a historical course of action. "Conflict and bargaining are ongoing features of a democratic political system and acknowledge [sic] the intrinsic role of values, ideologies, and economic interests in shaping policy making" (Head, 2015, p. 474). The design of policies is inherently a political exercise that considers the claims, interests and relative power of multiple actors in relation to a specific policy issue (Lasswell, Dhal & Lowi, in Bekkers et al., 2017, p. 123) and makes choices that balance and allocate values to deal with societal challenges (Bekkers et al., 2017, p. 6). Peters (2015, p. 139) concludes that "all the evaluation and policy advice in the world will be of little utility if the decision-makers involved in policymaking have ideological blinders, or other blinders, that inhibit their use of the information generated". However, Head (2010, p. 18) warns that both evidence and values may be mobilised "to support political objectives and to build coalitions of support" rather than for the promotion of accountable decisions. The balance between values and evidence is not always straightforward. Rabie (2019, p. 39) states that in South Africa the policy direction is set by executive departments which often draft the first versions of new Bills, and that this practice dictates the deliberations of the committee related to legislative oversight. Similarly, senior party members who become executive managers exert a strong influence on the adopted political viewpoint within the portfolio committees that must oversee the work of the very same executive.

Political party commitments reflect the commitment of the governing party to the policy at a particular point in time in alignment with election promises in order to ensure future re-election. However, the policy agenda may also be driven by the press or could be influenced by changing public opinions, incidents, or lobby groups (Cronin & Sadan, 2015, p. 6). Executive managers and political heads in the inner circle of decision-making also exert a strong influence on policy decisions. Furthermore, policies may be curtailed in terms of past policy decisions in relation to which the pursuit of existing norms and policies to maintain the status quo would provide the parameters for future policies.

In politically contested policy decisions, contrasting sources of evidence may become a weapon in the power struggle to support preferred views, predetermined agendas, and desired outcomes. "Based on political ideologies and preferences, but also in relation to electoral promises or political compromises that have been made", political parties adopt specific values that "act as criteria that can be used to define what actions should be pursued, but they also help to prioritise these actions and help to formulate a hierarchy of goals to be achieved" (Bekkers et al., 2017, p. 120).

Choices of the political party are not inexhaustible, but are inevitably limited by the information that is available, the available time, and the capacity to process the information so that the costs and benefits of all the various alternatives can be assessed (Bekkers et al., 2017, p. 45). Pragmatically, policy decisions consider the financial feasibility of the proposed policy, as well as the availability of other resources required (Cronin & Sadan, in Dayal, 2016, p. 5). Policies are long-term commitments and the financial affordability and sustainability of funding over the course of the lifetime of the policy needs to be considered. A further consideration is alignment with the Constitution and the existing legislative framework. Reflective policymaking should consider the role of law "as a shared set of beliefs that should be taken into consideration when drafting and implementing policy programs" (Bekkers et al., 2017, p. 310) but the proliferation of rules and norms complicates the policymaking space (Cairney, Oliver & Wellstead, 2016, p. 400). Where policies require support and resources from multiple government organisations, the policy decision is influenced by multiple actors and is the result of multiple decisions by sets of actors (Bekkers et al., 2017, p. 10) thereby further restricting the manoeuvring space available to the policymaker.

Political and individual choices are limited by practical circumstances and the complexity of decisions (Dunn 2018, p. 50). While politics are concerned with "norms, values, ideology, power, influence, authority", the political preference may be challenged by "facts, objectivity, and empirically warranted descriptions and explanations" (Mathison, 2005, p. 320) that may contradict the political preferred viewpoint. Policy scholarship, however, concludes that the neutral and objective evidence of scientific knowledge does not, and cannot, drive policy in a democratic political system. In South Africa, Rabie (2019, p. 39) finds that oral submissions to portfolio committees gain more traction than long or technically complicated, written submissions, even though the latter submissions may have a stronger evidence base. It reiterates that the political decision-making process is inherently marked by conflicts, trade-offs, and compromises (Lindblom, 1979, in Head, 2015, pp. 472-473).

Policy decision-makers therefore prioritise certain goals and specific information sources or draw "on emotions, gut feelings, deeply held beliefs, habits, and what is familiar to them, to make decisions quickly" (Cairney, in Cairney & Weible, 2017, p. 622). Within the politics of policy decision-making, a mixture of science, value preferences and practical judgements on feasibility and legitimacy becomes relevant (Head, 2010, p. 13). The policymaker is obliged "to take account of the ethical values, social mores, community attitudes, behavioural consequences, and political ideologies that influence government decisions" (Shergold, 2016, p. 485) and cannot remain objective and neutral towards the policy issue at hand as is expected from the science and research community. The process of value clarification may at times mean that while the policymaker concurs with research findings and proposed actions, pragmatic considerations, such as the available financial, organisational or human resources; the political and managerial buy-in required for successful implementation; and the inevitable trade-offs against other pressing priorities, may lead to decisions that seemingly contradict what the evidence dictates.

The network/relational level of governance capital perspective

As captured by models of Weyrauch et al. and others, this dimension concerns parliaments' interface with civil society, the media and academia, the processes of establishing and sustaining formal and informal relationships among organisations, networks and individuals, and the quality of those relationships

as conduits for evidence. These interactions are perhaps most vibrant at the level of the committees where, as noted earlier, building these relationships are the cornerstones of effective public participation in its various forms (such as calls for submissions by members of the public and interest groups and oversight visits).

The nature of these interfaces and their ability to foster the systematic use of evidence by African parliaments are highly context-specific and are conditioned by the macro-governance, organisational, committee and MP-oriented perspectives explored above. Macro governance perspectives will shape media freedom, the robustness of civil society engagements (even in rural and less developed areas) and crucially, the extent to which parliaments welcome or shut down rigorous engagement.

On one hand, civil society could be a conduit for many forms of evidence which could result in better lawmaking and oversight (including grassroots lived realities). Conversely, public participation could be dominated by well-resourced, sophisticated interest and lobby groups, invested in furthering their own narrow interests at the expense of the public good. Subservience by parliament to the executive rather than independent-minded scrutiny will, from a macro governance perspective, also shape both the supply of evidence to parliaments and their ability to use the evidence systematically in carrying out their functions. These networks/relationships foster the interchange of evidence through formal reporting mechanisms or less formal channels (such as social media).

From a more micro-governance perspective on parliaments' roles as formal institutions, their constitutional/statutory powers to solicit and demand information become critical (for instance, in relation to commissions of inquiry). House rules and parliamentary procedures on engagement at plenary and committee levels will influence the scope for civil society to interact with parliaments (e.g. through petitions). The most practical and concrete perspectives relate to the committee and individual MP levels and whether the appetite, capacity and infrastructure exist to engage with evidence. Here committee support services, Hansard, research and library services are critical.

Concluding remarks

The models and frameworks provide useful alternative viewpoints on the use of evidence by parliament in executing its functions. Efforts to strengthen African parliaments should be to consider the macro role and purpose of parliament in society, the link between the producers of evidence and the evidence users and, finally, the role of evidence in informing the deliberations within portfolio-committees. The different frameworks offer potential performance areas against which the performance of parliaments can be measured in terms of both internal operations and external performance. It is only once the desired performance to which a legislature aspires can be clearly defined, that the requisite enabling capability can be defined and built.

Some of the presented frameworks and models (e.g. Parkhurst; Rabie; Weyrauch et al.; Langer et al.) focus on an appreciation of different sources of evidence that may inform decisions and how the production of evidence more relevant to parliamentary decisions can be pursued. The Six-Sphere framework and the INASP governance context framework provide a lens for considering the influence of macro context factors on the work of parliament, whereas the performance models show how parliament's performance may be assessed in terms of not only the alignment to the macro context, but also its ability to extend its influence to a macro context.

The 'parliamentary committee decision-making' and the 'parliamentary Compass' are useful for understanding the micro level aspects that the evidence user considers when making decisions and these may extend to what evidence is used and responded to and what evidence is ignored.

The integrated models are useful for stakeholders that wish to engage parliament in interventions that may improve opportunities for evidence use and strengthen the capability and motivation of people to use evidence. While Steward et al. specifically start from a user perspective, Weyrauch et al. and Langer et al. emphasise a more integrated approach that considers the macro context that produces and influences evidence use.

Finally, the models focusing on the performance of parliament emphasise the importance of multi-criteria and systematic approaches that encourage parliament to transition from a rubber-stamping facade to a more transformative role that changes society for the better. This may entail a parliament reshaping

its internal culture, systems, and structures as well as the macro producers and corridors of evidence used to fulfil this transformative role. These dimensions and their complex interactions are explored later in this volume as they cumulatively shape the demand for, and supply of, evidence by (and on) African parliaments over time.

Encouraging evidence use demands an encompassing approach that is sensitive to the macro governance context in a particular country (often shaped over time by political, governance and economic dynamics), the demand and supply of relevant and reliable evidence, the internal capacities and considerations of decision makers, and the support systems and procedures and incentives that drive or impede the use of evidence. The lessons and insights in subsequent chapters will contribute to framing strategies for improving systemic evidence use in the African parliaments studied and will contribute to a nascent – but rapidly developing – body of conceptual knowledge and praxis.

Reference List

Bekkers, V., Fenger, M. & Scholten, P. (2017). *Public Policy in Action. Perspectives on the Policy Process*. Cheltenham: Edgar Elgar Publishing.

Boaz, A., Davies, H. Fraser, A. & Nutley, S. (2019). *What Works Now? Evidence-based Policy and Practice Revisited*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press Books.

Cairney, P., Oliver, K. & Wellstead, A. (2016). To bridge the divide between evidence and policy: Reduce ambiguity as much as uncertainty. *Public Administration Review*, 76(3):399-402. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12555

Cairney, P. & Weible, C.M. (2017). The new policy sciences: Combining the cognitive science of choice, multiple theories of context, and basic and applied analysis. *Policy Sciences*, 50:619-627. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-017-9304-2

Chêne, M. (2007). Parliamentary approaches to corruption. Available from: https://bit.ly/2Xrnqpy (Accessed 15 September 2019).

Cloete, F. (2018). Policy change. In: F. Cloete, C. de Coning, H. Wissink & B. Rabie (eds.), *Improving Public Policy for Good Governance*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Crawley, K., (2017), 'The six-sphere framework: A practical tool for assessing monitoring and evaluation systems'. *African Evaluation Journal*, 5(1):a193. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v5i1.193

Cronin, P.G. & Sadan, M. (2015). Use of evidence in policy making in South Africa: An exploratory study of attitudes of senior government officials. *African Evaluation Journal*, 3(1):Art. #145. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.145

Dunn, W.N. (2018). *Public Policy Analysis. An Integrated Approach*. 6th edition. New York, N.Y.: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1002/epa2.1038

Goldman, I. & Pabari, M. (2020). An introduction to evidence-informed policy and practice in Africa. In: I. Goldman & M. Pabari (eds.), *Using evidence in policy and practice. Lessons from Africa*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007043

Head, B. (2010). *Evidence-based policy: Principles and requirements*. Available from: https://bit.ly/3EtJfWj (Accessed 2 April 2019). https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12475

Head, B. (2015). Toward More "Evidence-Informed" Policy Making? *Public Administration Review*, 76(3):472-484.

International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP). (2017). *Evidence in African parliaments*. Available from: https://bit.ly/2Xmkc6A (Accessed 2 July 2020).

Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2017). *Global Parliamentary Report 2017 – Parliamentary oversight: Parliament's power to hold government to account*. Available from: https://bit.ly/3tLpbdf (Accessed 24 August 2018).

Langer, L., Goldman, I. & Pabari, M. (2020). Analytical framework used to guide case study research. In: I. Goldman & M. Pabari (eds.), *Using evidence in policy and practice. Lessons from Africa*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007043

Laurenz, L. & Weyrauch, V. (2020). Using evidence in Africa: a framework to assess what works, how and why? In: I. Goldman & M. Pabari (eds.), *Using evidence in policy and practice. Lessons from Africa*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Manona, W. (2015). Critical Analysis of the Oversight Role of the Education Portfolio Committee in Parliament of South Africa. *Africa's Public Service Delivery & Performance Review*, 3(3):72-94. https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v3i3.90

Marais, L. & Matebesi, Z. (2013). Evidence-based policy development in South Africa: The case of provincial growth and development strategies. *Urban Forum*, 24:357-371. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12132-012-9179-4

Mathison, S. (ed). (2005). Politics of evaluation. In: *The Encyclopedia of Evaluation*. London: Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412950558

Nicol, M. n.d. *The Committee System of Parliament: Are the "engine rooms of Parliament" exercising their powers fully and possible areas of reform. Parliamentary Monitoring Group*. Available from: https://bit.ly/3lwaeYS [Accessed 30 March 2020].

North, D. (1990). *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511808678

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2019). *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation. Revised Evaluation Criteria. Definitions and Principles for Use.* Available from: https://bit.ly/3khB2MX [Accessed 10 July 2020].

Parkhurst, J. (2017). *The Politics of Evidence: From Evidence Based Policy to the Good Governance of Evidence.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315675008

Parliamentary Centre and World Bank Institute. (n.d.). *Parliaments that work: a conceptual framework for measuring parliamentary performance*. WBI, Washington D.C. https://bit.ly/2VMpaZR

Peters, P.G. (2015). *Advanced Introduction to Public Policy*. Cheltenham: Edgar Elgar.

Rabie, B. (2019). The Most Influential Decision-making Criteria in South African Parliamentary Committees. *Administratio Publica,* 27(4):26-46.

Segone, M. (ed.). (2004). *Bridging the Gap: The Role of Monitoring and Evaluation in Evidence-based Policy Making.* New York: UNICEF Evaluation Office.

Shergold, P. (2016). Lost in translation? The challenge of informing public policy with evidence. *Public Administration Review*, 76(3):484-485.

Stewart,R. Langer, L & Erasmus, Y. (2019) An integrated model for increasing the use of evidence by decision-makers for improved development. *Development Southern Africa*, 36:5:616-631. https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2018.1543579

Strydom, W.F., Funke, N., Nienaber, S., Nortje, K. & Steyn, M. (2010). Evidence-based policymaking: A review. *South African Journal of Science*, 106(5/6), Art. #249. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajs.v106i5/6.249

Van Rensburg, W.J., Vreÿ, F. & Neethling, T. (2020). Collecting evidence on the use of parliamentary oversight tools: A South African case study. African Evaluation Journal, 8(1):a424. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v8i1.424

Weyrauch, V., Echt, L. & Suliman, S. (2016). *Knowledge into policy: Going beyond "Context Matters"*. Available from: https://bit.ly/3kemEFq (Accessed 2 July 2020.

Yamamoto, H. (2007). *Tools for Parliamentary Oversight: A Comparative Study of 88 National Parliaments.* Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union.

3

A SYSTEMS THINKING PERSPECTIVE ON EVIDENCE USE IN PARLIAMENTS



Steven Masvaure, Angelita Kiwekete, Hermine Engel and Boikanyo Moloto

Introduction

Parliaments are unique and complex political and bureaucratic institutions with inter-connected (and often disconnected) structures and processes, comprising actors both internal and external to parliament and who influence and affect evidence use in different ways. This chapter aims to unpack and apply a systems thinking perspective to explore and describe the system(s) of evidence use in African parliaments and the related implications at a generic level, bearing in mind that each parliament will have a unique configuration of components and factors making up its individual system of evidence use, as is discussed in subsequent chapters.

The chapter draws from literature on evidence use in African parliaments and CLEAR-AA's work on strengthening evidence use in African parliaments. The focus of this chapter is on African parliaments in general. This chapter is targeted at stakeholders who are involved in synthesising and providing evidence that is needed by parliamentarians and their committees to inform debate and discussions on policy and legislative issues; strengthening individual and institutional capacities for increased demand and use of evidence; and generating evidence that improves the understanding of the evidence system in African parliaments.

The chapter begins by defining systems thinking and moves on to place systems thinking in the context of evidence use. The later sections of the chapter provide a background to systems of evidence use in African parliaments and applies a systems thinking perspective to evidence use in African parliaments to reveal the interrelationships and interconnectedness of various elements and components of the system of evidence use.

Defining systems thinking

Systems thinking has its origins in the twentieth century in the natural sciences. Systems theory was expounded by Von Bertalanffy who wrote on general systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1972). Systems thinking was characterised using different terms such as general systems theory, systems dynamic, cybernetics and complexity science (Midgley, 2006). Until the late twentieth century, systems theory was criticised by scholars such as Churchman (1979) and Ackoff (1981) (as cited in Midgley, 2006) for its emphasis as a tool for portraying reality. The criticism led to the shift from viewing systems theory as a tool for representing

reality – which was problematic to conceptualising it as methods and tools available – to that of a tool for analysing complex systems. Such a shift led to the emergence of the term systems thinking. Barry Richmond coined the term 'systems thinking' in 1987 (Arnold & Wade, 2015) and defined it as "the art and science of making reliable inference about behaviour by developing an increasingly deep understanding of underlying structure" (Richmond, 1994, p. 6). Peter Senge (1996) later added to Richmond's definition by defining systems thinking as "a discipline for seeing wholes and a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots" (cited in Arnold & Wade, 2015, p. 4). Arnold and Wade define systems thinking as "a set of synergetic analytic skills used to improve the capability of identifying and understanding systems, predicting their behaviour and devising modifications to them to produce the desired effect" (2015, p. 7). The three definitions show that systems thinking is a skills-set which helps an individual to view, analyse and understand the various components and the interconnectedness and interrelationships of a complex system. This skills-set is regarded in this study as a systems thinking perspective. This chapter adopts Arnold and Wade's (2015) definition of systems thinking.

A further examination of the definition shows that a systems thinking perspective focuses on examining the patterns of interconnectedness rather than memorising isolated facts. This contrasts with the traditional approach (reductionist) which examines systems by breaking them down into their separate elements (Loosemore & Cheung, 2015). Systems thinking has been used across various disciplines in the quest to understand complex or so-called 'wicked problems' – problems that are generally seen as complex, open-ended, and intractable and need to be approached from multiple, and sometimes competing, perspectives and which may have multiple possible solutions (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Adoption of systems thinking has been driven by the failure of the reductionist approach to solve complex or wicked problems. Reductionist approaches simplify complex systems and look at systems components as independent from the whole. By doing so, they negate the interrelationships between systems components while a systems thinking perspective is a "holistic approach, which tackles problems by examining the context of the system in which they occur and is particularly relevant to tackling ill-structured 'messy' problems" (White, 1995).

This objective of this chapter is to examine evidence use in parliament holistically from a systems thinking perspective, locating evidence use within the broader parliamentary system and related external influencing factors, recognising the broader parliamentary and governance system and the evidence system in parliaments as diverse, dynamic, and complex with interdependent components. The underpinning understanding in this chapter is that the system of evidence use in African parliaments is part of a larger system with various interconnected elements and components. The approach in this chapter is not to simply focus on the system of evidence use in parliament and view it as a system with members of parliament and suppliers of evidence only; cognisance is taken of the fact that there are structures (some influenced by power), relationships and other variables which affect evidence use in parliaments. Applying a systems thinking perspective enables individuals to understand the underlying mechanisms which influence evidence use in parliaments and the impact of these mechanisms on evidence use in parliaments. The desired outcome is that such an understanding will contribute to improving the system of evidence use in African parliaments and elsewhere.

Systems thinking in the context of evidence use in African parliaments

African legislatures, parliaments or assemblies are shaped by their country's colonial history and the adopted post-colonial ideology, with the British and the French systems of governance prevalent in Anglophone Africa and Francophone Africa respectively. Generally across Africa, parliaments are representative institutions established to represent citizens and mirror the range of citizens' preferences as conveyed in elections (Salih, 2005). Parliaments in Africa have a responsibility to develop and enact legislation and this process requires that evidence is used in order to influence decision-making and shape the legislation to reflect citizens' interests and development outcomes. Parliaments also fulfil the function of holding the executive arm of government to account for its decisions and actions (Crum, 2018). To perform these functions effectively, parliaments need to use evidence. The evidence required is sourced from internal parliamentary systems and various external sources including the government, the judiciary, civil society, experts, the media, higher institutions of education, international organisations, other legislative bodies, as well as from citizens. The interaction between these sources of evidence, the information provided, the users of the information and how the information is used, all form the system of evidence use in parliament.

When one applies a systems thinking perspective to the use of evidence in parliaments, there is a need to move away from the current reductionist approach which disregards interrelationships, interconnectedness and isolates components when solving problems. The reductionist approach also singles out specific components for attention and is given an explanatory weight on its own, separating it from the rest of the system (Bryant, 2002). By using the systems thinking perspective, one refrains from singling out components of evidence use in parliament such as sources of evidence, parliamentary committees, social groups, think tanks, Civil Society Organisations, members of parliament (MPs), the political as well as the socio-economic context, as all being independent of one another. Rather, these components are viewed as interconnected and components of a system which influences evidence use in parliaments. By examining the interconnectedness of these components, one moves from focusing and observing behaviour, actions, and processes happening on the surface to reveal the underlying structures and mechanisms that drive the use of evidence in parliament. Identification of these underlying mechanisms and structures allows for a clearer perspective to address the problems of poor evidence use in parliament. The table below differentiates systems thinking from reductionist approaches concerning systems of evidence use in parliaments.

Table 3.1 Systems thinking versus reductionist approaches

Systems thinking-oriented approach	The reductionist approach
Systems of evidence use in parliaments possess properties that are only possessed by the system as a whole and not by any isolated system.	Systems of evidence use in parliaments can be explained by the properties of its components.
The approach emphasises the importance of interconnectedness/interrelationships between various system components.	The approach disregards interrelationships and isolates components when solving problems.
Many factors are simultaneously evaluated to assess the dynamics of the system when solving problems.	One component is singled out for attention and is given an explanatory weight on its own.
The approach is non-liner and chaotic.	The approach uses a linear and predictable approach.

Source: Adapted from (Ahn et al., 2006)

Systems of evidence use in parliament are complex, as is the use of evidence in formulating public policies and decisions. This complexity is largely exacerbated by the wicked problems prevailing in public institutions and because the political

nature of decision-making in parliaments involves a variety of stakeholders with varying interests and different approaches to generating evidence. Such a complex system is difficult to understand if one uses the reductionist approach. This chapter introduces a systems thinking perspective to evidence use in parliaments. The approach in this chapter is to view the components of the system of evidence use in parliaments from a systems thinking perspective with the belief that these components are intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole. A systems thinking perspective also allows for the identification of the contributions of both internal and external stakeholders (non-deliberative practices) to parliament (the deliberative body) (De Mesquita, Smith, Siverson & Morrow, 2005).

Background to the system of evidence use in parliaments in Africa

At the heart of governance lies the relationship between citizens, institutions, politics and leaders (Helboe, Pedersen, Halpin & Rasmussen, 2015). These relationships are crucial to understanding how the system of evidence use in parliament (should ideally) operate. When parliament works as a strong effective institution, it assists other arms of government (the executive and the judiciary) to work accountably, capably and responsibly (Strøm, 2000). Across Africa, parliaments are reclaiming power from years of one-party states and dictatorships which left them weak and incapable of holding the executive arm of government to scrutiny and account (Cohen, 2019). Various studies have shown that because of local and international pressure to democratise, parliaments on the African continent are becoming more assertive and more involved in scrutinising government policies and expenditure (Azevedo-Harman, 2011; Draman, Titriku, Lampo, Hayter & Holden, 2017; Adar, 2018; Notshulwana & Lebakeng, 2019).

Previously, without proper separation of powers between the executive, judiciary and legislative arms of the state, parliaments were largely symbolic and parliamentary seats assigned were part of the reward system of a broad authoritarian system based on loyalty and conformity to groupthink (aligning with party political positions) which served to maintain the power base of the political party or leader. The dominance of the authoritarian system across Africa (the 'big man rule', dictatorships, and dalliance with the one-party state system) curtailed parliaments' capacity to perform their duties. Instead,

parliaments' subservience to the executive arm of government (Azevedo-Harman, 2011) drove the parliamentary agenda whilst parliaments acted as rubber-stampers of executive decisions (Barkan, 2009). It is argued that the colonial legacy of African countries and the decolonisation process weakened the design of the parliamentary system and failed to allow the parliaments in Africa to play the same role as those in established western democracies and, furthermore, hindered the strengthening of parliaments' independence. The implication was that the parliamentary function of oversight with regard to holding the executive accountable and scrutinising executive policy decisions was curtailed. Historically, parliaments were poorly funded and this situation still prevails with consequent crippling of holding the executive to account, since the ability to generate and synthesise evidence is limited because of lack of human capacity. Overall, these challenges subsequently lead to limited use of evidence by parliaments (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2007).

As indicated earlier, African parliaments in the last few decades have been steadily reclaiming power from years of one-party states and dictatorships and are becoming more assertive in claiming and fulfilling their roles of holding the executive accountable. As described by Draman et al. (2017, p. 1), African parliaments are "evolving rapidly as part of dynamic social, political and technological development". However, the effects of authoritarian, non-democratic and patriarchal states and the impact of their respective journeys to democracy, have left African states and, by implication, parliaments with a wide range of internal, institutional and broader socio-economic and political challenges to address in addition to new challenges at national, regional and global levels. These challenges are exacerbated by the current global Covid-19 pandemic and its disastrous socio-economic effects. Parliaments, as 'guardians of the state' (the citizen representative in governance matters), need to have the necessary powers, capacity, resources, support and evidence to effectively fulfil their mandates. Evidence is a crucial element for the successful delivery and implementation of a parliament's core functions, such as formulation of legislation, holding the executive accountable and citizen representation.

Applying a systems thinking perspective to evidence use in parliaments allows for a deeper understanding of the ingrained complex behaviours related to legislative/policy decision-making and evidence use. This, in turn, can allow for better responses to improve the evidence cycle for informed policy decision-making and for holding the executive accountable. A systems

thinking perspective incorporates the macro and micro factors and systematic approaches to strengthening evidence use as outlined in the frameworks in Chapter 2. Evidence use moves beyond a limited focus on sources and access to evidence and emphasises the importance of focusing on both the internal parliamentary processes, systems, and structures as well as the external systems and structures which shape the demand, supply, and use of evidence, in contributing to policy decision-making and improved implementation practice.

The authors of this section state at the outset that the application of a systems thinking perspective alone is not a panacea for challenges associated with evidence use in parliaments. A systems thinking perspective, however, allows for a close examination of the interconnectedness of various elements and components which influence evidence use in African parliaments. By applying a systems thinking perspective, the following key points on evidence use in parliament are revealed:

- Evidence use is not influenced only by internal parliamentary structures and processes and other external factors play a significant role in influencing evidence use in parliament.
- An understanding of the country's socio-economic context, history, the nature of political leadership, decision-making processes and 'rules of the political game' is crucial to analysis and improvement of evidence use in parliaments.
- Availability of better knowledge and evidence will not necessarily transform into better use of evidence for decision-making (Király, Köves & Balázs, 2017).

In keeping with a systems thinking perspective, the authors contend that there are a range of institutional and political factors which influence decision-making processes including the use (or non-use or selective use) of evidence. The authors draw on the following theoretical assumptions to understand the factors influencing decision-making (including the extent to which evidence use plays a role). The first assumption emanates from De Mesquita's selectorate theory (2005) that assumes that a central goal of political leaders (including MPs) is to remain in power and to do so, they need to maintain the support of the selectorate (either a small or large group who support the leader, which in the case of parliamentarians include their main constituents). The theory further notes that this support is maintained and secured by the allocation of private and public goods. Private goods include specific benefits for a smaller support group (i.e. the selectorate) while public goods include broader benefits for the public at large (Arena & Nicoletti, 2014). Using the selectorate theory,

it is argued that the extent to which evidence is used and how evidence is 'selectively' used is often dependent upon whether MPs' political chances are affected by the issues being deliberated and the factors (including evidence) influencing such deliberations.

The second assumption is that MPs are often the echo chambers/mirrors of political institutions and political groups to which they belong and who have supported their election/appointment as political leaders (Rotberg & Salahub, 2013). Where political party loyalty takes priority in the decisions and actions of political leaders (as in many cases around the world and the African continent, whether in government or parliament), the political party's interests (in terms of ideology or stance on a particular issue) dictate the extent and ways in which evidence is selected, presented and used in parliaments (Parkhurst, 2017).

The third assumption is that before evidence reaches MPs or before MPs consider evidence, it goes through three major filters, cognitive, institutional and political, which shape how the MPs use evidence (De Mesquita et al., 2005). The cognitive filter is an MP's biases, values or interests that influence the choice to selectively accept or reject the evidence available. Institutions act as filters of evidence which is produced and presented to members of parliament. The institutional filters act in two ways: they can encourage evidence that supports existing institutionalised political ideas (or 'policy paradigms') or they can block evidence that could transform institutional political ideas that may present new challenges (Azevedo-Harman, 2011; Parkhurst, 2017). The authors argue that in some cases, institutional filters influence role players such as evidence producers (including internal parliamentary staff and external producers) to filter evidence so that whatever evidence is presented to MPs speaks to existing institutionalised political ideas. For example, in authoritarian regimes or where the corporate private sector has significant influence, the elites wield enough power to influence which evidence gets through to MPs and how MPs use evidence. They will also wield the power (through groupthink) to decide whether an MP has a future in parliament or not (an example is the recent situation of state capture in South Africa where MPs of the ruling party's position shifted with the leadership changes at the national level despite the evidence of state capture staying the same). The argument here is that if MPs strictly adhere to a specific groupthink (political party or interest group position) which determines the rules and the incentives for conforming to specific political

positions, then these elements will play a more dominant role in policy decision-making, including affecting the extent and ways in which evidence is used to ensure that the political party interests are supported.

Given these assumptions and including the filters noted above, it is clear that a wide range and complex set of factors and actors are at play in the use of evidence for decision-making in the parliamentary space. Hence the importance and potential value of applying a systems thinking perspective to ensure that the complex spectrum of factors and actors are carefully considered within the broad scope of a system of evidence use in parliaments in order to avoid a narrow focus on evidence alone.

A systems thinking perspective, therefore, reinforces the important conceptual shift from calls for 'evidence-*based* policymaking' to 'evidence-*informed* policy-making', acknowledging that there is a range of other factors interconnecting and influencing policy decision-making including political realities, budget constraints, societal and cultural issues, as well as personal values and beliefs (Draman et al., 2017; Cairney, 2016; Parkhurst, 2017). Important in this shift to 'evidence-*informed* policymaking' and, as Parkhurst (2017) suggests, the need for a shift to the *good governance of evidence*, is the acknowledgement and reminder that politics plays a central role in policy decision-making including how evidence is used (or not used) in political institutions such as parliaments. Parkhurst (2017, pp. 9-10) emphasises the need for a political approach to evidence use in policy decision-making that "considers multiple competing values, as well as the political-institutional context in which decision-making takes place …". The author goes on to point out that, in the same way, *improving* evidence use in policy "requires a decidedly political approach – one that recognises the realities of decision-making in contested policy arenas" (Parkhurst, 2017, p. 167). Rather than attempting a depoliticised approach to evidence use critiqued by various scholars (Cairney, 2016; Parkhurst, 2017), it is important to acknowledge and effectively navigate the politics of evidence use.

A systems thinking perspective on systems of evidence in African parliaments

Figure 3.1 illustrates the shared components of systems of evidence use in African parliaments according to the three categorisations illustrated as concentric circles including the outer sphere (the broader macro-context), the

middle sphere (external structures supporting evidence use in parliaments) and the inner sphere (internal parliamentary structures supporting evidence use) surrounding the core sphere – the central issue of evidence use and ultimately policy decision-making and oversight by parliaments – illustrating evidence as one factor, among others, including values, interests, ideology, etc. influencing policy decision-making. It is important to bear in mind that the interaction between the various components takes place between several different components and across the different spheres – all impacting on the core spheres of the factors including evidence use – influencing policy decision-making and oversight. The complex inter-relationships and interconnectedness between the different components and across different spheres (illustrated by the cross-cutting arrows) give effect to the operations of the evidence ecosystem in parliaments. The aim here is simply to capture some of the different components within the different spheres.

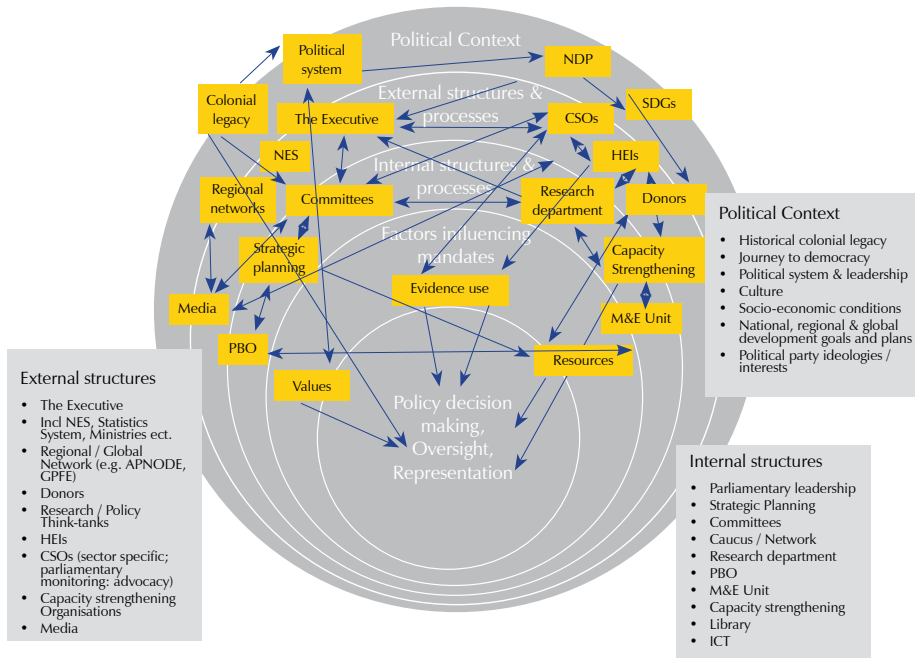


Figure 3.1 Components of the system(s) of evidence use in parliaments (Authors' illustration)

The broader macro-political context of African parliaments – as structural foundations

As discussed earlier, the broader political and historical context has a profound effect on African parliaments including how evidence is used in parliaments in relation to other factors informing policy decision-making. How African parliaments are constituted is influenced by three main factors: colonial and historical heritage influencing the powers and forms of parliament; each country's journey to independence and democracy; the political ideologies shaping those journeys steered by political party formations competing for power and influence. These aspects can be described as the structural foundations that define and shape the powers a parliament has in terms of its mandates and how it can effectively fulfil its mandates (including its use of evidence).

In the first instance, the colonial legacy has had a strong influence on the parliamentary powers and related practices. Countries with a Francophone colonial legacy (including the former Belgian colonies) tend to mirror the French parliamentary system as in Niger, Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and Gabonese parliaments. Whereas the Anglophone heritage in countries such as Zimbabwe, Uganda, Malawi, Ghana and Kenya tend to lean towards the British Westminster system. The same applies to Lusophone countries with a Portuguese colonial history: Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau (GIZ, 2016, pp. 2-3; Draman, Titriku, Lampo, Hayter & Holden, 2017, p. 22). The implication of these different colonial legacies points to a more executive subservient parliamentary system. British colonies had relatively more exposure to legislative powers than their French and Portuguese counterparts: "… in contrast to the British colonial politics, which established quasi-legislative institutions, during French colonialism all political decision-making was exclusively concentrated in Paris… In Lusophone countries, the legislative practice was non-existent during colonialism" (Jolobe, 2012, p. 9). However, the legacy of the British colonial system has also been critiqued for reinforcing executive dominance and limiting the powers of the legislature; "Anglophone African countries show least separation [of powers] and most concentration of power; and Francophone countries have a higher degree of separation but also high levels of presidential power" (Van Cranenburgh, 2009, p. 54).

As in other parts of the world, African countries have opted for either unicameral or bicameral legislatures. Whichever option a country has opted for has implications on the rate, process and resources available for evidence use in parliament to perform its mandate. While it is difficult to generalise about which option has more advantages, bicameralism can serve to limit executive dominance: "…constitutional structures that protect legislatures from the executive dominance are generally better served by bi-cameralism than uni-cameralism" (Salih, 2005, p. 19). Again, the broader context is important, with Salih pointing out that "bi-cameralism is also better suited for severely divided societies by checking more effectively the power of the executive and exposing the failings of government. It allows more thorough scrutiny of legislation by double-checking with a broader spectrum of citizens' representatives" (Salih, 2005, p. 19).

The other point which must be noted is that the powers of many African parliaments have been severely restricted under single-party dominance. The resurgence of multiparty politics has been widely regarded as a positive development to enhance the powers of African parliaments. For example, Bowman (2010) and Salih (2005) note that pluralistic politics, especially the prevalence of competing political parties, means that parliaments have become representative of a wide range of opinions, 'ideological' trends and interest groups and, as such, are symbols of the citizen's sovereignty and, by extension, an exercise of overseeing on their behalf (Salih, 2005:21; Bowman, 2010). The majority of African countries have progressed from having one party controlling the executive and the legislative arm of government to allowing opposition parties and independent members to participate in legislative elections. However, countries such as South Africa, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Mozambique are examples that have had the same ruling party since independence (Draman et al., 2017, p. 22). Furthermore, constitutions adopted by some African states have also enhanced the journey to democracy and the role of parliaments, for example, Kenya's 2010 Constitution cemented the role and position of opposition politics in parliament. These broader political and historical contextual factors have played, and in many cases, continue to play, important roles in (re)shaping African parliaments and influencing how they fulfil their mandates. The inclusion of opposition politics also had a positive effect on holding the executive accountable and on the use of evidence in scrutinising policy decisions both by parliament and the executive arm of government.

Applying a systems thinking perspective to internal structures supporting evidence use in African parliaments

The 'institutional architecture' of parliaments includes the political and administrative leadership that supports a culture of evidence use and invests in structures within parliaments that provide institutional support for evidence use such as research and M&E units and related infrastructures such as libraries and ICT. The interrelationships between the different components of the institutional architecture (and especially between the 'producers' and 'users' of evidence) are important in supporting evidence generation and use. While the various components will need to be effectively resourced to fulfil their specific mandates, their interactions and how they interact with their relevant counterparts play an important role in contributing to more effective evidence use. We argue that internal structures and mechanisms for generating and supplying evidence is influenced by a number of factors, such as the value given to evidence in decision-making by both the executive and the MPs, the resources allocated to generating knowledge and the general evidence use culture in the parliament. In a number of parliaments across Africa, researchers also indicated that despite making evidence available, MPs may not necessarily use the evidence for a range of reasons such as non-alignment with their values and interests, constituency needs, political party loyalty, and more practical elements such as time constraints, and accessibility of the evidence in terms of how it is presented (CLEAR-AA, 2018).

Experience shows that internal parliamentary structures do not always cater sufficiently for the demand for evidence from MPs because of inadequate resourcing, including human resources resulting in the limited number of staff members being unable to respond timeously to a large number of requests. The number of researchers in parliaments varies widely, for example, Malawi reportedly has 8 researchers and Kenya, 24 (AFIDEP, 2016, p. 5) which affects the ability of research departments to effectively support evidence use in parliaments. In response to this challenge, some African parliaments are reported to have formed units that offer specialised information and analysis to MPs by establishing Parliamentary Budget Offices (PBOs) to provide support on issues involving budgets (Draman et al., 2017: 27). The authors argue that if a systems thinking perspective is applied to these internal evidence generation and synthesis capacity challenges, it becomes evident that challenges are not only localised but are interconnected and interrelated to the independence

of the parliament from the executive and the perceived role of parliament. The authors argue that where parliaments claim their independence from the executive they will see the need to further develop their capacities to execute their duties.

Applying a systems thinking perspective to external evidence generators and suppliers

The traditional approach to investigating and analysing evidence use in parliaments has been to single out specific components and give each an explanatory weight on its own. In this section, the authors apply a simultaneous evaluation approach to assess the dynamics of the system of evidence use. As stated earlier, various organisations are involved in generating and supporting evidence use in parliaments. These organisations fall outside the internal parliamentary institutional architecture, but despite being external to the parliamentary institutional architecture they are interconnected and interrelated in several ways. These organisations play several key roles which can be broadly categorised into the following five areas: sources (producers) of evidence; advocates for evidence use; as 'monitors' to hold parliaments accountable to fulfil their mandates effectively; as capacity developers; and as donors – financially supporting initiatives internal and external to parliament that support evidence use. The external organisations include government entities, research organisations/think-tanks, parliamentary networks, advocacy organisations, the media, citizens, multilateral funders and capacity-strengthening organisations (CLEAR-AA, 2020; Draman et al., 2017; Hudson & Wren, 2007).

The authors argue that when evidence is generated, requested or delivered to parliament, the interrelationships and interconnectedness of parliament and these organisations play a key role in terms of the content and the availability of the evidence. As highlighted earlier, parliaments in the African context are not truly independent of the executive and, politically, in most cases, the ruling party which constitutes the executive also dominates the parliamentary committees' leadership role, which is key when deciding what type of information is requested and delivered to parliament. The authors add that there are no linear relationships which result in information being requested and delivered without the influence of a 'filter' – cognitive, institutional and political. These filters, when combined with the political objective of retaining power, limit the content and type of information delivered to parliament. These filters also

influence the effectiveness of parliament in holding the executive to account. The political factors that shape evidence in parliaments are expounded on in Chapter 5 of this volume. The example below demonstrates how the filters shape the parliamentary debates and information available to MPs.

In 2007-2008 the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe was involved in quasi-fiscal activities which involved buying farm implements and machinery and loaning the machinery to a narrow group of politically connected recipients through a programme called Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Farm Mechanisation programme. The total value of the loans was in excess of USD 200 million. The recipients defaulted on the loans and in 2015 the Zimbabwean Minister of Finance tabled a debt assumption Bill of the loans in parliament. During the committee reading stage and parliamentary debate, opposition MPs demanded the list of the beneficiaries so that they could make an informed decision prior to voting on the Bill. However, the committee chairpersons and the speaker of parliament from the ruling party denied the motion. The minister implored the opposition members of parliament to let 'bygones be bygones' (Dailynews, 2015). Therefore, despite the list of the beneficiaries being available, the MPs voted without knowing who the beneficiaries were. Five years later, in 2020, the list was revealed and it was discovered that a large majority of the beneficiaries were executives and MPs from the ruling party. This case shows how different filters – political interests, interrelationships and interconnectedness – influence evidence use when parliament executes its functions. In this instance, the following issues become observable when one applies systems thinking:

- Despite the information being available, the committee chairperson and parliamentary leaders who were from the same party as the ruling party used their political and cognitive filters to prevent the list of beneficiaries from being presented in parliament.
- The implication was that the parliamentary role of holding the Reserve Bank to account and playing an oversight role on the Zimbabwean Consolidated Revenue Fund was curtailed because the political fortunes of the ruling party would be negatively affected.
- Personal political interests also superseded the constitutional role of parliament of holding the executive to account.

Using this case as an example, one can argue that political survival and adhering to groupthink is key in deciding on the type of evidence demanded or presented to parliament by various groups. One can also argue that if evidence has little political impact on the executive and MPs, its chances of being accepted are

high. Such events shape how external sources of evidence view parliament and also shape how they relate to parliament when it comes to evidence use and generation. In some cases, the parliamentary oversight role is curtailed in situations where the executive is too powerful or in cases where the executive and the parliament are controlled by the same political party (Masvaure, 2018). In such situations, the parliament and its committees act as institutional filters and decide what evidence is requested from the executive arm of government. This impairs the effectiveness of parliament. The IPU (2008) noted the following: "When the government (the executive arm) is the only source of information, or when available information is not transparent, parliamentarians are limited in their ability to hold governments to account, and an imbalance of power between the legislature and the executive may result" (IPU, 2008, p. 7).

For external organisations, such as think tanks where funding is mostly dependent on government, this may influence the processes and procedures of the think tanks and, in turn, how the evidence is collected and presented. Further to this, it may result in a biased approach in the selection of the evidence provided by certain research organisations when compared to their non-government-funded counterparts. While this is not always the case, the probability exists.

Considerations to strengthen the evidence system in African parliaments

In keeping with the principles of a systems thinking perspective to strengthen evidence use in parliaments, it is important to focus on the interrelationships and interconnectedness of the various components and stakeholders rather than focusing on performance of individual elements. Such a focus requires investing time and energy in understanding and building strong relationships between the different elements and components of the evidence system in parliaments. This can be more effectively achieved by:

- Understanding and appreciating the unique and integrated contribution of the different components of the system of evidence in parliament.
- Building strong relationships between the *people* involved in the various components involved in the evidence system in parliament.
- Being intentional about creating and effectively using opportunities for interaction to strengthen linkages which can include strengthening communication channels,

cross-component goal setting, and shared reflection on what works well and ways in which to address challenges.

- Appreciating the importance of the interconnectedness and interrelationships between internal and external parliamentary stakeholders.

The importance of adequately investing in understanding internal and external structures, entities and processes that work to strengthen evidence use in parliaments cannot be underestimated. Many parliaments are under-resourced and under-capacitated in terms of structures which generate and synthesise evidence such as parliamentary research and M&E units. In a recent tracer study conducted by CLEAR-AA (2020), parliamentary representatives participating in capacity-strengthening opportunities reported that institutional support (related to political will that values the importance of evidence use) was the main factor determining whether it was easier or more difficult to apply and transfer the learning and skills gained in their respective institutions. Limited financial resources were often cited as the reason for the symptomatic lack of political will and the absence of an institutional buy-in culture. Investment in evidence generation and use is therefore closely tied to political will and, by implication, indicative of an institutional culture that values effective evidence use.

Parliamentary networks such as APNODE and parliamentary caucuses often struggle to function optimally due to limited funds as, in many cases, they are not part of the formal parliamentary structure of specific parliaments and tend to rely on external development partners for support, which focuses largely on secretariat functions and capacity building support but is more limited in terms of supporting participation in networking activities. Similarly, parliamentary monitoring organisations rely on donor organisations/independent foundations to ensure that they are able to play their roles effectively and have the necessary autonomy to hold parliaments and government sectors accountable. These intertwined engagements between donors, development partners, capacity building entities, and 'evidence structures' again emphasise the interdependent and interconnected system of evidence use.

Expanding on the analogy that "ecosystems have to be adaptive to respond to change", Stewart et al. (2019, p. 7) introduce innovation as an important element of the evidence ecosystem, highlighting the importance of exploring and experimenting with new approaches, methods and tools and by being adaptive to constantly, rapidly changing (socio-economic and political) environments. This is particularly important in view of the Covid-19 pandemic

with its consequent cross-cutting global impacts. With the availability of many advances in technology, new possibilities to improve approaches for greater efficiency and effectiveness should be explored. To ensure that innovative approaches are indeed useful in improving evidence use, it is important to ensure buy-in and ownership of the innovation from institutional leadership and the innovation's main users. It is also important to explore and develop innovative solutions by means of meaningful participatory approaches involving the direct users of the innovation during the development process to ensure relevance, suitability, applicability, and usability.

The structures within and external to parliament engage with the evidence system in different ways and should strive to work together effectively by building strong relationships and by exploring synergies to complement each other's work rather than working in silos at each step from evidence production to its use. "Institutions and roles which provide more than one ecosystem function help connect the entire system; opportunities to develop these should be explored… These institutions and people also act as pipelines in evidence ecosystems, the absence of which impedes the flow of evidence." (Shepherd, 2014, pp. 5-6).

To strengthen the capacity of support organisations, the systems thinking perspective is useful to enable moving beyond technical aspects to consider and integrate the wide range of factors influencing evidence use in the parliamentary context. The systems thinking perspective is key in exploring the use of evidence in terms of the whole, rather than just parts. Furthermore, a systems perspective can make capacity-strengthening organisations more aware of and sensitive to how their intervention approaches affect other elements in the system and, by implication, the broader system.

Conclusion

Systems of evidence use in African parliaments are not homogenous. Hence, the application of a systems thinking perspective enables one to cut through the different layers and aspects of evidence use in order to understand how the various elements and components are interconnected in order to influence the behaviour of a system of evidence use in parliament. It is important for the various entities and actors in the evidence system to identify and be aware of the factors within the system that either support or impede and then to build

on those that support evidence use to contribute to better policy decision-making. On the other hand, there is also a need to explore and advocate for solutions to mitigate the constraining factors. Adoption of an evidence-informed policymaking position from a systems thinking perspective allows for an awareness of other factors contributing to policy decision-making and oversight. Such insight is essential when deciding whether these factors should play a leading role and for evidence to play a supporting role or vice versa.

Reference List

Adar, K.G. (2018). *Globalization and emerging trends in African states' foreign policy-making process: a comparative perspective of Southern Africa*. New York and Abingdon: Routledge.

AFIDEP. (2016). *Annual Report 2016: Shaping Africa's Future through Evidence-Informed Policies.* Available from: https://bit.ly/2XlF2D8

Ahn, A.C., Tewari, M., Poon, C.S., & Phillips, R.S. (2006). 'The Limits of Reductionism in Medicine: Could Systems Biology Offer an Alternative?', PLOS Medicine. *Public Library of Science*, 3(6):e208. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.0030208

Arena, P. & Nicoletti, N.P. (2014). Selectorate theory, the democratic peace, and public goods provision. *International Theory*, 6(3):391-416. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971914000347

Arnold, R.D. & Wade, J.P. (2015). A definition of systems thinking: A systems approach. *Procedia Computer Science*, 44(2015):669-678. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2015.03.050

Azevedo-Harman, E. (2011). Parliaments in Africa: representative institutions in the land of the "big man". *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 17(1):65-85. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2011.545180

Barkan, J.D. (2009). *Legislative power in emerging African democracies*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Bowman, W.M. (2010) *Policy Makers or Rubber Stamps? The Challenges Regarding Legislative Independence in East Africa.* SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 1642847. Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network. Available https://bit.ly/3lBzf4l (Accessed 17 September 2020).

Bryant, A. (2002). Re-grounding grounded theory. *Journal of Information Technology Theory and Application (JITTA)*, 4(1):7.

Cairney, P. (2016). *The politics of evidence-based policymaking*. London: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-51781-4

CLEAR-AA. (2018). Report on the Workshop on Research and Evidence Use in the Parliamentary Context, Kampala, Uganda: 23 to 25 October 2018. (Unpublished report shared with workshop participants.)

CLEAR-AA. (2020). Tracer Study Report: Effects of the Parliamentary Capacity Strengthening Initiatives implemented by CLEAR-AA and Twende Mbele between 2017 and 2018. (Unpublished internal report for CLEAR-AA and Twende Mbele.)

Cohen, R. (2019). *Democracy and socialism in Africa*. New York and Abingdon: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429045660

Crum, B. (2018). Parliamentary accountability in multilevel governance: what role for parliaments in post-crisis EU economic governance? *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(2):268-286. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2017.1363270

Daily News. (2015). *Disclose full list of RBZ debtors: MDC, DailyNews*. Available from: https://bit.ly/3Cowzy3 (Accessed 17 September 2020).

De Mesquita, B.B. et al. (2005). *The logic of political survival*. Cambridge: MIT press.

Draman, R., Titriku, A., Lampo, I., Hayter, E. & Holden, K. (2017). *Evidence in African parliaments*. Oxford: INASP (International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications). Available from: https://bit.ly/2XrJqQR (Accessed 6 February 2020).

GIZ. (2016). *Guardians of Democratic Accountability: The Role of Anglophone and Francophone African Parliaments in Supervising the Budget*. Pretoria: GIZ.

Helboe Pedersen, H., Halpin, D. & Rasmussen, A. (2015). Who Gives Evidence to Parliamentary Committees? A Comparative Investigation of Parliamentary Committees and their Constituencies. *The Journal of Legislative Studies,* 21(3):408-427. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2015.1042292

Hudson, A. & Wren, C. (2007). *Parliamentary strengthening in developing countries.* Final Report for DFID. London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

International Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2008). *World E-Parliament: Report 2008*. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Király, G., Köves, A. & Balázs, B. (2017). Contradictions between political leadership and systems thinking. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. 140:134-143. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2015.05.131

Loosemore, M. & Cheung, E. (2015). Implementing systems thinking to manage risk in public private partnership projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 33(6):1325-1334. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2015.02.005

Masvaure, S. (2018) Decentralisation: unshared vision and political contestation in the City of Harare, Zimbabwe. *Journal of Political Power*, 11(2):191-210. https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2018.1477375

Notshulwana, K.M. & Lebakeng, T.J. (2019). Constraints and Prospects for Legislative Oversight in Emerging African Democracies: The Case of South Africa. In: *Perspectives on the Legislature and the Prospects of Accountability in Nigeria and South Africa*. Cham: Springer, pp. 179-195. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93509-6_10

Parkhurst, J.O. (2017). *The politics of evidence: from evidence-based policy to the good governance of evidence*. London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315675008

Pelizzo, R. & Stapenhurst, R. (2007). The role of parliament in promoting good governance in Africa. Available from SSRN 2101133. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2101133

Richmond, B. (1994). Systems thinking/system dynamics: let's just get on with it. *System Dynamics Review*, 10(2-3):135-157. https://doi.org/10.1002/sdr.4260100204

Rittel, H.W. & Webber, M.M. (1973). 2.3 planning problems are wicked. *Polity,* 4(155):e169. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01405730

Rotberg, R.I. & Salahub, J.E. (2013). *African legislative effectiveness*. North-South Institute (Ottawa) Research Report. Available from https://bit.ly/2Z80Oew

Salih, M.A.R.M. (ed.) (2005). *African parliaments: between governance and government*. New York, N.Y: Palgrave Macmillan.

Senge, P. (1996). Systems thinking. *Executive Excellence*, 13(1):15-16.

Shepherd, J.P. (2014). *How to achieve more effective services: the evidence ecosystem*. Cardiff: University of Cardiff.

Stapenhurst, R., Draman, R., Imlach, A., Hamilton, A. & Kroon, C. (2011). *African Parliamentary Reform*. Oxford: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203806548

Stewart, R., Dayall, H., Langer, L., Van Rooyen, C. (2019). *The evidence ecosystem in South Africa: growing resilience and institutionalisation of evidence use*. London: Palgrave Communications. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0303-0

Strøm, K. (2000). Delegation and accountability in parliamentary democracies. *European journal of political research*, 37(3):261-290. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007064803327

Turnperry, J., Russel, D. & Rayner, T. (2013). The complexity of evidence for sustainable development policy: analysing the boundary work of the UK Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.* Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), 38:586-598. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.00549.x

Van Cranenburgh. (2009). *Restraining executive power in Africa: Horizontal accountability in Africa's hybrid regimes*. Available from: https://bit.ly/3tOQS4S

Weyrauch, V. (2016). *Knowledge into Policy: Going Beyond 'Context Matters', INASP and Politics and Ideas*. Available from: https://bit.ly/3EukdGz

White, D. (1995). Application of systems thinking to risk management:: a review of the literature. *Management Decision. MCB UP Ltd,* 33(10):35-45. https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000003918

4

PARLIAMENTS IN NATIONAL EVALUATION SYSTEMS: CURRENT PRACTICE, FUTURE POTENTIAL



Takunda Chirau, Ian Goldman, Josephine Watera, Abdoulaye Gounou, Damase Sossou and Elias Segla

Introduction

The role of legislatures in overseeing the implementation of policies and programmes by the executive is inherently evaluative. Tracking whether budgets are spent appropriately, targets are met (monitoring) and assessing whether the lives of citizens have been changed for the better (evaluation) are at the core of what legislatures do (Zantsi, 2020, p. 1). Parliament's functions are summarised as representation, legislation, and oversight (Zantsi, 2020). To play these roles effectively, parliamentarians need access to quality evidence, including from evaluations. They also need the capacity to use the evidence. Benin, Uganda and South Africa have each established a national evaluation system (NES), a national evaluation policy and a central institution which has been tasked with championing and overseeing M&E. This chapter seeks to explore the relationship between each country's parliament and its NES, how their parliaments have used evaluations generated internally and through the NES, and how parliaments have influenced and informed the NES. The authors of this chapter have been involved in either NESs or parliamentary M&E in the three countries. The chapter therefore draws heavily on the authors' experience, also drawing on wider literature and interviews with people who have been involved in these systems.

Democratic governments are built on the separation of the powers of the executive, the legislature and the legal system (Van Rensburg, Vrey & Neethling, 2020). In this system of checks and balances, the legislature sets rules and prescribes how such rules should be executed (Yamamoto, 2007, p. 9). This defines the relationship between the executive and the legislature where the executive remains accountable to the legislature. So what do we mean by evidence? Goldman and Pabari (2020) argue that although evidence is associated with rigorous quantitative scientific studies, it can take many forms and come from many sources, but must have the key qualities of independence, objectivity and verifiability. Evidence from monitoring means using routine administrative data from government services on their operations and survey data from national statistical agencies. Evidence from in-depth research and evaluation studies allows for deeper understanding and helps to unpack the effects of government interventions and how they can be strengthened.

The word evaluation is used loosely for many types of studies. Evaluation is defined by the United Nations Evaluation Group (2016, p. 10) as "an assessment, systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy,

policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability" (UNEG, 2016).

Evaluations provide parliaments with evidence as to what is working (or not) and this information can be used in parliaments' oversight and legislative roles. In the context of parliaments, Eberli refers to using evaluations for "argumentation, legitimization or rationalization" (Eberli, 2015, p. 1). Argumentation applies where MPs have to convince their colleagues that a certain decision is the right one, whereas legitimisation justifies why specific decisions have been made, and rationalisation speaks to fronting or delaying specific decisions. Evaluations should allow parliamentarians to better interrogate the work of the departments they oversee. The value of a NES is that the discipline of evaluation is mainstreamed across government, guiding how evaluations are selected, implemented and used and the systems in place to ensure quality should increase confidence in the findings (Goldman et al., 2018, p. 1). This means that parliaments should be able to access quality evaluations of government actions across the state. According to Zantsi (2020, p. 6), "there are three ways in which evaluation manifests in the legislative environment. Parliaments can improve the NES by demanding high-quality evaluations from departments; they can lead evaluation efforts, especially for areas that are transversal in nature; and they can initiate self-assessments that not only assist in building an evaluative culture within legislatures but also give insights into the attainment of national goals as a result of the legislature's actions." These three areas interact and reinforce the others, and in efforts to strengthen the NES, all three areas need to be given due attention. Goldman and Pabari (2020b) provide a model of the supply and demand of evidence, introduced in Chapter 2 (see Figure 4.1). For evaluations to be *demanded* and used there needs to be institutionalisation of evidence-based policymaking, planning and decision-making practices in government (Dhakal, 2014, p. 51). In terms of ***supply*** of evaluations, parliaments may undertake or commission evaluative activities themselves or use evaluations conducted by other organisations e.g. from the NES. To use evaluations from elsewhere a *knowledge broker* is needed who is able to identify relevant evaluations and use the evidence from these to support parliament's work.

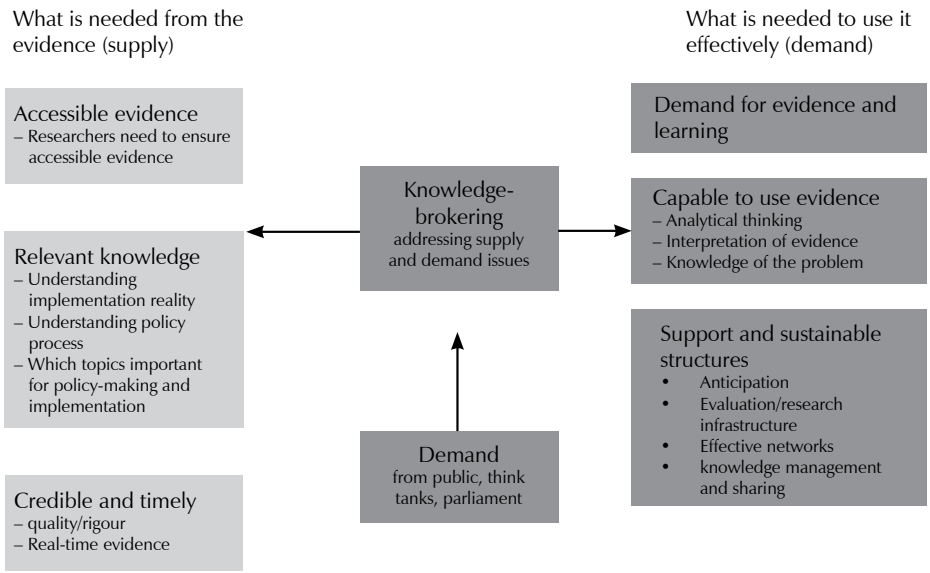


Figure 4.1 Supply, demand and knowledge brokering for evidence

Source: Goldman and Pabari, 2020b

Martinuzzi and Sedlacko (2016) suggest that the role of a knowledge broker is threefold:

- Knowledge brokers as *knowledge managers*; involves the development, transfer and translation of knowledge.
- Knowledge brokers acting as *linkage agents;* this involves the development of knowledge-based networks, for example ensuring linkages with research institutions or evaluation sections in the executive.
- Knowledge brokers acting as *capacity builders* involving the development of capacity to produce and use policy-relevant knowledge.

In parliaments a parliamentary research service (PRS) and often a parliamentary budget office (PBO) typically undertake these knowledge broker roles. The next section of this chapter provides a summary of how evaluation and evidence systems are operating in African parliaments. This is followed by a focus on the three African countries that have a NES – Uganda, Benin and South Africa – and an exploration of how evaluation information is supplied, how the national NESs are linked to their respective parliaments, how evaluations are requested, how they are used, and the knowledge broker roles that are being played by the executive and within parliament. In the third section of the chapter, lessons are drawn from the linkages between NES and parliament. Finally,

the fourth section of the chapter reflects on the emerging lessons and draws conclusions, including how the different configurations of the M&E 'ecosystem' affect evidence use in parliaments (demand and use), the lessons for working with committees and/or parliamentary researchers, notably around their knowledge-brokering roles, and overall lessons for institutionalising evaluation in parliament.

It is the hope of the authors that this work can contribute to emerging thinking about how to strengthen evaluation systems and processes within parliaments and executives.

Evaluation and evidence systems in parliaments in Uganda, South Africa and Benin

The parliamentary structures in Uganda and Benin have one national assembly or parliament, while South Africa has a national assembly and an upper house (with regional representation in the upper house).[1] This chapter focuses on the national assembly. The constitutions of all three countries provide for parliament to monitor expenditure of public funds and scrutinise government policy and administration. The roles of parliament are outlined in more detail in Chapter 1 of this volume. To avoid repetition, only the key features which relate to M&E are outlined.

Parliaments have a two-tier management structure. Firstly, the **political** structure, which comprises the plenary, parliamentary committees, and political offices. *Plenary* is where MPs sit to debate and pass laws, resolutions, and motions, and is presided over by the Speaker or Deputy Speaker. All business is introduced in the plenary before being referred to a relevant committee for further consideration. All parliamentary committees report their findings and recommendations to the plenary, which takes the decision. ***Parliamentary committees*** undertake pre-legislative scrutiny of Bills and scrutiny of the various objects of expenditure and the sums to be spent on each with the objective of assuring transparency and accountability in the application of public funds and monitoring the implementation of government programmes and projects. Many multiparty parliaments have strong systematic structures and procedures geared towards ensuring a strong opposition in a multiparty dispensation. For example, the rules of procedure of the Parliament of Uganda mandate the

[1] World Factbook. Available from: https://bit.ly/39nohKp [Accessed 5 July 2020].

leader of the opposition to study all policy statements of government with shadow ministers, attend committee deliberations on policy issues, present their party's views and opinions, and thereafter propose possible alternatives.[2] The **administrative** structures of parliament are charged with providing logistical support for the political decision-making process of parliament in a non-partisan manner (Hanmer, 2009, p. 3). A secretariat headed by the clerk works under the authority of the speaker and provides administrative, procedural and technical support services to parliamentarians. In Uganda, the Department of Research and Development, the PBO and the PRS unit play critical knowledge broker roles, linking external evaluation producers with parliamentary committees. In South Africa, the PRS, the PBO and content advisors play the equivalent knowledge broker role. In Benin, there are three administrative structures, the State Budget Control and Assessment Analysis Unit (UNACEB), the Project of Support for the Strengthening and Modernization of the National Assembly (PARMAN), and the Benin Parliamentary Institute (IPAB) providing parliament with the means, tools, techniques and expertise necessary for the accomplishment of its constitutional missions.[3] In addition, Uganda and South Africa have internal M&E units to review the work of parliament. They also play a key brokering role in evaluation and evidence use. For example, the M&E division in Uganda houses the database for civil society organisations (CSOs) who are key generators of evidence, and links relevant CSOs to respective committees of parliament.

How parliaments use evidence to support their key roles

Law-making (legislation) is regarded as the most important function of parliaments. Parliaments create legislation through private members' Bills, but further amend, approve or reject laws put forward by government. In Uganda, the rules require that for the first reading a new Bill is accompanied with an evaluation report to justify the need for the proposed legislation. Furthermore, upon referral of a Bill to committees, consultation processes are conducted requiring input from highly knowledgeable persons or institutions, creating an avenue for use of evaluations. Post-legislative scrutiny, an ex-post evaluation of enacted legislation, is also emerging as a critical practice in parliaments during which evidence is sought on the effects of legislation in terms of whether intended policy objectives have been met by the legislation and, if so, how

[2] Rule 14 (4).
[3] Available from: https://bit.ly/3AwN62M [Accessed 9 April 2020].

effectively (Caygill, 2019). For example, the Persons with Disability Act 2006 of Uganda had to be amended when evidence emerged that some provisions were abused. Parliamentary *oversight* refers to parliament checking whether government's policies have been implemented according to legislative intent and desired goals.

In this case, evaluation evidence on government expenditures is valuable. In exercising their oversight, committees use the PRS to undertake desk research on relevant topics. In some instances, the PRS undertakes field studies to obtain first-hand knowledge from people engaged in the direct implementation of specific programmes and/or who are directly responsible for service delivery and/or by inviting experts from inside and outside government to provide background knowledge and analysis on relevant issues. Citizen evidence is also a common tool for informing decision-making in parliaments through petitions and interactions at constituency level.

Using the supply/demand model, parliaments both supply and demand evaluations; they produce their own evaluations and they use evaluations produced by others (Jacob, Speer & Furubo, 2015, p. 20). As producers, the technical departments are mandated to commission studies that are of interest to the business of parliament. As a user of evidence itself, parliament draws on evidence from evaluation studies generated internally and externally to debate and take policy decisions. In many countries, however, evaluation has become increasingly practised within the executive branch and parliaments have, therefore, indirectly become consumers of evaluative information (Speer, Pattyn & De Peuter, 2015, p. 39).

While many sources of information and analysis are available to parliamentarians, the various political parties, CSOs, journalists, etc. have their own agendas. Academic sources are sometimes too complex or theoretical and few, if any, external sources meet the often short and unpredictable timescales in which parliaments make decisions (Global Partners Governance, 2017, p. 1). Hence the internal producers of evidence, PRS, PBO and M&E units play critical roles in supporting committees with evidence.

How the NES and the parliamentary systems link in the three countries

The linkage with the NES and the Ugandan parliamentary system

The introduction of a National Development Plan in 2010 set new demands for national-level M&E. To address the need for M&E of the National Development Plan, a National Policy on Public Sector M&E was approved by Cabinet in 2013 (Office of the Prime Minister, 2013) followed in 2014 by an implementation plan to operationalise the policy (Office of the Prime Minister, 2014). One of the aims of the national M&E policy is to improve the confidence of Ugandan citizens in the parliament's ability to hold ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and government accountable for development outcomes (Abola, 2014). The policy further details three key responsibilities for parliament: to scrutinise various objects of expenditure and the sums to be spent on each; to assure transparency and accountability in the application of public funds; and to monitor the implementation of government programmes and projects (Office of the Prime Minister, 2013, p. 22).

The policy concretised the key elements of the Uganda NES including embedding M&E in the management practices of MDAs and in local governments and expanding the coverage of public policy and programmes subject to rigorous evaluation. The policy is geared at enhancing the basis on which decision makers make evidence-based public policy and programme decisions and strengthening accountability regarding government policies and programmes (Abola, 2014). The Uganda NES is led by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Evaluations can either be led by the OPM, a sector ministry or by an agency. The Government Evaluation Facility (GEF) commission was established to conduct and disseminate evaluations of national interest as approved by the Cabinet. A National M&E Technical Working Group (NMETWG) peer reviews evaluations in the GEF and includes representatives from government departments, parliament, the research community, private sector, non-government organisations (NGOs) and development partners.

How parliaments use evidence

The Parliament of Uganda is currently composed of 457 members assigned to 29 committees. Committees of parliament are tasked with the function of monitoring and evaluating government. In exercising their oversight function,

committees may conduct investigations, hold public hearings, acquire reports from the executive or commission studies in reaction to complaints, criticism, opposition or abuses surrounding a programme, operation, agency, or official (Abola, 2014). As mentioned earlier, the legal framework empowers the opposition in parliament to keep the government in check and articulate alternatives to government policies and positions (Parliament of Uganda, 2017; the Republic of Uganda, 1995, 2006). The opposition draws on evidence provided by the internal technical team in the office of the leader of the opposition through alternative policy statements, Bills, analysis reports, issue briefs, minority reports, sectoral briefs, analytical reports, statements, motions, oversight reports, accountability reports and questions.

Key components of the parliamentary administration relating to the use of evidence include the library service, PRS, PBO and the Institute of Parliamentary Studies.[4] Similar to the MDAs, parliament also has an M&E division. The PRS and PBO are mandated to provide objective, reliable and timely information to individual members and committees of parliament.

Parliaments cannot rely solely on the information provided by the executive but must look at other sources to enable them to explore contrary arguments (Draman et al., 2017, p. 20). The majority of the evidence presented in parliament originates from professional bodies and CSOs outside the NES and GEF structures. Parliamentarians can proactively commission studies to shed light on a topical issue in the House, with the findings packaged in the form of briefs, as well as full reports. This underscores the importance of the internal capacity of specialised units within parliaments to conduct evaluations or research. Internally generated studies are carried out by these units in parliament and may involve specialist researchers and may extend beyond desktop studies to field research or data collection. These studies do not necessarily follow the procedures for commissioning, conducting and disseminating full rigorous evaluations that are required in the NES. This raises questions of quality assurance and verification of evidence.[5] In addition, external sources of evidence are drawn from the GEF, from sector ministries, or third parties such as Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and academia.

[4] Available from: https://bit.ly/39ij46I

[5] Even more so if you compare with the good practice of evidence checks used in the House of Commons in the UK.

The PBO has played a critical role in ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of resources by undertaking studies on the performance of the national budget, for example, in terms of the projects under implementation, loans approved, domestic arrears, among others. Often, the PBO also triangulates the findings from the reports of the Auditor-General with their desk reviews on the execution of the national budget. The parliamentary M&E division fulfils many of the functions of the wider national M&E system, including undertaking the annual sector reviews of the legislature, preparing the parliamentary component for the government annual performance report. It also participates in the peer review of key national evaluation studies commissioned through the GEF. In setting up the NES, capacity was identified as a major impediment. The Civil Service College provided training which was attended by several parliamentary staff members. What has proved more valuable is the M&E training provided by the in-house Institute of Parliamentary Studies to members, committees and staff of parliament, and which has led to better use of evaluation evidence (Lwebuga & Busiku, 2015).

Examples of where evaluations have been used

In terms of using evaluations from the NES, a limited number of GEF evaluations have been tabled in parliament in cases where a specific parliamentary committee has an interest in a specific subject. One example was the evaluation by the OPM on the efficiency, rationalisation and prioritisation of public sector organisations. The report made fundamental recommendations, including merging and abolishing some government agencies and departments. This report prompted intense media attention which stimulated parliament's interest. Another landmark example is when parliament demanded an evaluation of the Youth Livelihood Programme. The Auditor-General issued a report which stated that the Youth Livelihood Programme was not meeting its intended objectives of empowering youth with necessary skills and start-up capital. Upon receipt of the audit report, the Public Accounts Committee demanded an evaluation of the Youth Livelihood Programme by the executive. The Public Accounts Committee also asked the PRS to carry out its own internal study to see if it confirmed the evaluation by the executive, to ensure they had a rapid response to the Auditor-General's findings, and to exert pressure on the executive to deliver the evaluation quickly. The two separate studies drew the same conclusions as the Auditor-General.

Accordingly, parliament pushed the executive to restructure the programme and relax some of the tight minimum requirements that were hindering access by beneficiaries. In practice, committees find it easier to request research evidence on specific matters of concern from inhouse structures including the PRS and PBO.[6] Recent examples are the post-legislative scrutiny studies of the Domestic Violence Act, 2010; the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2006; and the Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2010. The PRS undertook field activities and collected data from a cross-section of respondents. The findings led to rigorous debate in parliament which resulted in the amendment of these laws.

The findings of the PBO's reports and recommendations from parliamentary accountability committees have resulted in recoveries of substantial amounts of money and resources. A case in point is the recovery of the land titles belonging to the national broadcaster, which had been fraudulently allocated to an individual. The fraud was exposed in a report of the Auditor-General. The PBO and PRS helped the public accounts committee to assess the findings in corroboration of the oral evidence submitted by witnesses and which, ultimately, informed the move to recover the land titles. The leader of the opposition has undertaken several studies, for example, on the operation of a police interrogation centre, locally known as 'Nalufenya'. The findings of citizen abuse resulted in a detailed investigation by parliament and the closure of the facility.

Overall lessons

Parliamentary committees focus strongly on oversight rather than evaluation. Studies undertaken on the funding available, to enable parliament to play an oversight role, reveal that this is still a challenge despite the National M&E policy dictating that all MDAs allocate 3% of project funds towards M&E and this should also apply to parliament (Office of the Prime Minister, 2013). Uganda's National M&E Policy has led to a greater appreciation of the need for evidence to inform policy and programmatic decisions, including in parliament. The policy has helped to hold the public sector accountable for its application of resources. It has also addressed gaps in existing legislation and administrative practices concerning tracking performance and evaluating public policies and the policy has clarified the roles of different stakeholders, including parliament (Office of the Prime Minister, 2013). In practice, however, evidence advanced by the executive is often not well packaged nor is it readily available for use

[6] Each committee has a full-time researcher.

in parliament both of which obstruct the uptake of evidence. Parliament is demanding and using a range of sources of evidence including evaluations, reviews, desktop research and impact assessments.

The use of formal evaluations is very limited. This is partly due to the urgency of decisions that have to be taken in parliament. On the supply side, parliament prefers internally produced evidence due to the ease of access to internal resources such as parliamentary researchers, economists, legal advisors and policy analysts. Also, the credibility of internally sourced evidence is perceived to be higher than evidence provided by the executive because parliamentarians regard internal evidence as more impartial. There is little linkage between the formal evaluation programme of the GEF and the outputs of parliament's internal sources. The demand for internal sources should be of interest to the OPM as they inform on how to build capacity for conducting evaluations in parliament and how to incorporate evaluations produced in parliament with the GEF to enable wider access and use in the NES. While parliament is not necessarily a major producer of evaluations and other studies, there is a heightened emerging interest in evaluation. This can be seen through the emergence of a parliamentary forum on development evaluation, a chapter of the African Parliamentarians Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE). In addition, changes to the Uganda parliamentary rules of procedure in 2017 included a request that a study accompanies new legislation to justify the necessity for the new legislation.

Links of the NES to the South African parliamentary system

The supply system – the National Evaluation System

The Department of Performance (later Planning), Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) was established in the Presidency in 2010 to drive government M&E (Engela & Ajam, 2010). An official NES was established in South Africa in 2011, when the first national evaluation policy framework was approved by Cabinet (DPME, 2011). The establishment of the system is described by Goldman et al. (2015). Key elements of the NES in South Africa include national/provincial/departmental evaluation plans, evaluation standards, competencies, a range of evaluation courses, 27 guidelines and templates, a quality assurance and assessment system and a set of communication materials including annual reports and policy briefs highlighting the content of evaluations as well as the progress in establishing the system (DPME, 2017). In addition, a national Evaluation Technical Working Group (ETWG) of key stakeholders in the

evaluation system, both at the national and provincial levels, was used to broaden ownership of the NES. Parliament was not involved in this. The last annual report undertaken on the NES was for the period 2016/17 (DPME, 2017), and it summarised the situation at that time, as does the evaluation of the NES conducted in 2016/2017. The report indicated that while many elements were working, the improvement plan system needed to be followed up and tracked more rigorously (Goldman et al., 2019).

During 2018-2019 there were high-level changes in personnel in DPME which resulted in the evaluation system faltering. In 2020 there were signs that it might re-established and a new National Evaluation Policy Framework was approved (DPME, 2020). Despite the weakening of the DPME's central coordination role, the system has continued to operate with individual provinces and departments continuing to conduct evaluations.

The link between the NES and the parliamentary system

South Africa has a bicameral system. The National Assembly has 30 committees to which departments and public entities report.[7] The administration has a department of knowledge and information services, which includes documentation services, the parliamentary library, a PRS and a PBO. The committees of parliament are supported by content advisors who perform a similar function to parliamentary researchers.

DPME initially reported to the Standing Committee on Appropriations (SCOA) whose primary mandate is overseeing departmental expenditure. Overseeing DPME was a significant additional responsibility for the committee and DPME undertook major efforts to brief them on the M&E system and assist them to play their role effectively.[8] SCOA became the key champion for M&E in parliament. These efforts were very successful at building a strong understanding in SCOA of the work of DPME and led to a much more collegial atmosphere between the committee and DPME. Unfortunately, after the 2014 elections all the members of the committee changed and DPME was asked to report to the Public Services Committee instead. Hence all the institutional memory was lost and DPME had to build a new working relationship.

---

7 Available from: https://bit.ly/3hOxJvf

8 This included a 3-day training in July 2012 and taking 6 members of the committee accompanied by the Deputy Minister of DPME on study tours to the US and Canada in September/ October 2012 and to Uganda and Kenya in June/July 2013.

It became standard practice in DPME that evaluation reports and improvement plans were sent to the relevant parliamentary portfolio committees ensure that the portfolio committees were aware of the findings. Presentations were made at the Committee of Chairs of Portfolio Committees in 2012, 2013 and 2015 to make them all aware of DPME's work and to apprise them of evaluations conducted which could be followed up on. DPME also established links with the PBO so that researchers would use evaluation reports.

In addition, DPME presented to the parliamentary researchers to enable them to understand the evaluation system and how to access evaluations. However, this only occurred in 2013 and the failure to repeat the exercise represents a missed opportunity considering the importance of the parliamentary researchers in ensuring evaluations are used in parliament.

Evidence of demand – examples of where evaluations have been used

Several parliamentary committees asked for evaluations to be presented to them including the Rural Development and Land Reform Portfolio Committee, the Basic Education Portfolio Committee, the Mineral Resources Committee, and the Standing Committee on Appropriations. There are cases where parliament specifically requested information on evaluations. This shows there is demand for evaluations from committees and the desire to hold the government accountable. There are examples in the parliamentary records of parliamentarians asking for information about the number and use of evaluations. For example, in 2013 an MP of one of the opposition parties asked the Minister in the Presidency:[9]

- Whether, with reference to the implementation of the National Evaluation Policy Framework of 2011 and the National Evaluation Plan 2012-2013, whose stated objectives are to improve policy and programme performance and accountability, there is sufficient political will from the Cabinet and the Executive to ensure the implementation of these evaluation plans; if so, then why do certain government departments, such as Human Settlements and Arts and Culture, continue to violate the constitutional rights of South Africans to the speedy delivery of services by underspending their budgetary allocations year after year?

In 2015 an MP of the ruling party asked the Minister in the Presidency to report on:

- How many evaluation projects on the performance of government departments had been undertaken and completed by his office in the 2014-2015 financial year

[9] Written questions submitted to DPME to be answered.

in order to ensure that the 14 outcomes of the medium-term strategic framework were achieved?

- How many of these evaluations his office planned to undertake for the 2016-2017 financial year?
- What did the results of the completed evaluations indicate in terms of achieved progress and the impact of government programmes on improving the lives of the citizens?

In addition, in May 2016 SCOA requested that National Treasury work with stakeholders to assess the funding for, and performance of, the scholar transport programme. As a direct result of this, an evaluation of scholar transport was initiated as part of the National Evaluation Plan for 2017/2018, the first example of a national evaluation requested by parliament.

Lessons

An evaluation of the NES in 2016/2017 demonstrated limitations in the turnaround time for evaluations. In addition, while it is difficult to assess use of evaluations, case studies revealed that instrumental and process use were prominent. It has been argued that there is a high return on evaluations of between R7 and R13 per rand invested (Goldman et al., 2019).

Some of the emerging lessons are:

- The NES should be formally linked with parliamentary institutions such as the PRS and PBO so that evaluations are automatically sent when they have been completed and departments should automatically include reporting on evaluations in their reports to parliamentary committees.
- The South African NES demonstrates that committees can propose evaluations, and the first such evaluation has been completed.
- It would be useful if parliamentary committees took responsibility for following up on the improvements which departments are requested to implement as part of an evaluation process to ensure sure that the changes needed are implemented. Committees could play a pivotal role in this regard.

How the NES links to the Benin parliamentary system

The supply system – the national evaluation system in Benin

A Bureau for Evaluation of Public Policies (BEPP), now called the Bureau for Evaluation of Public Policies and Government Action Analysis (BEPPAAG), was created in 2007. Located in the Presidency, the Bureau's role is primarily

the establishment of the NES and to ensure that evaluation becomes a strategic tool for development across all levels. A 10-year (2012-2021) National Evaluation Policy was adopted in 2011 to promote learning for the improvement of management decision-making, as well as to ensure that government is accountable for its actions. (BEPP, 2012). An institutional framework has been established which defines the mechanisms for conducting evaluations and includes guidance on selecting evaluations and structures, engaging stakeholders, disseminating results, and monitoring the implementation of recommendations. A national evaluation guideline was also adopted by the government in 2018. Evaluation findings are seen as 'public goods' and are made available through the website. The National Evaluation Policy recently underwent a mid-term evaluation (BEPPAAG, 2019).

How does the NES link to the parliamentary system – what evidence is there of demand?

Benin has a unicameral National Assembly with 83 seats with 5 standing committees.[10] There are three components of the parliamentary administration. One is the Benin Parliamentary Institute (IPAB) created in September 2019 to correct the imbalance of resources between the executive and parliament by providing the latter with the means, tools, techniques and expertise necessary for achieving its constitutional mission. Theoretically, the IPAB has the responsibility in parliament to analyse and evaluate public policies of the government, although it is not clear whether this is happening in practice.

In 2018, the Twende Mbele network, the APNODE and the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results (CLEAR-AA) provided technical assistance to the BEPPAAG to train MPs to understand the purpose of evaluation and the role MPs can play in supporting an evaluation culture in the country. Evaluation findings were shared during these training sessions. Various events have taken place in Benin to raise awareness of the value of evaluation in parliament. The Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Benin and the president of APNODE Benin participated in Benin's Evaluation Days conference in 2016 and 2018 (a biennial event designed to promote an evaluation culture)[11] and attended

[10] *Commission des Lois, de l'Administration et des Droits de l'Homme; Commission des Finances et des Échanges; Commission du Plan, de l'Equipement et de la Production; Commission de l'Education, de la Culture, de l'Emploi et des Affaires Sociales; Commission des Relations Extérieures, de la Coopération au Développement, de la Défense et de la Sécurité.*

[11] Because of separation of powers it is not possible to invite MPs individually. These came from the invitation of the minister.

capacity-development activities and panel discussions. At a meeting of the Benin APNODE branch in 2017, most of the 15 completed evaluation reports were shared with members of parliament who attended. Key MPs (including the Deputy Speaker) have a list of evaluations that have been undertaken.

In the past, 25 of the 83 members of parliament were members of the Benin branch of APNODE. Many of these MPs lost their seats in a subsequent election and this weakened the APNODE branch. A discussion is ongoing between parliament and the secretariat of APNODE about creating an evaluation committee in parliament that can interact with BEPPAAG to use evaluation findings. Unfortunately, however, this may not be possible. As stated in the following quote from the APNODE president:

> In the Parliament of Benin, we are far from effectively playing our oversight role, despite the efforts of APNODE BENIN since 2018. Our efforts to institute evaluation in the constitution did not bear fruit in the 2019 constitutional review. Even our efforts to introduce a technical committee for the evaluation of public policies in the rules of procedure of the national assembly, accepted in committee during the seventh legislature (but not scheduled to be voted on in plenary at the time) was rejected in plenary during the vote on the revision of the rules of procedure two weeks ago by the government, because it implies additional burdens.[12]

Incentives have been used to encourage MPs to use NES findings in parliamentary committees, including training in the use of evaluations and issuing invitations to panel discussions on the role of parliament in evaluations.

Examples of where evaluations have been used

Evaluations have never been used in parliamentary debates or to formulate questions to the government. At the country level, collaboration between government, civil society, and academia on evaluation appears to be increasing. However, the separation of powers leads to a reluctance by parliament to use government evaluations. The view of some of the evaluation champions is that government should not be evaluating itself and that the evaluation function should be independent. There is, however, a discussion regarding the establishment of an evaluation office in parliament as part of IPAB with possible support from the UNDP. There are also opportunities to collaborate more closely, to strengthen capacity, and to build an evaluation culture at the national level which will involve parliament (in terms of the decision-making

[12] Response to a questionnaire completed for this chapter.

process), academia (in terms of curriculum development and research), VOPEs (in relation to evaluators conducting evaluations), and civil society (in terms of dissemination).

Lessons

The relationship between the Benin NES and parliament is poor and much needs to be done to improve it. There is evidence of some use in the executive of evaluations from the government-led evaluation system in Benin (DGE, 2016; BEPPAAG, 2018a). However, evaluations are not used consistently to oversee the executive and parliament relies primarily on administrative data.

The establishment of an evaluation committee in parliament is a possible solution to increase the demand for and use of evaluation. BEPPAAG needs to present evaluation findings to MPs frequently and to formalise the sharing of evaluation findings. It also needs to work with IPAB to support capacity development activities to strengthen parliament's understanding of the role of evaluation and how it can strengthen parliament's oversight role.

Some areas of action needed include:

- Ensuring that government, in collaboration with its partners, plans for evaluation and allocates funding for M&E. This requires a change in political will, culture and practice;
- To strengthen the use of Benin's NES, the country needs legitimacy from parliament through a law and this must be supported by MPs who are evaluation champions inside parliament.[13] The government is considering whether to include evaluation in the constitution or to push for the passing of a specific law on evaluation. In 2020 a consultant was being procured to draft the law. This would provide an opportunity to institutionalise the link between parliament and the NES and maximise the likelihood of the use of evaluation findings to control government action.

Similarities and differences between the three case study countries

Frameworks such as the Holvoet and Renard (2007) framework have been developed to examine NESs. This framework has been applied to compare the systems in Benin, South Africa and Uganda (see Goldman et al., 2018). However, none of these frameworks specifically address links between a country's NES and parliament.

[13] Notably members of the Benin branch of APNODE.

The inclusion of parliament in the M&E policies of Benin and Uganda demonstrates a recognition of the role of parliament in the NES and an expectation that parliaments should use evaluation evidence. In all cases, though, the link between parliament and the NES is weak in practice reflecting a separation of powers and silo operations. In all three countries, the separation of powers between legislature and executive is reflected in the NES, as it is not formally linked to parliament. The experience arising from these three countries suggests that formalising the link would be beneficial in two main respects. First, it would assist to ensure the use of evaluations by parliament. Second, it would potentially help to ensure that evaluations that parliament's preferred evaluations are included on the list of candidate evaluations in national evaluation agendas. As the two arms of the state are autonomous, parliament would need to consider how to incorporate the use of evaluations in its processes. A discussion will follow on what the executive would need to do in terms of the NES. Ideally, this should be embedded either in policy or legislation.

Strengthening the link between the NES and evidence generation and use in parliamentary processes is likely to increase the demand for evidence and its use in policy and decision-making. In turn, this can build a culture of evaluation within parliament thereby establishing the necessary enabling environment and implementing systems (i.e. guidelines for evidence utilisation in parliament). The involvement of parliament as an institution in the evaluation process implies focusing on and investing in structures such as committees, parliamentary research services, budget offices, M&E units and other support structures, rather than investing in individual parliamentarians. The importance of this is shown in the experience of changes in MPs in South Africa and Benin.

Emerging lessons

Institutionalising evaluation in parliament

In cases of Uganda and South Africa (as well as Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia) the PRS provides important services to committees, supports evaluative studies of different types and, to some degree, draws on evaluations from the NES.[14] Key in institutionalising evaluations in parliament is that the NES champion should work with parliamentary researchers and committees. Several additional factors emerge as important, as discussed below.

[14] This comes from CLEAR's work on national evaluation systems and with parliament in these countries

Building capacity of MPs to use M&E evidence: Induction of MPs is limited in scope. Committee members need to understand the policy process and possess the necessary skills to use M&E evidence. To carry out their roles effectively, parliamentary committees need to request evaluations from MDAs, including requesting that the executive undertakes evaluations, as has happened in South Africa. Areas of capacity development include asking the right policy questions, critical thinking, interpretation and utilisation of M&E evidence. Capacity development should not be a once-off event but should be sustained to enhance the link between NES and parliament. Current members of parliament should receive capacity-building training and this should also be included in the induction of new members of parliament. Given the challenge of MPs not being retained, capacity building should also focus on the PRS, PBO, etc. This is key to holding the executive to account, particularly given the shift from a transactional-oriented approach (process and compliance) to a more transformational and outcome-oriented approach (Zantsi, 2020).

Building capacity of technical structures in parliament: Parliamentary researchers[15] are sector experts or research specialists with little or no M&E knowledge and skills.[16] They are, generally few and overstretched. They require capacity building in M&E, including training, coaching, mentoring and technical assistance.

Effective networking with external researchers: Parliamentary researchers primarily conduct desktop reviews rather than primary research. However, they also need to access data located within research institutions, CSOs, think tanks and private consultancies. External links are often weak, such as with academia, think tanks, and other research providers. To strengthen these linkages, the South African and Ugandan parliaments require external bodies to present their research. This is greatly facilitated where relationships exist between committees and trusted external researchers and where researchers are able to communicate in accessible ways (Goldman & Pabari, 2020a).

Inclusion in the evaluation process: Research or evaluation studies that are internal to parliament are initiated by committees more frequently than donor- or executive-initiated evaluations. Committees are often not involved in evaluation processes conducted by the executive. Involvement in evaluation

[15] And content advisors in South Africa.
[16] From interviews with researchers.

processes increases the likelihood of ownership and use of evaluative knowledge and learning. One way to maximise buy-in by committees would be by including MPs in evaluation steering committees or validation workshops. Their participation can boost the legitimacy of evaluation results and improve the use of evaluation reports by parliamentarians (Zantsi, 2020). This may be seen to conflict with the separation of powers.

Oversight of action by the executive on evaluation recommendations: Where research, evaluations, and, where available, resulting improvement plans are presented to parliamentary committees, there is often no process to check whether MDAs are following up on recommendations and learning. This could become an important part of committees' oversight function and could potentially have a positive impact on the follow-up of these recommendations.

Political will and champions*:* Institutionalisation of the generation and use of evidence is critical for the work of committees. Political will from both the ruling party and the opposition party and advocacy for evidence use by champions may persuade other members of committees to value evaluation and allocate resources for the use of evaluation as a significant component of the portfolio committees' day-to-day work to strengthen accountability and transparency.

Strengthening the links of the NES with Parliament

Several elements could be incorporated into national evaluation policies or legislation to ensure that NESs consider parliament's needs. For instance, it can be required that once evaluation reports and improvement plans are approved that ***evaluation reports are submitted to the appropriate parliamentary committees, as well as the PRS/PBO***. It should also be standard practice that evaluation findings are presented to the relevant committee of parliament that oversees the evaluation of the public service.

National/ministry evaluation plans*:* In South Africa, there is already an example of an evaluation undertaken at the request of a parliamentary committee. All parliamentary committees could systematically and formally be requested to propose that evaluations are included in national or departmental evaluation plans. Once the evaluation plan/agenda is approved it should be shared with parliament so that it is clear which evaluations can be expected and can then schedule feedback presentations on the committee calendar.

***MDA reporting to parliament**:* MDAs could be required to report on evaluations when they report to parliamentary committees. This would institutionalise reporting on evaluations.

***Knowledge-brokering role**:* Goldman and Pabari (2020a) point to the importance of the facilitation and knowledge-brokering role for the effective use of evaluations. The sharing of information requires a relationship and, potentially, a partnership between knowledge brokers in parliament and the executive. Specifically, parliamentary structures such as the PRS and PBO need to be linked with M&E units in the presidency, ministries, departments and agencies and research institutions that can provide research and evaluation evidence and knowledge.

Repository: If knowledge brokering is to be successful, evaluation repositories should be created where evaluations are organised and publicly accessible and the PRS/PBO be made aware of them. All three countries have created such repositories.

Oversight of improvement plans: Potentially, an important part of the parliamentary oversight role is ensuring that progress reports on implementing improvement plans are tabled to parliamentary committees as part of ministry reporting. In this way, committees know what is working or not working in terms of specific policies and programmes, what changes are being proposed, and whether ministries are taking forward those changes, and ministries could be held accountable for making the changes.

Conclusions

The policymaking process is subject to political contestation as it is grounded in theory, values, ideology and practice (Davies, 2011). Parliaments are political arenas where interests compete in shaping decision-making. For parliaments operating in a multiparty system, the landscape is complex and composed of a wide diversity of opinion (Blaser Mapitsa, Ali & Khumalo, 2020) with influence and interests dictating how evidence is demanded and actually used. If the information being provided supports the position of the ruling party, the chances of the evidence, such as an evaluation, being demanded by the party would be very high (Kiranda & Kamp, 2010). Examples of how opposition parties use evidence were also evident.

This chapter explored the supply of evaluations commissioned by the executive and undertaken within parliament, the demand from parliament, and the knowledge-brokering role carried out within parliament by the PRS or PBO and within the executive by custodian central units (for example in the Presidency), and M&E units of ministries, departments and agencies.

Parliaments draw evidence from a variety of studies, both internally generated and externally generated. There is some evidence that parliament prefers internally generated evidence, which responds to parliament's timescales and addresses the specific questions parliament must answer. These studies are often rapid desktop studies which are valuable but could also be complemented by rigorous and rapid evaluations and research conducted by the executive. While Benin, Uganda and South Africa have all made great strides in the development of NESs serving the executive, the separation of powers means that the executive and parliament keep each other at arm's length and the links between the NES and parliamentary systems are weak, often informal, and dependant on relationships.

Goldman and Pabari (2020a) point to the importance of building agreement, trust, access, and institutional mechanisms to promote a deeper connection between the bodies responsible for research and evaluation and parliament. South Africa and Benin devoted resources to building the capacity of members of parliament to use evidence, but their efforts lost momentum when MPs changed – as frequently happens at the end of each parliamentary term. This points to the need to strengthen the links between the institutions – the knowledge brokers in parliament (the M&E divisions, PRS and PBO) and the national and departmental M&E champions in the executive – so that evidence flows between them, and accountability needs are met. Those links need to be relational (building trust, commitment, and collaboration) and institutional (shared values and principles encouraging accountability and transparency amongst others). Several ways of institutionalising links emerge. Firstly, making it a formal requirement that all evaluations are presented to the relevant parliamentary committee. This would help parliamentarians to use evaluations in their oversight role and might stimulate them to demand evaluations.

Secondly, parliamentarians should also gain expertise in requesting evaluations that are more suited to their needs and time scales. Thirdly, it would be significant if parliaments could take on the role of monitoring the executive on the implementation of the action plans for improvements that form part of every evaluation. It would reinforce the fact that MDAs are accountable. Lastly, the legislative opportunity as is currently under consideration in Benin and South Africa would serve to institutionalise the linkages officially. The tension is how to manage to build a more collegial approach while maintaining the separation of powers.

Reference List

Abola, C. (2014). *Does the Parliament of Uganda have a role to play in evaluation? Evaluation Capacity Development*. Available from: https://bit.ly/3EzEfzp

Amisi, M.M. (2015). Improving the use of evaluative evidence through effective communication: Lessons from implementing the South African evaluation system. *African Evaluation Journal*, 3(1):7. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.109

Arter, D. (2007). *Comparing and Classifying Legislatures*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

BEPP. (2012). *Politique Nationale d'Evaluation*. Bureau d'Evaluation des Politiques Publiques.

BEPPAAG. (2018a). *Rapport de suivi de l'utilisation des résultats des évaluations*. Bureau de l'Evaluation des Politiques Publiques et de l'Analyse de l'Action Gouvernementale.

BEPPAAG. (2018b). *Cinquième édition des Journées Béninoises de l'Evaluation, Rapport général*. Bureau de l'Evaluation des Politiques Publiques et de et de l'Analyse de l'Action Gouvernementale.

BEPPAAG. (2019). *Évaluation de la mise en œuvre de la Politique Nationale d'Évaluation (PNÉ) et élaboration de son plan d'action 2020-2021*. Bureau de l'Evaluation des Politiques Publiques et de l'Analyse de l'Action Gouvernementale, Benin.

Blaser Mapitsa, C., Ali, A. & Khumalo, L. (2020). From evidence to values-based decision-making in African parliaments. *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 20(2):68-85. https://doi.org/10.1177/1035719X20918370

Caygill, T. (2019). Legislation Under Review: An Assessment of Post-Legislative Scrutiny Recommendations in the UK Parliament. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 25(2):295-313. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2019.1603260

CLEAR. (2018). *Tracking monitoring and evaluation developments in Anglophone Africa [COMPASS]*. Johannesburg: The Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA).

Davies, P. (2011). *Evidence-based policy making (EBPM): Enhancing the use of evidence and knowledge in policy making*. PSPPD. Available from: https://bit.ly/3CqWQMm

DGE. (2016). *Rapport de suivi de l'utilisation des résultats des évaluations réalisées au cours de la période 2010-2013*. Direction Générale de l'Evaluation.

Dhakal, R.T. (2014). Institutionalisation and use of evaluations in the public sector in Nepal. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation*, 10(23):51-58.

DPME. (2011). *National Evaluation Policy Framework*. Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation. Available from: https://bit.ly/3lEUrqA

DPME. (2017). *Annual Report on the National Evaluation System 2016-2017*. Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Pretoria, South Africa. Available from: https://bit.ly/3hLg0os

DPME. (2020). *National Evaluation Policy Framework*. Pretoria: Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Draman, R., Titriku, A., Lampo, I., Hayter, E. & Holden, K. (2017). *Evidence in African Parliaments*. Oxford: International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications.

Eberli, D. (2015). *Tracing the Use of Evaluations in Legislative Processes in Swiss Cantonal Parliaments*. 2nd International Conference on Public Policy, Milan.

Engela, R. & Ajam, T. (2010). *Implementing a government-wide monitoring and evaluation system in South Africa*. World Bank. Available from: https://bit.ly/3EAQvQs

Genesis. (2016). Evaluation of the National Evaluation System in South Africa. International Benchmarking and Literature Review, Draft report. Pretoria: Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Global Partners Governance. (2017) Paper 7: Information and Expertise for Parliaments. London: Global Partners Governance.

Goldman, I., Byamugisha, A., Gounou, A., Smith, L.R., Ntakumba, S., Lubanga, T., Sossou, D. & Rot-Munstermann, K. (2018). The emergence of government evaluation systems in Africa: The case of Benin, Uganda and South Africa. *African Evaluation Journal,* 6(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v6i1.253

Goldman, I., Deliwe, C.N., Taylor, S., Ishmail, Z., Smith, L., Masangu, T., Adams, C., Wilson, G., Fraser, D., Griessel, A., Waller, C., Dumisa, S., Wyatt, A. & Robertsen, J. (2019). Evaluation^2 – Evaluating the national evaluation system in South Africa: What has been achieved in the first 5 years? *African Evaluation Journal*, 7(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v7i1.400

Goldman, I., Mathe, J.E., Jacob, C., Hercules, A., Amisi, M., Buthelezi, T., Narsee, H., Ntakumba, S. & Sadan, M. (2015). Developing South Africa's national evaluation policy and system: First lessons learned. *African Evaluation Journal,* 3(1):9. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.107

Goldman, I., Olaleye, W., Ntakumba, S., Makgaba, M. & Waller, C. (2020). Mere compliance or learning – M&E culture in the public service of Benin, Uganda and South Africa. In: I. Goldman & M Pabari (eds.), *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice – Lessons from Africa.* Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007043-4

Goldman, I. & Pabari, M. (2020). *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice – Lessons from Africa*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007043

Goldman, I. & Pabari, M. (2020a). Lessons for using evidence in policy and practice. In: I. Goldman, & M. Pabari (eds.), *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice – Lessons from Africa*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. pp. 224-241. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007043-13

Goldman, I. & Pabari, M. (2020b). An introduction to evidence-informed policy and practice in Africa. In: I. Goldman & M. Pabari (eds.), *Using Evidence in Policy and Practice – Lessons from Africa*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. pp. 13-34. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007043-2

Hanmer, S. (2009). *Guide to working with Parliaments*. United Nations Children's Fund. Available from: https://uni.cf/3Cw3jWb

Holvoet, N. & Renard, R. (2007). *Monitoring and evaluation under the PRSP: Solid rock or quick sand? Evaluation and Program Planning,* 30:66-81. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2006.09.002

InVirke & Publikum. (2014). Danish MFA's evaluation of development assistance: Evaluations-use, user relevance and communication. *Journal of Development Effectiveness*, 6:4, 451-460.

IPU & UNDP. (2017). *Global Parliamentary Report 2017*. (Parliamentary Oversight: Parliament's Power to Hold Government to Account). New York: Interparliamentary Union.

Jacob, S., Speer, S. & Furubo, J.-E. (2015). The institutionalization of evaluation matters: Updating the International Atlas of Evaluation 10 years later. *Evaluation,* 21(1):6-31. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356389014564248

Kalugampitiya, A., Nogueira , L.M.D.C. & Orte, P.D. (2014). *How to Engage Parliamentarians in Evaluation (No. 261)*. Brasilla: The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth, UNDP.

Kenny, C., Rose, D.C., Hobbs, A., Tyler, C. & Blackstock, J. (2017). *The Role of Research in the UK Parliament*, Volume One. London: Houses of Parliament.

Kiranda, Y. & Kamp, M. (eds.). (2010). *Reality check: The state of multiparty democracy in Uganda*. Uganda: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Leslie, M., Moodley, N., Goldman, I., Jacob, C., Podems, D., Everett, M. & Beney, T. (2015). Developing evaluation standards and assessing evaluation quality. *African Evaluation Journal*, 3(1). https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.112

Lopez-Acevedo, G, Krause, P & Mackay, P. (2012). *Building Better Policies: The Nuts and Bolts of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems*. Washington DC: The World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-8777-1

Lwebuga, E.P. & Busiku, P. (2015). *Post Evaluation of Training under the Institute of Parliamentary Studies*. Nairobi: Institutional Development and Management Training Consultants.

Martinuzzi, A., & Sedlacko, M. (2016). *Knowledge brokerage for sustainable development: Innovative tools for increasing research impact and evidence-based policy-making*. Saltaire, West Yorkshire: Greenleaf Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351285483

Morkel, C. & Ramasobana, M. (2017). Measuring the effect of evaluation capacity building initiatives in Africa: A review. *African Evaluation Journa*l, 5(1):0-0. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v5i1.187

OECD. (2016). *Evaluation Systems in Development Co-operation. 2016 Review*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Office of the Prime Minister. (2013). *National Policy on Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation*. Kampala, Uganda: Office of the Prime Minister, Government of Uganda.

Office of the Prime Minister. (2014). *Operationalisation of the National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. Government of Uganda*. Kampala: The Republic of Uganda.

Parliament of Uganda. (2017). *Rules of Procedures of Parliament*. Kampala: Parliament of the Republic of Uganda.

Parliamentary Research Services. (2001). *Parliamentary Research Services Handbook*. Uganda: Parliament of Uganda.

Porter, S. & Goldman, I. (2013). A Growing Demand for Monitoring and Evaluation in Africa. *African Evaluation Journal*, 1(1):1-9. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v1i1.25

Power, G. (2012). *Global Parliamentary Report: The changing nature of parliamentary representation*. Inter-Parliamentary Union and United Nations Development Programme. Available from: https://bit.ly/3ExUJbk

Republic of Uganda. (1995). *The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*. Kampala: Uganda Print and Publishing Corporation.

Republic of Uganda. (2001). Budget Act. Government of Uganda. *Uganda Gazette* no. 18 on 30 March 2001.

Republic of Uganda. (2006). *Administration of Parliament (Amendment) Act*. Kampala: Parliament of the Republic of Uganda.

Republic of Uganda. (2015). *The Public Finance Management Act*. Uganda: Government of Uganda.

Rubio, G.M. (2012). Key Choice for a menu of evaluations. In: G. Lopez-Acevedo, P. Krause & P. Mackay (eds.), *Building Better Policies: The Nuts and Bolts of Monitoring and Evaluation Systems*. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Speer, S., Pattyn, V. & Peuter, B.D. (2015). The growing role of evaluation in parliaments: holding governments accountable? *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 81(1):37-57. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852314546583

UNEG. (2016). *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*. New York: United Nations Evaluation Group.

UNDP. (2015). *Towards Baseline Study: Insights on National Evaluation Capacities in 43 Countries*. Available online: https://bit.ly/3kreR7f

Van Rensburg, W.J., Vreÿ, F. & Neethling, T. (2020). Collecting evidence on the use of parliamentary oversight tools: A South African case study. *African Evaluation Journal*, 8(1):11. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v8i1.424

Yamamoto, H. (2007). *Tools of Parliamentary Oversight: A comparative study of 88 national parliaments*. Switzerland: Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Zantsi, R. (2020). The evaluative role of legislatures in creating a responsive executive. *African Evaluation Journal*, 8(1):6. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v8i1.432

5

THE POLITICS OF EVIDENCE IN PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT



Linda S. Khumalo, Kieron Crawley, Donald Manyala and Ahmed Hassan

Introduction

The third wave of democratisation (Huntington, 1991) which spanned the period from the late 1980s to the early 1990s saw the expansion of democratic governance principles across many African countries as well as the critical recognition of the role of parliaments in promoting effective governance. Parliamentarians require a wide range of reliable evidence to effectively scrutinise how governments implement policy and to safeguard the intent of parliament as is expressed in legislation. Even though parliaments, as multiple centres of power, are not always easily accessible to researchers/academia and citizens more broadly, the nature of parliamentarians' engagement with evidence and the political factors shaping evidence use in decision-making requires further understanding. Power (2013) highlights that parliamentary strengthening initiatives have tended to focus on technical elements – for example, on the tools that parliamentarians use for their oversight roles – and are devoid of analyses of the political factors that shape the way that parliaments work. While there is consensus on the political nature of parliaments, and the complexities surrounding evidence use are increasingly being documented, little is known about the political factors and inherent systems of patronage that affect the use of evidence in parliamentarians' undertaking of their oversight roles.

Despite a growing role for African parliamentarians in the oversight of government policy, few studies have explored how the nature of power relations within parliaments have contributed to the limited nature of evidence use within parliaments (Cairney, 2016; Draman, Titriku, Lampo, Hayter & Holden, 2017). In trying to identify essential barriers to evidence use, efforts have tended to focus on the disconnect between those who supply evidence and those who demand it (APNODE, 2014). Emphasis has typically been on technical factors. These include skills and capacity gaps for evidence users, budget and resource constraints, as well as the limited availability of timely and relevant evidence. Efforts to address the limitations of evidence use in parliaments have been accompanied by a growing body of recommendations focused on 'bridging the gap' between the producers and users of evidence by making effective, relevant, synthesised and communicative evidence more readily available to policymakers (UNICEF, 2008). Notably, the role of parliamentarians as key stakeholders in the evidence use *ecosystem*[1] continues

[1] Ecosystem here is used as a term borrowing from the natural sciences referring to a community of interacting organisms and their physical environment. It is used to illustrate inter-scalar thinking in the social sciences.

to receive growing recognition in the development sector. Parliamentarians play critical roles in creating a demand for evidence as part of their oversight role and are also central to the enacting into laws and legislation that support the institutionalisation of evidence, such as national evaluation policies.[2] There is a need to build an understanding of how parliamentarians operate and, in particular, the factors that shape how they engage with evidence including research, M&E evidence as well as citizen's voices.

Although increasing the demand for evidence from both lawmakers and policymakers has been noted as a prerequisite for institutionalising its use (UNICEF, 2008), limited studies have factored in the complex nature of evidence within the broader political governance discourse which is often shrouded in neopatrimonialism behaviour (Mkandawire, 2015). This calls into question the linearity of the relationship between evidence use and parliamentary oversight. This chapter begins by situating evidence use within the macro governance landscape of parliament which is masked in neopatrimonial characteristics of the state including personal interests, patronage, corruption, and rent-seeking (Mkandawire, 2015). These neo-patrimonial characteristics have been discussed in relation to what the post developmental theorists have termed the failed developmental project (Escobar, 1997; Crush, 2005). Notably, the politics of evidence use in parliaments should be understood within these macro-political governance issues, some of which have been discussed by Morkel and Bradshaw in Chapter 1 of this volume.

Consequently, this chapter seeks to focus more on the micro-level political factors that shape evidence use. While the chapter recognises the importance of evidence in all parliamentary roles, it pays special attention to the use of evidence for oversight which is critical to achieving good governance. The authors believe this to be a worthwhile examination of how parliamentarians manoeuvre within the evidence use space and also to shed light on some of the political considerations involved. As was declared in Bishkek[3] by Mr George Tsereteli, president of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

---

2 The Sri Lankan Parliament in 2019 appointed a Parliamentary Select Committee on National Evaluation Capacities. The committee worked on the National Evaluation Bill and capacity building of the Parliamentary Research Unit. The report of the PSC on national evaluation capacity was presented to parliament on 20 Feb 2020 proposing the establishment of an Independent Evaluation Commission.

3 Keynote Speech at the International Seminar on Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight in the Kyrgyz Republic – Session I – Defining the Foundations of Effective Oversight in Bishkek, 27 September 2019 President George Tsereteli (Georgia), 2019.

Parliamentary Assembly, effective oversight may be the most important long-term contribution that parliamentarians can make to democracy and good governance in their countries.

Based on the examination of literature, the factors affecting the politics of evidence use in parliament can be categorised into macro and micro-level factors. The macro-level factors are the external/contextual factors surrounding the MP and which affect how they use evidence. These include the nature of neopatrimonial relations (i.e. corruption, patronage and clientelism) (Khan, 2005; Mkandawire, 2015); the structure/type of parliament; the nature of democracy; the balance of powers between the executive and the legislature (and political buy-in) (Power, 2013; Parkhurst; 2017); the extent of media freedom; the extent of development commitment of the ruling elite; the extent of the culture of evidence use; the impact of civil society; the volatility of the national political context; and the extent of conflict (Court & Cotterrell, 2004). The study draws on the *parliamentarians' Compass,*[4] introduced by Rabie and Ajam in Chapter 2 of this volume. The framework is useful for supporting conversations with African parliamentarians to understand the political factors that influence their decisions to use evidence. The Compass depicts the MP as an individual operating within four poles that may be in conflict – personal agenda, constituencies, constitutional mandate, and their political party interests in manoeuvring evidence use.

The authors present some empirical findings from Kenya that illustrate the political complexities that surround evidence use by parliamentarians. This chapter is divided into five key sections. It begins by examining the political factors that drive the use of evidence by parliamentarians informed by literature. It then presents the chapter's analytical framework (the parliamentarians' Compass, which is designed to help make sense of the complex influences on parliamentarians' inclination to use evidence as part of decision-making). The next section presents the methods used with the Kenya parliament case study purposively selected (given the access to the Parliament by two of the chapter authors). The case study demonstrates the application of the analytical framework. This is followed by a breakdown of the results and analysis of the case study illustrating the political factors that shape parliamentarians' use of evidence in their oversight function. The chapter concludes by presenting the implications of the data presented on parliaments navigating the political factors that shape their decisions to use evidence for policymaking.

[4] The framework was designed as part of CLEAR-AA's work with parliaments (Crawley, 2017).

Examining the macro-political factors that drive the use of evidence by Parliamentarians

Parliaments have vital roles to play in improving the quality of governance by ensuring transparency and accountability, shaping citizens expectations, and upholding democratic values (Power, 2013). Through their oversight, representative and law-making roles, parliamentarians are crucial stakeholders for upholding these democratic values. In many African countries there is a continued appreciation of the need to strengthen democratic governance and the vital role of parliaments as essential democratic institutions. Yet, evidence use does not take place within a vacuum but is influenced by more systemic issues that are both internal (micro) i.e. factors that shape decision-making by the MP (aligned to MPs values and individual incentives to use evidence), and external (macro) factors that could be beyond the MPs' locus and influence and which affect how they make decisions that shape policy.

According to Parkhurst (2017), Bradley (2019) and Draman et al. (2017), evidence is, by its very nature, political, and is fraught with disagreement over values and competition between groups. Evidence is intrinsically value-laden and embedded with power contestations across various stakeholders such as MPs whose values as users of evidence may contest with other values in the evidence ecosystem (Blaser Mapitsa et al, 2020). In its contested characterisation, evidence is interlinked with conflict and cooperation. It involves competing needs and opposing interests of different groups and is accompanied by myriad disagreements on the rules defining how people live. Power (2013) argues that there is a need to understand these power relationships and incentive structures that exist within parliament should we wish to better understand the political nature of evidence in parliaments.

The following section unpacks some of the critical macro factors that emerge from the relevant existing literature and the political factors that shape parliamentarians' decision-making. This begins by looking at parliamentarians as politically driven individuals using the neopatriamonial discourse to unpack the political drive. It then discusses the power dynamics between governing and opposition parties; the role of parliamentary structures; political party dynamics and political whipping; as well as power imbalances between the executive and parliament.

Parliamentarians as political individuals within a broader politically driven state: Neopatrimonialism and evidence use in parliaments

Neopatrimonialism is a critical discourse to the discussion on the political decision-making space in parliaments and is a useful approach that one can apply in understanding parliamentarians as political individuals operating within a broader politically driven state. Neopatrimonialism provides an understanding of the patrimonial relations, party politics and power interplays that take place in various forms and shape how MPs as state actors select and use evidence for policymaking.

Khan (2005) notes the central features of the neopatrimonial state as its personalisation of power. Personalisation of power involves the state being characterised as a persona i.e. represented by the leader of the ruling party supported by 'clients' who attain material benefits for their support. Through this, the value of informal networks in which the leader's power is centred supersedes the existence of formal rules. Thus, the neopatrimonial state is viewed as the antithesis of Weber's bureaucratic rationality (Khan, 2005). In addition, Von Soest (2010) views neopatrimonialism as a threefold concept that is characterised by clientelism, patronage and corruption as its specific modalities. Notably, the political factors surrounding the decision to use evidence by MPs can be a symptomatic neopatriamonial feature. It can be linked to group/private interests, especially when the evidence provided is contrary to individual/group dominated interests. Mkandawire (2015) further provides an understanding of three main characteristics of neopatrimonialism which illustrate the unstable and power-laden nature of neopatriamonial relations. These provide a useful approach for understanding politics in decision-making at a macro level. First, he discusses the economy of affection/ the moral economy of corruption which renders corruption understandable and its victims complacent. Second, he alludes to the unexpected deference to authority which results in the 'big man' syndrome – closely linked to clientelism – that manifests in subordinated people who are also quiescent and complicit in their exploitation. Lastly, he discusses the nature of the African 'big man' whom Bayart asserts to have characteristics of insatiable greed and gluttony.

While there are no known studies that illustrate direct linkages between neopatrimonialism and evidence use in parliaments, an examination of neopatriamonial characteristics mentioned previously, i.e. greed, cronyism,

rent-seeking, corruption (Khan, 2015), can provide a useful perspective into the macro-political landscape within which the politics of parliamentary evidence can be examined. This chapter does not in any way imply that all African parliaments are infested with neopatriamonial traits, but it does note the effects that the broader macro political factors in nations can have on the political culture of evidence use in parliaments. The question becomes what happens when evidence does not favour an MP's interests including their political party and constituency interests, how they manoeuvre the political space, and whose interests are served in the decision to use evidence. The nature of politics within parliament can lend itself to neopatriamonial elements such as patronage and clientelism, where parliamentarians are often an extension of the state and, instead of effectively using evidence for oversight, they may get caught up in the mix of using evidence that benefits their political party positions or other interests. The next section discusses how MPs, as politically driven individuals, manoeuvre the evidence use space.

Power dynamics between governing and opposition parties

A parliament comprising members of both governing and opposition parties is a foundational feature of any multiparty democracy. Both groups play important roles representing constituents' interests, holding the executive to account for policy implementation, and enacting legislation. Due to their majority, governing parties (or governing coalitions) hold more sway in shaping the business of parliament while parties in opposition have less influence and power, despite their constant efforts to extend their parliamentary control over government (Power, 2013; Parkhurst, 2017; Draman et al. 2017; Azevedo-Harman, 2011).

Azevedo-Harman (2011) discusses ruling party dominance which inherently has an effect on the institution of parliament in fostering accountability. She provides examples of ruling political parties which maintain dominance and hold large electoral majorities.[5] She argues that ruling party dominance can diminish competitive politics in parliaments and can further weaken the

[5] These include BDP (Botswana Democratic Party) in Botswana (77.1 per cent), FRELIMO in Mozambique (62 per cent), SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation) in Namibia (75 per cent), the ANC in South Africa (69.7 per cent), the RSP (Revolutionary State Party) in Tanzania (81.4 per cent), the NRM/NRM-O (National Resistance Movement/National Resistance Movement Organisation) in Uganda (59.3 per cent), and ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front) in Zimbabwe (59.6 per cent) (Azevedo-Harman, 2011 pp70).

relations between the parliament and the executive (Azevedo-Harman, 2011). Influence of the political party is also evident within the portfolio committee system where both governing and opposition parties are represented (in proportion to their seats) and more often than not chaired by a member of the governing party. This multiparty system gives rise to a highly contested terrain, characterised by differing values and interests which, when challenged, can result in bias in how evidence is used. In addition to competition between parties, there is competition between parliamentarians within parties (e.g. where positions within parties are contested). At an individual level, members within political parties themselves may have different values and interests that drive them and this results in an additional level of complexity with regard to the use of evidence and decision-making.

Complex institutional arrangements and multi spheres of influence surrounding parliaments

Parliaments are often multi-layered structures, comprising numerous roles and structures that, in turn, shape both parliament's operation and its institutional arrangements with other functions of the state. Importantly, the Westminster system of governance which was adopted by several former British colonies has had a notable effect on the function of parliaments, including how they conduct oversight of the executive. Essentially in the Westminster model, the president maintains dominance as the head of the executive. As they are part of the ruling party, the majority of MPs are part of the executive but have a primary role of overseeing the executive. In authoritarian states, the executive typically maintains dominance, and this situation has left parliaments with little autonomy being viewed largely as rubber-stamping entities and regarded as weak in their oversight roles.

Moreover, it is important to appreciate how power relations within parliamentary structures may impact on evidence use. Administrative functions in the house are covered by the parliamentary clerk, the speaker, and administrative committee positions such as research assistants. In addition, parliamentarians may hold various roles that support their core mandate of oversight, representation and lawmaking. These include political party positions such as party leader, portfolio committee chairs, and other senior committee positions, as well as formal and informal caucus positions.

These structures (sources and figures of influence in parliaments) have inherent dynamics and shifting power bases which shape how parliamentarians function and perform their mandates (Power, 2013). Power suggests that parliamentary figures derive their authority from three potential sources: their political parties, parliamentary procedures and/or control of resources. Senior political figures such as the president or prime minister, leader of the majority and the leader of government business in parliament are likely to play significant roles in determining parliamentary business with direct implications for decision-making. They determine when certain voting procedures take place, the period of time parliament has to scrutinise and deliberate, and the appointment of parliamentarians to different parliamentary positions such as portfolio committees (Power, 2013). In addition, procedural committees and liaison committees can act as significant locations of power independent of the executive. Moreover, Power argues that parliaments themselves are often in states of flux with competing interests that seek to shape their decision-making.

Dynamics within political parties and political whipping

While elected members of parliament invariably take an oath to uphold the constitution and to execute their duties in the best interests of the nation and its citizens, political whipping is a major factor that ultimately influences their decision-making. Thus, political allegiances may sometimes be in conflict with parliamentarian's oaths to represent citizens' interests as whips ensure that MPs are loyal to party mandates and interests. According to Cowley and Stuart (2015), parliamentary party whips have three main functions: management, communication, and persuasion. First, management involves organisation in the parliament such as liaising with the opposition parties, ensuring that party MPs stay informed and are organised. Second, the communication role involves acting as a two-way channel of communication between the party leadership (the frontbench) and non-leadership MPs (those on the backbenches) (Cowley & Stuart, 2015). They thus keep backbench MPs informed of the leadership's plans and also communicate the views of the backbenchers to the leadership, especially in cases of possible dissent. Lastly, the persuasion function which receives the most attention from outsiders, involves keeping in check MPs that may deviate from the party line, i.e. persuading members to return to the fold.

Whips guarantee discipline by ensuring party members are fully aware of party leaders' priorities and by 'whipping members' to follow the party position in key debates. Divergence from the party line may be met with disciplinary

procedures or even a 'removal of the whip'[6] despite the fact that evidence may suggest an alternative course. Parliamentary whipping is consequently seen by some as the antithesis to evidence-based decision-making.

Power imbalances between the executive and parliament

Foundational to multiparty systems is the separation of powers of the legislature, executive and judiciary. In some African countries, however, the independence of the executive and legislature is politically contested resulting in a power imbalance between the two. A number of countries still battle with executive dominance within multiparty democracies. While Chiroro (2006) argues that active opposition parties contribute significantly to good governance, Power (2013) asserts that three primary issues affect the power dynamics between the governing and opposition parties and in turn, shape how the institution of parliament is run. These are: the balance of power between the two (i.e. the number of seats the governing and opposition parties hold in Parliament), the level of discipline and cohesion within political parties, and the formal rules that determine how parliamentary business is run.

Several scholars raise concerns over parliaments with weak oversight of the executive (Barkan, 2009; Power, 2013) while others question the ability of African legislatures to hold the executive to account (Hughes, 2005; Fashagba, 2009; Nijzink, 2015; Ahmadu, 2016; Malapane, 2016, as referenced in Barkan, 2009). Barkan (2009) notes that the extent of power imbalance between the executive and parliament varies from country to country. In some countries the legislature remains weak despite a move to multiparty politics while in others the legislature has managed to assert itself through checks and balances and monitoring the implementation of policies. Others remain somewhere in between. Barkan cites the Kenyan Parliament as a good example of an independent legislature that has ensured progressive reform and obliged the executive to accept changes to proposed legislation and budgets (Barkan, 2009). A powerful executive within a less democratic state can dominate parliamentary business. Holding the executive to account in this context is challenging and the use of evidence tends to be driven by political interests rather than by the extent to which it is credible and available.

[6] Members of parliament who have the 'whip removed' are effectively thrown out of the party.

At an institutional level, Polsby's classification of parliaments[7] reflects the need and openness to information and explains how the separation of powers between the executive and legislature works in practice. For instance, a so-called 'rubber-stamp' parliament exercises little autonomy from the executive and has limited oversight and scrutiny. On the other hand, a more transformative parliament exercises a degree of independence from the executive thereby strengthening its oversight role and the demand for evidence.

It is further worth noting that the independence of the parliaments in budget appropriation and approval can shape the power imbalances between the parliament and the executive. In parliaments where the budget appropriation and approval function rests with the executive, this can compromise the ability of MPs to effectively conduct oversight of the executive as well as to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to strengthen evidence systems in the parliament. According to a 1998 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) study of 46 cases, the preparation of the draft budget is a critical consideration in parliament's autonomy. The study found that in two-thirds of the 46 cases, parliaments held the responsibility for drafting the budget without government intervention while one-third required approval from the Ministry of Finance. The Ugandan Parliament, for example, was seen to benefit from administrative autonomy through the Administration of Parliament Act 1997, which established the Parliamentary Commission which prepares and submits annual budget estimates before parliament. In South Africa the Money Bills Amendment Procedure and Related Matters Bill (B75-2008) was introduced and signed into law by 2009. The Act provides parliament with the opportunity to assert itself in budgeting and spending matters (Idasa, 2009). The political dominance of the executive can constrain parliament's ability to assert its independence (CPA, 2005).

While executive dominance is prevalent in some countries, in others there is dominance of the legislature over the executive. Padding[8] within the budget appropriation process in the 8th legislative Assembly in Nigeria is a case in point. In this instance, elected members within the Senate and National Assembly overstepped their constitutional and fiscal responsibility (Theophilus & Perpetua, 2016) by allocating significant sums to constituency projects related

[7] Polsby (1975) distinguished parliaments in developing countries as falling into four groups; rubber-stamp, emerging, informed, and transformative.

[8] Budget padding involves Parliamentarians adjusting the budget by introducing new lines into the budget prepared by the executive (Falana, 2016).

to their own personal interests or the interests of constituents.[9] It is therefore imperative to use evidence as part of decision-making in instances where there is a clear power imbalance between the executive and legislature.

Micro-level factors: understanding parliamentarians' incentives to engage with evidence using the parliamentarians' Compass

In understanding the micro factors that affect MPs' decisions to use evidence for decision-making, the chapter recognises the need to foreground these in the macro political factors discussed in Section 2. This means that when MPs make decisions along the four poles of the Compass (their constitutional roles; obligations to their party; personal and professional ambitions; as well as representation of their constituency) this is influenced by the broader political factors surrounding them i.e. entrenched political patronage systems, broader dynamics between political parties as well as power imbalances between parliaments and other arms of the state.

Parliamentarians as 'politically driven' individuals

Parliaments are political spaces that are shaped by multiple power dynamics across actors. These dynamics these should be understood within the broader political factors that shape governance processes in Africa. This chapter notes that evidence use cannot be studied in a vacuum; it additionally recognises that evidence use should be understood within the broader politics surrounding the governance of the state. In this context, MPs are recognised as individuals operating within a complex political environment with various influences that shape their decision-making. Reflecting on what drives parliamentarians, one cannot ignore the importance of the 'human element' and individual values which play a significant role in understanding the political nature shaping evidence use. Power (2013) asserts that while parliaments are institutions, they are made up of a complex collective of diverse individuals with different objectives and interests. To understand how parliaments work, it is therefore crucial to understand what incentivises individual parliamentarians in their roles as elected members and also what values drive them. In addition to

[9] It was reported that almost 20 Parliamentarians in the National Assembly and the Senate adjusted the budget by including constituency projects to the tune of N100 billion in the Appropriation Bill. In this regard, the Senate and the National Assembly allocated N60 billion and N40 billion to themselves, respectively (Falana, 2016).

the status and legitimacy that comes with being an MP, Power (2013) groups incentives into three categories; 1) political control and patronage exercised by political parties; 2) personal and constituency interests; and 3) parliamentary structure and culture. All these factors may, in turn, influence how individual parliamentarians decide to use evidence.

Taber and Lodge (2006) and Baekgaard, Christensen, Dahlmann, Mathiasen and Petersen (2019) utilise the motivated reasoning theory[10] and partisan motivated reasoning[11] (Bolsen, Druckman & Cook, 2014) to explain how accuracy or directional goals can shape politicians' decision-making patterns. The theory states that individuals' motivation to make decisions can be either through directional or through accuracy goals. A directional goal refers to when a "person is motivated to arrive at a particular conclusion" (Kunda, 1999, p. 236). Individuals motivated by directional goals reach specific and preselected conclusions using interpretation strategies that increase the possibility of understanding information in ways that are in accordance with their prior attitudes and beliefs (Baekgaard et al., 2019). These individuals are more likely to reject or misinterpret information that is at odds with these attitudes and beliefs and view evidence that is consistent with their prior opinions more favourably (Kunda, 1999).

Conversely, an accuracy goal refers to when individuals are motivated to evaluate information in a manner that will lead to an 'accurate' belief or opinion (Bolsen et al., 2014, p. 238). Individuals motivated by accuracy goals reach objectively true conclusions regardless of the content and implications. In essence, these individuals strive to make decisions based on evidence. The individual thus evaluates political arguments with the hope of reaching a correct outcome although, as Bolsen notes, what is deemed to be the 'best outcome' is not always clear (Bolsen et al., 2014). The results of a study conducted with Danish politicians illustrates directionally motivated reasoning in practice. This illustrates how politicians interpret new information based on their prior attitudes and beliefs. Although noteworthy, this study should be applied to the African context with caution as it is conducted in a different context, but it nevertheless provides a useful and interesting perspective in examining how MPs engage with evidence. While several decision-making theories exist in the field of social sciences, limited evidence exists linking these to politicians – such as the study of Danish politicians.

[10] Motivated reasoning refers to an individual's goal in the context of forming an attitude (Baekgaard et al., 2019).

[11] Individuals interpreting information through the lens of their political party commitment (Bolsen et al, 2016).

Evidence use, specifically what drives MPs' decisions to use evidence, may be biased by varying interests. Parkhurst (2017) outlines the twofold nature of biases – technical and issue bias. These types of bias relate to the attitudes and beliefs that inform evidence use for policymaking. He sees these biases as critical for understanding the good governance of scientific evidence as they can both influence the creation, selection, and interpretation of evidence.

According to Parkhurst (2017), technical bias relates to problematic uses of evidence from the perspective of scientific best practice where evidence can be misused to serve particular goals and this denotes the politicisation of science. For instance, this would be seeking evidence to confirms one's predetermined position and only believing the evidence that confirms that (Carney, 2017). On the other hand, issue bias relates to the ways in which innovations of particular forms of evidence can obscure the political nature of decisions and thus result in biased decisions towards particular outcomes and this can be described as the depoliticisation of politics (Parkhurst, 2017, p. 43). Thus, using Parkhurst's typology, the politics of evidence are behind both technical and issue bias. Within issue bias, Carney (2017) critically engages with the mantra of 'evidence-based policy' as a way of depoliticising and downplaying the unresolved conflicts pertaining to values in evidence use. Parkhurst argues that the use of evidence is political and involves values. More so, as argued by Blaser Mapitsa, Ali and Khumalo (2020), parliaments should recognise and engage with a values-based policymaking lens in manoeuvring the complexities of the landscape of the politics of evidence.

In exploring incentives that drive MPs it is imperative to examine their relationships with their constituencies through, for instance, the Constituency Development Funds (CDF) where porkbarrel politics come into play.[12] CDFs and their approximations exist in counties that elect legislators from single-member districts e.g. Kenya and Nigeria. MPs use CDFs as a response to constituent pressure to deliver both private and public goods to increase their likelihoods for re-election. Private goods include jobs, cash handouts for school fees etc, while public good includes development projects to build schools, roads and health facilities. This way, they attempt to maintain good standing with their constituents and aim to improve their chances of re-election (Barkan & Mattes, 2014).

[12] Pork barrel politics involves MPs attaining projects for their constituencies through directly influencing budget appropriation processes. In pork barrel projects, the benefits are geographically targeted whereas the costs are dispersed through general taxation (Lancaster, 1986).

The Compass framework which follows provides an empirical understanding and analysis into the individual incentives that drive MPs' use of evidence which is central to this chapter.

The parliamentary Compass as a tool to explore structural knowledge

The concept of a set of 'poles', each of which acts as an 'attractor' that influences behavioural outcomes has much in common with Game Theory and Rationale Choice Theory.[13] However, rather than seeking to explain Parliamentarians' decision-making, the graphic tool acts as an instrument to support exploratory conversations about factors that influence decision-making. The construction of the tool itself was informed by cumulative learning emerging from engagement with parliamentarians as part of the CLEAR AA Strengthening Legislative Oversight programme and has been tested with a selection of African Parliamentarians who are members of the African Parliamentarians Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE).

The parliamentarians' Compass is a graphic tool that has been designed to explore by means of conversation, and to locate within a figurative structure, MPs' own perceptions of factors that influence their use of evidence as part of decision-making. The Compass model was developed by CLEAR-AA in 2017 as a framework to support the understanding of parliamentarians' incentives to engage with evidence. The framework has been used by CLEAR-AA to support conversations with African parliamentarians to shed light on the factors that influence their inclination to engage with evidence as part of oversight decision-making. The approach builds on the use of graphic devices to make sense of structural knowledge (Crawley, 2017). Structural knowledge is defined by Beissner (1994, p. 4) as "knowledge that represents the relationships between concepts in a content domain." If knowledge is considered to infer meaning then "meaning does not exist until some structure, or organization is achieved". The benefit of imparting structure to knowledge within a particular field is that it facilitates the formation of mental constructs that enhance understanding which can be be applied to new situations (Beissner, 1994). In fact, the application of structure becomes more valuable as the content domain increases in complexity and abstraction.

[13] A concise definition of both Rational choice and Game theory can be found at https://bit.ly/2Y3WaxN

As depicted in the Compass (Figure 5.1), parliamentarians are positioned at the centre while factors that serve to shape parliamentarians decision-making are represented at each of the cardinal points.

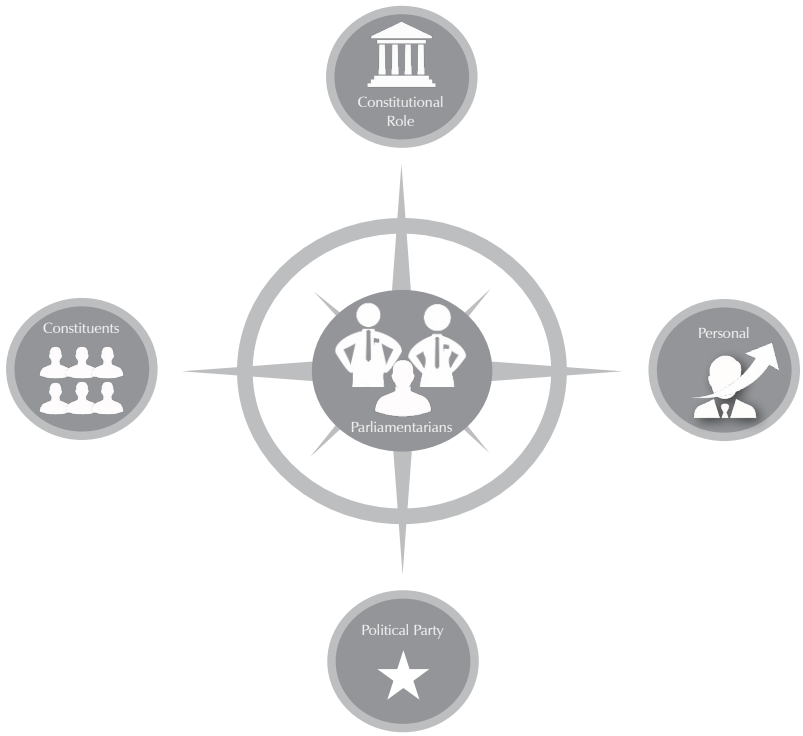


Figure 5.1 Parliamentary Compass

Source: Crawley and Ali (2017), unpublished, used with permission

North – constitutional role

To the north is the MP's constitutional role as a legislator and custodian of oversight. The importance of this pole is made explicit as part of every parliamentarians 'swearing in' where they must take a solemn oath[14] to uphold the constitution and bear true faith and allegiance to the people and the nation. While this may not explicitly state that decision-making must be based on evidence, constitutions more often than not allude to principles such as truth, integrity, equality, transparency, and accountability.

[14] Members elected to the Senate and National Assembly of Kenya must take the following oath – "I ….., having been elected a member of the Senate /National Assembly do swear (in the name of the Almighty God) (solemnly affirm) that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the People and the Republic of Kenya; that I will obey, respect, uphold, preserve, protect and defend this Constitution of the Republic of Kenya; and that I will faithfully and conscientiously discharge the duties of a member of Parliament. (So help me God)".

South – obligations to party

To the south of the parliamentarians' Compass lie obligations to the political party. Political manifestos are the public declaration of policy and aims which are often issued before election by a political party or candidate. In seeking to deliver on manifestos, governments and political parties may find themselves pursuing courses of action that are strongly aligned with evidence, weakly aligned with evidence, or which run counter to evidence. In many instances these courses of action may also be at odds with personally held prior beliefs of parliamentarians and their constituents. 'Political whipping' is the mechanism that parties use to ensure that parliamentarians vote according to the official party policy. Parliamentarians who vote contrary to the party line may be sanctioned or in some cases have their 'whip removed.[15]

East – personal and professional ambition

To the east lies personal and professional ambition which complements the discussion in the section above on MPs as individuals with personal goals. All parliamentarians take an oath of office to fulfil their duties as a democratically elected representative of the people. Many parliamentarians, however, have ambitions of higher office both within the party and within government (shadow ministerial positions within opposition, junior ministerial positions and securing a seat in Cabinet within governing parties). While being seen to contribute effectively during debates through use of evidence is one way that parliamentarians can demonstrate their professional standing, the judicious *ignoring* of evidence to vote along party lines may also lead in certain circumstances to upward career movement within the party.

West – representative of constituents

To the west lie the MPs' obligations to citizens and constituents. Constituents are important stakeholders for all parliamentarians. They have particular interests and priorities that may or may not align with those of the political party. When debating and shaping legislation parliamentarians must be seen to deliver to constituents, particularly in 'first past the post systems' where voters determine whether or not a parliamentarian retains or loses his or her seat. Parliamentarians who ignore their constituents in such systems do so at their peril.

---

[15] Thrown out of the party.

These various sources of influence serve to inform decision-making by parliamentarians and while at any given time due consideration of a single pole will lead to a clear decision-making strategy, attempts to meet the interests of more than one pole may well result in the MP being pulled in different directions. The 'art' of the politician is therefore hypothesised as the ability to reliably calculate the likely outcome of meeting (or failing to meet) a combination of expectations that emanate from the parliamentarians' Compass and to make decisions that maximise individual political benefits while minimising negative political fallout[16]. The following section provides an application of the Compass in practice using the Parliament of Kenya as a case study. This examines the micro political factors that MPs face in making decisions in terms of the four poles described above.

The case of the Kenya Parliament

The evidence-informed approach to decision-making in Kenya has gained pace in the decade following the promulgation of the new Constitution in 2010. The Kenya case study in Section 3 of this volume provides a clear overview of the structural arrangements that support and, to some extent, also hinder evidence use.

In recognising the need to have Kenyan parliamentarians actively involved in championing the use of evidence within committees and in the house, the formation of the Parliamentary Caucus on Evidence-Informed Decision-making (PCEIDM), referred to as the 'the Evidence Caucus' has been a notable milestone (Sande, 2018). Established in 2015, it is a bi-partisan, informal committee made up of members from both the National Assembly and Senate. The PCEIDM advocates for evidence-informed decision-making within the legislature.

[16] A good example of the parliamentarians' Compass in action is the recent and widely reported political process of passing Brexit legislation through the British parliament. Many Parliamentarians found themselves representing constituencies where voters in the referendum voted for outcomes that the parliamentarian did not favour themselves (tension between personal and constituent poles). In other instances, parliamentarians decided to vote against the predominant views of their own political party to base their judgement on evidence and run the risk of losing the whip (tension between party and personal). In others, Parliamentarians voted for outcomes that they felt were constitutionally right in that they were acting in the best interests of the country (based on evidence) and their oath of office despite the views of their constituents (tension between constitutional, and constituent poles). Commentators contend that certain politicians even pursued outcomes that they did not personally believe in, nor were supported by evidence but that would bolster their career aspirations (tension between personal ambition and constitutional role).

Method of data collection

The collection of data was guided by the parliamentarians' Compass framework. As stated above, it was designed to be used primarily as a visual tool to guide conversations with parliamentarians. The data collection was twofold: the first approach involved using structured and semi-structured interviews while the second comprised the collection of secondary data in the form of Hansard records. The interviews began with an explanation of the Compass framework to the parliamentarians and practical examples were provided. Once the interviewees understood the concept and were able to relate it to their work, the interviewers then guided a conversation to explore the extent to which the four poles might help to make sense of the complex ways in which they and other parliamentarians think about using evidence. When interviewees were hesitant to answer a specific question posed to them during the interview they were invited to speak about parliament in general. The intention was to keep the conversation flowing and extract as much information as possible from the interviewee. Questions were asked about examples of the existence of tensions between the different poles of the Compass, how these arose, and the mechanisms adopted to resolve the tensions. The interviewees were asked to make reference to the practical process of transacting parliamentary business and their individual and collective roles in the process. Where necessary, a series of prompting questions were used to explore in greater detail any issues that arose.

Limitations of the data collection process

The interviews revealed a range of rich qualitative data but interviews were limited to five parliamentarian respondents (three from the governing party and two from opposition parties). To triangulate the findings from the interviews, the researchers made use of the Hansard reports detailing the debates that took place during the consideration of these issues on the floor of the House. The Hansard report is a near verbatim report of the actual discussions and decisions on any particular matter on the floor of the House.

Results and discussion

This section presents the data obtained through an application of the Compass framework in the Parliament of Kenya. The purpose of the empirical approach was to ascertain the political factors that influenced MPs in their selection and use of evidence and the complexities surrounding evidence use in decision-making. The following recent examples (drawn from the period of 2014 to 2019)

of legislative debate within the Kenyan Parliament were used to contextualise the discussions and situate the conversation that formed the basis of the interview discussions and the Hansard reviews that took place:

- **The revision of the debt ceiling from a percentage of GDP to an absolute figure**, is a proposal that was introduced to parliament through amendment of Public Finance Management Act regulations and not through a substantive Bill. The amendment was made in response to the prevailing budgetary situation. The case was that the government was confronting huge budgetary deficits and needed to borrow to make up the difference to finance its spending requirements. However, the challenge encountered was that government had exceeded the ceiling of 50% of Kenya's GDP allowable by law. The revision of the law was expected to herald an absolute figure ceiling of 9 trillion Kenya shillings instead of the 50% of the GDP requirement. Opinion was divided on the sustainability of the debt levels by the economy and a deep sense of concern existed amongst stakeholders in terms of further opening up of the debt ceiling. Buoyed by these views, those MPs opposed to the review of the law recommended debt restructuring, the institution of measures to reduce spending, and also called for sealing loopholes that could occasion leakages. Their argument was based on evidence emerging from stakeholders on the unsustainability of the debt levels. Interestingly, the day was carried by those in support of the new law and, unusually, was supported by both the ruling party and opposition MPs. The reasons for this could be explained by the existence of a loose alliance consisting of both opposition and government MPs supporting a pact between the president and the leader of the opposition party's coalition. Despite the existence of evidence to the contrary from within and outside the Parliament, both Houses passed the amendment. The Parliamentary Budget Office and other key stakeholders had provided evidence on the unsustainability of the levels of the debts.
- **The controversial rejection by the Parliament of a joint parliamentary committee report on the importation of illegal and contaminated sugar into the country**. Controversies around safety of sugar imported into the country were investigated by a committee. The committee presented a report to the House with a number of recommendations that addressed both the safety and lack of probity on the part of some of high-ranking public officials in the importation of the sugar as well as actions intended to safeguard consumers and restore an industry that was seen to be the economic backbone of over 10 million Kenyans. Members rejected the report on the floor of the House despite the existence of evidence presented by the investigating committees to support their recommendations.
- **The passing of security amendment laws that gave the government certain absolute powers to tackle terrorism and certain forms of political violence**. The opposition party took the view that some of the provisions of the proposed amendment law violated human rights and heralded a return to the era of detention

without trial and were an affront to the new constitutional dispensation. The proposal was vehemently opposed by the opposition party but was passed by the majority governing party amid protests and violence in the house during the debate. Political affiliation played a major role in determining the decision as both sides of the political divide had compelling arguments.

Results: Political factors affecting evidence use in the Parliament of Kenya

The data collected from the interviews and triangulated against the Hansard reports from the Parliaments of Kenya revealed and identified some political factors that affect evidence use in Kenya. After applying the Compass to the study, the results illustrate the prominence of MPs' obligations to their political parties in influencing their decision-making. The other factors that were found to influence MPs' decision-making were the MPs' obligations to their constituencies and their constitutional mandates. These factors are discussed in detail.

MPs obligations to political parties: 'Party politics'

Parliamentarians interviewed pointed to the fact that under the current political setup, members are expected to support the party agenda and that political considerations are, at times, considered more significant than the use of evidence in making policy decisions. As seen in Section 5, two very significant scenarios can be used to illustrate situations where evidence gave way to political expediency to make policy decisions.

- Raising Kenya's debt ceiling

Members were implored by their party leaders during voting to support the raising of the country's debt ceiling to plug the budget deficit for the financial year 2019/2020 despite evidence showing that the country's public debt rose to 62.3% of the gross domestic product against the recommended threshold of 50%. Both the World Bank (2019) and the Parliamentary Budget Office (2019) provided evidence against raising the debt ceiling. This evidence was conveniently ignored. During the debate on the floor of the Senate, a ranking member in the opposition party, who backed the motion remarked, *"Kenya is approaching the situation that was there in Greece"*. He continued, *"Even as opposition we wouldn't want to inherit an economy that has crashed. In certain circumstances, where the spirit of patriotism is required, we must come together instead of allowing the economy to crash"* (Senate Hansard, 2019).

His statements during the debate revealed the contradictions and the tension that existed at the time. On one hand the member alludes to the fact that from existing evidence that the debt situation was at a tipping point comparing it to the situation in Greece, but then goes on to give his justification for supporting the motion to have been informed by a future political aspiration of forming a government. The members interviewed were in agreement that, left to their own devices, their decision on these issues would have been more amenable to the existing evidence about these issues indicating that ultimately use of evidence in a political setting is informed by the politics of the day.

Security laws (Amendment Bill)

In 2014, amidst rising insecurity the governing party published a security amendment Bill, occasioning amendments to various security sector-related legislations and mobilised members of parliament to support the Bill. The proposals were vehemently opposed by civil society groups, human rights organisations, and the opposition party all of whom cited evidence that in the proposals there were certain draconian provisions that could violate human rights (FIDH, 2014). Representatives of the Muslim community argued that a section of the proposals targeted persons professing their faith. Tensions amongst various groups were palpable and further complicated by the fact that amongst ranking members of the governing party were members representing predominantly Muslim constituencies. The situation presented an enormous challenge to such members. They had to balance the variant interests of their constituents and their political party as well as had to deal with the fallout that might have affected their political future. Eventually, ranking members of the governing party decided to support the amendments while a minority from these constituencies opposed some of the proposals. The position taken by some members was believed to have had political consequences, contributing to some members' difficulties in defending their seats in subsequent elections while others realised a significant boost to their political careers.

This example of tension between the influence of the party and the interests of the constituents illustrated how parliamentarians may be ultimately driven by their political party's position on any policy issue. It was also noted that a blind support of the party's position while completely ignoring the existing evidence and preferences of the constituents, could lead to undesirable results during the elections.

In Kenya's 'first past the post' system, parliamentary candidates rely heavily on political parties and their leaders to contribute substantially (both financially and materially) to their elections. Upon successfully securing the parliamentary seat, the support that was extended to the individual members during the period of the electioneering is ordinarily expected by the party to be reciprocated through loyalty to the party's aspirations. This state of affairs could affect the use of evidence in decision-making for such a member. In the interview, a member stated, *"You cannot expect me to oppose my party leader, when in essence he has made me who I am today as an MP, do I want to risk the repercussions of losing his endorsement to the voters?"* Clear evidence in support of objective decision-making may therefore be sacrificed at the altar of political expediency.

MPs' obligations to citizens and constituents: pork barrelling

Pork barrelling, which refers to the funnelling of government funds into projects designed to meet the specific interests of constituents in return for votes in future elections, is a common feature of politics in Kenya. Almost all members interviewed stated that they would support a government or political party agenda if it included or protected the specific interests of their constituents.

The idea of social support to constituents runs deep in the electoral politics of Kenya. As one member remarked *"Constituents always want money to support their socio-economic challenges like funerals, medical bills, school fees and so on, so I need money as an MP to meet their demands, otherwise I risk losing their support!"*. Members stated that, at times, the desire to meet the demands of their constituents compromised their personal values.

Constituency politics

Electoral politics is localised. Electorates are likely to give higher premium to candidates who identify and prioritise local issues over those whose agenda extends to the wider national interest. When a matter specifically affects the local community within an electoral boundary, members' understanding and positions tend to hold sway over national policy goals regardless of the gravity of the national aspirations. A case in point which occurred during the 10th Parliament was the proposal to evict of communities from the Mau Forest. Some elected members from the local community opposed evictions in the face of overwhelming evidence that failure to protect important catchments, rivers and water resources would compromise the country's ability to meet water needs of both present and future generations.

During the process of reclamation of the Mau water towers, an MP from the Mau region stated that *"I cannot allow my voters to be in the cold and lose their livelihoods just because the country is experiencing drought. Show me the evidence that water comes from trees in Mau Forest and not from the sky?"*

Politicians in this instance prioritised constituents' need for shelter, schools and food over a larger issue that affected the whole nation. The constitutional role of an MP in such an environment is relegated to the periphery and party affiliation becomes less important to the prevailing local interest. This indicates that at the local level, electorate interests may shape the likelihood that a member considers the use of evidence in coming to a particular policy decision.

MPs' constitutional role: Public participation and petitions

Kenya's progressive constitution stipulates that public participation is a mandatory part of the public policy development process. This is intended to contribute to good governance by ensuring that the voices of constituents are heard. However, a number of those interviewed revealed that in certain situations they themselves mobilised constituents to appear before committees to reinforce their own views. Members admitted that by so doing, they were able to sway certain decisions in their favour.

Parliamentary procedure in Kenya provides for anyone, including an MP acting on behalf of the electorate, to petition parliament to consider any matter within its authority. This procedure has gained significant traction over the last few years and has provided parliament with valuable evidence on a range of social issues that are important to citizens. Some of the issues raised in these petitions have been given a deeper consideration by parliamentarians and a number have ended up becoming the subject of parliamentary inquiry. Citizen-generated evidence became available to the members through presentation of petitions by the public on specific social issues that required members' action. There is widespread acceptance by parliament of public petitions to inform and improve the quality of the decision-making on the particular issue petitioned.

Discussion: Complexities surrounding the political factors influencing decision-making

Members of parliament highlighted that while they appreciated the importance of evidence to inform decision-making, they encountered several confounding factors that arose from the political environment in which they

operate. These included: the negative view that many voters had developed of parliamentarians as a group;[17] balancing the need to win over voters and deliver on their constitutional mandate; dealing with conflicts of interest; manoeuvring the competing interests of voters; and managing self-interests. In addition, the worsening economic situation accompanied by high unemployment has been met with subsequent demands by voters for cash assistance from MPs – a shift in the interpretation of how citizens understand MPs representation roles and what they expect from them. The unending political cycles were seen to further complicate the situation by keeping parliamentarians in campaign mode throughout their parliamentary life.

Parliamentarians indicated that they were more amenable to consider and use evidence on non-contentious policy issues and were also, at times, willing to demand evidence to make informed decisions. This was reported to be easier at the portfolio committee level where there was adequate time, personalised support from technical staff and familiarity with other parliamentarian colleagues. Although the small sample size did not allow for the generalisability of the findings, the information obtained during the interviews with parliamentarians corroborates the literature in illustrating the role that politics plays in shaping evidence use in parliaments. The variance in political party values and interests results in biases in evidence use (Parkhurst, 2017). The interviews also highlighted the role of party politics and, in particular, 'election support' as significant political influences on how evidence is used (Power, 2013; Bradley, 2019; Draman et al., 2017).

The leaders of the political parties, the presidency, and the leaders of the majority and minority parties play significant roles in determining parliamentary business and, as corroborated by Power (2013), determine when certain voting procedures should take place, the period of time parliament has to scrutinise and deliberate on certain issues, and the appointment of parliamentarians to different parliamentary positions, including departmental committees. Pork barrelling as described above appears to be a key political driver that impacts on evidence use in the Kenyan Parliament. As indicated by Power (2013), the status and legitimacy that comes with being an MP often presents additional resources and opportunities for self-fulfilment. Power (2013) groups parliamentary incentive structures into three categories which provide a framework with which to interpret the motivations of individual parliamentarians.

[17] Respondents cited a protest by activists who released a pig and piglets outside parliament to show their anger at newly elected MPs demanding higher salaries.

Crawley (2017), Power (2013), and Parkhurst (2017) hold that political control and patronage, personal and constituency interests, as well as institutional factors such as parliamentary structure and culture, are powerful forces that influence behaviour.

The micro political factors shaping evidence use are well demonstrated within the Kenyan case. There is tension between *constitutional role* and meeting the *interests and needs* of constituents, stemming from the fact that constituents may not fully understand parliamentarians' constitutional role. Further tension can be demonstrated between political party affiliation and MPs' constitutional role in instances where the use of evidence is influenced by party caucusing. Tensions between political parties and constituents' interests on one side and personal and constitutional interests on the other, are consistent with the accounts of pork barrelling. In situations where politics surrounding local issues becomes prevalent, tension can be clearly inferred between MPs' constitutional role (use of evidence) and the interests of constituents.

Conclusion and implications on the use of evidence within parliamentary oversight

The chapter has illustrated that while evidence may be acknowledged as an important component in objective decision-making, several competing political factors at both macro and micro level influence decision-making within parliaments. Highlighted in the chapter is the ongoing question on the extent to which evidence is given priority within the complex political factors in which parliamentarians operate. The need to understand the broader motives behind evidence use should also be made apparent. The systems of patronage and protracted socio-economic challenges that shape development outcomes in the continent are critical factors to consider in the analysis of what shapes evidence use in parliaments.

Parkhurst (2017) recommends two primary ways to promote evidence use. First, building structures that support the use of evidence including resources and arrangements of what he terms 'evidence advisory systems'. Second, adopting principles for evidence use and embedding them within the rules, incentives, and practices according to which institutions operate. These include the structures, rules and norms that dictate which evidence is used, how, by whom, and how these systems can ensure public representation and political

legitimacy in the use of evidence. Additionally, in support of evidence structures, parliaments are increasingly introducing research libraries and other resources to support evidence systems. The notion of the open parliament is reinforcing principles of transparency towards citizens and becoming more widespread. These principles are supported variously by the practice of allowing citizens to submit motions to parliament; the growing number of Public Budget Offices within parliaments; the growing number of evidence caucuses and networks;[18] and a stipulation in Ghana that prevents the passing of any Bill into law without presentation of credible evidence. Within civil society, parliamentary monitoring groups such as Parliamentary Watch (South Africa) and Mzalendo (Kenya) are providing citizens with valuable evidence of parliamentarians' and parliaments' performance while public transcripts of portfolio committee proceedings and online publication of Hansard ensure transparency and accountability of parliamentary process to citizens.

While the noted political dynamics remain and the complexities within the evidence use space cannot be overemphasised, the importance of the good governance of evidence described by Parkhurst (2017) is paramount. This involves advocating for rigorous, systematic, and technically valid pieces of evidence that are used within decision-making processes that are inclusive of, representative of, and accountable to the multiple social interests of the population served (ibid). In conclusion, there is a need to deepen the culture of evidence use within African parliaments in order to bolster transparency and accountability and better achieve development objectives in the African continent.

[18] The African Parliamentarians Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE) and the Global Parliamentarians Forum on Evaluation (GPFE) are two such bodies.

Reference List

Azevedo-Harman, E. (2011). Parliaments in Africa: representative institutions in the land of the 'big man'. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 17(1):65-85. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572334.2011.545180

Baekgaard, M., Christensen, J., Dahlmann, C., Mathiasen, A. & Petersen, N. (2019). The Role of Evidence in Politics: Motivated Reasoning and Persuasion among Politicians. *British Journal of Political Science*, 49(3):1117-1140. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123417000084

Barkan, J.D. (2009). *Legislative power in emerging African democracies*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Blaser Mapitsa, C., Ali, A.J. & Khumalo, L.S. (2020). From evidence to values-based decision-making in African parliaments. *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 20(2):68-85. https://doi.org/10.1177/1035719X20918370

Bolsen, T., Druckman, J.N., & Cook, F.L. (2014). The influence of partisan motivated reasoning on public opinion. *Political Behavior*, 36(2):235-262. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-013-9238-0

Cairney, P. (2016). *The politics of evidence-based policy making*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-51781-4

Cairney, P. (2017). *Politics and public policy. The politics of evidence*. Available from https://bit.ly/3zHC2yl (Accessed 20 July 2020).

Chiroro, B. (2006). The dilemmas of opposition political parties in Southern Africa. *Journal of African elections*, 5(1):100-125. https://doi.org/10.20940/JAE/2006/v14i1a6

Court, J. & Cotterrell, L. (2004). *What Political and Institutional Context Issues Matter for Bridging Research and Policy?* A Literature Review and Discussion of Data Collection Approaches. London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

Cowley, P. & Stuart, M. (2015). Whipping them in: Role-playing party cohesion with a chief whip. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 11(2):190-203. https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2015.1016035

Crawley, K.D. (2017). The six-sphere framework: A practical tool for assessing monitoring and evaluation systems. *African Evaluation Journal*, 5(1):0-0. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v5i1.193

Draman, R., Titriku, A., Lampo I., Hayter E. & Holden, K. (2017). *Evidence in African parliaments*. Oxford, U.K: INASP.

Falana, F. (2016). The Criminality of Budget Padding. Available from https://bit.ly/3m1pYTZ (Accessed 28 March 2020).

FIDH. (2014). *International Federation of Human Rights: Kenya: The Security Laws (Amendment) Act must be repealed*. Available from https://bit.ly/2ZqE9tW (Accessed on 26 March 2020).

Hughes, T. (2005). The South African Parliament's Failed Moment. In: *African Parliaments*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 225-246. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403979308_12

Huntington, S.P. (1991). *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA). (2009). *Parliament, the Budget and Poverty: Aspects of the South African Context*. Edited by Kate Lefko-Everett, Ahmed Mohamed, Len Verwey and Musa Zamisa. Pretoria: IDASA.

Khan, M.H. (2005). Markets, states and democracy: Patron-client networks and the case for democracy in developing countries. *Democratisation*, 12(5):704-724. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340500322157

Kunda, Z. (1999). *Social cognition: Making sense of people*. Cambridge: MIT press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/6291.001.0001

Lancaster, T.D. (1986). Electoral structures and pork barrel politics. *International Political Science Review*, 7(1):67-81. https://doi.org/10.1177/019251218600700107

Mkandawire, T. (2015). Neopatrimonialism and the political economy of economic performance in Africa: Critical reflections. *World Pol.*, 67:563. https://doi.org/10.1017/S004388711500009X

Parkhurst, J. (2017). *The politics of evidence: from evidence-based policy to the good governance of evidence*. Abingdon: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315675008

Parliament of Kenya. (2019). *Senate Hansard 5th November 2019*. Accessed from https://bit.ly/3zEDvpa (Accessed on 26 March 2020).

Parliamentary Budget Office. (2019). *Brief on Revision of Debt Ceiling to the Sessional Committee on Delegated Legislation*. Nairobi: The parliament of Kenya.

Polsby, N.W. 1975. Legislatures. In: F. Greestein & N. Polsby (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science*. Vol. 5, Boston: Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Power, G. (2013). *The politics of parliamentary strengthening: understanding political incentives and institutional behavior in parliamentary support strategies*. London: Global Partners/WFD.

Sande M. (2018). *The state of evidence use in the Kenyan Parliament, AFIDEP.* Available from https://bit.ly/3kKFrbv/ (Accessed 29 March 2020).

Taber, C.S. & Lodge, M. (2006). Motivated skepticism in the evaluation of political beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3):755-769. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00214.x

The African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE). (2014). *Younde Forum on the role of parliamentarians in supporting an enabling environment for evaluation in Africa*. Abidjan: APNODE.

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. (2005). *The financing and administration of Parliament*. Report of a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Study Group hosted by the Legislature of Zanzibar, Tanzania, from 25 to 29 May 2005.

Theophilus, A.A. & Perpetua, E.C. (2016). Budget Padding: The Nigerian Perspective. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Research | Social & Management Sciences*, 2(12).

UNICEF. (2008). *Bridging the Gap – The Role of Evaluation in Evidence based Policy Making*. In: M. Segone (ed.). Geneva, Switzerland.

Von Soest, C. (2010). What neopatrimonialism is – Six questions to the concept. In: *GIGA-Workshop" Neopatrimonialism in various World Region*s. Hamburg: GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies.

World Bank. 2019. *Kenya Economic Update: Securing Future Growth – Policies to Support Kenya's Digital Transformation (English)*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. Available from: https://bit.ly/3oab3cE (Accessed on 25 March 2020).

Yinka Fashagba, J. (2009). Legislative oversight under the Nigerian presidential system. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 15(4):439-459. https://doi.org/10.1080/13572330903302497

6

PARLIAMENTS LOOKING FORWARD: TECHNOLOGY, FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND COMPLEX PROBLEMS



Aisha Jore Ali, Kobena T. Hanson and Angelita Kiwekete

Introduction

This chapter presents a forward-looking perspective for African legislatures to consider when building and sustaining systems of evidence suitable to generate quality evidence for informed policymaking in the context of rapidly changing global conditions of the twenty -first century. Advancements in technology have led to waves of digital transformation with economic and social activities shifting online and altering the way individuals, organisations and governments operate globally with indications that this trajectory will be exponential in the near future (Schuler, 2020). Businesses and corporations are at the forefront of the transformation and are rapidly innovating, adapting and shaping the use of technologies to achieve their business imperatives. Governments, particularly those in developing countries, have, however, been slow to adopt technologies at a similar pace despite the immense possibilities that such advancement offers to leapfrog from the transitional industrial age stage of development to the information, knowledge, and data-driven age of contemporary times (Ciuriak & Ptashkina, 2019).

With the backdrop of these developments, governments are continually having to contend with persistent and seemingly intractable and complex problems such as, among others, climate change, pandemics, and international migration, all of which intersect across sectors and subsystems with potentially catastrophic effects. Despite the gravity of the problems, they have been inadequately addressed by rational and technical solutions put forward by public management (Head, 2008). The Covid-19 pandemic is a prime example of such a complex problem, albeit very recent, where a health crisis has had far reaching effects on people, communities, businesses, economies and governments, sparking waves of disruption and exposing the skewed logic and value systems that underpinned the strategic imperatives of people, governments and corporations worldwide (OECD, 2020). In addition, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have been felt disproportionately in societies across the world, mirroring the pattern of existing inequalities and power imbalances, further exacerbating conditions for the vulnerable across age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicities and geographies (Blundell et al., 2020).

Digital technologies can be applied in diverse ways to inform and formulate strategies for complex problems such as the Covid-19 pandemic. Countries that have been seen as successful in planning and coordinating government response to the Covid-19 pandemic, have integrated digital technologies

with policy and health care to arrive at successful outcomes in managing and containing the effects of the pandemic (Whitelaw, Mamas, Topol & Van Spall, 2020). Such successes in application and use of technologies by governments are few and far between. There are, however, concerns that unfettered use of technologies by individuals, corporations and governments to infringe on citizens' rights and privacy without proper regulation, poses potential challenges to legislators and policymakers (Schuler, 2020).

This chapter describes the opportunities, challenges and fears emerging from the wave of digitisation and technological advancement sweeping across society. It covers the extent to which parliaments have adopted technologies across their systems of evidence, delves into the way parliamentary decision-making occurs at different levels, and describes how African parliaments operate within the evolving context of increasingly complex, interrelated, non-linear problems, with a case in point being African parliaments' responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, it concludes by discussing the implications of the twin disrupters, Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and complex problems such as the Covid-19 pandemic to parliamentary political, managerial and technical decision-making.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the transformation of society

The invention of a device capable of inexpensively mass producing and spreading knowledge on a variety of subjects in faster ways than ever experienced before, leading to profound effects on society and shaping the world as we know it today, is arguably an event of great relevance to the topics discussed in this chapter (Dittmar, 2011). In 1436, a German goldsmith, Johannes Gutenberg, invented a movable version of the printing press, an innovation that became the driving force of the renaissance and prompted a scientific revolution leading to the birth of a global news network[1] akin to contemporary mainstream media, doubling literacy rates in Europe in every subsequent century and triggering the transition of civic participation from merely sharing public opinion to launching popular revolutions that disrupted monarchies and governments (Schlossberg, 2011). The centuries that followed were marked by equally impressive inventions although the invention of the

[1] The traditional media as we know it today was modelled off the patterns of distribution that followed the demand for knowledge generated by the printing press.

printing press was particularly pertinent because it transformed the way that people shared ideas and used and valued knowledge. In the twenty-first century we can draw multiple parallels on social, economic, political and cultural fronts with the onset of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR),[2] which is, primarily, impacting significantly on the way that knowledge is generated, shared, valued and culturised by individuals, businesses, organisations and governments (Xu, David & Kim, 2018).

The impact of 4IR on society may be better understood by revisiting previous industrial revolutions and their impact on economy and society. The invention of the steam engine in 1760 ushered in the first industrial revolution that shaped the transition from cultivation, feudal modes of social and commercial organisation to that of manufacturing using coal as the main energy source and trains for transportation. The second industrial revolution that started in 1900 was prompted by the invention of the internal combustion engine and the dawn of the era of rapid industrialisation with oil and electricity as the main sources of energy for mass production. Innovations around electronics and information technology sparked the third industrial revolution during which production was automated and a digital revolution ensued. The invention of the computer, internet and artificial intelligence, among other innovations, heralded the beginning of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) with disruptive technologies, web-enabled communications, computer-generated product design and three-dimensional (3D) printing amongst its key technologies. The novel and efficient ways in which these technologies are able to combine physical, digital and biological inputs enables fundamental transformation at the systems level in the production, management and governance spheres (Xu et al., 2018).

In today's world, with neoliberalist ideologies and capitalism driving the global economy and the prevailing context of globalisation, digital technologies have had mixed results on the African continent with its high unemployment rates. On one hand, digital technologies have provided economic opportunities for thousands to participate in the global gig economy when they would otherwise

[2] The 4IR, a transformational change, is characterised by the rise in ubiquitous and mobile technology; cheaper, smaller, and stronger sensors; and artificial and machine learning (Deliotte, 2018). The 4IR is not just ubiquitous to innovative technologies, but also the dynamic entanglements between these technologies with an unprecedented level of data gathering and of communication of physical systems both with humans, as well as with each other in real-time. This chapter only focuses on a subsection of disruptive technologies, specifically how it impacts citizen engagement, politics and governance.

have been grappling with structural unemployment. In this way, digital technologies could be seen as enablers for economic progress. However, a nuanced analysis of the gig economy enabled by digital technologies and platforms, exposes the vast profits made by global tech companies at the expense of workers earning low wages and working long hours, and further magnifies the gap between rich and poor and the global inequalities and inequities intermeshed within this tech-enabled system (Naughton, 2019).

For the opportunities arising from the 4IR and digital technologies to benefit society as a whole and considering that the technological changes are occurring at an exponential pace never witnessed before, it is important for policymakers to recognise that the changes associated with this revolution will bring about shifts in power, wealth and knowledge akin to the changes brought about at the time of the invention of printing press (Bianchi & Labory, 2018). For Africa, the most pertinent of these disruptive technologies is undoubtedly the invention of the mobile phone and a boom in mobile telephony infrastructure across sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Such technologies have driven a series of innovations related to the Internet of Things (IoT), web- and mobile-enabled communication platforms, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter all of which have shown consequent disruptive effects on business through e-commerce, social and political organising and networking that have been deployed in protests, demonstrations and revolutions (Arthur, 2020; Hanson, 2020; Hanson & Puplampu, 2018).

Technologies and systematic evidence use in parliaments

With the drive for New Public Management (NPM) practices in government and governance modernisation reforms, African parliaments have begun to adapt technologies to modernise organisational systems and processes. Administrative and managerial processes such as financial management, Human Resources (HR) management and organisational communications have been, in most cases, successfully transformed from the laborious manual processes to electronic and digital forms that have brought demonstrated efficiency and productivity gains. Similarly, parliamentary libraries have been able to digitise their paper documents and records with tech-enabled storage and archival systems that have made it much simpler to retrieve, store and organise large amounts of information. Hansard departments have benefitted

from the adoption of technologies that record, transcribe and store audio files of plenary debates on the floor of parliaments. However, the application of technology across processes in parliaments has not been uniform.

The work of research departments and parliamentary budget offices have largely been left out of this technology adoption wave despite the potential for these technical processes to support systematic evidence generation which is integral to evidence-based policymaking by individual parliamentarians and parliamentary committees. This may have occurred for several reasons: first, across the globe, technologies for business processes for finance and HR management are simply more available and accessible because the way that technological advancement has grown is a function of the drive and interests of the private corporations that lead innovations. As such, technological solutions for specific public sector organisations are limited other than for a few strategic exceptions such as communications, defence, and sector-specific areas like health, where governments have partnered with private companies to drive innovation in those areas (Schuler, 2020).

Another reason why technology adoption in parliaments is skewed is due to the intrinsic characteristics of parliaments as political institutions. Studies have shown that within public institutions the technological reforms for functions that have less exposure to political contestation are more successful than those functions that sit within the prism of political bargaining, negotiating and contestation that is customary in political parties (Cordella & Bonina, 2012). A common conception in evidence-based policymaking circles is that evidence use is political and is subjective to the user's interests and motives. However, the documented experiences of parliamentary researchers and budget officers involved in systematic evidence generation indicate that evidence generation itself is political. The process of introducing reforms to improve these functions that are inherently politicised will undoubtedly be slower and more complicated to undertake as reform designers and implementers will need to understand and ably navigate the political landscape to expect some level of success (Antonio & Francesco, 2012).

These are important considerations for those working to improve technological capabilities in parliaments. Successful undertakings of such capacity development projects will likely require a good understanding of the ecosystems of technology and the technological solutions that are available

for use, as well as an astute grasp of the political dynamics within parliaments where the newly introduced technological applications are expected to create value (Cordella & Bonina, 2012).

In addition to the reasons contributing to the skewed nature of technology adoption within parliament, discussions with parliamentary staff over the course of the CLEAR-AA parliamentary support programme reveal the undercurrents of demand and supply of evidence in parliaments which also play a significant role in how technology could be effectively applied to achieve the best results. There is a growing demand for evidence by parliamentarians and other parliamentary staff which puts immense pressure on the often overloaded clerks, parliamentary researchers, budget officers and legal officers to systematically respond to evidence requests. The digitisation of previously time-consuming processes such as interview transcriptions or using artificial intelligence and machine learning for data analysis and synthesis of data contained in hundreds of government reports are ways in which the process of systematically generating evidence could be made easier with the use of 4IR technologies. Demand for evidence will continue to grow as parliamentarians are pressurised by citizen expectations and demands and the use of technology can be leveraged to reduce the onerous burden of work on parliamentary staff.

Suppliers of evidence used by African parliaments are becoming increasingly diversified. Most commonly, the evidence used by parliaments for policymaking is from the executive arm of government in form of reports. However, over the past decade Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that monitor parliamentary work have begun to provide evidence to parliaments on various subjects and topics. Think tanks and research centres in universities and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are increasingly involved in providing specialist evidence targeted at policymakers and legislators, some of which work directly with parliamentary committees. Citizen-generated evidence is becoming a key feature of evidence supply for parliamentary committees, typically with support from NGOs. Parliaments are in a good position to integrate this diverse data to create a rich pool of evidence for policymaking and digital technologies are an important tool for streamlining and systemising information.

Perhaps the most interesting outcome of the advent of digital and mobile technologies in Africa over the past two decades is the proliferation of robust citizen engagement with governments. Digital technologies have enabled millions of Africans to communicate and interact with each other

and with policymakers on various channels, particularly through social media (Mabweazara, 2015). For legislators on the African continent, this has implications on the government's role for either empowering or curtailing this wave of public participation and engagement.

Impact of disruptive technologies and digitalisation on parliament, governance, and democracy

As asserted by Arthur (2020), users of disruptive technologies can communicate with each other directly and indirectly through iterative processes which was previously not the case with traditional media. The prominence of disruptive technologies has resulted in the internet progressing society from a largely representative to a participatory democracy which involves more active audiences who have control over channels and messaging. This is exacerbated by the lower costs of producing and sharing information. Furthermore, through new media, individuals and groups have access to powerful, speedy, and relatively low-cost tools for recruitment, fund-raising, dissemination of information and images, collective discussions, and mobilisation for action (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013).

4IR and disruptive technologies have further taken over the advantage previously held by governments in terms of dominance and control of state media and have further shaped how governance is taking place and how political parties and MPs are communicating messages (Arthur, 2020). Other benefits have included enabling increased civic engagement by allowing politicians and policymakers to leverage online platforms and digital applications to engage with constituents in real time; to gather nuanced feedback on citizens' concerns; and to enhance and advance civil discourse. This has further played a role in empowering citizens to collectively hold elected officials accountable by tracking the effectiveness of the implementation of policies thus closing the democratic divide between 'policymakers' and 'policy takers.'

The flipside is also true, as with all disruptive technologies there are winners and losers. Technology can serve as a purveyor of 'fake news', disinformation, radicalisation and polarisation. Well-resourced governments and/or politicians with devious motives can leverage digitalisation and the internet to misinform people and undermine a democracy. The case of Cambridge Analytica, which

is addressed in subsequent paragraphs readily comes to mind. At the level of local politics, such technologies can be used to spread lies, sow ethnic/religious/race divisions and create confusion about what is real and what is not.

Having discussed the increasing availability of disruptive technologies, it is paramount to examine how these are shifting the African political landscape. Several scholars concur that increased digitalisation and rise in disruptive technologies have provided good platforms to mobilise and connect with target audiences as a means of building trust (Arthur 2020; Taprial & Kanwar, 2012). Social media platforms have facilitated new forms of political activism due to the low cost of enabling mobilisation and participation in protest action. For example, social media was key to the Arab Spring (Karolak, 2018). Disruptive technologies are further making it easier to organise political events at short notice as they allow citizens to receive messages in real time on various platforms. The #FeesMustFall and #BringBackOurGirls campaigns in South Africa and Nigeria are prime examples of such digital activism (Mutsvairo & Karam, 2018).

Disruptive technologies are used by MPs to communicate with citizens and have been beneficial in allowing citizens to express their views. Many MPs have continuously utilised social media platforms to communicate and disseminate their party policies, positions on key socio-economic and governance issues; to discuss and solicit the voice of people on key and current issues; and to mobilise support and membership for the parties (Arthur, 2020). Indeed, according to Dzisah (2018), social networking sites (Facebook), cross-platform messaging and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), WhatsApp, and microblogging services (Twitter) are among the most popular social media platforms and have notable benefits in enhancing political participation.

Digital cameras combined with sites such as YouTube create new possibilities for exposing and challenging abuses of power (Diamond, 2010, p. 76). Ordinary citizens now have the possibility to record and share events and incidents and this has enabled citizens to tell their version of events to wider audiences thereby inflecting political discourse and shaping perceptions and attitudes. Arthur (2020) further argues that disruptive technologies are significant in their potential to boost public trust in the legislature and political systems as they serve as effective oversight tools and for enhancing citizens engagement with government (Mehr, 2017; Androutsopouloua & Charalabidis, 2018).

While the digitisation and increased use of disruptive technologies have presented advantages to participation in governance processes as shown above, their limitations also need to be stated (Arthur, 2020). Serious concerns have been raised over the proliferation of 'fake news' and breaches of personal privacy, as was the case when Cambridge Analytica harvested the Facebook profiles and personal data of millions of people without their consent and used it for political advertising. According to Hammond (2018), the past decade has witnessed disruptive digital technologies putting pressure on incumbent governments and reshaping democracy in fundamental, sometimes detrimental, ways. Central to this has been the expansion of social networks, and the way in which they have created a new space of political participation and opinion-formation (Hammond, 2018). To this end, the new media has produced a crisis of authority which engulfs journalism, academia, and politics, resulting in many people no trusting the information that they are provided with.

Further, as Arthur (2020) and (Omidyar, 2018) point out, social media tends to create small, deeply polarised groups of individuals who tend to believe everything they hear, irrespective of the reliability of the source and thereby helping to advance the cause of those who are bent on creating and sustaining a divided and polarised society. Thus, rather than creating a horizontal forum for communication, social media has in fact amplified certain voices who act as a key point of identification for the diffuse networked crowd. Trolls and bots disguised as citizens are manipulating information and fomenting polarisation and creating distrust and confusion in the political and democratic landscape of many countries.

Some innovations such as biometric voter registration and identification machines, electronic results transmission, database management systems, and digital networks have enhanced the quality of polls in African countries and reduced electoral disputes (Iwuoha, 2018). However, concerns have been raised on malfunctioning of biometric identification machines or hacking of electoral transmission machines which could facilitate the rigging of the electoral process and outcomes. For instance, during Ghana's 2016 presidential elections, the Electoral Commission directed its staff to stop electronically transmitting the electoral results to the tallying centres out of fear that the system had been hacked. Similarly, Kenya's 2017 presidential election was annulled by the country's Supreme Court after allegations of hacking and other extensive irregularities in the electronic transmission of votes (Arthur, 2020).

More recently, in February 2020, Malawi's constitutional court annulled last year's disputed presidential election results, citing 'widespread' irregularities and ordered a new vote. Such attempts to intervene in elections through sophisticated hacking operations and the spread of disinformation – real or perceived – threaten parliaments and the essence of democracy which relies on an informed electorate to reach reasonable decisions on public policy.

Increased digitisation has seen the rise of citizen journalism where citizens use mobile phones and social media to produce content for mainstream media and this has given citizens 'voice' by allowing them to transmit their views rationally and become represented in mainstream channels, bypass mainstream norms and practices, and actively enter political life on their own terms. This has contributed to citizens using various channels to hold governments accountable for development outcomes. Technology has undoubtedly created seismic shifts in how people communicate and engage on social, economic, and political fronts. The extent to which African governments and parliaments recognise the need to adapt to changing conditions and deploy technologies within public institutions to improve institutional performance is explored further in the sub-section below.

Exploring the intersection of technology, evidence systems and parliamentary decision-making

As the broader society contends with the disruptive effects of technology and 4IR, it is important to understand how Africans parliaments have responded and this can be done by exploring the intersection between technology, parliamentary evidence systems and parliamentary decision-making. The discussion below draws from CLEAR-AA's work with parliaments over the past five years and is largely influenced by the experiences of parliamentarians and staff in Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Zambia, Rwanda, Tanzania, South Africa, Malawi, the East African Legislative Assembly and the ECOWAS parliament. Parliamentary evidence systems are designed to support parliamentary decision-making and these systems rely on technologies for efficiency gains. However, a critical consideration for parliaments is that technological advancements should be meaningfully deployed to facilitate effective parliamentary decision-making. An additional consideration is the use of ethical and value-driven strategies to limit the effects of technological advancements and checking the excesses of political contestation that translate into unethical results (Blaser Mapitsa et al., 2020).

Defining the context of complex problems

Scholars and practitioners have typically analysed the problems faced by governments and by society at large in a pattern that established cause and effect from a single perspective by first applying bureaucratic and managerial approaches that draw on rational/technical measures and dimensions typically ascribed to economic and political considerations, and often only draw on aspects of social and cultural discourse as an afterthought (Head, 2008). While these approaches may have had some successes (although evidence overwhelmingly indicates otherwise) in addressing some problems, they are certainly unsuitable in dealing with contemporary complex problems that are not restricted to certain geographies and terrains. Nor are they limited to particular marginalised social classes and excluded groups where causes are myriad, and effects are indiscriminate and catastrophic. Problems such as climate change and its consequences on the environment and on weather patterns, for example, bushfires causing cities to shut down have led to crises in developed Covid-19 pandemic that caused unprecedented disruptions across society with entire countries and major cities across the world under lockdown. This section focuses on the Covid-19 pandemic as a case for analysis of the parliamentary response, the use of technology and implications of parliaments' evidence systems in Africa.

Global trends resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic is a prime example of how a public health problem can transform into and present as economic and governance problems. The governance problem (as opposed to the public health or economic problems per se) is that parliaments are governance structures based on the geographic and national sovereignty of the national state. The pandemic's impacts, however, are largely driven by global factors requiring global responses including the international movement of people spreading the virus; cessation of local economic activity due to lockdowns disrupting global supply chains and trade flows; the need for coordination of global public health, financing, and economic recovery. All these impacts are subject to substantial variations in access and quality of health care across countries, differential access to personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators and expertise, and vulnerabilities due to poverty and inequality.

Cumulatively this means that while the probability of infection is random and 'equal opportunity', the probability of recovery is heavily dependent not only on epidemiological factors such as age (elderly more vulnerable), gender (women have better survival rates, children don't seem to get infected at a much lower rate), but also on personal income levels to finance the necessary health care, and the overall ability of inundated public health services to cope with the onslaught. The least skilled (and by extension poorest) people are least likely to have an occupation and the internet facilities to work from home This highlights the digital divide and exacerbates the unequal burden borne by different segments of the population.

Against this backdrop, the responses of African parliaments have been varied and few were prepared to deal with this level of disruption. This was not a unique situation in the early days of the pandemic as most governments across the globe had a chaotic response. However, evidence shows that compared to elsewhere in the world, African countries imposed some of the most stringent government responses, shutting down schools, banning gatherings, closing public transportation, and instituting work from home measures, among others (Hale, Petherick, Phillips & Webster, 2020). The responses of some African parliaments to the Covid-19 pandemic are elaborated upon below as they juxtapose against their mandates of oversight, legislation, and representation, intersecting with use of technology that has raised important questions as to which of the three mandates emphasised the use of 4IR during parliamentary work.

In recent times, the outbreaks of Ebola stands out vividly as an epidemic that affected several African countries. The outbreaks required that the medical and health responses be drawn from local, state, and international resources. These efforts were largely motivated by the United Nations' pronouncement on Ebola as a 'threat to international peace and security'. Between 2014 and 2016 the outbreaks recorded thousands of cases and over 10 000 deaths in West Africa alone (CDC, 2016). Pailey (2017) concludes that local communities, individuals, and the Liberian diaspora supported government and donor community-led medical responses in fighting the epidemic. In the case of Ebola, the executive role in curbing the pandemic overshadowed the role of parliament in the countries affected by the pandemic as has been the experience during the Covid-19 outbreak where the executive is managing the pandemic with limited input from the legislative arm of government (OECD, 2020).

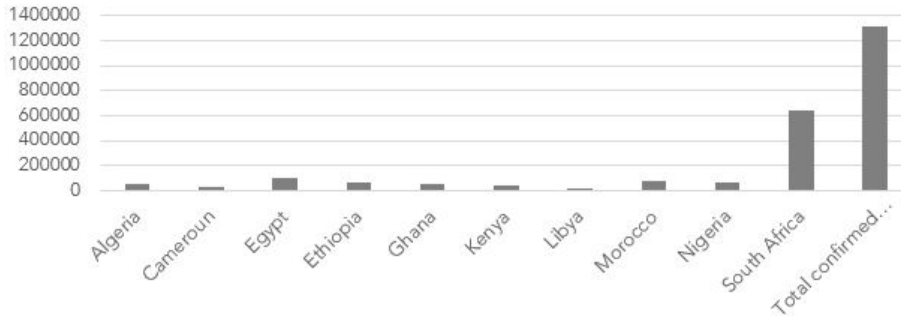


Figure 6.1 Confirmed Covid-19 cases in selected African countries

Source: African Arguments, Coronavirus in Africa tracker confirmed cases as of 8 September 2020

Covid-19 affected the world in unprecedented epic proportions and has caused countries across the world to declare national states of emergency and to institute lockdown measures to curb the Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). International guidelines reiterate the need to integrate gender and human rights considerations in the way parliaments exercise their legislative and oversight roles during the uncertainties taking place during the Covid-19 period (Inter Parliamentary Union, 2020a; 2020b). Initially, African parliaments were forced to shut down the physical execution of their work as were the non-essential sectors. Figure 6.1 above depicts the number of confirmed cases in selected African countries since Covid-19 was first reported in Egypt in February 2020. South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Algeria, and Ghana had the highest number of confirmed cases as of 8 September 2020. The ripple effect of Covid-19 through lockdown measures impeded the African parliaments that were under lockdown from fulfilling the triple mandates of representation, legislation, and oversight. Covid-19 also exposed the fragility of the ecosystems for evidence within which parliamentarians operate. The limited access and use of technological tools by parliamentarians to work remotely are an instance in which this fragility was revealed. This section highlights several issues that arise when parliaments seek to fulfil their triple roles in operating within the complexities that result from Covid-19.

Representation

The opportunity presented by the increasing uptake of mobile technology on the continent could be useful in enhancing citizen engagement for parliaments.

Disseminating information through mobile technology would have been more efficient if there had been previous investment to support virtual communication to offer information for evidence uptake during political campaigns, during citizen engagement, or during parliamentary sessions. This lost opportunity meant that during the Covid-19 pandemic, measures were instead geared more towards adhering to social distancing rules for parliamentary sessions to proceed after lockdown measures were eased. Limits were set in Kenya and Tanzania for the number of MPs that could be physically present in the chambers when parliament was in session and this was coupled with strict hygiene and screening measures in parliaments. Parliaments including those of Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya, Zambia ceased all parliamentary work immediately after lockdown announcements. In addition, civic engagement and educating communities on observing the stringent regulations of Covid-19 lockdown was done remotely through media such as radio and social media platforms. Opposition parties in South Africa's parliament rallied behind the government through social and visual media platforms to encourage citizens to follow the lockdown regulations instituted in March 2020. Unfortunately, certain instances show that during political campaigns parliamentarians were seen to interact with citizens in contravention of Covid-19 protocols. This is unfortunate as MPs are expected to adhere to lockdown regulations and to rather make use of social platforms but certain MPs appeared to have disregarded this option.

Instead, the elections in Burundi and Guinea, as well as Malawi's judicial ruling for the 2020 presidential elections proceeded according to internationally accepted protocols on social distancing (Human Rights Watch, 2020; Mulauzi, 2020; Wolters, 2020). Incidences of public political officials not adhering to quarantine regulations and hosting public community gatherings place citizens at risk (Lwanga, 2020). Furthermore, although executive strongarm tactics were reported in the media, silence from parliament on the violence perpetrated on citizens by the police as reported in some of Africa's largest cities during the enforcement of lockdown regulation is disconcerting. Leaving the executive itself to deal with such devastating results of enforcing lockdown measures further erodes citizen trust in parliaments to represent their interests.

Legislation

Legislation is an important aspect of parliamentary work and some of the technological aspects that parliaments adopt to work remotely include holding

virtual sessions for plenary sessions. The adoption of laws by parliament will facilitate the executive's response to Covid-19. The fast-tracked Corona Virus Act of 2020 passed by the UK parliament regulated the co-ordinated response of UK health and related sectors towards the pandemic. A similar accelerated experience in the case in Nigeria where the federal legislature proposed an Infectious Disease Control Bill to replace the archaic 1926 Quarantine Act. However, the alacrity with which this legislation was adopted raises some concerns as it took place in Nigeria's parliamentary ecosystem of evidence which is considered fragile.

The approval of the budget is also an important mandate of parliaments. During the Covid-19 pandemic the executive branch of many African governments adopted extraordinary measures with associated budget implications. In these cases, parliaments were required to approve supplementary budgets and budget amendments to support Covid-19 measures. In April 2020, Kenya's parliament approved a supplementary budget for the reallocation of government spending towards Covid-19 responses such as the provision of water to communities. In June 2020, South Africa's second house, the National Council of Provinces passed the Division of Revenue Bill during a virtual plenary sitting for all spheres of government which included R20 billion allocated to provinces to respond to Covid-19 challenges (Parliament of the Republic of Kenya 2020; Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2020). However, Covid-19 has also revealed contradictions in parliaments' role in approving national budgets. The approval of supplementary budgets can also be exorbitant to citizens in the face of economic recession and restrictions brought about by measures to curb Covid-19. The adoption of Uganda's supplementary budget in early 2020 included a parliamentary budget of USh20 billion for MPs to use in their constituencies to support Covid-19 response by government and this resulted in a public outcry (Parliament of Uganda, 2020; Kazibwe, 2020). Parliaments will need to be innovative and adopt new ways of working because the pandemic has revealed that procedures that are in place to perform budgetary function need to be flexible in accommodating the approval and subsequent oversight of budgets. This will, for instance, require the research offices and PBO to expediently relay condensed user-friendly information (probably by using technology) to MPs on the socio-economic impact that Covid-19 budgets will have on national development priorities and subsequently how this will affect citizens.

Oversight

The oversight role of parliaments calls for MPs to utilise the ecosystems of evidence available to them to hold the executive accountable (Oronje & Zulu, 2018; Sallas-Mensah, 2011). The lockdown measures may have hindered parliamentarians from accessing evidence from parliamentary systems such as researchers and libraries. Nonetheless, the lockdown measures instituted by many countries to curb Covid-19 provided an opportunity for the use of technological tools to enhance MPs' oversight role. The virtual hosting of committee hearings, for example, Kenya's senate committee on citizens' access to universal health care in the context of health legislation, while the Economic Freedom Front, an opposition party in South Africa, used media platforms to call the executive to account for the measures implemented during lockdown (Parliament of Kenya, n.d.; Evans, 2020). Few parliaments in Africa can be said to be adequately resourced to provide support to parliamentarians in fulfilling their triple roles. The same can be said of the continental body, the Pan African Parliament, which is tasked with oversight of Africa's ambitious Agenda 2063 and the rest of the African Union organs. The vulnerability of the fragile ecosystems for evidence in which these parliaments operate will be exposed in the face of Covid-19 and this with further hinder the capacity of parliament to pass laws and hold the executive accountable. This is further exacerbated by the need for enforcement of lockdown regulations through the coercive power of the state during states of emergency (SANDF in SA, for instance). Parliament is needed to act as a check on the executive's application of these coercive powers and uphold human rights, while being under lockdown itself. In an emergency, separation of powers becomes problematic, as does the unequal access to IT infrastructure which translates into unequal access to vital information (e.g. press conferences which are video conferenced through Zoom or MS Teams).

These examples are contrary to the real experiences of citizens who have been forced to become versatile in their use of technology to communicate their disconnect while the fulfilment of parliamentary mandates appears to have made limited use of technological tools therefore raising the question of whether complex problems are compounded by the onslaught of crises such as the global pandemic of Covid-19. In the case of the parliamentary mandates being met, the use of 4IR in parliaments seems to have unfolded in an incremental manner as opposed to the rapid uptake of technology in the rest of society prompted by the pandemic.

What is the way forward?

Technology has changed how governments work in an environment where complex problems such as health pandemics and climate change are a pressing reality for policymakers. On the one hand, technology has presented benefits for parliaments to respond to shocks such as the Covid-19 pandemic, allowing for virtual plenary and committee sessions to be held through video conferencing technologies, for information digitalised by libraries in parliaments to be made evidence accessible to parliamentarians and other users at a touch of a key. However, it also means that the traditional, bureaucratic ways in which parliaments have operated are no longer suited to new conditions such as dispersed, remote working staff and, as such, parliaments must reshape their hierarchical command and control features, exchanging them for more flexible, decentralised and agile modes of working.

Technology is redefining people's ideas of what democracy means and galvanising citizen and public participation in unprecedented ways, shifting from the notion that one person means one vote to the reality that one device equals one voice. Citizens have become more active through use of new media and are deciding directly on more things more often, as shown by the surge of petitions, initiatives, and referendums across the globe. Technology is not only accelerating this trend, but it also is forging more digital interaction between citizens and their representatives. Grassroots movements, civil society and citizens are leveraging the digital age to open new possibilities for greater participation in the democratic process. It is for these reasons that Shaw and Hanson (2019) contend that Africa needs to leverage digital technologies to become a disruptor itself, advancing its own variety of development and democratic governance in which its innovations and related disruptive technologies can facilitate its global role beyond the holding of elections. However, challenges arise with inclusivity in access to ICTs and new media as individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds may not be able to participate in new media engagements due to lack of access. The digital divide in the continent relating to data costs and access to devices to access the internet often excludes groups which are already marginalised and presents a challenge to the important notion of no one being left behind.

Parliaments must adopt more collaborative, inclusive and deliberative organisational channels to engage adequately with the new ways in which

empowered members of the public are interacting with parliaments and the ways in which they are communicating. In doing so, a revised landscape of citizen engagement and awareness will be engendered, one in which ordinary people are able to inform the agenda-setting process by sharing their lived experiences and challenges in real time, while engaging with each other and their parliamentary representatives to devise solutions to identified issues.

Reference List

Abdulrauf, L. (2020). Nigeria's Emergency (Legal) Response to Covid-19: A Worthy Sacrifice for Public Health? *VerfBlog*. Available from https://bit.ly/3ETQOpF (Accessed 6 June 2020).

Alhassan, A.A. (2018). The Role and Use of Social Media in Elections Campaigns and Voting Behavior in Nigeria: An Analysis of 2015 Presidential Election. *International Journal of Recent Innovations in Academic Research*, 2(6):117-129.

Androutsopouloua, A., Karacapilidisb, N., Loukisa, E. & Charalabidisa, Y. (2018). Transforming the communication between citizens and government through AI-guided chatbots (October). *Government Information Quarterly*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2018.10.001

Antonio, C. & Francesco, C. (2012). *Socio technical regimes and e-government deployment: The case of the Italian judiciary*. ECIS 2012 – Proceedings of the 20th European Conference on Information Systems.

Arthur, P. (2020). Democracy, Governance, Technology and National Elections in Africa: Back to the Future? In: P. Arthur, K.T. Hanson & K.P. Puplampu (eds.), *Disruptive Technologies, Innovation and Development in Africa*. London: Palgrave. pp. 17-39.

Bianchi, P. & Labory, S. (2018). The fourth industrial revolution, by klaus schwab. *World Economic Forum*, pp. 49-78.

Blaser Mapitsa, C., Ali, A.J. & Khumalo, L.S. (2020). From evidence to values-based decision-making in African parliaments. *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 20(2):68-85. https://doi.org/10.1177/1035719X20918370

Blundell, R., Costa Dias, M., Joyce, R. & Xu, X. (2020). Covid-19 and Inequalities*. *Fiscal Studies*, 41(2):291-319. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5890.12232

Centers for Disease Control (CDC). (2016). *2014-2016 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa*. https://bit.ly/3G40MFt

Ciuriak, D. & Ptashkina, M. (2019). *Leveraging the Digital Transformation for Development: A Global South Strategy for the Data-driven Economy*. Waterloo, Ontario: The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI). p. 148.

Cordella, A. & Bonina, C.M. (2012). A public value perspective for ICT enabled public sector reforms: A theoretical reflection. *Government Information Quarterly*, 29(4):512-520. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2012.03.004

Diamond, L. (2010). Liberation Technology. *Journal of Democracy*, 21(3):69-83.

Dittmar, J.E. (2011). Information technology and economic change: The impact of the printing press. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 126(3):1133-1172. https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjr035

Dzisah, W. (2018). Social Media and Elections in Ghana: Enhancing Democratic Participation. *African Journalism Studies*, 39(1):27-47.

Evan, J. (2020). *Covid-19: EFF calls for Ramaphosa Q&A at special Parliament in Tshwane*. 16 May. https://bit.ly/3lW6LUG

Hale, T., Webster, S., Petherick, A., Phillips, T. & B. K. (2020). *Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker.*

Hammond, G. (2018). Digital democracy: threat or an opportunity? 29 September. Available from https://bit.ly/2Z6iY00 (Accessed May 10, 2020).

Hanson, K.T. (2020). Automation of Knowledge Work and Africa's Transformation Agenda: Threats, Opportunities and Possibilities. In: P. Arthur, K.T. Hanson & K.P. Puplampu (eds.), *Disruptive Technologies, Innovation and Development in Africa*. London: Palgrave. pp. 273-295.

Hanson, K.T. & Puplampu, K.P. (2018). The internet of things and the sharing economy: Harnessing the possibilities for Africa's sustainable development goals. In: K.T. Hanson, K.P. Puplampu & T.M. Shaw (eds.), *From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals: Rethinking African Development*. New York: Routledge pp. 133-151.

Head, B. (2008). Wicked Problems in Public Policy. *Public Policy*, 3(2):101.

Human Rights Watch. (2020). *Malawi: Ensure Free, Fair, Safe Elections: Safeguard Citizens Against Violence During Presidential Rerun Vote*. Available from https://bit.ly/3vuh1GR

Inter Parliamentary Union. (2020a). *Gender and Covid-19: A guidance note for parliaments*. Available from https://bit.ly/3nefSzs (Accessed 31 May 2020).

Inter Parliamentary Union. (2020b). *Human rights and Covid-19: A guidance note for parliaments*. Available from https://bit.ly/3vvNEUF(Accessed 31 May 2020).

Iwuoha, V. C.(2018) ICT and Elections in Nigeria: Rural Dynamics of Biometric Voting Technology Adoption. *Africa Spectrum*, 53(3):89-113.

Kazibwe, K. (2020). *MPs have already pockets the shs 10 bn covid money – Parliament*. Available from https://bit.ly/3aX7wXg (Accessed 31 May 2020).

Lwanga, C. (2020). Kilifi deputy governor in quarantine after Germany trip. *Daily Nation*, 27 March. Available from https://bit.ly/3G0QB4u

Mabweazara, H.M. (2015). Mainstreaming African Digital Cultures, practices and emerging forms of citizen engagement. *African Journalism Studies*, 36(4):1-11. https://doi.org/10.1080/23743670.2015.1119486

Mehr, H. (2017). *Artificial Intelligence for Citizen Services and Government*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard Kennedy School: Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation.

Mulauzi, B. (2020). *Malawi: Campaigning during Covid-19 doesn't have to be like this*. 2 June 2020. Available from https://bit.ly/3ndYbA6

Mutsvairo, B. & Karam, B. (2018). Key Developments in Political Communication in Africa. In: B. Mutsvairo & B. Karam (eds.), *Perspectives on Political Communication in Africa*. Macmillan, Cham: Palgrave. pp. 3-36. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62057-2_1

Naughton, J. (2019). Technology may not create inequality, but it certainly enables it to thrive. *The Guardian*.

OECD. (2020). *The territorial impact of Covid-19 : managing the crisis across levels of government*. April, pp. 2-44. Available from https://bit.ly/3CPPMt0

Omidyar, P. (2018). 6 ways social media has become a direct threat to democracy. *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 35(1):42-45.

Oronje, R.N. & Zulu E. (2018). Contribution of a network of parliamentary committees of health to the ecosystem of evidence use in African parliaments. *Evidence & Policy*, 14(3):523-35.

Parliament of the Republic of Kenya. (2020a). *Guidelines consequent on the declaration of Covid-19 (Corona Virus) as a global health pandemic and the confirmation of a case of corona virus infection in Kenya*. 13 March. Available from https://bit.ly/3lYLYzP

Parliament of the Republic of Kenya. (2020b). *Council of Governors: Covid-19, Retrogressive Health Laws dim light on realization of UHC*. Available from https://bit.ly/3AYIPEB

Parliament of the Republic of Uganda. (2020). MPs issued guidelines on Covid-19 funds. 23 April. Available from https://bit.ly/3aSwDuz

Sallas-Mensah. (2011). Engaging civil society: Ghana's first public PAC hearing. In: R. Stapenhurst, R. Draman, A. Rasheed, A. Hamilton & C. Kroon (eds.), *African Parliamentary Reform*. Oxford: Routledge.

Schlossberg, T. (2011). *The State of Publishing: Literacy Rates*. McSweeney's, San Francisco: The State of Publishing.

Schuler, D. (2020). Can Technology Support Democracy? *Digital Government: Research and Practice (DGOV)*, 1(1):1-14. https://doi.org/10.1145/3352462

Shaw, T. M. & Hanson, K.T. (2019). *Artificial Intelligence & International Relations in Africa: Drivers of sustainable development?* Paper presented at Shanghai Conference, China (April).

Whitelaw, S., Mamas, M.A., Topol, E. & Van Spall, H.G.C. (2020). Applications of digital technology in Covid-19 pandemic planning and response. *The Lancet Digital Health*, 2(8):e435-e440. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2589-7500(20)30142-4

Wolfsfeld, G., Segev, E. & Sheafer, T. (2013). Social Media and the Arab Spring: Politics Comes First. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 18(2):115-137.

Wolters, S. (2020). Burundi: Can newly-elected President Ndayishimiye deliver change? *African Arguments*, June (2)2020. Available from https://bit.ly/3lXen9q

Xu, M., David, J.M. & Kim, S.H. (2018). The fourth industrial revolution: Opportunities and challenges. *International Journal of Financial Research*, 9(2):90-95. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijfr.v9n2p90

7

PARLIAMENTARY EVIDENCE USE IN REPRESENTATION



Abraham Ibn Zackaria, Jacqueline Thomas, Ressida Begg and Caitlin Blaser Mapitsa

Introduction

The core mandate of parliament, as the embodiment of the people, is to represent the people by articulating the views of citizens in decision-making processes, to make laws, undertake oversight of the executive and to hold the executive to account on behalf of the people. Representation, therefore, is a key principle in a parliamentary democracy, and a lever of governance (Bainomugisha & Mushemeza, 2006). For parliaments to perform these roles as representatives of the people effectively and satisfactorily, access to reliable, accurate and valid evidence is vital. In view of this, the legislature requires an array of different types of well-timed, relevant and accurate evidence such as the knowledge of citizens; experts; statistics; and research evidence (Newman, Fisher, & Shaxson, 2012) to meaningfully represent the citizenry and hold the executive to account. For instance, Members of Parliament (MPs) need to know what the issues in their constituencies are; committees need to understand the possible impacts of legislation they are working on; and staff need access to a wide range of evidence in order to advise MPs and committees.

In spite of the importance of evidence-informed policy in the legislature, much of the 'evidence-informed policymaking' literature until now has focused on the executive arm of government (Young, Gropp, Pintar, Waddell, Marshall, Thomas & Rajić, 2014). However, there is an emerging body of literature concentrating on parliaments which adds to the understanding of evidence use in parliaments (Broadbent, 2012; Zantsi, 2020). In exploring evidence use in legislatures, it is essential to recognise that parliaments have a constitutional obligation to represent the interests of the citizens. This understanding justifies the move towards a broader understanding and acceptance of the importance of 'evidence' and 'evidence use' within the legislative sector. The importance of evidence in improving the quality of legislation, oversight and representation cannot be overemphasised. Information and evidence have been referred to as "the lifeblood of parliaments that sustain democracy across the world" (Cunningham, 2009 cited in INASP, 2017, p. 17).

The call for improved evidence use in policymaking is premised on the grounds that, in order to obtain desired policy outcome of the transformation of lives of citizens, MPs and legislatures have to use primary evidence when developing, assessing, passing legislation and holding governments responsible. However, in many emerging democracies, particularly in Africa, the executive dominates the policymaking landscape, and this is a key factor which influences and

shapes evidence use within parliaments. Additionally, the challenge facing parliaments in Africa in performing their representational roles is the effective use of evidence in performing their constitutional mandates to achieve the desired policy outcome. Some of these challenges include weak organisational and human resource capacity for the production and organisation of evidence, varying levels of leadership commitment to the use of evidence in legislation, limited information technology and library services available to MPs, limited links with the national research sector, and the fast-paced political nature of the legislature and the associated challenges this poses for providing robust evidence in very short timeframes (Agora-parl.org).

This chapter unpacks the concept of representation and looks at the historical roots of some of the challenges African MPs face in executing the representation function, as well as how African governments are using evidence to shift the dynamics that have historically limited the avenues for MPs to play genuinely representative roles in the governance process. Finally, the chapter looks at characteristics of evidence use in processes of representation. It concludes with both promising aspects as well as reasons for caution about the ways in which the representation function may evolve.

Typologies of parliaments and representation

In many emerging democracies, particularly in Africa, the executive dominates the policymaking landscape, and this is a key factor influencing and shaping evidence use within parliaments. The strength of parliament can be related to its capacity to gather and use information and evidence. Parliaments' typologies shape the emerging trends in evidence use by MPs in many African parliaments resulting in 'patchy' evidence use (UNDP Global Parliamentary Report, 2012: p. 7) their role remains the same: to represent the people and ensure that public policy is informed by the citizens on whose lives they impact. Effective parliaments shape policies and laws which respond to the needs of citizens, and support sustainable and equitable development. For parliaments to be truly representative, elections must be free and fair. Citizens must have access to information about parliamentary proceedings, legislation, and policy, and be able to engage in continual dialogue with parliamentarians. The United Nations Development Programme.

The framework of Nelson Polsby (Greenstein & Polsby, 1975 cited in Miko & Robinson,1994) outlines a typology of parliaments as described by Rabie and Ajam in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.11) which links legislatures' evidence requirements to the type of parliament moving from rubber-stamp to transformative parliaments. They argue that the preferred levels of parliamentary functioning have a significant bearing on evidence use in parliaments. This macro factor consequently impacts on the performance of parliaments in terms of their representation roles, for example, rubber-stamp parliaments are less likely to have an enabling environment to nurture citizen representation in the work of parliaments. Parliamentary structures in rubber-stamp parliaments tend to reflect a 'closed space' by nature of their physical structure which is marked by citizens being restricted from accessing parliaments and therefore creating a visible distance between MPs and citizens. On the other hand, transformative parliaments typically have enabling structures in the form of more open parliaments that encourage citizen representation and interactions between MPs and citizens.

WEAK EVIDENCE STRONG

The rubber stamp legislature	The emerging legislature	The informed legistlature	The tranformative legislature
◗ has very little need for information other than the time and place to vote. ◗ essentially meet to endorse the ruling party programe of work. ◗ independent research and analysis have very little value to MPs and committees.	◗ Generally, have libraries with some reference materials; a research service; and parliamentary committee staff. ◗ a minimal demand for and use of information by MPs and committees.	◗ with library and research service providing reference services, produces reports, offers a clipping service distributed to all members and may track the progress of key legislation. ◗ the parliamentary information service provides a full array of services. ◗ is distinguished from the next level only by the scale of resources and the fact that it stops short of providing substantial research and analysis services that identify policy options and their impacts. ◗ an increased level of demand and use of information by MPs and committees.	◗ has substantial resources requirements and typically has a generous allocation of personal staff, strong and well-staffed committees and large research groups ◗ capable and developing policy options. ◗ MPs and committees are 'hungry' for and use information in all aspects of their work.

Figure 7.1 Authors Adaptation of A Typology of parliaments based on Nelson Polsby

Source Greenstein & Polsby, 1975 cited in INASP, 2017:25)

Concept of representation

Representation is a key principle in representative democracies, and its roots can be traced to classical political theory. In his book The Social Contract, or Principles of Political Rights (1762), Jean-Jacques Rousseau theorised that any perfect society should be controlled by the 'general will' of its populace (Rousseau, 1762). However, with the growth of population and increasing complexity of human society and its attendant needs, it became apparent that it is virtually impracticable. if not impossible. for all the members of any given human society or nation to vote and debate individually on all issues, great or small, affecting the lives of people in that society. This limitation gave birth to the representative body known as parliament, where the people's representatives converge at a particular place and time to deliberate and debate national issues on behalf of the people. This type of democracy is called a representative democracy.

A representative democracy has four main characteristics: the sovereignty of the people expressed in the electoral appointment of the representatives; representation as a free mandate relation; electoral mechanisms to ensure some measure of responsiveness to the people by representatives who speak and act in their name; and the universal franchise that grounds representation on an important element of political equality (Urbinati, 2011). These characteristics of representative democracy are realised through the creation of democratic institutions such as parliaments. The existence of parliaments as democratic institutions is essential for the responsiveness of the rulers to the preferences and/or interests of the citizens (Dahl, 2008). Consequently, Dahl emphasises a participative process and giving citizens a more active role to elect their parliamentary representatives thereby ensuring their subsequent representation in parliaments.

This practice of parliamentary representation lies in the assumption that all citizens cannot participate in the public debate and decision-making at all levels. Therefore, the legislature, in a representative democracy, is projected as a society in a macrocosm (Prasad & Dayadhar, 1978), the outcome of whose work must reflect the interest and needs of most members of the society. However, the function of the individual legislator as a representative of their constituents has been seen from diverse perspectives. While some see the individual representative as a delegate, others view them as a trustee. Others still believe that the individual representative is a politico, with a role that combines both delegate and trustee perspectives.

As a trustee, the primary role of the representative is a reflective one where the representative is seen as an agent of the people to reflect the values and opinions of the people who elected them (Arnesen & Peters, 2018). The legislator is seen as a free agent elected by the people to follow their convictions while doing their work. As a delegate, the legislator should act only on the instruction of his or her constituents. The representative acts as the voice of those who are not present. The perception is that legislators are agents of their constituency and who act according to the instructions of their constituencies as to what to do and what not to.

It is generally recognised by political theorists that, in practice, it is rare to find a system in which representatives act solely as delegates with a mandate from their constituents or as trustees who decide issues based upon their judgment and in the best interest of the nation (Russell, 2012). In practice, a combination of these two perspectives are pursued by elected officials. The politico model, therefore, emerged as a hybrid of delegate and trustee models of representation to formulate a theory that mirrors how representatives act in government (Schwartz, 1988). Representatives who do not subscribe strictly to either the delegate or the trustee view of representation are considered politicos, whose representational acts depend upon the circumstances of the decision-making process – context matters. This model is also associated with career politicians who act in any way that will help them get re-elected.

Finally, it is helpful to locate representation in the broader context of democratic governance, which includes the protection of rights, checks and balances within government, as well as other avenues for participation. While a representative government is one pillar of democratic governance, it is not sufficient to guarantee good governance on its own. Further, as the Figure 7.1 illustrates, how parliament engages with other key democratic institutions such as the media, CSOs and government entities are important considerations to strengthening a country's democratic governance. The interconnections between a representative government, the participatory engagement of citizens, fundamental rights, and checks and balances on the executive, are important to ensuring democratic governance. Moreover, parliaments, in their roles of representing citizens in governance processes, play critical roles and are critical tenets of democracy.

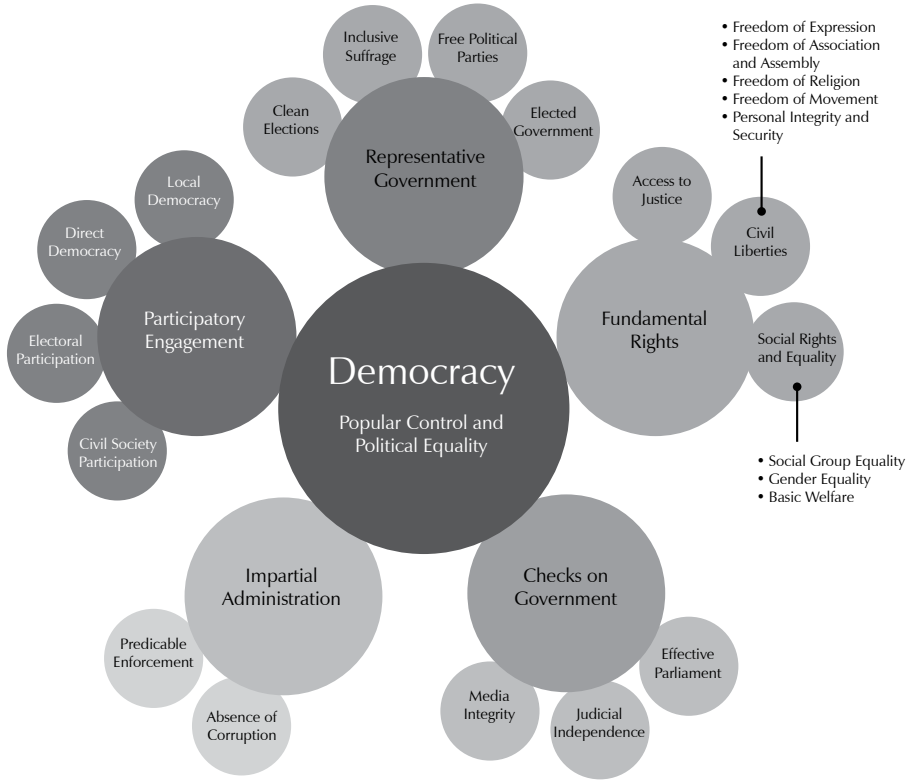


Figure 7.2 Global state of democracy conceptual framework

Source: International IDEA, 2019

Current trends in the representation role

The introduction of democratic governance in Africa during the 1990s saw many African countries shift to democratically elected governments based on a multiparty democratic system. Such emergent democracies witnessed parliaments beginning to exercise novel constitutional roles and functions. These roles facilitated legislatures' growth and development as independent institutions responsible for exercising more oversight and scrutiny over their governments. Since independence across Africa, parliaments exercise greater powers than ever before (World Bank, 2003). However, African states must still grapple with deeply entrenched power relationships of patronage and clientelism which stand in the way of a robust and effective representative role for elected representatives. It is also important to contend with the influence of forms of governance that reflect traditional and cultural ways of mediating the relationship between those being governed and those responsible for

governing. This has meant that paths of liberal democratisation have varied across the continent with countries adopting various ways of embedding traditional governance forms within their political systems. The relevance of the adoption of traditional forms of governance resides in how it then influences parliamentarians to understand and pursue their representative roles. Botswana, for instance, and its success in blending the Westminster Parliamentary model with the traditional institution of Bogosi (chieftainship), enabled the country to embed and extend traditional governance into legislative and administrative institutions (Molomo, 2004). From a parliamentary perspective, this has meant the constituency dimension becomes the heart of the representative function, thus making responsiveness and educating the electorate (and by implication building citizenship) an explicit feature of the parliamentary function.

The Global Parliamentary Report of 2012 indicates that "the existence of a parliament is not synonymous with democracy, but democracy cannot exist without a parliament" (Power, 2012, p. 4). Evidence from countries around the world suggests that politicians are not principally held to account for their legislative scrutiny or oversight of the executive but rather for the tangible benefits that they can deliver to voters. The challenge facing African parliaments in performing their representational roles is one of continual evolution in terms of the increasing and changing expectations of the citizens they represent. Voter expectations are high and appear to be increasing. This evolution appears to manifest itself in the manner that the public expects its representatives to deliver services different from their constitutionally mandated services. However, while MPs play an important role in appropriations and oversight, MPs cannot themselves provide services and the executive capacity to deliver services remains unequal across the continent but is often particularly lacking in underserved, rural areas most in need of these services.

In practice, particularly in the case of failures of service delivery by the state, MPs are held individually accountable for the personal financial needs of the individual constituent, such as the payment of school fees, funeral assistance, and payment of health bills (Lindberg, 2009). These expectations are reflected in the increased public expectations of what parliament can shoulder, and in the weakening of the representational role of parliament in many societies. The capacity of the MP to respond to such issues is being challenged by the volume and diversity of cases and the level of (often financial) support that citizens request. However, a failure to take on these matters as part of the role

as elected representative often means that a constituency will not return an individual to office, with the more ideological or principle-based electoral platforms failing to resonate in communities where basic needs are not met.

This creates a strong tension in the way an individual MP experiences their representative role, as well as the ways in which MPs use evidence both coming from their constituents and feeding back into their communities. While in the capital fulfilling the important roles of lawmaking, oversight, and appropriations, the MP has a 'macro' view of the needs of the communities they represent, seeing how, for example, shifts in agricultural policies or infrastructure development priorities will alter the socio-economic dynamics in the community. They often draw on available evidence to report back to their constituencies on the implications these changes will have on the people they are mandated to represent.

When MPs engage with constituents on the ground, policy discussions tend to become distant and concerns are chiefly about how basic needs will be addressed. This both stems from and contributes to a situation where the expectation of political favours in exchange for votes is transactional and is deeply entrenched. What this often reflects, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, is a lack of other, legitimate pathways for citizens to engage with processes of governance effectively in a way that can meaningfully shape policy or development outcomes. Furthermore, MPs are often seen as having a mandate to bring their constituents evidence to the national decision-making landscape, whether this is through discussions of prioritisation, allocation of resources, or simply by expressing the hopes and aspirations of the citizenry. This evidence, however, often takes the form of anecdotal needs and specific community needs. Individual MPs must then grapple with the gap between evidence supply and demand in the policy space. While some countries are seeing initiatives to scale citizen data in a way that can influence national policy-making processes, these efforts are not yet widespread, making engaging with citizen data challenging.

The IPU and UNDP in the 2012 Global Parliamentary Report, focused on the evolving relationship between citizens and parliaments and highlighted the main characteristics of this relationship, which are the changing expectations of citizens from parliament and individual parliamentarians and how parliaments are responding to these changing expectations (IPU and UNDP, 2012).

Clientelism, patronage and other challenges to representation

Data from the African Legislature Project (ALP) and Afrobarometer survey (2017)[1] conducted across 17 randomly chosen African countries (Barkan & Mattes, 2014) suggest that the public expects MPs to listen to their constituents and provide constituency services as the first step in understanding and being responsive to their needs, as well as to deliver benefits informed by such primary evidence (Barkan & Mattes, 2014). However, they argue in countries with constituency development funds (CDFs), "MPs have correctly gauged the extent of popular demand for a 'localist' MP style, or an African form of 'home style'". At the same time, this is precisely where MPs get it wrong and interpret these localist orientations as demand for the delivery of goods and favours to the district, and miss the fact that what citizens want is for their elected representatives to listen to their concerns and facilitate a suitable government response (Barkan & Mattes, 2014).

Amartya Sen's often quoted conclusion, that no modern democracy has undergone a famine, proposes that democracies cannot insulate themselves from suffering. Therefore, if MPs, as elected representatives, wish to continue to hold office, they should attend to and be able to respond to the concerns of constituencies (Sen, 2003). "Recognising both the political nature of decisions and the value of the evidence to inform policy decisions (e.g. to ensure the efficacy and effectiveness and value for money of competing policy options) requires a more nuanced account of evidence which appreciates the role evidence can and cannot play in the identification and resolution of policy issues" (Parkhurst et al., 2017).

This new form of representational function, often described in the literature as 'clientelist', is widespread in Africa and is likely to remain a significant feature of politics in low-income countries (Van de Walle, 2009). In this new form, legislators in Africa are seen employing such practices as attending to individuals' school fees, electricity and water bills, funeral and wedding expenses; or distributing cutlasses and other tools for agriculture, or even handing out `chop-money' (small cash sums) to constituents (Lindberg, 2000), all in the name of performing their representational roles.

[1] Available from https://bit.ly/3CToNNa

A study in Uganda by the Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI, 2008) demonstrates that what the public expects from their representatives appears to be at variance with the roles they are supposed to play as indicated in the Constitution. Ugandan voters at the grassroots will, for instance, always re-elect an MP who attends fundraisings, burials of their deceased, pays school fees for their children, and solves any other personal, as opposed to community, problems. Whether the MP attends and represents them well in parliament is beside the point (ALI, 2008).

In Malawi, the Afrobarometer survey (2006) conducted by the Institute for Economic and Social Research, found that Malawians expect their MPs to be responsive, visit their constituencies frequently, and deliver development benefits (IFESOR, 2006). An interview-based study carried out in 2008 by Lindberg shows that MPs in Ghana are held accountable by diverse political actors in the Ghanaian society for a variety of purposes (Lindberg & Zhou, 2009).

Citizens in constituencies hold MPs accountable for personal assistance and community development projects. For parliaments to navigate through these complex demands and expectations from constituents and to perform their roles as representatives of the people effectively and satisfactorily, access to reliable, accurate and valid evidence presented in an acceptable manner to parliament and individual members, is of utmost importance.

What is obvious from the discussion thus far is that whether parliaments concentrate on performing their traditional roles of lawmaking, oversight and representation, or focus on performing the new emerging roles of providing constituency services and meeting individual needs, or both, the importance of evidence-informed policy in the legislature cannot be overemphasised.

Parliamentary structures to use evidence for representation

The role of evidence in representation goes two ways. First, citizen evidence plays an important role in how MPs engage with lawmaking and oversight, bringing the interests of their constituency into their role. As discussed above, while there may be tensions as to whether these interests are expressed in terms of patronage or policy pressure, citizens are increasingly finding direct routes (for example, through social media) to collate and communicate their interests. While citizen evidence is discussed further in Chapter 8, two notes

from practice after this chapter will look at the example of how constituency offices in Zambia and South Africa can work to strengthen the representative roles of MPs and what challenges still stand in the way.

In addition to bringing evidence from citizens and fulfilling their role as representatives, parliamentarians must also find ways of bringing evidence about legislative and executive processes back to their constituencies. On one hand, constituencies are most often concerned about direct service delivery issues. Where there is limited state capacity to deliver certain services, MPs have an incentive to collate information about efforts made within the executive, challenges they face, and how much progress has been made around the provision of certain services needed. In addition, however, many MPs are champions in trying to shift the established clientelistic relationship, and one way is by communicating to constituency groups that the oversight and legislative roles that they play affect the people they represent and the developmental aspirations of their constituency.

This process can be a challenge because it requires taking evidence that is often not designed exclusively for policy decision-making and determining how to contextualise it locally. While many parliamentary researchers build skills and experience in this process due to demand from MPs, the limited availability of locally relevant, useful data on development in many localities across the continent means that the process of translating national processes and decisions into localised development outcomes involves a significant skills, time, and capacity on the part of the parliamentary researchers. A degree of conjecture is also involved, given the variability in available data.

Promises for representation

Despite the tremendous challenges to effective governance that are reflected in the representational dilemmas faced by MPs, as well as the limitations in the ways in which the electorate's aspirations are reflected in the outcomes of elections, there are also a number of promising signs of representation across the African continent.

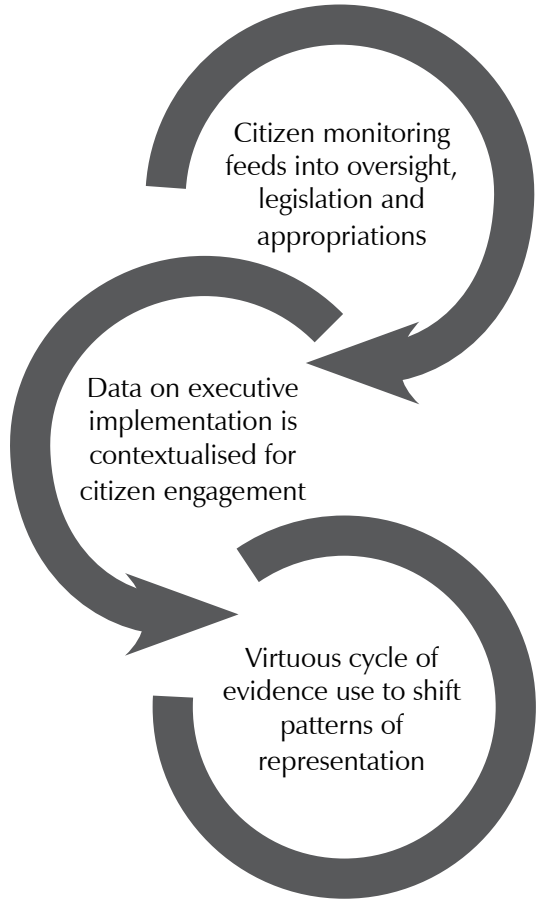


Figure 7.3 How evidence use can strengthen the representative role of parliamentarians

Source: *Authors*

One such promising sign is the increased awareness and realisation of the value of evidence use by MPs, particularly the new mechanisms that parliaments are utilising and developing to improve representation via the parliamentary oversight processes. This systematisation of evidence and, in particular, evidence for oversight, serves to undermine some of the clientelistic tendencies of representative institutions by incorporating checks and balances for evidence-informed decision-making. This is further bolstered by trends towards transparency which equips citizens with a stronger information base around whether elected representatives are acting in the interests of the people they serve.

A second promising sign is a strong focus on state capacity in parliamentary discourse. Governance across Africa cannot be understood without also acknowledging the ways in which the region's colonial history undermined economic development and left a legacy of systems that excluded citizens from decision-making processes. As a result, many political considerations were deferred as African leaders struggled with how to meet the basic needs citizens. Parliaments are often at the nexus of processes to build a capable state while simultaneously seeking to build space for participation and inclusion in decision-making. While the track records of African states are obviously varied and diverse, an increasing number of countries are investing in education and critical social services thereby capacitating people to rise above poverty, in part through effective public sector policy implementation.

Finally, African governments are now more than ever able to integrate innovations in governance that may not have been available either to previous generations, or to countries facing different developmental challenges, particularly in the arena of data use for representation. Uniquely equipped with the youngest electorate in the world, the region is poised for a promising technological evolution, more so in this region than in many others in the world. Organisations like Mzalendo, which uses technology to link constituents to their representatives in Kenya, are increasingly creating space for citizen-generated data to play a role in the way representatives relate to their electorate. This is a clear example of evidence systems themselves shaping the representative role of parliamentarians. As MPs begin to respond to this changing context, the linkages between a representative government and other forms of participatory engagement, and a capable state, are likely to strengthen.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed evidence use in the representational roles of parliamentarians. A snapshot was provided of how this is located in complex social, political and technological shifts and changes which fundamentally affect the way that evidence is gathered and used. The authors have sought to make the case for greater evidence and information use in strengthening the sector by demonstrating the links between evidence and parliaments' representational roles, and have also tried to show that a nuanced understanding of African parliaments is required. The exploration of the issues is by no means exhaustive and it is hoped that others will continue to explore and add to the emergent observations.

A broad view has been taken of evidence use and the multiple factors that shape how evidence is gathered and used. Some of the major contextual factors have been identified as they relate to shaping evidence for parliamentarians to represent their electorate, particularly the influence of the executive, the electoral system, and the growth of and need for evidence use. Also highlighted are a number of key institutional factors shaping evidence use within parliaments, some of which are practical while others are more behavioural. These include the information support system, institutional culture around evidence use, support from members, and the processes and systems which structure evidence needs and the gathering and synthesis of evidence to meet those needs.

The practice notes that follow present practical understanding of constituency offices as approaches to enhance parliamentary representation. For example, this could be by ensuring that constituents can openly deliberate on their development-related concerns, and also that their needs are heard and that MPs voice these needs in parliamentary sittings or committee deliberations to ensure inclusive policymaking. Practices from the parliaments of Zambia and South Africa are examined.

Reference list

Arnesen, S. & Peters, Y. (2018). The legitimacy of representation: How descriptive, formal, and responsiveness representation affect the acceptability of political decisions. *Comparative Political Studies*, 51(7):868-899. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414017720702

Bainomugisha, A. & Mushemeza, E.D. (2006). *Monitoring Legislative Representation: Environmental Issues in the 7th Parliament of Uganda*. ACODE Policy Research Series (19).

Banégas, R. (2006). Côte d'Ivoire: patriotism, ethnonationalism and other African modes of self-writing. *African Affairs*, 105(421):535-552. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adl035

Bardach, E. & Patashnik, E.M. (2019). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving*. California: SAGE.

Barkan, J.D. & Mattes, R. (2014). *Why CDFs in Africa? Representation vs. constituency service*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

Berenschot, W. (2018). The Political Economy of Clientelism: A Comparative Study of Indonesia's Patronage Democracy. *Ward Berenschot1*, 51(12):1563-1593. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414018758756

Bowen, S. & Zwi, A.B. (2005). Pathways to "evidence-informed" policy and practice: a framework for action. *PLoS medicine*, 2(7):e166. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.0020166

Connor, W. (2018). *Ethnonationalism*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv39x5s6

Cranenburge, O.V. (2009). Restraining executive power in Africa: horizontal accountability in Africa's hybrid regimes. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, pp. 48-69. https://doi.org/10.1080/10220460902986230

Dahl, R.A. (2008). *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

DPME. (2014). *What is Evidence-Based Policy-Making and Implementation? Evidence-Based Policy-Making and Implementation (Overview Paper)*. Pretoria: DPME.

Draman, R., Titriku, A., Lampo,I., Heyter,E. & Holden, K. (2017). *Evidence in African Parliaments*. Oxford: INASP.

Eulau, H., Wahlke, J.C., buchana, W & ferguson, L.C. (1959). The Role of the Representative: Some Empirical Observations on the Theory of Edmund Burke. *American Political Science Review*. https://doi.org/10.2307/1951941

Hopkin, J. (2006). Conceptualizing Political Clientelism: Political Exchange and Democratic Theory. *Researchgate*.

IPU and UNDP. (2012). *Global Parliamentary Report: The Changing Nature of Parliamentary Representation*. Denmark: UNDP and IPU.

Kirigia, J.M., Pannenborg, C.O., Amore, L.G.C., Ghannem, H., IJsselmuiden, C. & Nabyonga-Orem, J. (2016). Global Forum 2015 dialogue on "From evidence to policy-thinking outside the box": perspectives to improve evidence uptake and good practices in the African Region. *BMC health services research*, 16(4):305-314. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-016-1453-z

Kuo, D. (2018). Clientelism as a Governing Strategy in the United States. In: *Clientelism, and Democracy: The Rise of Programmatic politics in the United States and Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 43-62.

Lindberg, S.I. & Zhou, Y. (2009). *Co-optation despite democratization in Ghana*. London: Lynne Reinner Publishers. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1744037

Molomo, M. (2004). The Need for Electoral Reform in Botswana. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 4(2):55-77. https://doi.org/10.4314/ajcr.v4i2.39378

NDRI. (2010). *Political Clientelism, Social Policy, and the Quality of Democracy: Evidence from Latin America, Lessons from Other Regions*. Quito: NDRI.

Newman, K., Fisher, C. & Shaxson, L. (2012). Stimulating Demand for Research Evidence: What Role for Capacity-building? *IDS Bulletin*, 43(5):17-24. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2012.00358.x

OECD. (2017). Governing better through evidence-informed policy making. evidence for governements. OECD. pp. 1-17.

Paget, D. (2019). Election campaigns and political mobilization in Africa. In: *Oxford research encyclopedia of politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.876

Parkhurst, J. (2017). *The Politics of Evidence: From Evidence-based policy to the good governance of evidence*. Oxen: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315675008

Prasad, R.C. & Dayadhar, J.H.R. (1978). The Representative Role o Legislators. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, pp. 99-120.

Robles-Egea, A. & Aceituno-Montes, J.M. (2011). An Impossible Democracy: Political Clientelism and Corruption in Andalusia. In: At the ECPR General Conference, Reykjavik. pp. 24-27.

Shaxson, L., Datta, A., Tshangela, M. & Matomela, B. (2016). *Understanding the organisational context for evidence-informed policy-making*. Pretoria: Department of Environmental Affairs. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Stiftung, H.B. (2012). *Do Parliaments Matter? African Legislatures and the Advance of Democracy*. Berlin: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung.

Stokes, S.C. (2011). Political Clientelism. In: R.E. Goodin (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199604456.013.0031

Sutcliffe, S. & Court. (2005). *Evidence-Based Policymaking: What is it? How does it work? What relevance for developing countries?* London: Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

Urbinati, N. (2011). Representative democracy and its critics. *The future of representative democracy*, pp. 23-49. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511770883.002

Young, I., Gropp, K., Pintar, K., Waddell, L., Marshall, B., Thomas, K. & Rajić, A. (2014). Experiences and Attitudes Towards Evidence-Informed Policy-Making Among Research and Policy Stakeholders in the C anadian Agri-Food Public Health Sector. *Zoonoses and public health*, 61(8):581-589. https://doi.org/10.1111/zph.12108

7.1

NOTES FROM PRACTICE: REPRESENTATION THROUGH CONSTITUENCY OFFICES IN THE PARLIAMENT OF ZAMBIA

Japheth Chanda

Strategic Objective 4 of the National Assembly of Zambia Strategic Plan 2015-2019 relates to enhancing the representative function of parliament. Citizen engagement and public participation are key to realise this objective. To this end, the National Assembly has established constituency offices in all the 156 constituencies across the country. The move to set up constituency offices formed part of the parliamentary reforms and political change that swept the country in the late eighties and early nineties. With the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1991, and as a way of enhancing democratic governance, the National Assembly of Zambia found it prudent to realign the functions of parliament with the demands of plural politics. This called for the introduction of parliamentary reforms with a view to addressing some of the limitations that existed in the institution. The establishment of constituency offices was one of the key recommendations in the area of member/constituent relations aimed at promoting citizen engagement and participation in legislative processes. This vignette will highlight the work of the constituency offices as an illustration of citizens' engagement in parliamentary processes.

Established in 2003, the constituency offices have the core purpose of performing the 'representative' function of parliament at local level. They are central places where constituents can exchange information and ideas to empower the MP in carrying out his/her work as their representative in all spheres of parliamentary work. In the initial years of operation, a number of interventions were employed at constituency office level to sensitise the public on governance issues and to generate interest for the public to participate in national matters.

The significance of constituency offices in Zambia

Facilitating exchange of issues from citizens to parliament

Constituency offices in Zambia have played central roles in facilitating the exchange of information between MPs and their constituents. An informed citizenry is key in citizen engagement in governance matters. In order to enhance meaningful information dissemination and exchange among the members of public and the governance systems at lower level, libraries have been established in constituency offices. Constituency offices support the primary function of parliaments which is the legislation and oversight of the activities of the executive. This includes legislation of what government intends to bring into parliament and it relates to broad range of issues such as alleviation of poverty through provision of services such as health and education; efficient

service delivery; addressing corruption; prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS; as well as the implementation of measures addressing gender imbalances and good governance in general.

Constituency offices were also established as central places for constituents to interact with their members of parliament and to present issues to be passed on to parliament. However, it became apparent that some issues presented to constituency offices could only be addressed by other stakeholders within the constituencies. Thus, staff in constituency offices now seek to identify stakeholders involved in community development as well as service provision and to connect constituents to the relevant stakeholders for support.

Facilitation of MP-Constituent Feedback

As constituency offices continue to be made aware of issues and incorporate them into reports for the action of the MPs, some issues are expected to feed into parliamentary debates. However, some issues just need the attention of the MPs for action and constituency offices ensure that feedback from MPs is transmitted to constituents. Constituency offices facilitate interactive platforms such as open days (meet your MP) to provide feedback on identified issues and also to inform the constituents on policy changes and national developmental programmes.

Public hearings

One central way in which input from constituency offices makes its way into parliament proceedings is through parliamentary committees. Programmes of work of parliamentary committees include citizen engagement and participation in the form of public hearings. As part of community mobilisation function, constituency offices are used as information centres for committee hearings. Constituency offices work closely with staff from the committees department of the National Assembly to ensure that timetables for the public hearings are circulated. There is also a deliberate policy to ensure the integration of public hearings in the annual work plans of constituency offices. Constituency offices collaborate with key local stakeholders such as District Commissioners and Council Secretaries to undertake the following:

- Develop and implement district and constituency level committee hearings awareness and mobilisation plans;
- Present topical issues that affect people at district level for possible consideration; and
- Prepare and coordinate public hearings as part of the District Coordinating Teams.

Constituency offices further convey information regarding timetables of meetings to constituents. In addition, constituency offices encourage constituents to make submissions on topics of interest as individuals or on behalf of their constituencies. To ensure inclusivity and increased community participation, constituency offices further work with community radio stations in communicating programmes on the work of parliaments. Through these platforms, MPs share the latest developments around policy changes, national development programmes, and constituency development activities.

Constituency office libraries

Another effort towards improving citizens awareness of legislative processes is through the constituency office libraries at the parliament. The aim is to provide technical support in information management and include valuable resources such as the constitution; the catchment area of constituency; information on traditional leadership; government departments available; parliamentary proceedings; the different national policies and laws; and National Assembly publications. The introduction of constituency libraries has contributed to increased access to information on the work of parliament; national policies and laws; and other developmental issues. While availing these resources has the potential to contribute to ensuring a well-informed citizenry capable of participating in the governance of the nations, there is a need to further examine who uses them and how accessible and useful they have found the information in informing their active involvement in parliament processes.

The piece illustrates the engagement of citizens with parliamentary processes through the constituency offices in Zambia. This has been an important intervention in ensuring that citizens' issues are part of parliamentary deliberations and thus fostering citizen representation. Constituency staff traditionally work in collaboration with different stakeholders such as the relevant government departments, traditional leaders, civil society and local authorities. However, there is a further need to foster even closer collaboration between constituency offices and local authorities to ensure improved delivery of services to constituents.

7.2

NOTES FROM PRACTICE: PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY OFFICES TO STRENGTHEN REPRESENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Ressida Begg and Jacqueline Thomas

Parliamentary Constituency Offices (PCOs)

There are approximately 350 PCOs across South Africa where members of the public can approach elected representatives and request assistance and support. The parliamentary calendar includes regular periods for members (both MPs and MPLs) to devote time to constituency work. The parliamentary programme also allocates every Monday while in session as well as several weeks during the year for MPs to focus on constituencies. During constituency periods, members are obligated to be available to constituents and help solve service delivery problems experienced by members of the public as well as provide feedback to constituents on what is happening in parliament (In session, Parliament of RSA, August 2013).

MPs spend time in their constituencies performing their oversight function during parliamentary constituency weeks. It offers members an opportunity to meet and engage with the public around issues of concern and to find solutions to problems raised by local communities. PCOs are meant to play a pivotal role in public participation and to create an enabling environment for the public to become active citizens and to take part in parliamentary activities. Services that give effect to this are direct interaction with MPs and the opportunity to lobby representatives, report-backs from MPs, and advice on how to access services from both public and private sector establishments (Parliament of South Africa, 2020). They also assist with challenges faced by local communities in terms of access to services as well as participation in parliamentary processes, such as preparing submissions or drawing up and presenting petitions. Members also participate in committee meetings so that they are able to share constituency-related evidence.

Members are allocated constituencies by their party. Parties with very few parliamentary representatives in parliament are compelled to allocate vast geographical areas to a single member. For example, if a party only has one seat, the relevant MP will have to service the entire country as his/her constituency. Some constituencies will have more than one representative as different parties are responsible for allocating their representatives.

While Parliament and the nine provincial legislatures make available the funding for PCOs, the different political parties ensure the establishment of the PCOs including the employment of administrative staff to run the daily operations. Political parties receive allowances to set up and maintain the PCOs. Yet, in

reality, not all members are assigned PCOs as the allocated resources to parties are considered to be inadequate. This is usually the case for small political parties as, in most instances, the MPs' and MPLs' constituency allowances are pooled by the parties to establish a smaller number of PCOs.

PCOs are funded by public resources and, officially, they are an essential component of parliament and provincial legislatures. Even though policy requires that parties provide parliament with evidence, efforts to source such evidence from political parties about the location of PCOs and the members assigned to each has, in some instances, proved difficult.

PCOs, by their very nature, are a fertile ground for the collation of evidence on basic services provided by local government as well as services falling within provincial and national competencies. The direct engagement between a member and his or her constituency allows members to collate information on these and, in the same vein, provides constituents with direct access to parliament and information on parliament. This serves as a conduit for evidence from constituencies and for parliament to meet its intended recipients.

The HLP Report (2017) revealed that while PCOs do exist and even though MPs are provided with constituency offices and are compelled to provide services to their constituents, the majority of people are not aware of the presence of such offices or who their constituency representatives are. It further revealed that in South Africa, citizens are generally not aware that constituency offices are parliamentary offices but are frequently perceived to be party offices and anecdotal evidence suggests that MPs provide services to their party constituents and not to all members of the public.

The unequal access to evidence on the existence of PCOs and their roles and functions impacts negatively on the oversight functions of parliament and its influence on access to constituency services by constituents and the extent to which MPs and MPLs execute their representation roles.

Administrative evidence use during lawmaking

The national legislature of South Africa, as in the case of Ghana, uses administrative evidence when passing legislation. The key legislation that dictates public finances is the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA, Act 1 of 1999, as amended) which forms the foundation of parliament's oversight over

the executive and its departments and entities by setting out clear guidelines for fiscal allocations and the spending thereof. The PFMA represents the South African government's attempt to establish a results-oriented or performance-based budgeting system. It highlights performance contracting, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting.[2] Lack of compliance with these guidelines led to severe criticism emanating from the yearly reports of the Auditor-General. The reports identified omissions, gaps and weaknesses in the functions and operational realities of the public finance system (Okojie, 2017).

Evidence from citizens and other stakeholders on legislative processes

One of the founding values of the Republic, as set out in Section 1 of the Constitution, is a system of democratic government to ensure accountability, responsiveness, and openness. This finds expression in the constitutional requirement that the rules of the Houses (the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces) must have due regard to, amongst others, representative and participatory democracy and public involvement. It also finds expression in the duty imposed by the Constitution on both Houses to facilitate public involvement in their legislative and other processes and of their committees.

In parliament, the legislative process starts with the introduction of a Bill by the executive through a member of the executive, or a minister on behalf of the president. The Bill is at that point referred to the appropriate Portfolio (NA) Committee for deliberations and report-back to the plenary. At this stage of the committee process, the committee requests evidence from the public, including interest groups and individual citizens, to inform the final decisions of the committee. The secretariat of the committee advertises the Bill inviting submissions from citizens, interest groups, and other stakeholders to make input into the Bill. Sometimes stakeholders and interest groups are invited to meet the relevant committee to present their case and the required evidence. Such inputs from the public are listed in the committee report to the plenary, as part of documents consulted by the committee in arriving at its recommendations.

---

[2] *Induction Handbook for Members of Parliament and Provincial Legislatures*, South African Legislative Sector,130

Where the Bill impacts on provinces, it will be referred to the NCOP for processing via its select committees to obtain mandates from provinces. Provincial legislatures are also required to embark on their public involvement processes to collate evidence on the desirability of the policy underpinning the draft legislation. The importance of this type of evidence to parliament's committees cannot be overemphasised. As representative institutions, parliaments safeguard the interests, views, and values of the public it represents. This type of evidence is paramount in its policy decisions. Inviting submissions and inputs from the public to inform decisions of the committee is a manifestation of the extent to which the interests and concerns of the citizens are well represented in parliament.

In South Africa the structural arrangements that are responsible for the provision of evidence to parliament are described in detail in the case study on South Africa in Volume 2 of this series.

8

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICA



Nagnouma Nanou Kone and Caitlin Blaser Mapitsa

Introduction

Citizens' engagement is the governance mechanism that allows people to be part of the political decisions that affect them. The degree of influence they have on these decisions varies considerably, and the actual structure of engagement can also range from voluntary individual activism to organised civil society. It can also be defined as "actions that influence or seek to influence policy decisions or actions that incorporate the demands and values of the citizens into public administration services" (Zimmerman, 1988). Citizens' engagement is therefore the continuous interaction between citizens and the government, with parliaments as moderators. While it is closely related to the representative function of MPs, the representation function discussed in Chapter 7 looks at the contextual drivers of how MPs play their representative role and how evidence feeds into decision-making. This chapter will look at structures that facilitate citizen engagement and how evidence systems inform them.

More than any other branch of government, due to its composition of elected representations, parliament provides a platform for participation and the articulation of people's will. Parliament is the bloodline between the executive that governs and the citizenry that are governed. Parliament is designed to reflect the dynamics of the nation, substituting for ordinary citizens and acting as they would have acted (Fishkin, 1995) and is thus a key element in, and a symbol of, the creation of a representative state (UNDP, IPU, 2012). However, the degree to which elected representatives can display this diversity varies.

For parliaments to play an effective role in engaging citizens, it is critical that information is available for citizens to access, that there are spaces and platforms for consultation, and finally, that there is genuine deliberation through processes of participation (Holmes, 2011). Of these three elements of engagement, public participation is the most likely to have positive effects on democratic principles, because it offers space for deliberation (EIPP, 2011). Therefore, central to the engagement process is that the 'public', however it is defined, should be seen to have a legitimate role in calling other centres of power to account. One of the challenges is how to support this legitimacy while still acknowledging the diverse views of groups such as 'the public,' 'citizens,' and 'communities.' (EIPP, 2011). In a modern democracy, citizen engagement is a method used to impact, direct, empower, and own a policy or programme instituted by the government (Sefora, 2017). The effective balance of parliaments' role is

one of the truest tests of governance. This is a core concern for many African countries where parliament is still considered the weakest amongst the three arms of government.

The African Governance Report (ECA, 2005) found that: "In terms of enacting laws, debating national issues, checking the activities of the government and in general promoting the welfare of the people, these duties and obligations are rarely performed with efficiency and effectiveness". This weakness originates mostly from historical systems of excluding citizens, which systemically weakened African legislatures compared to the executive arms of the governments (Alabi, 2009).

This chapter will explore the historical roots of citizen engagement and will then look at how organised civil society facilitates citizen engagement. Finally, it will explore recent shifts in the landscape of citizen engagement, in particular the role of technology in shifting systems of engagement. Moving across all three themes, the chapter will look at how evidence is generated by citizens for use in engagement with elected representatives. This will be done by first looking at how governments in the region are responding to reform, followed by a survey of models of civil society engagement in different countries and a discussion of both the promises and limitations of the different structures and methods in place.

The road to citizen engagement

Structurally, most colonial African parliaments were neither designed nor empowered to serve as an effective ombudsman of the people against the executive. Instead, the authoritarian legacy of colonialism aimed at destroying the 'traditional checks-and-balances,' in order to render parliamentary institutions as tools to deepen systems of patronage and ethnic alignment (Schraeder, 2000). Catalysed by globalisation and the digital revolution, all twenty-first century governments have been forced to develop systems of governance that accommodate free-market principles, whilst simultaneously improving citizens' welfare. This has required a range of reform processes to take place which are aimed at strengthening the public service administration and aligning constitutional and electoral systems in line with these goals (Edwards, Sharma-Wallace, Wreford, Holt, Cradock-Henry, Flood & Velarde, 2019). This section will discuss the range of efforts governments in Africa have made to reform, and what this has meant for citizen engagement.

In Africa, the growth of regional parliamentary bodies such as the Pan African Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Economic Community of West African States Parliament (ECOWAS), and the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) demonstrate the willingness of African governments to invest in institutions which meet global standards of democracy (Mpanyane, 2009). In addition to being signatories to various international law instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights and Agenda 2063 'the Africa we want' which explicitly states under Aspiration 6, No 48 "All the *citizens* of Africa will be actively involved in decision-making in all aspects of development, including social, economic, political and environmental (ECA, 2015), African governments, jointly declared to take responsibility for promoting and protecting democracy by developing clear standards of accountability, transparency and participatory governance at the national and sub-national levels" (NEPAD, 2001). However, building these structures has often required adapting global standards to a context that does not always have the governance infrastructure necessary to underpin and ensure its efficacy. This has required an ongoing reform process which includes contestations to create institutional alignment (Navarro, 2010).

At the national level, many African countries have constitutional reforms that encourage the promotion of citizens' engagement. In Kenya, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, citizen participation is regarded as a necessary component of governance and is thus adopted in their constitutions. In these four countries, local governments are constitutionally protected and accorded degrees of self-governing powers and are hence obliged to facilitate community participation in local spaces.

In Kenya and Uganda, various chapters and clauses of the constitution require that public participation is undertaken at all levels of government before government officials and bodies make official decisions. For instance, in Kenya, Article 196 (1) stipulates that a county assembly shall openly conduct its business and hold its sittings and those of committees in public and should facilitate public participation and involvement in the legislative and other business of the assembly and its committees, whilst Article 232 (1) stipulates that the values and principles of public service include(s): (d) involvement of the people in the process of policymaking (Fuo, 2015). The objective is to bring the parliament

closer to the people, improve service delivery and increase citizen participation in public affairs. While having this constitutional and legislative foundation has been critical, equally critical is ensuring the bureaucratic capacity to facilitate the implementation of this legislation and in this regard the results have been varied.

In South Africa, which has a more recent history of excluding citizens than many countries in the region, public participation is an issue that has been raised at the Constitutional Court on numerous occasions. Government has an obligation to facilitate a public participation process, but the precise definitions of the scope and nature of this obligation are being redefined on an ongoing basis. The right to public participation is given considerable importance in particular at the local government level, where the government is seen as closest to the people. Provisions in Sections 59, 72 and 118, specify that committees and legislatures should work together in the interest of facilitating participation. Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) guide local government service delivery, and developing these plans requires ongoing engagement with communities. This participation takes place through a range of different tools, including *imbizos* (gatherings, usually called by a traditional/ local leader) where senior officials meet with the general public to engage with policies and service delivery as well as the engagement of community development workers who have an explicit mandate to help communities access the information and stakeholders needed to engage effectively with government representatives, departments, and service providers. Their main objective is to facilitate community participation in government programmes and activities.

In Zimbabwe, civic participation is grounded primarily on the Constitution, with preambles highlighting the need to entrench democracy, good, transparent, and accountable governance and reaffirming commitment to upholding and defending human rights and freedoms (Government of Zimbabwe, UNDP, 2017). To bring the parliament and parliamentarians closer to the people and to ensure participation and inclusivity, local authorities (urban and rural councils) are constitutionally recognised as the third tier of government. Section 264 of the Constitution stipulates that, whenever appropriate, governmental powers and responsibilities must be devolved to provincial and metropolitan councils and local authorities which are competent to carry out those responsibilities efficiently and effectively (Fuo, 2015).

These case studies highlight the extent to which African governments have gone to constitute country-specific forms of decentralised governments with supporting constitutions that oblige the legislature and parliamentarians to facilitate citizen engagement.

Despite these efforts, substantial challenges limit the scale at which parliaments-citizen engagement occurs. In Kenya, for example, the transformative devolution process is still unstructured and is undertaken in a tokenistic way. Its effectiveness is further diluted by the limited capacity of the citizens to fully engage in an informed and meaningful way (Mariru, 2015). Second, there are limited adherences to the "right to participate in governance, planning and development process" as stipulated in the constitution, especially during the budget-making process and in presidential directives due to both social and structural factors such as poverty, inequality, and weak institutions (Otienno, 2018). Because the government has still to formulate guidelines and safeguards to ensure meaningful participation, political elites have hijacked the process to ensure results are favourable to their needs.

Finally, despite the Kenyan constitution providing for citizens' rights to access state information, this right has been continuously denied in practice. This demonstrates just one of many examples of exclusion of citizens from decision-making processes. The unwillingness of a state to uphold the rights it claims to guarantee results in widespread disillusionment of citizens. In South Africa this disillusionment has led to service delivery protests. In Kenya, it has led to citizens, known as 'wananchi' (children of the nation) and 'wanainchi' (owners of the nation), demonstrating against the continued ineffectiveness of the mechanisms of engagement and the processes of governance that continue to perpetuate exclusion (Gathu & Kahindi, 2015).

As these examples show, while there is formal provision for citizen participation in legislation, with many governments taking steps to provide for this, the steps vary from government to government and have different implications for the terms on which civil society engagement can take place.

Structures for engagement

While the section above considered the legislative intention of including citizens in political decision-making as part of a process of reform, the structures and tools that have been built to do this vary considerably. Some will be discussed

below outlining the ways in which they link to political decision-making. Some provide platforms to engage citizens which allow the direct input of citizen views into legislative processes and others link directly to monitoring data for decision-making.

Although Ugandan *barazas* (community-based accountability meetings) have the potential to allow for citizen accountability, particularly with regard to local public service delivery, this has not been the practice (ISER, 2018). *Barazas* are not conducted in every district and even where they are conducted, one *baraza* per district per financial year is insufficient to allow for meaningful engagement of citizens.

Second, the extent to which the opinions and concerns generated at the *barazas* are considered in the planning processes, or provided to respective parliamentary committees, is unclear (ISER, 2018). The *baraza* programme has neither follow-up nor accountability mechanisms to ensure that citizen engagement is actively translated into action by decision-makers. As a result, citizens are both frustrated with performative participation and also disincentivised to engage further due to the general perception that government sees citizen engagement as a mechanism of compliance, rather than of meaningful participation.

In 2013, the Community Based Monitoring Framework was adopted in South Africa to monitor government performance, but this has been hindered by issues related to poor citizens participation as hearings are held in remote and inaccessible areas and coincide with citizens' working hours.

In Zimbabwe, the Prime Minister's directive of 1984 mandated the establishment of participatory structures at grassroots level where issues of community development and service delivery could be addressed with the structures cascading nationally through village groups and ward and district development committees. Despite these arrangements, citizen participation has remained fragmented (UNDP, 2017). The 2014 Afrobarometer survey of citizens' engagement in Zimbabwe where 2400 adult Zimbabweans were interviewed highlighted that:

- Zimbabweans do not interact with their elected leaders; 67% indicated that they did not contact local government councillors or MPs, while this number stood at 86% in the year preceding the survey.

- Of those surveyed, 75% noted that they were not members of voluntary associations or community groups.
- Urban residents are less engaged than their rural counterparts, and women are less engaged than men, with a notable exception being engagement with religious leaders.

Clearly, despite acknowledging the importance of civic participation, relatively few Zimbabweans engage with their local parliamentarians. There is also a strong sentiment among Zimbabweans that MPs do not listen to citizens and are in power only for their own selfish ends and that this is at the expense of the needs of the community at large.

While civic engagement is firmly enshrined in the legislative and constitutional frameworks of these countries, the implementation of engagement mechanisms is often weak and there is little trust between citizens and elected representatives. As a result, public engagement processes often lack legitimacy and engagement processes remain fragile. This is further compounded by poor access to information for many citizens resulting in limited awareness of both government decision-making processes in the legislative space as well as the practice of engagement by citizens. However, MPs appear to be increasingly making use of evidence to combat this landscape of fragility. There is an expectation that citizens' views will be brought into the process of oversight and it appears that MPs are reporting back more frequently to their constituents with on matters of executive capacity and progress. The intention is that access to information will foster more meaningful participation. In the following section the structures and organisations within civil society which can either foster or inhibit citizen engagement will be examined.

The role of civil society organisations in the engagement of Africa's citizens

The third wave of democratisation focused the attention of African Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on social accountability. This occurred at the same time as widespread cell phone penetration and the increased access to social media. This resulted in more widespread opportunities for participatory data collection and new forms of engagement. At the same time reform processes emphasised the need for evidence-informed policymaking. This has opened the door for new platforms to allow direct communication and dialogue between

civil society and governments in the region (World Bank, 2010). The examples below will explore some of these processes, with particular emphasis on how they have influenced electoral processes and parliamentary decision-making.

There has been lively contestation about the scope and nature of African CSOs' involvement in the policy process. However, the way that research on this topic has unfolded has been shaped at least as much by ideology as by empirical analysis (ODI, 2008). In areas where CSOs have collaborated with the government, there have usually been better policy outcomes. For example, in the lead up to Ghana's 2012 elections, the Ghanaian CSO CDD-Ghana provided the opportunity to members of local communities to engage with candidates who were running for election to represent them in parliament (Oxfam, 2013). The debates were held in town halls in 29 counties and included participation from diverse stakeholders including representation from a range of excluded and minority groups of the electorate. Candidates were given space to explain their strategies to tackle national issues, and there was space for open engagement around topics that were of particular concern.

During the 2012 election in Sierra Leone, the WASH-Net coalition of CSOs worked together to try and put WASH issues on the agenda as a national priority in upcoming elections (WASH-Net, 2015). WASH-Net visited every district in the country and asked candidates running for positions to pledge to certain commitments on water and sanitation. In total, 1 482 pledge cards were signed, and 326 candidates who participated in the pledge were elected to government. This campaign contributed to the eventual creation of a new Ministry for Water, which had formerly been part of the Ministry of Health (Oxfam, 2013).

Bemuse (2006) cites the example of the work of the Malawi Economic Justice Network (MEJN). This group engaged with the Parliament of Malawi on the issue of pro-poor budgeting. The MEJN briefed individual MPs and made representations to committees and publicised positions, recommendations, and analyses in advance of the budget debates. They also supported a coalition of MPs to scrutinise economic policies that were proposed by multilateral agencies and donors. This provided a way to engage civil society meaningfully with parliamentary processes and also built relationships between MPs and stakeholders in civil society working for pro-poor budgeting.

In Kenya, the non-partisan organisation, Mzalendo, makes public information easily accessible to all. Its website offers a detailed searchable profile for each MP, including responsibilities and contact information. Each MP has a scorecard ranking their performance in several categories, such as how accessible they are to their constituents, how often they attend and vote in the Kenyan Parliament, and how they have spent their Constituency Development Funds (CDF) – funds allocated to MPs who then decide how to spend these funds in their home district. Mzalendo's work has had a direct impact on Kenya's parliament. When the project publicised poor attendance in legislative sessions, a public outcry ensued resulting in an immediate performance improvement (Veit, 2012).

Finally, in addition to monitoring parliamentary electoral processes, many civil society organisations are sectoral experts within their particular sector of engagement and, as such, they make submissions directly to parliamentary portfolio committees. These submissions can advocate for a specific interpretation of departmental evidence, provide evidence about the state of service delivery, or contribute to a gap in either evidence or executive capacity around a certain area of service delivery.

Despite the advantages of CSOs' participation in the enhancement of citizen engagement and their contribution to transparency, accountability and participation, the CSO field in Africa has not been straightforward or unencumbered. For example, in 2018 (USAID, 2018) there were several threats to the freedom of civil society on the continent. Malawi and Tanzania both proposed new legislation which would limit certain CSO freedoms amongst which was the freedom of expression. In Uganda and Zimbabwe the combative relationship between civil society and government meant that many civil society activists faced or risked arrest. The engagement between African governments and the CSOs is fraught with suspicion, mistrust and political manipulation. In addition to the fragmentation among CSOs and insufficient human and financial resources (Oxfam, 2013), CSOs face many other challenges in their championing of engagement with the government.

Parliamentarians certainly have an advantage when they work with CSOs. However, the onus for the successful relationship falls not only on CSOs but also on parliamentarians who have the role of ensuring that CSOs have a platform and an enabling environment to express themselves without fear of retribution. This includes support for open civic spaces through legislation and also by fostering an inclusive political culture.

Technology and changing methods of engagement

Achieving true political participation in the digital era (Agora, 2015) requires parliaments to move beyond merely using parliamentary websites as the tool for citizen engagement towards the adoption of new technologies that make it quick and easy for people to share inputs. The upsurge in the use of the internet, smartphones and social media has provided a fertile landscape for ordinary citizens and CSOs to change the historical African narrative of a lack of engagement between the parliament and citizens. To stay abreast of the global trends all parliaments are compelled to use ICT for their internal functioning and outreach and this has led to the development of e-parliaments.

The Kenyan Parliamentary sessions are aired live to the public using their internal media departments with recorded sessions available upon request. This allows the public access to a live feed of parliamentary debates. Additionally, since 2007 the Kenya Treasury publishes its financial budgets online for public scrutiny prior to the Auditor-General's report at the end of the year (Kenya Treasury, 2007). As a consequence of this accountability measure, Mars Group Kenya (2009), a non-governmental organisation (NGO), highlighted a KSh 10 billion (USD98 million) financial error in the 2009/2010 budgetary estimates. It was conceded that the deficit was a mistake and it was subsequently rectified. Finally, the Independent Electoral Commission has maintained election transparency since 2013 by using 3 ICT tools, namely: (i) the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) system which electronically scans and saves voters fingerprints to use later in the case of voter identification and registration, (ii) the Electronic Voter Identification (EVI) system which confirm voters' identities and, (iii) the Results Transmission System (RTS) which allows for counted votes to be instantly and electronically relayed to the public in real-time. Election results are in the public domain to allow for citizen scrutiny (CIPESA, 2015).

In Uganda, the Parliamentary Call System 'UsPeak,' an SMS and web-based constituent engagement and tracking platform, allows citizens to contact their elected representatives using SMS, and for political decision makers to better access the views of citizens (NDI, 2013). UsPeak enables constituents to give their views on various issues by text message or by voicemail and also to request more information on topical issues from their representatives (CIPESA, 2012). Uganda also has a Bill tracking application (app) for the Parliament of Uganda called '*Bungeni*' with which people can track the status of Bills as well as search for available information about committees and legislators.

In addition to government social media platforms, websites, and digital channels, a range of digital platforms run by civil society groups are also in operation across the continent. These tools enable citizens to hold their public institutions to account. Parliamentary monitoring sites in countries such as Kenya (Mzalendo), South Africa (PMG), Ghana (Odekro), and Nigeria (Shine Your Eye), are run by civil society organisations to enable citizens to have an insight into parliamentary rulings and parliamentarian activities.

Irrespective of the socio-economic, environmental and structural challenges, it is equally important to assess the extent to which citizens themselves engage with the state or parliamentarians through the use of the available technologies.

An assessment undertaken by the Institute of Development Studies in Kenya (IDS, 2016) to examine the level of citizens' engagement and use of ICT instituted by the government highlighted the following:

- Of the 120 young people surveyed, two-thirds of the respondents had not accessed any of the online services provided by the government despite their knowledge of the systems. This was either because of a lack of interest in civic participation; a lack of personal computers; a lack of ICT knowledge; or the fear of victimisation or condemnation.
- One-third of the sample had used the e-platforms or visited the Huduma centres for services such as applying for an ID card or filling in their income tax returns.

With regard to the use of e-platforms to engage with leaders:

- Of the 32% of the sample that had used online services, only four respondents had used them to contact the President directly, two to contact the Nairobi senator directly, and one to contact the Nairobi governor directly.
- Only half of those who had made direct contact had received a response.

With regard to public forums developed by parliamentarians, the IDS (2016) noted that most of the 120 questionnaire respondents observed that advertisements for public forums are usually political as they are either advertised in the papers very close to the date of the event; the events are held on weekdays when working people are unable to attend; or the advertisements are displayed in county offices where only a few people can see them.

Analysis to date highlights that e-parliament services are not a panacea for facilitating parliament to citizen engagement. As accurately stated by Papaloi and Gouscos (2009), eparliament services function as a supplementary

mechanism as they (i) do not allow for the substitution of representative democracy with direct democracy; (ii) do not replace parliament-like initiatives which run in physical contexts with parliament-like initiatives which run on a website; (iii) reinforce participatory democracy; and (iv) enable the members of parliament to apply citizens' recommendations if they judge so. In addition, any discussion on citizen engagement should focus both on parliament and citizens' attitudes towards good governance.

Conclusion

There is a range of opportunities for citizens to engage in parliamentary processes. While some of these include the formal channels of elections and consultation processes by elected representatives, these formal channels are not the only ways through which citizens engage in parliamentary processes. Parliamentary monitoring groups, citizen monitoring of service delivery, and other forms of citizen-generated data, have all played a role in fostering citizen engagement with parliamentary processes. However, the country-level space for an active civil society varies considerably across the region, and historical as well as political dynamics have shaped the levels to which governments are open to meaningfully considering and integrating civil society input into processes of governance.

To conclude, political leaders in the continent need to show commitment to addressing the issue of good governance by adopting measures for transparency, accountability, participation and the combating of corruption. Parliaments have a critical role in supporting participation, primarily by means of parliamentary evidence systems but also in broader aspects of governance. Addressing the issues of participation, corruption, and misappropriation of funds is a fundamental goal of democratic representation and, as such, must be prioritised. The existing inadequacies in the level of qualification of many African parliamentarians must be addressed, not only in terms of an understanding of the law but also in its application. At the core of it all, African parliaments and parliamentarians need credible information to fulfil their law-making and oversight functions. The lack of use of and demand for evaluation at the legislative level has been detrimental to the progression of good governance and civic representation. Traditional methods of civic outreach in conjunction with ICT systems can provide additional value to deliver insights about the quality of a policy, design, the process of its implementation, and evaluably, impact on

the fiscal economy and society. To address the challenge of civic participation, it is clear that while there are no one-size-fits-all solutions, there is a need to holistically determine country-specific strategies that will encourage citizens to gravitate freely towards the government openly and transparently with no fear of repercussion.

Reference List

African Union Commission. (2015). *African Union Commission Agenda 2063 Framework Document – The Africa We Want*. Midrand: African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD).

AGORA. (2015). *Citizen Engagement Through ICT*. AGORA: The Portal for Parliamentary Development.

Alabi, M.O.A. (2009). The legislatures in Africa: A trajectory of weakness. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 3(5):233-241.

André, P., Martin, P. & Lanmafankpotin, G. (2012). *Citizen Participation. Encyclopedic Dictionary of Public Administration*. Encyclopedic Dictionary of Public Administration. Available from www.dictionnaire.enap.ca

Bratton, M. & Walle, N. (1997). *By Michael Bratton – Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. 1st Edition. London: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139174657

Bwalya, K.J., Du Plessis, T. & Rensleigh, C. (2012). Conceptualization of E-Parliament in Promoting E-Democracy: Prospects for the SADC Region. In: Mehmet Zahid Sobaci (ed.), *E-parliament and ICT – Based Legislation: Concept, Experiences and Lessons*. Hershey: IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-61350-329-4.ch017

Cheeseman, N. (2018). *A Divided Continent Regional Report Africa*. Berlin: Bertelsmann Stiftung.

CIPESA. (2012). *How ICT Tools Are Promoting Citizen Participation in Uganda*. Kampala: The Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA).

CIPESA. (2015). *ICT Governance in Kenya – Policies and Practice*. CIPESA ICT Research Series. Kampala: The Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA).

Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK). (2013). *Strategic Plan 2013-2018*. Nairobi: The Governemnt of Kenya.

Economic Commission for Africa. (2005). *African Governance Report*. Addis Ababa: United Nations. Economic Commission for Africa.

Economic Commission for Africa-Governance and Public Administration Division (GPAD). (2013). *The Role of Parliament in Promoting Good Governance. Economic Commission for Africa*. Addis Ababa: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

European Institute for Public Participation. (2011). *Public participation in Europe: An International Perspective*. Berlin: European Institute for Public Participation.

FHI 360, USAID & ICNL. (2019). *2018 Civil Organization Sustainability Index*. Asia: United States Agency for International Development Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance.

Fishkin, J.S. (1995). *The Voice of the People Public Opinion and Democracy*. London: Yale University Press.

Fuo, O.N. (2015). Public participation in decentralized governments in Africa: Making ambitious constitutional guarantees more responsive. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, pp. 167-191. https://doi.org/10.17159/1996-2096/2015/V15N1A8

Gathu, P. & Kahindi, H. (2015). *Access to Information in Kenya*. Available from https://bit.ly/3ARw13v

Government of Zimbabwe & United Nations Development Programme. (2016). Citizen Engagement Framework. Citizen engagement framework draft document. (Unpublished)

Holmes, B. (2011). *Citizens' engagement in policymaking and the design of public services (No. 1)*. Parliament of Australia – Department of Parliamentary Services.

Kabunga, N., Mogues, T., Bizimungu, E., Erman, A. & Van Campenhout, B. (2016). *The State of Public Service Delivery in Uganda Report of a Baseline Survey.* Kampala: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPR).

Mariru, P. (2015). *What About Public Participation? Where Are We?* Nairobi: The International Institute for Legislative Affairs (IILA).

Mars Group. (2009). Material differences in the new budget computer error again: a memorandum for the information of the budget committee of the [Blog]. *Mars Group Blog*. ICT Governance in Kenya – Policies and Practice. CIPESA ICT Research Series. Available from https://bit.ly/3uq9yYX

Mpanyane, S. (2009). Transformation of the Pan-African Parliament A path to a legislative body? *The Institute for Security Studies*, 181:1-20.

Mzalendo. (2019). *Keeping an Eye on Kenya's Parliament*. Available from Tavaana.org.

Naidoo, G. (2012). Implementation of E-government in South Africa – successes and challenges: the way forward. *International Journal of Advances in Computing and Management*. pp. 62-66.

National Treasury of Kenya. (2007). *The National Treasury*. ICT Governance in Kenya – Policies and Practice. CIPESA ICT Research Series. Available from https://bit.ly/2XZHrnu

Nyambura, S. (2016). *When Does the State Listen: Has Kenya's ICT revolution triggered more citizen participation?* Institute of Development Studies. Brighton: University of Sussex.

Oloruntoba, S.O., Falola, T. & Durotoye, A. (2017). Democracy and Political Development in Africa. In: *The Palgrave Handbook of African Politics, Governance and Development,* 1st edition.). London: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 471-485. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-349-95232-8_28

Oni, A.A., Oni, S. & Ibietan, J. (2016). ICT and Democratic Parliament in Africa: State of the Matter. *Journal of Governance and Development*, 12:71-85.

Oppong, F.K., Oduro, F., Awalghana, M. & Debrah, E. (2013). *Civil Society Engagement with Political Parties during Elections: Lessons from Ghana and Sierra Leon*. Oxfam Research Reports and Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana). Nairobi: Oxfam international.

Otieno, S. (2018). *Partially Protected: The State of Civic Space in Kenya*. Dar es Salaam: Twaweza na sisi.

Overseas Development Institute. (2007). *Parliaments, governance and accountability: What role for parliaments in poverty reduction?* London: ODI.

Papaloi, A. & Gouscos, D. (2011). E-Parliaments and Novel Parliament-to-Citizen services. *JeDEM – EJournal of EDemocracy and Open Government*, 3(1):80-98. https://doi.org/10.29379/jedem.v3i1.53

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2020). Available from https://bit.ly/3kP1NII

Schraeder, P.J. (2000). *African Politics & Society: A Continental Mosaic in Transformation*. Boston and New York: Bedford Books/St. Martin's Press.

Sefora, M.M. (2007). *Public Participation in Parliament – Perspectives on Social Media Technology (SMT)*. Master's dissertation. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University.

Sobaci, M.Z. (2011). *E-Parliament and ICT-Based Legislation: Concept, Experiences and Lessons,* 1st ed. Hershey, Pennsylvania: IGI Global. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-61350-329-4.ch001

The Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER). (2018). *An assessment of the role and effectiveness of Barazas in decision-making processes.*

The New Partnership for Africa's Development & African Union. (2001). *The New Partnership for Africa's Development*. NEPAD, AU: United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs Poverty.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affa & Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2008). *World e-Parliament Report 2008*. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Switzerland: The Global Centre for ICT in parliament. IPU.

United Nations Development Programme. (2009). *E-governance and Citizen Participation in West Africa: Challenges and Opportunities*. The Panos Institute West Africa & The United Nations Development Programme. New York and The Panos Institute West Africa Dakar: Democratic Governance Group Bureau for Development Policy UNDP.

Veit, P. (2019). *Why Africa Needs Open Legislatures*. Addis Ababa: World Resources Institute.

WASH-Net. (2015). *Case Study: I'm Voting for Water and Sanitation Sierra Leone Election Campaign*. Sierra Leone: WASH Sector Learning.

World Bank. (2010). *Demanding Good Governance: Lessons from Social Accountability Initiatives in Africa*. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. In: McNeil, Mary, Malena & Carmen (eds.), *Demanding Good Governance: Lessons from Social Accountability Initiatives in Africa*. World Bank. Available from https://bit.ly/3BZyadT

Zimmerman, M.A. & Rappaport, J. (1988). Community psychology and the law. *Citizen Participation, Perceived Control, and Psychological Empowerment*, 16(4):451-463. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00930023

8.1

NOTES FROM PRACTICE: THE USE OF CITIZEN EVIDENCE IN PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT IN GHANA

Abraham Ibn Zackaria

Evidence use by the Parliament of Ghana in performing key representational roles

A review of official documents of the Parliament of Ghana reveals that there is evidence that the Ghanaian legislature uses different types of evidence in the performance of its key representational roles, particularly when passing Bills into law, during budget approval and in the performance of its oversight roles. Essentially, citizens' evidence, practice-informed evidence, research evidence, etc. are used in diverse ways by the House when performing its key representational roles such as budget consideration, constituency oversight and mainstreaming constituency needs into debates in the House. The use of evidence by the Parliament of Ghana is to ensure that its decisions are robust and designed to benefit the people it represents. The use of data from official sources and research information is common amongst MPs. In this regard, some arrangements have been made as part of the service delivery structure of the parliamentary service to ensure that the House and its members have access to accurate and reliable evidence from diverse sources when the need arises.

The Parliament of Ghana uses evidence from diverse sources when undertaking oversight activities. Interaction with some selected committees revealed that committees sometimes use citizen evidence to support their work, especially when performing their oversight role. Committees monitor the progress of projects approved in the budget, as well as the usefulness of such projects to the communities from the perspective of the members of the communities where such projects are located. Committees on health and education use citizens' evidence obtained from the Committee Score Card (CSC) and the Committee on Government Assurances uses a digital platform to interact with citizens on the implementation of government projects in their respective communities.

1. Citizens evidence through Committee Score Card (CSC)

Some committees of parliament, particularly the Health and Education Committees, periodically undertake small-scale assessments of the progress and usefulness of government projects approved in the national budget from the perspective of citizens. The committees use the CSC to elicit information on the experiences and perceptions of citizens regarding the progress and usefulness of projects to the needs of the constituents. By so doing, parliament is able to exact accountability from the government from the perspective of citizens.

The use of this method enables committees to have first-hand information from citizens and this information informs the decisions of the committee regarding policy proposals of the government and the allocation of resources for the implementation of such policies and projects. The results from the CSC are mainstreamed into debates on the floor of the House, amplifying and drawing the attention of the government to challenges, and any inappropriateness of services provided to citizens. Members use their oversight tools such as statements and question time in plenaries to draw the attention of the respective ministers to the results of the CSC for immediate action.

2. Citizens' evidence on ministerial promises to parliament: Committee on government assurances digital platform

The Parliament of Ghana is currently using a digital platform as a tool to obtain feedback from citizens in respect of government promises in the various constituencies across the country. In 2015, the Government Assurances Committee of Parliament launched "www.assurances.gov.gh", an online digital platform project to facilitate the committee's mandate of monitoring all assurances and promises made by the executive in parliament. The project encourages citizens to voice their concerns on the platform on assurances made by ministers to ensure accountability. The platform is integrated with a mobile App, SMS and social media and was developed with a clear focus on the needs of the end-users with the objective of ensuring that citizens are able to engage with parliament to monitor the implementation of government assurances. It also enables citizens to actively participate in the process of assessing government and holding it more accountable via an innovative, easy to use, interactive online platform. The work of the committee has become more efficient as, for the first time ever, there is a dedicated website on which citizens can report on projects within their communities and reach out to the committee via an integrated media system.

The case study has briefly illustrated how the Parliament of Ghana engages with citizen evidence and ensures that the different forms of evidence make their way into parliamentary engagements such as portfolio committee engagements. The committee scorecard has been instrumental in facilitating public participation in the oversight of government programmes in respective communities.

8.2

NOTES FROM PRACTICE: EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN CITIZENS' ENGAGEMENT IN PARLIAMENTARY PROCESSESS IN KENYA

Humphrey Ringera

Introduction

The Parliament of Kenya utilises different methods to provide information to the members of public on the various pieces of legislation being considered and on how the public can participate and influence the debate. This vignette will highlight three approaches used in the parliament of Kenya and illustrate how they contribute to citizen engagement. These are: committees and standing orders; petitions and committal of Bills to committees as well as exchanges and networking online, in partnership with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

Committees and standing orders

Parliamentary committees have the power to summon any person to appear before them for the purpose of giving evidence and providing information.[1] They hold meetings in public and hearing schedules are usually publicised in advance to keep members of the public informed. They are mandated to conduct open hearings and inquiries and they provide direct channels for public engagement. Committees therefore act as linkages between members of public, policy institutions, think-tanks, academia and other stakeholders and parliament. Further, publicising committee activities on the parliamentary website and/or in the media generates public interest and optimises awareness of and participation in the committee activities which, in turn, helps ensure that the activities are grounded in reality and evidence.

Petitions and committal of Bills to committees

The right to petition parliament is recognised in Articles 37 and 119 of the Constitution. Article 119 provides that, *"every person has a right to petition Parliament to consider any matter within its authority, including to enact, amend or repeal any legislation".* Petitions allow members of the public to engage and raise issues for consideration by the legislature. The respective standing orders provide a procedure for submission of petitions.[2] The committee invites the petitioner to the hearing and allows relevant authority to respond to the subject of the petition in writing or orally. The committee can also undertake a site visit to the concerned physical area or region depending on the nature of the petition.

---

1 Article 125, Constitution of Kenya, 2010.
2 National Assembly, Standing Order 220 & Senate, Standing Order 226.

As a further means to facilitate citizen engagement in lawmaking, when Bills are read for the first time in parliament, they stand committed to the relevant committees whose requirement it is to facilitate public participation and take into account the views and recommendations of the public in their reports to the House.[3] To ensure this, parliament usually publishes advertisements for public participation and calls for memoranda indicating the name of the Bill, the number of days for public participation, the venue and the time (sample annexed).

Exchanges and networking online, in partnership with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Another initiative worth highlighting that has increased citizen involvement in parliament processes is a sharing and networking platform called Dokeza.[4] This is an initiative with Mzalendo Trust, a non-partisan organisation that monitors the Parliament of Kenya with a mission to facilitate public participation in parliamentary processes through information sharing, research and networking.

Dokeza aims to facilitate and enhance public participation by providing an online platform where members of the public can inform lawmaking and have their views presented in the form of a memorandum. Bills are usually interpreted by an expert to make them easily understandable and to provide members of the public with the opportunity to state their views in various sections and even share their input on social media. Dokeza has radically changed public participation in lawmaking as it is modern, accessible, and exciting. It has expanded the outreach and increased public participation as it is able to reach the largest segment of the population who are youth, most of whom are online. It creates a platform where lawmakers interact with their constituents to inform legislations under discussion. It further enables people outside Nairobi (where parliamentary sittings are usually held) to collate public opinion and draft memoranda within the prescribed stringent timelines and serves as a repository of public regulations on various calls for memoranda.

The multiple avenues highlighted thus far have contributed to improving a fact checking system which enables MPs to consider evidence from citizens at various levels that would otherwise have been ignored. The submissions by members

[3] National Assembly, Standing Order 127 & Senate, Standing Order 140.
[4] Dokeza – Swahili for 'share your ideas'.

of the public and institutions, either orally or by written memoranda, usually provide advice, evidence, guidance or norms on best practices that assists in building evidence-based consensus on the majority of policy decisions.

Annexure 1: Advertisements for public participation and calls for memoranda

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



TWELFTH PARLIAMENT | FIFTH SESSION

THE SENATE

INVITATION FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND SUBMISSION OF MEMORANDA

At the sitting of the Senate held on Tuesday, 6th July, 2021, the Bills listed at the second column below were introduced in the Senate by way of First Reading and thereafter stood committed to the respective Standing Committees indicated at the third column.

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 118 of the Constitution and Standing Order 140 (5) of the Standing Orders of the Senate, the Committees now invite interested members of the public to submit any representations that they may have on the Bills by way of written memoranda.

The Memoranda may be sent **by email** on the address: csenate@parliament.go.ke and copied to the respective Committee email addresses indicated at the fourth column below, to be received on or before **Friday, 23rd July, 2021 at 5.00pm**.

	Bill	Committee Referred To	Email Address
a)	The County Oversight and Accountability Bill (Senate Bills No. 17 of 2021)	Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations	senatedevolution@gmail.com
b)	The National Cohesion and Peace Building Bill (Senate Bills No. 19 of 2021)	Standing Committee on National Cohesion, Equal Opportunity and Regional Integration	nationalcohesionc@gmail.com
c)	The County Boundaries Bill (Senate Bills No. 20 of 2021)	Standing Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights	senatejlahrc@parliament.go.ke
d)	The Preservation of Human Dignity and Protection of Economic and Social Rights Bill (Senate Bills No. 21 of 2021)	Standing Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights	senatejlahrc@parliament.go.ke
e)	The Heritage and Museums Bill (Senate Bills No. 22 of 2021)	Standing Committee on Labour and Social Welfare	senatecommittee.labour@parliament.go.ke
f)	The Coconut Industry Development Bill (Senate Bills No. 24 of 2021)	Standing Committee on Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries	senatescalf@parliament.go.ke
g)	The Kenya Citizenship and Immigration (Amendment) Bill (Senate Bills No. 33 of 2021)	Standing Committee on National Security, Defence and Foreign Relations	scnsdfr2021@gmail.com
h)	The Alternative Dispute Resolution Bill (Senate Bills No. 34 of 2021)	Standing Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights	senatejlahrc@parliament.go.ke
i)	The County Governments Grants Bill (Senate Bills No. 35 of 2021)	Standing Committee on Finance and Budget	scfinanceandbudget@gmail.com

The Bills may be found on the Parliament website at http://www.parliament.go.ke/the-senate/senate-bills.

J.M. NYEGENYE, CBS,
CLERK OF THE SENATE.

References

Institute of Economic Affairs (I.E.A). (2015). *Review of the Status of Public Participation and County Information Dissemination Framework: A Case Study of Isiolo, Kisumu, Makueni and Turkana Counties*.

Kanyinga, K. (2014). A review by AfriMAP, Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa (OSIEA) and the Institute for Development Studies (IDS). Nairobi: University of Nairobi, Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa.

Odhiambo, M & Taifa, A. (2009). *Devolved Funds Development: A Handbook on Participation*. Nairobi: Claripress.

Republic of Kenya. (2018a). *12th Parliament, The Senate Standing Orders*. Nairobi: Government Printer.

Republic of Kenya. (2018b). *National Assembly Standing Orders*. 4th Edition. Nairobi: Government Printer. Available from https://bit.ly/3zOB8jM

Republic of Kenya. (2010). *The Constitution of Kenya*. Nairobi: Government Printer.

9

POSITIONING AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS TO USE EVIDENCE EFFECTIVELY IN SHAPING DEVELOPMENTAL AND DEMOCRATIC FUTURES



Tania Ajam

Introduction

The previous chapters in this volume have highlighted the importance of parliamentarians using sound evidence in policymaking. Credible evidence provides parliaments with deeper insight into policy dilemmas, the service delivery and financial performance of public sector organisations, programmes and projects, and the effectiveness (or otherwise) of government regulation. These insights could enhance parliamentarians' oversight, lawmaking, budget appropriation and representation roles. It is clear, however, that while evidence is a prominent component of decision-making, it is only one of many competing factors that ultimately influence decision-making within parliaments. Successful realisation of these benefits also depends on the nature of the political culture and party dynamics.

This concluding chapter aims firstly to synthesise the themes emerging from previous chapters in this volume and to explore future directions for building the institutional capability of parliaments to systematically use evidence in pursuit of their core mandates of lawmaking, oversight, representation, and budget appropriation. It considers the kinds of investments that parliaments need to make to successfully support good governance at the level of the institution as a whole, at the level of parliamentary committees, and at the level of the individual MP. The focus is both on the use of evidence *by* parliament in executing its functions as well as the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) *of* parliament itself as a critical institution of democracy. The chapter concludes by presenting the implications of the volume's key findings on practice as well as avenues for further research.

Emerging themes and lessons from the Volume

Key themes emerged from this volume which are critical to understanding parliamentary evidence systems. These provide a useful foundation for efforts to support parliaments to systematise evidence use and function transformatively as institutions of good governance on the African continent and elsewhere. These themes also provide a sound foundation for further research in the area and can be classified into three broad areas. First, **the macro governance context of evidence use in parliaments**. This highlights the need to understand parliamentary functions within the broader development context as this influences the incentives for evidence use. In the preceding chapters of

this volume contributors emphasised that evidence use is inherently political and highlighted the need to examine the effects of neopatrimonialism and systems of patronage on parliaments which are themselves institutions of power contestation.

Secondly, **the micro governance context of evidence in parliaments** reiterates the importance of understanding parliaments' internal processes and structures that may hinder or support evidence systems. These include efforts in strengthening the supply of evidence and paying attention to factors such as evidence sources and the nature and presentation of evidence. Furthermore, the role of parliamentary structures such as portfolio committees has been emphasised, as these are the engines of parliament and critical hubs for evidence use. Further, parliaments' values, incentives, and disincentives to use evidence have been discussed extensively in this volume and have been identified as critical drivers of parliamentarians use of evidence.

Lastly, the volume has made significant contributions in examining **the internal and external structures, processes and approaches that contribute to systematising the use of evidence in parliaments**. Fundamental considerations in strengthening systems of evidence in parliaments include enhancing parliamentarians' roles in fostering inclusive public participation in decision-making; nurturing parliamentary evidence use champions; strengthening leadership commitment for systematising use of evidence; and institutionalising systems of evidence use. These key themes are discussed and implications and recommendations for future practice in strengthening systems of evidence use in parliaments are provided.

The macro governance context of legislative evidence use

Before focusing on individual parliaments and the micro-governance dimensions at the level of parliamentary committees or individual MPs, it is useful to gain a broader understanding of the external macro governance factors which may shape the demand for and supply of evidence use in legislatures. These include the orientation of parliaments (rubber-stamp, emerging, informed or transformative legislatures); their historical institutional development trajectories, whether they are bicameral or unicameral, whether the system of government is presidential, parliamentary or hybrid in nature, the balance of power between parliaments and executives and the tenor of this relationship, the political culture, power dynamics between governing and

opposition parties; the role Speakers of parliament, committee chairs, political party whips and other parliamentary structures, to name just a few. All of these environmental factors shape the inclination and aptitude of stakeholders within African parliaments to demand, create or apply evidence in pursuing their mandates.

As alluded to by Morkel and Bradshaw (2021) and Masvaure et al. (2021) earlier in this volume, most African parliaments emerged as artefacts of a European colonial past and, to this day, retain some of those inherited features. While European legislatures (such as France and the United Kingdom) were born of the struggles to wrest power from kings and establish a democratic order for their own (male) citizens, these same legislatures were happy to impose slavery and colonialism on the territories they had subjugated. Universal female suffrage was a much later historical development. For example, a Legislative Assembly was established in 1850 in the British Gold Coast as an advisory body to the colonial governor without any meaningful legislative authority or representation from the majority of the population. Similarly, Zimbabwe also inherited a Westminster style system of government, with a political culture which relegated oversight to opposition MPs rather than regarding it as an obligation of parliament as an institution. The same would apply to South Africa.

After independence, many African countries adopted a series of constitutions which shaped the institutional development of their parliaments. Thereafter, extensive periods of one-party politics followed in some African countries and, in some cases, their history was punctuated by military regimes which periodically dissolved parliaments. While parliaments continued to merely fine-tune legislation crafted by the executive and perfunctorily perform the rituals of oversight and accountability in form, in substance they submissively yielded to executive dominance by enacting laws and policies which favoured post-colonial elites, often further entrenching inequality. The reduction of parliaments to rubber-stamping entities was often accompanied by curtailment of the freedom of the media and civil society. The role of parliaments in budget approval was often simply ceremonial.

With the strengthening of multiparty democracy, calls were made for African parliaments to play a more activist role in shaping their country's development, and with these reforms came the need to strengthen institutional capability to execute that role. The Yaoundé Declaration of African Parliamentarians on Evaluation in 2014 recognised the important role played by (particularly

evaluation) evidence in national decision-making and this included the crucial role of parliamentarians in ensuring evaluation evidence is used for strengthening decision-making.

Parliaments' functions within the broader development context

Notably, the broader development context shapes how parliaments are structured as state institutions, with parliaments themselves encompassing multiple spaces and structures of power. The international development agenda continues to be embedded in global and national socioeconomic inequalities and is beset with systems of power and patronage, for example, international donors and neoliberal agendas continue to dominate development efforts. Moreover, the rise of the New Public Administration bolstered the need for systems of governance, compliance, and accountability with parliaments functioning as critical role players (Morkel & Bradshaw, 2021). MPs play critical roles in shifting attitudes from EIPM practices being founded on bureaucracy and compliance principles which overlook citizen needs, towards supporting more transformative evidence practices that are anchored on achieving development outcomes and ensuring the representation of citizens in policy-making agendas. There has been growing recognition of the importance and relevance of EIPM with parliaments' roles as institutions of good governance acknowledged as critically important. This volume has explored parliaments' roles as transformative institutions of good governance and their significance to systematising evidence use in policymaking to ensure that development programmes meet their intended objectives in improving citizens' livelihoods.

The political nature of evidence use

The nonlinearity and political nature of evidence has been a central theme throughout this volume. Parliaments and individual MPs are deeply embedded in power relations and value contestations which inherently shape what evidence is demanded, selected, and, ultimately, used for policymaking. At a macro level, party politics and systems of patronage are part and parcel of the neopatrimonial state culture which can be expressed in individuals being incentivised to be and to remain in positions of power for personal and party political gains (Khumalo et al., 2021). Party politics in parliaments play out in electoral incentive systems where MPs strive to be voted back in by maintaining party allegiance while simultaneously ensuring they remain loyal and maintain populism with their constituents. Evidence use needs to be understood

alongside these complexities as policy decision-making intertwines different norms, values, power, influences and authority and evidence cannot therefore be viewed merely as a neutral, objective tool for more effective decision-making.

In the politically charged governance arena of the legislature, the use (or rejection) and interpretation of evidence is quintessentially political; that is, conditioned by divergent values, ideologies and opinions; competing wants, needs and opposing interests vying for power and staking claim to limited resources and the changing dynamics of conflict and cooperation among rival stakeholder groupings. Evidence of poor performance could be 'weaponised' by opposition parties to cast the ruling party in a bad light and ignored or suppressed by defensive MPs of the ruling party intent on deflecting criticism rather than on improving performance.

Another factor which inhibits the use of evidence in decision-making is the (frequently non-transparent) political party funding system. Newly elected MPs, beholden to the funders of their political party election campaigns, may be pressured into facilitating the award of contracts and kickbacks to their benefactors, as well as patronage appointments. Under these circumstances, there is little incentive to consider evidence. This entrenches neopatrimonialism among political elites, and further marginalises representation of groups like women, persons with disabilities, and the rural poor who are deemed risky candidates offering a lower probability of returns on investment. This creates a market for political influence with political entrepreneurs rewarded for putting party and/or self-interest above the legitimate aspirations of their citizens or constitutional responsibilities. Voter alienation and apathy are exacerbated as the public perception of parliaments' legitimacy and performance declines, as has been shown in public opinion surveys such as the Afrobarometer. These political dynamics prevail in much of the developed and developing world, and Africa is certainly no exception.

The micro governance context of evidence in parliaments

Parliaments' internal processes and structures that affect evidence systems: institution-wide, committees and MPs

The incentive of African parliaments to demand evidence, and the opportunity and capacity to use evidence in their core business activities depend largely

their governance structures, parliamentary procedures and leadership, the control and deployment of resources, and the complex interactions among political parties, all of which exist in a dynamic politically charged context. Parliaments enact legislation for the establishment and operation of NESs.

Senior political leadership and structures (such as the Speaker and presiding officers, leaders of the majority and opposition parties, the leader of government business, the whippery and procedural and liaison committees) shape decision-making, the business of parliament and possibilities for the SUE, the rules of parliament, programming, the time parliament has to deliberate and perform its functions, the deployment of MPs as parliamentary committee chairs and other offices, and the sequence and timing of voting procedures. Party whips may enforce party leader's agendas though disciplinary processes despite evidence to the contrary.

Informal institutions, despite being somewhat less tangible and structured, are equally critical drivers of, or barriers to, evidence use. These informal institutions include the political values and culture of transparency, accountability and genuine public participation, the organisational culture of the administration of parliament, the incentives/disincentives for evidence use, political values and commitment to evidence use, and power relations in parliament's interaction with the executive and various levels of government and state entities. There may be trade-offs, tensions and synergies among these factors, which are dynamic, fluid, unfold over time, and occur across various spatial locations.

There is often a gap between formal institutions which may explicitly favour evidence use, and the informal, often tacit, institutions which may actively undermine its use. Therefore, while legislation, regulation and protocols may nominally exist, they may often not be enforced. The formal institutions often set out how evidence should be used, but the informal institutions determine how it is used in practice. Constrained financial resources are sometimes cited as barriers to effective evidence use but limited budgets are often symptomatic of a lack of political will which places low value and priority on evidence use. Conversely, as resources and capacity have increased in some parliaments, the quality of oversight has declined. The Parliament of South Africa, for instance, failed to combat state capture during the Zuma administration (2009-2018) and, despite greater resources and capacity, performed worse than it had in the first decade after democratic elections in 1994 (Ajam, 2020). Parliaments

like EALA have committed, as far as possible, to a dedicated budget line for the professional development of MPs and support staff and for evidence generation and use.

Trust (or lack thereof) is another important informal institution. Some MPs tend to prefer evidence they themselves have requested or evidence from internal sources rather than from external sources, especially when the standpoints of those sources do not resonate with their own perspectives. This points to the need not only to build institutional linkages but also to adopt more relational approaches to building credibility and trust. The application of evidence is often selective. Opposition parties, for instance, may prefer to ignore evaluative evidence which suggests good performance by government programmes or institutions. There may be little agreement on the quality of evidence.

It is often the operations of portfolio committees that are most amenable to evidence use, as there is generally more time for deliberation, the MPs are familiar with colleagues, and there is personalised support from committee staff and researchers, especially on policy issues which are uncontroversial. In parliaments like Ghana, the lack of adequate meeting rooms and staff shortages requires administrative staff to support multiple committees and this constrains effective committee performance. Neither committees nor support staff may be aware of evaluations already undertaken in NES and may also be unaware of forthcoming evaluations. This lack of knowledge results in research products not drawing sufficiently on NES evaluations.

The nature of democratic elections means considerable turnover of MPs and hence a continuous need for training and capacity building for new parliamentarians. These induction programmes should cover the roles and responsibilities, structures and processes in parliaments and the executive. Ideally, these should integrate evidence use within the scope of the other orientation dimensions. Low rates of returning members can result in a loss of institutional memory and the inexperienced new incumbents may be unfamiliar with parliamentary processes and procedures and may take some time to become functional.

MPs navigate the contested spaces between their constitutional role which tends to support evidence use, political party allegiances (which often do not), the interests of their constituents (who may not fully understand their constitutional role), and personal self-interest. This is especially true in settings

where public office confers status and income which individuals otherwise would not be able to access, and they face considerable pressure to provide services far beyond the public representative function. Once elected, MPs earn salaries which are high relative to the degree of poverty in their countries, have access to perks like favourable loans on new cars and subsidised accommodation, have control over funding for constituency development, and have increased access to networks for business opportunities. For MPs of the governing party, deployment as a minister becomes an attainable prospect should they find favour with party bosses. Simply waiting for directives from party superiors to dictate their positions may be an easier path to career advancement and, conversely, being the bearer of unwelcome evidence may well be severely career limiting.

Many social groups, such as women, the disabled, and youth are still largely excluded from parliaments despite their rising numbers. This limits their political visibility and influence in marshalling the evidence that would support their causes. National issues that are often pursued by female parliamentarians include healthcare, water, food security, waste management, disaster and risk management, public procurement, youth, environmental sustainability, and marriage-related issues. Even when elected, youth and women may be relegated to lower echelons in the party hierarchy (such as women's leagues or youth league) with limited participation in party policymaking or decisions. The increasing presence of female MPs in Kenya led to the formation of the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) and the Kenya Women Senators Association (KEWOSA) which engage and train women members to enhance their contributions to parliamentary debates. In other cases, multiparty gender caucuses have been less successful in championing the gendered use of evidence.

Strengthening the supply of evidence

Evidence is typically drawn from a broad range of sources including written and oral answers to questions by the executive, petition processes, oversight reports by parliamentary committees, routine administrative data from government services on their operations, more in-depth research, reviews and evaluation studies (which build deeper understanding about performance and beneficiary needs and impact), survey data from national statistical agencies which can provide data on outcomes, other reports from the executive, petitions, whistle-blower testimony, reports of statutory bodies (the Auditor-General, the human

rights commissions and the inspectorate of government), oral and written information from civil society stakeholders, the media and research institutions. Opposition parties often draw on evidence in alternative policy statements, Bill analysis reports, issue briefs, minority reports, sectoral briefs, analytical reports, statements, motions, oversight reports, accountability reports and questions. The use of formal external evaluations tends to be very limited due, inter alia, to the urgency of decisions needed, and the relatively long time required to execute effective evaluations.

It is critical that parliaments diversify their sources of rigorous evidence and that they are not overly dependent on the executive for evidence through official reporting lines. Moreover, they need to develop sufficient internal research and policy analysis capacity to independently verify reporting by the executive. To this end, they need to cooperate with a range of other institutions, such as the supreme audit institution, other institutions supporting democracy such as independent ombuds, and academia.

Internally produced evidence (by parliamentary researchers, PBOs, legal advisors and policy analysts, etc.) is preferred due to ease of access, quick turnaround times to meet tight – and often unpredictable – programming deadlines, and its customisation to the specific needs of committees and MPs. Internally sourced evidence is frequently perceived to be more independent and hence more credible than that provided by the executive. In countries with an NES, internally produced evidence typically reflects only tenuous links with governments' formal evaluation programmes.

Internal sources of evidence

Within the parliamentary ecosystem, there are a number of organisational structures which interact as knowledge managers, linkage agents, and capacity builders and this interaction is pivotal to institutionalising and systematising the use of evidence. Such structures include the Table Office (which mediates between the Office of the Speaker and MPs in managing the activities in the Chamber during plenaries), committee administrative support structures, libraries, parliamentary research units, information, and communication technology (ICT) units and (relatively recently established) PBOs. Hansard – the official publication of parliamentary proceedings – also plays an important role in preserving institutional memory. Many of these structures lack capacity, skills

and funding to perform effectively. Libraries, for example, are often chronically under-funded and struggle to afford subscriptions to electronic resources (especially when these are paid in foreign currencies).

ICT departments play an important role in designing the information architecture, rolling out and maintaining the necessary infrastructure, and the oversight of related policies. This includes managing the parliament's website, email servers, the intranet, business continuity and – increasingly important – cybersecurity. Various communications and public participation units may also be engaged in generating video and audio electronic records and distributing them to all media, including social media. Increasingly ICT departments are also playing a lead role in leading digitisation in parliaments such as Kenya and South Africa.

As in-house structures of parliament, research units, libraries, committee support staff and PBOs are easily accessible to MPs but may fail to timeously meet the demand for evidence by MPs due to insufficient staff and vacant posts, inadequate budgets, inappropriate skill-sets and the broad territorial scope of the research required. There may also be ineffective coordination of these structures, with overlapping roles and responsibilities which are not always well delineated. The number of researchers varies widely across parliaments: Malawi had about 5 researchers, Ghana 10 researchers (for 275 members), Zimbabwe 15 researchers (for 350 members of parliament), Kenya around 31 and South Africa around 50 researchers. These institutional arrangements are described in greater detail in the case studies in Volume 2 of this series.

It is becoming increasingly important that internal knowledge brokers within parliaments coordinate their efforts to provide seamless access to credible information which is required by MPs when they want it and how they want it (format, medium). Since 2016, the relevant components within the Ghanaian parliamentary service (research, library, ICT, Hansard, committees, Table Office, and the Journals and Public Affairs department) have collaborated and coordinated their activities through the steering committee and various technical committees of the Inter-Departmental Research and Information Group (IDRIG), culminating in the launch of a service charter in 2019.

The challenges which confront portfolio committees are often highly technical, cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary in nature. Faced with very tight turnaround times, parliamentary researchers must synthesise many disparate information

sources succinctly and accessibly in their policy briefs. With the increased depth and volume of new scientific knowledge, many researchers and other content providers as generalists struggle with the very specialised research topics which confront them. Under this circumstance, quality assurance of internally produced research reports and briefs becomes very challenging. In some cases, external experts can be contracted to serve as consultants, but budget constraints often render this option unfeasible.

External sources of evidence

In many countries there are independent institutions supporting democracy which could provide objective information and analysis to African parliaments such as auditors-general, public protectors and other ombuds, human rights and gender commissions, public service commissions, etc. Specialised research institutes and policy think-tanks associated with the executive could be useful sources of evidence (e.g the Zimbabwe Economic Policy and Analysis Research Unit (ZEPARU) aligned to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in South Africa). Similarly, in South Africa, parliamentary committees have established relationships with a number of government research institutions including the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and Statistics South Africa (Stats SA).

Given parliament's reliance on evaluative evidence generated through an NES, the independence and objectiveness of the evaluators is of prime importance. Inclusion of a broad array of key external evidence producing stakeholders (research and policy think-tanks, CSOs, e.g. for health and education, and higher education institutions) can enhance the transparency, rigour and independence of the evaluation function. Some of these organisations generate their own evaluative evidence while others, like the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) in Kenya, synthesise secondary research to meet the needs of MPs.

Some of these organisations may be advocating for certain policies or interventions and hence favour evidence and interpretations supporting their missions and downplaying or ignoring evidence to the contrary. It is critical for parliaments to canvass as broadly as possible on policy issues, especially from poor and marginalised communities, including oral evidence in all official languages and sign language.

Engagement with institutions of higher learning could also be an important source of affordable access to the latest evaluative evidence for parliaments (e.g. the Centre for Rapid Evidence Synthesis (ACRES) based at Makerere University in Uganda) through accessibly written policy briefs, position papers, and responses to calls from committees for submissions. While academic sources of evaluative evidence tend to be more balanced and verifiable, they are often too complicated, theoretical, and abstract, and generally take too long to produce to be responsive to parliamentarians' short-term, and often unpredictable, requests. The Department of Research Services (DRS) in Uganda has also, though a memorandum of understanding with the Uganda National Academy of Sciences, facilitated joint projects and the secondment of young graduate scientists volunteering to be seconded to the DRS to share their expertise, promote the uptake of scientific evidence while being trained on policymaking and scientific communication.

The media can also play an important role in awareness raising and providing evidence on policy issues which influence agenda setting in parliamentary debates and committee work. The quality of media output is variable. While certain articles offer deeper insights based on fact checking and sound research, others are much less rigorous. The media itself may not be completely independent or free and could possibly be biased by commercial or government interests. Overreliance by MPs on media sources without other diverse complementary evidence sources is unadvisable. There are few journalists who specialise in parliamentary reporting but, for those who do, there is a risk that they could become embedded and co-opted.

The rise of the internet and social media has lessened the power of commercial interests and governments to control the media, resulting in greater public participation in newsmaking, including citizen journalism where the mainstream media draws on mobile phones and social media to generate eyewitness content and 'alternative' journalism platforms. This has given citizens' 'voice', disrupted mainstream power configurations in public life, and helped to enforce accountability by the executive and by parliament. While new information and communication technologies open up new possibilities for unprecedented civic engagement and public participation through social media, ubiquitous 'fake news' and other forms of unverified propaganda, as well as lack of cybersecurity, could destabilise democratic processes. Regrettably, cyberspace also opens up

the door to hate speech and racism, misogyny and violence against women and children, terrorism, undue influence on electoral processes, unfounded allegations, and a host of other ills.

The convergence of technologies in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) such as digitisation, artificial intelligence, and big data, introduces both risks and opportunities. A deluge of unverified, real-time information may undermine – rather than improve – the quality of evidence used in decision-making. It is also critical that the social and economic inequalities which bedevil the physical world are not replicated and perpetuated in cyberspace, widening the gaping chasm of the digital divide.

CSOs can also play a critical role in the evaluation *of* parliaments, hold MPs accountable, incentivise MPs to improve their performance and, in some cases, also provide capacity-building support to parliaments. These include Parliament Watch in Uganda, Mzalendo in Kenya, Open Parly in Zimbabwe and the Parliamentary Monitoring Group in South Africa, among others. The relationships between these CSOs and the parliaments they focus on may often be fraught with tensions. The CSOs are often critiqued by parliamentarians for painting an uncomplimentary picture of the performance of parliament and the ruling party. These tensions may be exacerbated when CSOs monitoring parliament rely on funding from donors or independent foundations. Parliaments, on the other hand, may frustrate the CSOs access to information and attendance at parliamentary activities in subtle or blatant ways. For example, public committee meetings may be held in camera or may end in closed 'working lunches' unobserved by the public. If there are constitutional/statutory rights to freedom of information and public participation and an independent judiciary, then CSOs may have some form of legal recourse.

Internal and external structures, processes and approaches that contribute to systematising the use of evidence in parliaments

Strengthening evidence use by parliaments will need to build on the emerging good practices while mitigating barriers to systematising use of evidence. Strengthening practices that call for the routine demand of evidence by MPs and instituting criteria that trigger further production of evidence where specific gaps or contradictions emerge are crucial for institutionalising the demand

for evidence by parliaments. This can be complemented by strengthening the technical skills of the parliamentary service support staff who play vital knowledge brokerage roles. The critical assessment of the impact of parliament and preparation of insightful and robust M&E reports on internal performance also play an important role in this regard. Dedicated parliamentary M&E units can also perform a pivotal brokering role in evaluation and evidence use, e.g. through housing databases of CSOs who are key evidence providers and linking them with the relevant parliamentary committees of parliament and other forms of knowledge management and information sharing. This can expand the sources of evidence available to parliaments to exercise oversight over the executive and ensure that its decisions consider the viewpoints of divergent groups in society.

Enhancing systems of evidence production (though NESs and internal research and policy advice) may increase the supply of accurate, reliable, timely and relevant evidence. This increased demand may result in improved quality of information and analysis. This needs to be complemented by initiatives that strengthen the demand and usage of evidence through consensus and cross-party collaboration that promote the credibility of parliament as an institution, supported by a political will hold the executive accountable and followingup and acting on the evidence presented and the recommendations emanating from evaluations.

Strengthening leadership commitment for systematising use of evidence

The commitment of the political leaders in parliament to support the demand, supply and systemic use of evidence may perhaps be the critical factor that determines success within the contested and resource-constrained environment faced by African parliaments. Strengthening this commitment requires consideration of the macro and micro governance context of parliament and parliament's ability to engage with diverse constituencies through meaningful public participation.

Nurturing parliamentary evidence use champions

There are a number of parliamentary networks operating at global, regional and local levels such as the African Parliamentarians Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE) and its national chapters, the Global Parliamentarians' Forum on Evaluation (GPFE), Kenya's Parliamentary Caucus on Evidence-

Informed Oversight and Decision-Making (PC-EIDM), the International Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Such network organisations have been found to contribute positively to strengthening parliaments' eco-systems of evidence by knowledge sharing. In many cases they are not part of the formal parliamentary structure of specific parliaments and tend to rely on external development partners for support. This external funding tends to focus more on secretariat functions and capacity building support rather than on networking activities. As a result, some of these network organisations may face binding budget constraints which hinder their activities. Such networks advocating for evidence use in policymaking and for MPs being central players have been very instrumental in fostering a culture of evaluation in parliaments. For example, evidence champions have emerged from these platforms and it is evident that key parliamentary leaders – such as speakers of parliament – who champion evidence use in their parliaments have more influence and also nurture peer exchange with other parliaments.

However, the maintenance of institutional memory has been a challenge when key parliamentary champions are not voted back into parliament. For instance, capacity-building programmes may suffer setbacks if their erstwhile champions fail to be re-elected. This points to the need to strengthen ties between knowledge brokers inside the administrative support structures of parliament and other stakeholders to ensure that conduits for evidence remain functional.

Parliaments and public participation

As Chapters 7 and 8 have highlighted, the capacity of parliaments to engage in genuine public participation lies at the heart of its representative role and the democratic project. For most African parliaments, consultation and engagement with citizens is constitutionally or legally mandatory. Parliaments are representatives of the people and, as such, are central to the establishment of an effective relationship between government and its citizens. Citizen engagement is a prerequisite to ensuring that development outcomes, especially those pertaining to underrepresented populations, are heard and recognised in parliaments' decision-making agendas. UN Women has highlighted the crucial role that African parliaments can play in promoting gender equality and social inclusion and in raising awareness around the imperative for an integrated focus on generating and using evidence on gender equality and equity within the framing of the SDGs, including contextual gendered power relations and how they impact on development.

The outcries of poverty-stricken citizens and their yearning for improved circumstances and livelihoods have manifested in constituencies expecting MPs to support them by meeting their basic immediate needs rather than participating in longer-term community development objectives. Citizens' expectations include reliance on MPs for family and community needs such as support for funerals and school fees thereby rendering the representation function more complex for MPs. It is important that parliaments are not captured by powerful interest groups but ensure that a wide a range of different beliefs, ideologies and interests are expressed and represented in deliberations. In practice, however, not all voices are heard. Often the voices of the politically sophisticated, powerful, and organised groups which receive the most attention while the voices of other groups are marginalised or silenced. MPs and parties may mobilise constituents and other stakeholders to appear before committees and bolster their stance and influence decisions in their favour.

Institutionalising systems of evidence use

In Chapter 3 of this volume, Masvaure et al. reject a reductionist approach to systems thinking in favour of a holistic approach which recognises the importance of the interconnectedness between the various components of parliamentary evidence systems. This is aligned with the precept of *evidence-informed policymaking* which recognises that policy decision-making is affected by myriad factors such as values and ideologies as well as the political considerations demonstrated in this volume.

Strengthening African parliaments through national evaluation systems

The fundamental role of national evaluation systems (NESs) in institutionalising evidence systems in parliaments is highlighted by Chirau et al. in Chapter 4. Parliaments are inherently evaluative institutions, both internally and externally. To oversee the executive, parliaments demand evaluative evidence from their technical departments and their partnerships with evidence producers such as CSOs and academia. Moreover, parliaments increasingly invest not just in research departments but also in M&E units/departments to ensure that the important function of monitoring their internal performance against their core mandates is achieved. M&E policies in countries like Uganda have been instrumental to fostering leadership, including parliamentarians' appreciation of the role of institutionalising evidence for effective policymaking. However,

the use of evaluations for policymaking is still limited and remains a challenge. This is attributable to the long time periods and extensive financial resources that are required to conduct evaluations, especially impact evaluations. Moreover, there remain limited instances of parliaments themselves producing evaluations, although there is evidence of some parliamentary committees demanding evaluations from the executive.

In principle, NESs offer a huge advantage for parliaments wanting to exercise oversight over progress towards a national development plan since they allow legislatures to access evaluations regularly across the whole of the executive, rather than the occasional ad hoc evaluation. NESs are, however, generally driven by the executive which sets out national M&E policy on how evaluations are prioritised, conducted and used, designates a national M&E champion, and provides a framework for enhancing the quality, coverage, usefulness and dissemination of evaluative evidence, building the requisite capacity, integrating with evidence-based planning and promoting the utilisation and sharing of data.

It is evident from the case studies explored in this book that NESs are at different stages of maturity. While there have been some gains (e.g. identification of gaps in the legislative framework for M&E and clarification of roles and responsibilities – including of parliament), the culture of demanding M&E information to improve decision-making and performance still has to be embedded, the quality of evaluations may be inconsistent , funding for evaluations may be uncertain, and an emphasis on monitoring may still predominate.

Links between knowledge brokers within the executive and parliament may not be formalised and MPs may either be unaware of or not have access to evaluations and associated improvement plans based on their recommendations. Similarly, links between parliaments and national statistics systems may still be weak with parliaments relying more on administrative datasets. From a legislative perspective, parliamentarians may feel that the executive should not be evaluating itself in the NES and that evaluations should be independent. In this volume, Chirau et al. highlight the need for formal linkages between the executive structures and parliamentary internal institutions to ensure that evaluations are demanded and that evaluation findings are subsequently implemented to ensure programme development.

The early experience of the newly established Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the Presidency of South Africa highlights the importance of regular interactions with the Committee of Chairs of Portfolio Committees to raise awareness about the NES and evaluations undertaken, stimulate demand for evaluative evidence among MPs and parliamentary researchers, the parliamentary budget office and other internal knowledge brokers. In Benin and South Africa, evaluations are made publicly available through a website to facilitate access to the broader public. Links between evaluations and planning and budgeting are still not as strong as they could be. The Government Technical Assistance Centre (GTAC) in the National Treasury of South Africa has also undertaken many performance and expenditure reviews which are more closely aligned to budgeting and are available to the public on its website.

Future directions in building the capacity for systematic evidence use by African parliaments

Much of the focus has historically been on the tangible, technical and logistical capacity of parliaments such as skills, budgets, management systems, legislative or procedural frameworks, information flows, definition of roles and responsibilities. Initially interventions targeted skills development and knowledge sets among individual MPs and support staff, but there has been increasing recognition that these need to be accompanied by institutional reforms to the structures, processes, and organisational culture of the administration of parliament. A more holistic strategy to strengthening the capacity for evidence use will need to stimulate both evidence supply and demand, as well as have the necessary internal capacity to verify and synthesise evidence. All these requirements should be underpinned by the political will and organisational culture to respond to evidence amidst the competing priorities already discussed in the micro governance perspective.

The ability and inclination to apply and transfer learning gained from capacity-strengthening initiatives is conditioned by political will and a political culture that values evidence use in lawmaking, oversight, budgeting and representation. Political strategies for capacity building which engage with the underlying political-economy drivers of the macro governance context, the power dynamics they create, internal institutional politics and incentive structures that shape the behaviours, decisions and actions (or inactions) of various stakeholders in parliaments, are absolutely indispensable. These strategies

should not only factor in formal institutions, but also the equally powerful but intangible informal institutions: traditions, tacit conventions, ideologies, values, habits and attitudes.

Effective capacity building for systematising evidence use is always transformative and may shift existing power structures with resulting but inevitable political repercussions. Just as development initiatives fail if they are not contextually relevant, capacity-strengthening initiatives carry a double burden, as articulated by Blaser Mapitsa et al. in Volume 2 of this series. They must be relevant to the context of a specific parliament, but they must also be able to shift strategic levers of power that previously limited the effectiveness of parliaments. These dual demands often pull programmes in opposite directions and managing both can often seem like a zero-sum trade off. The intricacies of systematising capacitystrengthening initiatives in parliaments and how they work in practice are described more by Blaser Mapitsa et al. (2021) in Volume 2 of this series.

For those countries that have established NESs or are contemplating doing so, it is important to institutionalise linkages between the NES and the evaluative role of parliament. As a starting point, this may just require a specific committee(s) to be charged with oversight over evaluations and relationships among the knowledge brokers within parliament (such as parliamentary research services and budget offices) and the executive. Such an arrangement would ensure that completed and planned evaluations are shared with parliament. It would also enable committees to request particular evaluation topics. In time, it would include strengthening parliamentary committees to engage with evaluation findings and follow-up on evaluation recommendations and improvement plans. Ideally, in some cases, this relationship should be formalised in a National Evaluation policy so that information sharing workshops coincide with specific milestones in parliaments' programmes to influence legislative decision-making, e.g. when strategic and annual performance plans are adopted, budget votes are approved, or progress against the national development plan is reported. This would then allow portfolio committee chairs to factor planned evaluations and improvement plan follow-up into their annual operational plans.

In some cases, new legislation on M&E may be appropriate. For example, some countries adopted the position that all publicly funded evaluations and annual performance reports should be freely available to the public on the department's website. Transparency around evaluations may create an incentive

to evaluators to be rigorous since their methodology and findings would be open to peer-review scrutiny. More importantly, it would provide the public with deeper insight on issues, obstacles and possible courses of action and may enable and encourage civil groups and minority constituencies to embark on continuous engagement with parliamentarians to act on these matters.

In other cases, executive reporting requirements could be changed. Possible considerations include requiring the disclosure of all completed and planned evaluations, full access to the recommendations and progress on the recommendations in annual reports and objective reporting to parliamentarian committees by the custodian department for evaluations, rather than a more nuanced version first approved by the executive department.

Parliamentary rules may also be changed to require relevant forms of evaluative evidence before legislation is enacted or budgets are adopted (e.g environmental impact or carbon footprint studies, gender analysis of the budget, economic sustainability projections, and regulatory impact assessments). A court case in South Africa in August 2019 set aside the findings of the Seriti Commission of Inquiry into the arms deal on the grounds that the Commission's proceedings fell short of the requirements of legality and rationality. This opens the way to review current *Commissions Act 8 of 1947* and Parliament's House rules (where necessary) to ensure that this legislation is congruent with constitutional intent. Revised legislation is crucial as it may enhance the ability of special parliamentary committees of inquiry to investigate by enabling the summoning of witnesses, calling for submissions from interested parties, and the holding of public hearings (Ajam 2020). This could potentially increase the demand for forensic and computer auditing evidence that may currently not be readily available to many parliaments.

A major benefit of M&E legislation or parliamentary rules which clearly position parliament as an institution in relation to a NES, is that it promotes institutional continuity and, hence, the effectiveness of capacity-building interventions. It also encourages the establishment of routine reporting and oversight procedures and can help motivate the establishment and financial support for appropriate support capacity (e.g. research units or access to evidence databases). Promising evidence-based initiatives may initially receive support from the current political and administrative leadership due to their close alignment to the political objectives of the incumbent government, only to fall apart after elections. Legislation and parliamentary rules provide continuity for consecutive parliaments.

Capacity-building interventions should ideally have a 3 to 5 year planning horizon which factors in key governance milestones in the executive annual planning, budgeting and reporting cycles as well as the parliamentary programming cycle and calendar (e.g. when MP inductions take place, when parliament is in session and recess, when plans and budgets need to be approved, how different parliamentary committees, support staff and other parliamentary structures will be affected, and how they relate to each other). The less generic and abstract capacity-building interventions are and the more tailored to a particular parliamentary context and the roles of the various stakeholders, the more impactful they are likely to be. Capacity strengthening should not only focus on technical skills but should endeavour to create an inherent appreciation of evidence use and a supportive organisational culture. All parliamentarians should be exposed to capacity-strengthening initiatives and be familiarised with the available support structures available to MPs. Portfolio chairpersons would benefit from additional support to successfully facilitate robust engagement and discussions, especially in politically contested areas. Despite the best planning intent, the political environments in which African parliaments operate are dynamic and often unpredictable. A great deal of mutual flexibility may, therefore, also be called for.

Securing buy-in from political and administrative leadership is critical to harnessing institutional support and, from a micro governance perspective, encouraging individual MPs, political parties and support staff to invest the time, effort and resources to capacity-building interventions will enhance the likelihood of success. Their visible commitment facilitates the identification of institutional champions, the selection of the most appropriate participants, ring-fencing their time so that they can concentrate rather than constantly being called back to the office, and arranging for the use of available resources (e.g. meeting venues). These champions could use diverse techniques and learning methods in a 'train the trainer' approach, or could use parliamentary mechanisms which help capacity-building interventions to reach the broader group of MPs and the different levels of support staff. Training interventions often reveal issues with the processes of parliament which impede the effective use of evidence (e.g. lack of coordination among internal knowledge brokers) which can be resolved by informed and capable political or administrative leadership. Similarly, if MPs are dissatisfied with certain aspects of current arrangements for accessing evidence, institutional strengthening of this

shortcoming may require ownership from parliamentary leadership. Without a commitment to action, development partners may become frustrated and discouraged from pursuing and participating in capacity-building partnerships.

Parliaments tend to be large institutions governed by protocol, processes and traditions, and are quite bureaucratic with time-consuming processes. Development partners need to invest in understanding the communications and authorisation protocols of parliaments and should devote sufficient time to raising awareness on proposed initiatives, consulting on their objectives, ensuring advance planning with sufficient lead times, and building relationships of trust. Trust is maximised when the intentions of the development partner are to strengthen the capacity of parliament. Care should be taken to avoid introducing other reform agendas as part of capacity-building initiatives as this erodes the established trust and may erode the progress made towards systematising use of evidence.

Parliamentary research units are in a good position to package evaluations from the executive and other external sources with other forms of evidence in their research briefs for MPs. Although they face capacity and financial constraints, over time they can endeavour not only to provide reactive desktop studies, but also to undertake proactive studies (e.g. in relation to the progress of national development plans or emerging policy issues which require legislation) and primary research (e.g. rapid evaluations and other forms of empirical research). While parliamentary researchers may have expertise in one area, capacity constraints may force them to support committees where their expertise is general rather than specialised. Building partnerships with research institutions may help fill that gap. While parliamentarians may find information from research institutions too technical or theoretical, research staff can play a critical role in interpreting and packaging available evidence in an objective and balanced way in order to be useful to the deliberations and discussions without imposing specific political directions or viewpoints.

Systematic capacity building and parliaments' adaptability to technological transformations

Skills development of parliamentary researchers should be ongoing and should focus on asking the right policy questions, critical and independent thinking, and accurate interpretation and utilisation of M&E information. Equally important are the ability to work under pressure and excellent writing

and verbal presentation skills, which include the ability to succinctly and clearly present evidence in an impartial and politically neutral manner that encourages thorough consideration by the recipients of the information. Internal monitoring databases can be very useful as they capture the type of information requested by parliamentarians and can serve to systematically build appropriate evidence platforms and avenues to respond to these requests for information in an increasingly efficient and thorough manner. Analysis of these request databases could constitute a useful proxy for evidence demand and could feed into the strategic planning of parliamentary research departments. Parliamentarians' perceptions of the usefulness of the available research support staff and the value of the information available will determine future requests and uptake of such services. Parliamentary researchers could also participate in evaluation steering committees or validation workshops in order to contribute a legislative perspective. Interaction and mutual support between parliamentary researchers and the custodian department for the NES can facilitate the inclusion of evidence from completed evaluations in the submissions to parliamentarians at crucial milestones in the parliamentary calendar. Such interactions can also serve to validate and further augment the research findings of parliamentary research staff before such findings are presented to parliamentarians.

Despite resource constraints, parliamentary libraries are being compelled to re-think their offerings in an increasingly digital information multiverse. With the advent of the internet and digitisation of archives and other documents, there has been an unprecedented explosion in the production of electronic and multimedia publishing – domestically, regionally, and internationally, as well as filtering and search tools to access both non-electronic and digital resources. The array of information formats (texts, numeric, graphic, video, audio, images, etc.) is also expanding rapidly as are computing and telecommunications technologies for content creation, storage, retrieval, and delivery systems/ services. In African countries the cost of data remains high, the quality of internet access is variable, and access to appropriate devices may be limited. Ideally, specific budget allocations should be made to enable access to rich digital information. Cybersecurity also becomes a concomitantly greater challenge under these circumstances. European parliaments could support their counterparts in Africa and the developing world by enacting laws and approving other incentives for open access to academic journals and other scholarly works. Content development in local languages is also crucial.

Notably, parliaments have continuously digitalised their systems and processes to support real-time evidence, although this varies across parliaments depending on their resources, leadership buy-in, and their prioritisation of investing in evidence structures and processes. Importantly, the politicised nature of evidence and the myriad power dynamics in parliaments stand to hinder the introduction of systems that aim to achieve a shared evidence culture. Naturally, the prioritisation given to the reform of the parliamentary landscape to be more evidence enabling will vary from party to party. Notwithstanding, some innovative examples have been devised including digitalising oversight visits and facilitating real-time capturing of information and brokering evidence from parliamentary researchers to MPs by means of a mobile application (app) for oversight – the African Parliamentary Oversight Tool (POT) developed by CLEAR-AA. Moreover, the digitalisation of parliamentary libraries and the creation of e-database management systems, for example, ensuring the accessibility of the Hansard online for public consumption, are strides worth noting. However, some parliaments with fewer resources such as limited budget and research staff capacity have been slower in adopting more digitalised processes such as up-to-date online information, library systems and services to support timely and relevant evidence demands.

These developments are a boon, but also very confusing to MPs and other information users. The conventional information access and management roles of parliamentary librarians will inevitably expand to include the new role of information specialist intermediary between potential information user bases and the body of recorded information. They, in partnership with ICT departments, will have to lead the design and deployment of new information products, services and tools (such as mobile apps) to support information seeking, selection, analysis and synthesis of information content on behalf of users. They will also have to assume a capacity-building function for information users.

With the increased penetration of mobile phones in Africa, social media such as Twitter, Snap, YouTube, Facebook or Instagram have given voice to, and permitted the participation of formerly marginalised citizens and grassroots movements. This has invigorated demands for engagement from civil society using these channels e.g. for petitions, referendums, mobile phone campaigns and other forms of civic engagement. Scandals in the developed world have already illustrated that social media (such as Facebook) could influence the

outcomes of elections. As these trends and other 4IR technologies converge (e.g. artificial intelligence, machine learning, virtual and augmented reality, facial recognition), parliaments will have to enact legislative framework and enforce legislation which protects the privacy, consumer protection, safety and other rights of citizens against international technology platforms.

As parliaments venture increasingly into the social media space in order to facilitate public participation, they will have to adopt social media strategies and acquire the necessary skills to implement them. When new ICT systems and apps are introduced by the parliamentary service, it is important to secure the buy-in of MPs at the beginning of the process to pre-empt possible resistance from MPs to using official email and cybersecurity systems, apps and social media accounts. These new approaches should be used to complement existing civil outreach initiatives by parliaments, thereby enabling inputs and interactions not only with more constituencies, but also more frequently. Committee support staff should develop tracking mechanisms for following-up committee recommendations. If the committee engages with evaluation recommendations or improvement plans, these could be included in resolution tracking systems.

Systematising use of evidence in parliaments: Implications for practice

Given the complexity of EIPM, there is a need for a clearer understanding of the decision-making criteria that direct and influence the deliberations of MPs and parliamentary committees. The need to invest in parliaments as evaluative institutions cannot be overstated. It is necessary to strengthen multistakeholder interactions in the evidence flow to enable parliaments to access the multitude of credible evidence sources. For example, in a study on South African portfolio committees, Rabie (2019) found that knowing which executive department proposed a policy plays a significant role in how a problem is contextualised and the potential solutions that are offered as these will align to the mandate of the department. An important conclusion to be drawn from this is that the stakeholders who wish to influence the direction of policies or bills may need to engage with the mandated department prior to the issue being brought to the parliamentary committees for deliberation and referral. Therefore, strengthening the oversight capacity of parliamentarians and providing access to diverse sources of evidence may also create the

capacity to offer countering perspectives to the suggested course of action by the executive and truly enable parliament to lead, rather than just endorse, the direction set by the executive. As explained in this volume, systematising the use of evidence is complex and requires a multifaceted approach with interaction across various players, and central to this are the linkages between the executive and parliaments. Steward, Langer and Erasmus (2019) further highlight the need for and importance of multifaceted and context-specific engagements focusing on the individual, organisational and institutional levels to strengthen the capacity of evidence use. Consequently, in addition to the importance of advancing technical and logistical aspects such as improving processes, resources, capacity building and recruiting more research staff to support evidence use, it is equally critical to nurture a culture of evidence which is underpinned by leadership buy-in to the importance of an evidence culture. Beyond the existence of NESs, any attempt to foster an evidence culture also requires the institutionalising of evidence use across the various arms of the state and other institutions. Here, parliaments interaction with the executive and other external stakeholders becomes critical to systematising evidence use. This requires increased trust and collaboration across both internal and external stakeholders in the evidence chain. To reiterate the findings of Chirau et al. (2021) this includes the need to strengthen interactions between national evaluation system functions, evidence generation, and use in policy decision-making. This means bridging the prevailing silo approaches between the executive and parliament by supporting processes that foster an evaluative culture with the common goal of meeting development objectives.

As Khumalo et al. highlight in Chapter 5, the systematisation of evidence use in parliaments requires adherence to Parkhurst's (2017) precepts relating to the good governance of evidence. This includes advocating for rigorous, systematic, and technically valid evidence for decision-making. Moreover, EIPM should remain inclusive to citizens needs and MPs, as citizens' representatives, have important roles to play in ensuring that evidence systems contribute to achieving meaningful development outcomes for citizens, including marginalised groups. An acknowledgement of the politicised nature of evidence reinforces the need to be wary of a political lens for evidence selection and use in favour of a values-based evidence-informed policymaking lens that advocates for evidence as a negotiated space across diverse stakeholders. Therefore, interventions to strengthen evidence use should recognise the MPs' values and incentives and

not downplay political influences such as party manifestos and constituency demands as they are key incentives to parliamentary evidence use.

Concluding remarks

Democracies face huge challenges with declining legitimacy. Using new datasets drawing from 25 data sources, 3 500 country surveys, and 4 million respondents between 1973 and 2020, Foa et al. (2020) conclude that the proportion of people dissatisfied with democracy has risen continuously since the mid-1990s and has reached an all-time global high, especially in developed democracies. Against this backdrop, parliaments will have to decide on the role they wish to play in the political system and their inclination to assert their independence in holding the executive to account. Ultimately, this will determine their appetite for systematic evidence use.

With the necessary political will, parliaments can change and empower themselves to play the role their constitutions envisage. The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated that some parliaments have been agile enough to respond rapidly to the escalating health crisis, through applying videoconferencing technologies for virtual plenary sessions, committee sessions and public engagements, and with library information being made available to MPs digitally. The parliamentary service function has had to adjust to unsettling new conditions such as dispersed working staff working remotely from home. It remains to be seen whether parliaments will continue to pursue more effective and flexible operating models in a post-pandemic world geared to increased SUE or if they will simply revert to old bureaucratic conventions. Ideally, parliamentary protocols and procedures should be reviewed and adapted to allow for the more sustained application of these innovative tools that were seen to have added value during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A multistakeholder approach is required for introducing more innovative approaches to meet high evidence demands in parliaments, especially those less resourced. The short turnaround time required for some evidence requests presents a challenge in parliaments that may not be capacitated sufficiently to meet such demands. This has further implications for the use of evaluation recommendations by parliaments, given the length of time it often takes to undertake evaluations and present the findings for policymaking. This may be more feasible for longer-term policy decisions. Therefore, the use of rapid

evaluations and other innovative evaluative approaches to communicate evidence to parliamentarians is encouraged.

African post-pandemic reconstruction will regrettably entail more resource constraints and challenges in the wake of the health crisis, lockdown induced economic recession, increased unemployment and poverty, the collapse of tax systems, and burgeoning debt. Resources for capacity building and the time available to MPs and parliamentary service staff will be equally constrained. Collaboration and partnerships in joint programmes will be imperative, despite the huge investment in time, effort, and patience required for mutual understanding and accommodation of different objectives, focus areas, approaches, philosophies, interests, and expectations. As is the case with parliaments themselves, development partners may be compelled to explore joint resource mobilisation strategies on greater shared responsibility for direction setting, implementation and management which reap the synergies of the strengths of different development partners. These joint strategies may promote sharing of knowledge and insights, prevent duplication, identify gaps, minimise capacity-building fatigue, and may result in the adoption of approaches which draw upon international good practice, but are designed and implemented by Africans for the unique legislative contexts in different African parliaments.

Reference list

Ajam, T. (2020). Future-proofing the state against corruption and capture: the performance of the Parliamentary Service in supporting effective legislative oversight in South Africa. *Administratio Publica*, 28(2).

Foa, R., Klassen, A., Slade, M., Rand, A. & Collins, R. (2020). The Global Satisfaction with Democracy Report 2020. United Kingdom: Cambridge, Centre for the Future of Democracy. Available from https://bit.ly/3zSCBp2

Government Technical Assistance Centre (GTAC). The National Treasury. The Republic of South Africa. (Various years) Performance Expenditure Reviews: Technical Documents and Cost Models.

New Nation Movement NPC and Others v *President of the Republic of South Africa and Others*. (2019). ZACC 27. Available from https://bit.ly/3omGGzM

Rabie, B. 2019. The Most Influential Decision-making Criteria in South African Parliamentary Committees. *Administratio Publica,* 27(4):26-46.

Stewart, R., Dayal, H., Langer, L. & Van Rooyen, C. (2019). The evidence ecosystem in South Africa: growing resilience and institutionalisation of evidence use. *Palgrave Communications*, 5(1):1-12. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0303-0