



## Chapter 5

# Public Sector Communications and Institutionalised Bureaucracy

Margaret L. Dingalo 

“I believe that a guarantee of public access to information is indispensable in the long run for any democratic society ...”  
Swedish philosopher, Sissela Bok, 1982

In democratic societies, the right to access information is critical for public participation processes. Transparency, accountability and trust are closely associated with how public institutions openly and honestly engage communities on decisions that affect their lives (Hyland-Wood, Gardner, Leask & Ecker, 2021). The role that public sector communicators play in enabling participation and enables citizens to judge the work of public institutions (Canel & Sanders, 2012). Public sector communicators are tasked with facilitating communications between the public institutions and the citizens they serve (Ruijer, 2013). Communicators that work in public institutions make a valuable contribution in facilitating transparency, participation and engagement in policy-making processes, according to the Government Communications and Information Service of South Africa (GCIS, 2019).

Despite public sector communications importance to 21st century politics as a distinct area of research, it is not yet well understood its . The complexity of public sector communications and its unique environment wherein it is practised has become a subject of interest for many public sector investigations (Dingalo, 2020; Mbhele, 2016; Mukhudwana, 2014). Researchers tend to focus on communication systems (Dingalo, 2020), processes (Mbhele, 2016) and how communication is practised in public sector

institutions (Mukhudwana, 2014). This chapter argues that the uniqueness of the environment within which public institutions operate – in particular, institutionalised bureaucracy – has a bearing on their communication practices.

### **Public Sector Institutions**

Public sector institutions operate in highly regulated environments and have a responsibility to diverse stakeholders, often with divergent and competing interests. This means public institutions are under constant scrutiny, more so than their private sector counterparts. Public administration scholars advocate for the need to distinguish between public and private sector organisations particularly when conducting organisational communication research, because of the distinct differences in their operating environments (Dingalo, 2020; Mukhudwana, 2014). When compared to corporate communication, public sector communication is considered more complex because it must deal with significantly broader issues in managing the evolving expectations of different constituencies (Fairbanks, 2005). Scholars like Morudu and Halsal (2017), Allan and Heese (2017) as well as Khale and Worku (2013) lament the effects of bureaucratic systems of public institutions on the pace of implementing policy and service delivery. (;;.

### **Bureaucratic Theory and Its Influence on the Public Sector**

The bureaucratic approach provides valuable insight into the public institutions operational environment and influences how people communicate within these organisations (Weber, 1947; Waters & Waters, 2015). Bureaucracies are large-scale organisations, which are commonly found in both the public and private sectors (Olsen, 2008). Weber's theory of bureaucratic management is the basis for the most widely recognised system of public administration (Sager & Rosser, 2021). Weber (1978) describes a bureaucracy as a highly structured, formalised organisation with defined hierarchical

structures with clear rules and regulations and clear lines of authority, which govern it.

Dahlström, Lapuente and Teolle (2010) refer to bureaucracy as any large organisation of appointed officials whose primary function is to implement the policies of decision-makers. The rules that govern procedures within bureaucratic organisations, whether formal or informal, largely influence how public institutions operate (Hyden, Court & Mease, 2003). According to Weber (1947), bureaucracy plays a critical role in ensuring effective as well as efficient execution of policies. Weber (1947) highlighted three important characteristics of bureaucracies in his definition:

1. a well-defined hierarchy within the organisation;
2. a formal set of rules and regulations; and
3. clear lines of authority.

These clearly specified sources of control and decision making facilitate supervision, competency and accountability in large, complex organisations.

While scholars consider the concept of bureaucracy differently, the common point of departure among their different interpretations involves the understanding of how rules and regulations, hierarchal structures and lines of authority are used in large organisations to ensure effectiveness and efficiencies during the implementation and execution of policies (Dahlström et al., 2010; Hyden et al., 2003; Sager & Rosser, 2021). Organisations cannot always be considered as entirely bureaucratic, thus it is important to understand which bureaucratic rules and processes matter in defining bureaucracy. Among the many rules that matter, and which are relevant to this chapter are rules that govern accountability, communications and transparency. Transparency refers to the ability to guarantee information access to within the realm of accountability that public officials possess (Jaeger & Bertot, 2010). Public officials, by virtue of being serving in the public service, are accountable to constituencies they serve (Olsen, 2008). Section 32(1) of the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 enshrines the right

to access information on the work of public institutions, and serves as the basis for holding public officials accountable.

Bureaucratic theory makes vital assumptions about the role of hierarchical structures and regulations in managing large institutions. Weber (1947) believed that a well-defined hierarchy and clear lines of authority are crucial for effective and optimal functioning of large organisations. Establishing a set of rules that serve to codify regulations for everyone to follow not only seeks to guarantee achievement of organisational goals, it also ensures discipline and consistency in implementation.

Although these standard rules are viewed as implicitly positive, they may have unintended consequences. Weber (1978) reflected on the prospect of more red tape, that is, bureaucracy being put in place when rules get in the way of immediate goals. Weber's theory was based on his conception of rational and efficient organisations in private and public sectors, bearing in mind that scholars like Graham (1994) Kaplan (2009) highlight that there exist distinct differences in how bureaucratic principles are applied in public and private organisations;. Public sector institutions operate within a complex and highly regulated environment thus making them inflexible and unresponsive compared to their private sector counterparts (Liu & Levenshus, 2008).

Early 20th century literature on the role of bureaucracy, particularly during a period of rapid growth in Asian economies, asserts the view that the bureaucratic organisation became a key contributor to the success of many public institutions (Dahlström et al., 2010; Evans & Rauch, 1999). While scholars argue that bureaucracies differ structurally from across countries because of historical factors and administrative traditions, they acknowledge that the institutional features and the framework that guide the relationship between the state and society remain largely the same (Olsen, 2008; Peters, 2008).

African countries adopted bureaucratic models later on in their development, with the hope of reaping the

benefits provided by the regularity and certainty of a system, thus enabling consistency in service provision of public institutions. Some African scholars believed initially that the bureaucratic approach had the potential to improve the social and economic conditions of African citizens (Goldsmith, 1999; Olowu, 1988; Okoli, 2010). Although this was the initial belief of providing improvement, it is notable that during the period of colonisation in Africa, bureaucratic practices that were subsequently inherited from colonial states, centred not on issues of governance and administration as expected, but rather around issues of belonging and identity. In the colonial context, bureaucracy was used to define traditional systems of governance, which in South Africa referred to an early form of government system, focused more on the protecting culture, traditions and customs (SA History, 2019). When the concept of bureaucracy started gaining traction in the industrialised world in the 19th century that the term was used universally to describe a system of public administration (Sager & Rosser, 2021).

African countries began adopting western models of governing and post-colonial African countries began viewing the concept of bureaucracy differently, appreciating its potential to enhance the effectiveness of the public sector (Olowu, 1988; Okoli, 2010). It is interesting to note that, the latest literature on African bureaucracies is characterised by increased stereotypes related to inefficient governance and poor service delivery, contrary to the original intentions of its implementation (Masuku & Jiu, 2019; Schrire, 2007; Evans & Rauch, 2000). Numerous scholars lament the negative impact of bureaucratic systems in Africa on policy implementation and service delivery (Khale & Worku, 2013; Mamogale, 2016; Allan & Heese, 2017; Morudu & Halsal, 2017).

## **Rules And Regulations that Govern Public Sector Institutions and Unintended Consequences on Information Dissemination and Service Delivery**

South Africa has experienced an unparalleled rise in public protests over the past 10 years due to the public sector's failure to deliver services, blamed in part on process inefficiencies in public institutions (Morudu & Halsal, 2017). Morudu and Halsal (2017) establish a strong link between service delivery levels and the number of protests in South Africa. Khale and Worku (2013) point to public institutions' lack of transparency and accountability as some of the contributing factors, citing inefficient bureaucratic systems as responsible for the slow pace of service delivery in many instances.

In spite of these challenges, bureaucratic theorists continue to defend bureaucratic systems in public institutions and argue that bureaucratic rules and regulations that govern most of these institutions are necessary because they enable certainty in policy making and implementation (Cornell, Knutsen & Teorell, 2020). These scholars believe that these rules make it possible to hold public officials to account (Cameron & Milne, 2011). Public institutions need the bureaucracy to turn laws into rules in line with political intentions (Acs, 2015). This seemingly undesirable system of organisation has managed to weather relentless criticism over the years and bureaucratic theorists still see value in the system (Baekgaard, et al., 2018; Boushey & McGrath, 2017; Cornell et al., 2020).

Although public institutions still view bureaucracy as necessary to retain control and ensure consistency in policy implementation of, balanced against the unintended consequences of rigid processes on service delivery (Sager & Rosser, 2021). Public administration scholars are still convinced that regulated systems in public institutions are necessary because they directly influence efficient implementation and achievement of stated goals (Baekgaard, Mortensen & Seeberg, 2018).

The latter alludes to the importance of bureaucracy in the policy-making agenda of governments, considering the scope and scale of the work they do. The issues they deal with are broad and diverse and therefore require some level of discipline, which the use of bureaucratic rules allows (Baumgartner & Jones, 2015).

## **Public Sector Communication Adapting to the Changing Environment**

### **Public sector communication**

Literature on public sector communication uses different terms to refer to the exchange of information between state, its institutions and diverse stakeholders. These are terms such as *public information* (Weiss, 2002); *public sector communications* (Graber, 1992); *administrative communication* (Garnett & Kouzmin, 1997); *government public relations* (Lee, 2008); or *government communications* (Grunig, 2008; Liu, Horsley & Levenshus, 2010). To understand the concept of public sector communications requires reflecting on the term 'government' and its role as an institution in society.

Public sector communication scholars consider a government or a state as an institution through which enforcement of policies happen and people are governed (Canel & Sanders, 2012; Sanders, Canel & Hotlz-Bacha, 2011). Society inherently needs to create entities that manage shared resources and exercise authority on its behalf; in other words, people need to assign "agency or co-opt institutions that act on their behalf" (Canel & Sanders, 2012). People need to be confident that the government they choose will always act in their best interests and appoint relevant institutions to do so. The responsibility these institutions have, and their accountability to those who elected the government, is always assumed (Graber, 2003). A responsible government is regarded as one that always consults and confers powers on its public institutions to share information on how a public mandate is being executed (Sanders et al., 2011). Canel and Sanders

(2012) posits that governments are typically constituted based on people's direct or indirect consent, irrespective of political realities. That means that even the most authoritarian regimes may be regarded as a 'government' since they are also expected to govern on their people's behalf.

The term government broadly refers to the legislative, executive and judiciary branches of the state, or more narrowly, to refer to public institutions who act on behalf of a government to execute its mandate across different spheres (Grunig & Jaatinen, 1999). In the South African context, the government is responsible for crafting legislative frameworks, which are used to regulate the work of public sector institutions and monitor implementation of its policies across different sectors (GCIS, 2018).

An effective government, through these institutions, is one that engages constantly with citizens on its policies and decisions, educating them on how the policies will impact their lives (Morudu & Halsal, 2017; Sanders et al., 2011). GCIS (2018) emphasises that government's responsibility is to provide a framework to ensure that public sector institutions constantly keep citizens informed of government implementation of its mandate. Governing is an ongoing act of communication between those that govern and those governed (Heinze, Schneider & Ferie, 2013).

Scholars offer varied perspectives on the role of public sector communications in this context. Canel and Sanders (2012: 86) define governance as "the practice of communication by public officials in order to effect change in people's lives".

Yudof (1979) focused more on the public sector communication's role in promoting democratic values in society and empowering people to make rational choices about issues that matter to them. On the other hand, Ruijer (2013) focuses on public sector's communication's constitutive role in promoting transparency and accountability, important foundational principles in a democracy. In this regard, public sector communicators play an important societal role and

that public sector communication is central to a functioning democracy; that is, it cannot be separated from the act of governing (Canel & Sanders, 2012).

Literature generally assumes an automatic link between transparency in public sector communications and trust (Fairbanks, Plowman & Rawlins, 2007; Grimmelikhuisjen, 2012; Ruijter, 2013; Hyland-Wood et al., 2021). To understand what their government is up to citizens need information including how their government makes decisions that affect them (Meijer, Curtin & Hillebrandt, 2012). There is a connection between transparency of public sector communications and effective public participation in democratic societies, according to the Open Government Directive (Orszag, 2009).

Transparency in public sector communications refers to institutions enabling access to information for interested stakeholders, enabling them to participate and contribute to decision-making (Hyland-Wood et al., 2021). However, legal and regulatory controls, which public institutions rely on to regulate their operations, unfortunately tend to stand in the way of enabling access and transparency within the public sector (Pandey & Garnett, 2006). Public administration scholars including Khale and Worku (2013) as well as Dingalo (2020), highlight the complexity of public sector policies and rules, which is often blamed for delays in information sharing with citizens – as one of the challenges public sector communicators faces.;

While positive organisational outcomes such as improved productivity, effectiveness and consistency in the execution of policies are associated with bureaucratic processes , , bureaucratic systems may also impact negatively on communication practices in public institutions (Dingalo, 2020). Despite some of these challenges, public sector communicators have a legal and moral obligation for to keep the public informed about the policies and decisions, along with their implications.

## Public Sector Communication in the Digital Age

Public institutions and communicators still have to meet expectations of stakeholders who often rely on them to access information about public services (Khale & Worku, 2013; Morudu & Halsal, 2017). It is in this context that public sector communication researchers suggest that factors influencing communication practices in government institutions cannot be ignored when looking to understand public sector communications (Montsho, 2013; Mukhudwana, 2014; Dingalo, 2020). Scholars recommend, in particular, the need to recognise the uniqueness of public institutions (Mukhudwana, 2014; Dingalo, 2020). Montsho (2013) considered the influence of leadership and culture in public institutions, supporting the notion that public sector communications are complex and nuanced and must be considered with a separate lens from other communicative practices (Canel & Sanders, 2012).

Public institutions operate in a unique environment, , and in particular their institutionalised bureaucratic frameworks, have a bearing on their communication practices. Bureaucratic systems not only inhibit public sector communicators' ability to adapt but impede their flexibility to respond appropriately to changing dynamics in their environment.

Public employees who participated in the author's study raised concerns about official channels of communications, perceived as slow, outdated and irrelevant, partly due to bureaucratic processes (Dingalo, 2020). Although bureaucratic systems were perceived positively in terms of ensuring the credibility of the information they received, the employees noted that bureaucratic practices hampered their ability to obtain information needed to communicate timeously with their stakeholders.

Weberian principles of centralised control are key to the management of communications within public institutions as they are accountable to a range of stakeholders that expect public institutions to provide accurate and reliable information. Thus, the bureaucratic perspective emphasises the significance of hierarchies and centralised control, in that those in authority have to vet information before it can

be released to the public. In Weber's view on bureaucracy, although the vetting of information might cause delays, gatekeeping by management is pivotal to lend credibility to communications (Weber, 1978). The institutional configuration of hierarchies symbolises the centralisation of decision-making powers and organisational planning in these institutions, and the positionality of organisational authority (Weber, 1947).

### **The environment is changing: Public sector communicators' adapt to the digital information age**

The communication environment is changing faster than organisations as well as researchers can adapt. Public sector organisations have begun to realise that what worked during the industrial age is no longer relevant in the 21st century. The 4IR is here and new media technologies have brought about far-reaching implications for public sector communications (Davis, 2019; Murphy, 2015). Employees who work for public institutions, and citizens who traditionally rely on public sector communicators for information, can now access information about policies and their intentions from different online sources, such as websites or social media channels any time, from anywhere. Some of these online sources may not be credible because of the ability for anyone to publish content, posing a risk as institutions can potentially lose control over the narrative.

The proliferation of misinformation on some digital platforms can compromise public sector communications (Waszak, Kasprzycka-Waszak & Kubanek, 2018). On the other hand, new media technologies do offer citizens new ways of engaging with government.

These challenges and opportunities enjoin public sector communicators and researchers to review their approaches and methods as they seek to understand changing dynamics in the environment and the implications of these on the work they do (Zerfass & Viertmann, 2016; Winkler & Etter, 2018; Davis, 2019). The traditional top-down and one-to-many

communication approaches that organisations relied on in the past to control the narrative about their organisations have been replaced by many-to-many approaches (Falkheimer & Heide, 2015). Managing control over organisational messages is becoming more and more difficult (Murphy, 2015; Winkler & Etter, 2018) because of the interactivity of new media channels. Seeking to understand organisational communication is no longer about understanding only the deliberately planned and controlled communication processes; it is also about understanding all forms of communications, including communication processes over which organisations have no control (Winkler & Etter, 2018). In their analysis, public sector communicators and researchers thus need to look beyond formalised communications to consider conversations that take place outside organisations (Schafer & Fahrnich, 2020).

Given that new media technologies have opened new spaces for citizen participation, the pace of these shifts and the disruptions they bring – whether beneficial or destabilising – means it is no longer business as usual for public sector communications (Davis, 2019; Schafer & Fahrnich, 2020). The implications for emerging digital technologies on public sector communications and public participation processes need to be explored further (Burgess & Green, 2018; Dunan, 2020).

### **Methodology**

The study sought to explore employee experiences with the communications in a state institution. An explanatory sequential mixed-method design was employed. First, online questionnaires – to explore employee perceptions and attitudes towards communication, as well as to test the association between their personal view of communications, and how it affects their ability to do their jobs – were administered to 109 selected individuals. In the second phase, semi-structured qualitative interviews with nine purposefully selected individuals were conducted, and participants were made up of public sector communicators of three lower-level

employees, three middle managers and three senior managers. The aim was to provide more in-depth insights.

Findings indicate that 90% of survey respondents had a degree or higher qualification, while 75% had six years' experience in the organisation and 63% were on a management or higher level.

All nine employees who participated in the interviews had degrees or higher qualifications, seven had more than six years' experience and all three job levels were equally represented. In short, they all had sufficient experience and understanding to provide credible input to the study.

## **Discussion**

The survey and interviews findings indicate that employees could identify 17 official methods used by their organisation to communicate with employees. When testing for general awareness and use of the various methods, survey and interviews data suggests that while employees are generally aware of – and use most of – these sources to access information, it takes time for the information disseminated through these channels to reach them, because of bureaucratic systems. This delay explains why they often rely on the grapevine or other informal channels of communication to access information necessary to carry out their work. 93% of survey respondents indicated reliance on communication with co-workers for work-related information ( $n=4.03$ ). Interview participants explained that they trust information received from co-workers because they consider it useful as some of the participants articulated:

“I consider information I receive from colleagues useful because, in most cases, information that is shared with us on official platforms is old news; we hear about these things in the corridors before we hear about them from official channels.” (Participant 5, lower-level employee)

## Public Sector Communication in the Digital Age

“It takes a while for a newsletter, which we use to update staff on important matters, to be compiled and distributed.”  
(Participant 6, senior manager)

Interview participants expressed dissatisfaction with information received from their official channels for different reasons. Notwithstanding that they are not regularly updated, and official channels are slow in disseminating information, in some instances they carry content that is considered irrelevant to the work they do, further explaining reliance on unofficial channels as another participant intimated:

“Newsletters like ‘KM’ newsletter, are not relevant. It is as if they use these platforms just to tick the boxes without putting thought to it. The information they share is not relevant to me personally.” (Participant 1, middle manager)

It is expected to have this type of result in institutions where communication is hierarchical as a norm as the information has to go through various levels within the organisation to be vetted before it can be shared with employees, according to Dahlström (2009). Literature highlights the unintended consequences of bureaucratic systems on internal communications function in state institutions and by extension, the negative impact it has on service delivery (Allan & Heese, 2017; Morodu & Halsal, 2017; Khale & Worku, 2013). Results from the survey and interviews data indicate that informal communications in this instance carries greater credibility. Wagner (2013) concludes that particularly in public sector organisations informal networks tend to be more popular because of their bureaucratic systems. Informal networks enable employees to support one another in executing their duties, and they help them make sense of the world around them by providing them much needed relief from their day-to-day challenges of work (Conrad & Poole, 2002).

When probed about the reliability of official channels of communication, results show that all survey respondents  $n=40(100\%)$  identified departmental and staff meetings

as most reliable compared to other channels. Interview participants offered more clarity on why that is the case. Employees consider these two platforms as more reliable in conveying important information about their work in particular. Interview participants further reveal that when it comes to information that has to be shared with external stakeholders, they trust information received from the meetings convened by the relevant minister, director general (DG) and departmental heads because of their position in the organisation. This finding highlights a culture equating rank and position with trust, especially in bureaucratic organisations. People higher up in the organisation are considered as an authority on communication matters. This supports Weber's (1978) notion that emphasises the important role those in authority play in lending credibility to communications in bureaucratic organisations. The gate-keeping role they play in vetting information before it can be shared with the public means that employees can trust that it is credible.

Interview participants find staff addresses from the minister, DG or heads of departments as constructive as they are often used to share information about the organisational vision as indicated in the following comments:

“As a staff member, I sometimes get information through interactions with the DG or the minister. I consider them reliable because most often some of the information we receive is referenced from existing government policies, and one would know about them already.” (Participant 2, lower-level employee)

“I find staff addresses by the minister every year where she communicates her plan and what is expected from us very useful.” (Participant 3, middle manager).

“We also have directorate and staff meetings, where we address all work-related stuff and issues that affect people working in that directorate.” (Participant 4, senior manager)

These findings indicate that the bureaucracy is viewed as holding some benefit and is appreciated by the participants when it comes to ensuring credibility of the information received from the organisation. GCIS (2018), as the officially recognised coordinator of public sector communications in South Africa, emphasises the importance of ensuring that information shared with stakeholders on behalf of state institutions is not only credible but can be trusted. Dissatisfaction occurs when the bureaucracy impedes employees' ability to access timely information in order to be able to carry out their duties (Allan & Heese, 2017; Khale & Worku, 2013). The bureaucratic processes are often blamed for the delay in updating and disseminating required information, which, in essence, nullifies the notion of its credibility or usefulness.

The levels of employee satisfaction with communication generally was also explored. Evidence shows that employees enjoy varying degrees of satisfaction with various aspects of communication in their organisation. In this context, four constructs were assessed:

1. communication climate;
2. quality of communications;
3. communication with supervisors; and
4. communication with co-workers.

The participants' greatest area of satisfaction indicated was with co-worker communications ( $n=3.99$ ). This finding underscores the importance of the relationships employees have with one another, and how these relationships affect their perceptions of their organisations. The bureaucratic nature of public institutions forces employees to seek alternative ways of accessing information, especially on work-related matters where decisions have to be made on the spot, as Wagner (2013) suggested. Colleagues are often viewed as knowledgeable about what is going on in their own organisation. Muller, Bezuidenhout & Jooste (2006: 305) suggest – arguably – that communication between co-workers is just as important to organisations as 80% of information communicated this way

contains business-related politics, and is considered to be 90% correct on detail. Conrad and Poole (2002: 74) suggest that this form of employee communication is considered more accurate, and is more trusted because it is voluntary, uninhibited and uninfluenced by organisational power relations.

Results overall indicate that survey respondents expressed the most satisfaction with co-workers ( $n=3.78$ ), with the least satisfaction expressed with immediate supervisors ( $n=3.11$ ). This finding is particularly interesting, although communication from authority figures such as the minister, the DG and heads of departments is valued, communication with immediate supervisors, not so much. Interview participants explained that it is because of the one-directional nature of communications from supervisors that limits their ability to give input on issues that matter to them, or more importantly, their involvement in decision-making as aptly articulated here:

“Communication is typically one way; people are not given an opportunity to give input ... as individuals were treated as objects.” (Participant 7, lower-level employee)

“I think, having more engagements with staff where they are given an opportunity to ask questions will help a lot.” (Participant 8, middle manager)

“The concern I have is when staff in the lower levels do not engage with their supervisors.” (Participant 9, senior manager)

This finding is in line with the top-down nature of communications in bureaucratic organisations. In bureaucracies a top-down structure creates logical lines of reporting. Communication flows from the top to the bottom with vetting of information occurring at every step, so as to ensure credibility as Weber (1978) proposed. Public sector entities in South Africa, like other bureaucracies, are expected to operate within the prescribed framework on communication matters; observing protocols is one such measure (GCIS, 2018). Sebastião, Zulato and Trindade (2017) highlight the influence

of culture and leadership styles on communication processes in public sector institutions.

### Conclusion

State institutions operate in a unique environment which cannot be ignored when seeking to understand public sector communications. Of particular importance is the influence of the bureaucratic systems on the effectiveness of the institutions' internal communication practices. The complexity of government communication, and the context within which it is practised, will continue to be a subject of interest for many public sector researchers given its importance for 21st century politics.

The advent of the 4IR and the innovations brought about by new media technologies have shattered stereotypes about the need for bureaucracy in state institutions as employees and citizens become exposed to alternative ways of sourcing information, some of which might not be credible. The fragmented multimedia environment and the culture of social media are forcing researchers to review their assumptions and approaches and experiment with new theories, conceptualisations and methods.

### References

- Acs A. (2015). Which statute to implement: Strategic timing by regulatory agencies? *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 26(3):493–506. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muv018>
- Allan K & Heese K. (2017). Understanding why service delivery protests take place and who is to blame. Municipal IQ. [https://www.municipaliq.co.za/publications/articles/sunday\\_indep.pdf](https://www.municipaliq.co.za/publications/articles/sunday_indep.pdf)
- Baekgaard M, Mortensen PB & Seeberg HB. (2018). The bureaucracy and the policy agenda. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 28(2):239–253. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mux045>

## *Institutionalised Bureaucracy*

- Baumgartner FR & Jones BD. (2015). *The Politics of Information: Problem Definition and the Course of Public Policy in America*. Chicago, USA: University of Chicago Press.
- Bok S. (1982). *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation*. New York, USA: Oxford University Press
- Boushey GT & McGrath RJ. (2017). Experts, amateurs and bureaucratic influence in the American States. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 27(1):85–103. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muw038>
- Burgess J & Greene J. (2018). *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*. 2nd Edition. Digital Media and Society Series. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Cameron R & Milne C. (2011). Representative bureaucracy in the South African public service. *African Journal of Public Affairs*, 4(2):12–32.
- Canel MJ & Sanders K. (2012). Government communication: An emerging field of communication research. In: HA Semetko & M Scammel (Eds). *The SAGE Handbook of Political Communication*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, Singapore: SAGE Publications
- Conrad C & Poole MS. (2002). *Strategic Organizational Communication in a Global Economy*. Orlando, USA: Harcourt.
- Cornell A, Knutsen CH & Teorell J. (2020). Bureaucracy and growth. *Comparative Political Studies*, 53(14):2246–2282. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00104402091226>
- Dahlström C. (2009). The bureaucratic politics of the welfare state crisis: Sweden in the 1990s. *Governance*, 22(2):217–238. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2009.01433.x>
- Dahlström C, Lapuente V & Teolle J. (2010). Dimensions of bureaucracy: A cross-national data set on the structure and behaviour of public administration. Gothenburg, Sweden: University of Gothenburg. Paper presented, 13 October.

## Public Sector Communication in the Digital Age

- Davis A. (2019). *Political Communication: A New Introduction for Crisis Times*. Cambridge, UK. Polity Press. Dingalo ML. (2020). Understanding Communication Experiences and Job Satisfaction of Employees at a State Institution. Master's thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Dunan A. (2020). Government communications in digital era: Public relations and democracy. *Jurnal Pekommas*, 5(1):71–80. <https://doi.org/10.30818/jpkm.2020.2050108>
- Evans P & Rauch JE. (1999). Bureaucracy and growth: A cross-national analysis of the effects of “Weberian” states structure and economic growth. *American Sociological Review*, 64(4):748–765. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312249906400508>
- Evans P & Rauch JE. (2000). Bureaucratic structure and bureaucratic performance in less developed countries. *Journal of Public Economics*, 75(1):49–71. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727\(99\)00044-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727(99)00044-4)
- Fairbanks J. (2005). Transparency in the Government Communication Process: The Perspective of Government Communicators. PhD thesis. Hawaii, USA: Brigham Young University.
- Fairbanks J, Plowman DK & Rawlins BL. (2007). Transparency in government communication. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 7(1):23–37. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.245>
- Falkheimer J & Heide M. (2015.) Strategic communication in participatory culture: From one- and two-way communication to participatory communication through social media. *The Routledge handbook of strategic communication*. New York, NY: Routledge. 337–347.
- Garnett JL & Kouzmin A. (1997). *A Handbook of Administrative Communication*. New York, USA: Marcel Dekker.
- Gelders D & Ihlen O. (2010). Mending the gap: Applying a service-marketing model into government policy communications. *Government Information Quarterly*, 27(1):34–40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2009.05.005>

## *Institutionalised Bureaucracy*

- Goldsmith A. (1999). Africa's overgrown state reconsidered: Bureaucracy and economic growth. *World Politics*, 51(4):520–546. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100009242>
- Graber DA. (1992). *The Power of Communication: How Organizations Manage Information*. Washington DC, USA: CQ Press.
- Graber DA. (2003). *The Power of Communication: Managing Information in Political Organisations*. Washington, DC, USA: CQ Press. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483329949>
- Graham P. (1994). Marketing in the public sector: Inappropriate or merely difficult? *Journal of Marketing Management*, 10(5): 364–537. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.1994.9964284>
- Grimmelikhuisjen S. (2012). *Transparency and trust: An experimental study of online disclosure and trust on government*. Master's thesis. Netherlands: Utrecht University.
- Grunig JE. (2008). *Public Relations Management in Government and Business*. New York, USA: CRC Press. <https://doi.org/10.1201/b15784-4>
- Grunig JE & Jaatinen M. (1999). Strategic, symmetrical public relations in government: From pluralism to societal corporatism. *Journal of Communication Management*, 3(3):218–234. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb026049>
- Heinze J, Schneider H & Ferie F. (2013). Mapping the consumption of government communication: A qualitative study in Germany. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 13(4): 370–383. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.1483>
- Hyden G, Court J & Mease K. (2003). *The bureaucracy and governance in 16 developing countries*. New York, USA: United Nations. World Governance Survey Discussion paper, 7 July.

- Hyland-Wood B, Gardner J, Leask J & Ecker UKH. (2021). Toward effective government communication strategies in the era of COVID 19. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 8(30). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00701-w>
- Jaeger PT & Bertot JC. (2010). Transparency and technical change: Ensuring equal and sustained public access to government information. *Government Information Quarterly*, 27(4):371–376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2010.05.003>
- Kaplan AM. (2009). The increasing importance of public marketing: Explanations, applications and limits of marketing within public administration. *European Management Journal*, 27(3):197–212. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2008.10.003>
- Khale S & Worku Z. (2013). Factors that affect municipal service delivery in Gauteng and North West provinces of South Africa. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 5(1):61–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20421338.2013.782143>
- Lee M. (2008). *Government Public Relations: A Reader*. Boca Raton, USA: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Liu BF & Levenshus AB. (2008). Testing the government communication decision wheel: Toward a new theory of government public relations. *58th Annual International Communication Association Conference*. Montreal, Canada. Paper presented, 22–26 May.
- Liu BF, Horsley JS & Levenshus AB. (2010). Government and corporate communication practices: Do the differences matter? *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 38(2):189–213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909881003639528>
- Mamogale MJ. (2016). Examining Bureaucratic Performance of South African Local Government: Local Municipalities in Limpopo Province. PhD thesis. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University.

- Masuku M & Jiu N. (2019). Public service delivery in South Africa: The political influence at local government level. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 19(4): e1935. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.1935>
- Mbhele S. (2016). Internal Communication in Achieving Employee Engagement Within a South African Government Department. Master's thesis. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Meijer AJ, Curtin DM & Hillebrandt M. (2012). Open government: Connecting vision and voice. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 78(1):10–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852311429533>
- Montsho RK. (2013). Exploring Internal Communication within the Government Communication and Information System. Master's thesis. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.
- Morudu HD & Halsal J. (2017). Service delivery protests in South African municipalities: An exploration using principal component regression and 2013 data. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 3(1):1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2017.1329106>
- Mukhudwana RF. (2014). Investigating Communication Management by Government Departments in the Kwazulu-Natal Province in South Africa. PhD thesis. Pretoria. University of Pretoria.
- Muller ME, Bezuidenhout MC & Jooste K. (2006). *Healthcare Service Management*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Murphy P. (2015). Contextual distortion: Strategic communication versus the networked nature of nearly everything. In: DR Holtzhausen & A Zerfass (Eds). *The Routledge Handbook of Strategic Communication*. New York and London: Routledge: 113–126.
- Okoli F. (2010). An overview of conventional contract system and private public partnership. *Workshop organized by the Department of Public Administration and local government*. Enugu, Nigeria. Paper presented. 15–17 November.

## Public Sector Communication in the Digital Age

- Olowu D. (1988). Bureaucratic morality in Africa. *International Science Review*, 9(3):215–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019251218800900306>
- Olsen JP. (2008). The ups and downs of bureaucratic organization. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 11:13–37. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.060106.101806>
- Orszag PR. (2009). *Open government directive*. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/open/documents/open-government-directive>
- Pandey SK & Garnett JL. (2006). Exploring public sector communication performance: Testing a model and drawing implications. *Public Administration Review*, 66(1):37–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00554.x>
- Peters BG. (2008). The Napoleonic tradition. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 21:118–132. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513550810855627>
- Republic of South Africa. Government Communication and Information System (GCIS). (2018). Government Communication Policy. <https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/government%20Communication%20policy%20Cabinet%20Approved%2000ct%202018.pdf>
- Republic of South Africa. Government Communication and Information System (GCIS). (2018a). About us. <https://www.gcis.gov.za>
- Republic of South Africa. Government Communication and Information System (GCIS). (2018b). Government Communication Policy. <https://www.gcis.gov.za/sites/default/files/government%20communication%20policy%20online%20cabinetapproved.pdf>
- Republic of South Africa. Government Communication and Information System. (GCIS). (2019). Government Communicators Handbook. <https://www.gcis.gov.za/docs/pdf>.

## *Institutionalised Bureaucracy*

- Ruijers HJM. (2013). *Proactive transparency and government communication in the USA and the Netherlands*. PhD thesis. Richmond, USA: Commonwealth University of Virginia.
- Sager F & Rosser C. (2021). Weberian bureaucracy. In: WR Thompson (Ed). *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.166>
- Sanders K, Canel MS & Hotz-Bacha C. (2011). Communicating government: A three country comparison of how governments communicate with citizens. *The International Journal of Press and Politics*, 16(4):523–547. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161211418225>
- Schafer MS & Fahrnich B. (2020). Communicating science in organisational contexts: Toward an organizational turn in science communication research. *Journal of Communication Management*, 24(3):137–154. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-04-2020-0034>
- Schrire R. (2007). South Africa: Bureaucracy and the process of reform. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 5(1–2):145–164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02589008608729458>
- Sebastião SP, Zulato G & Trindade A. (2017). Internal communication and organisational culture interplay in the view of the Portuguese communication consultant. *Public Relations Review*, 43(4):863–871. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2017.05.006>
- SA History (2019). *The role of traditional leaders during apartheid*. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/role-traditional-leaders-during-apartheid>
- Wagner JD. (2013). *Communication Satisfaction of Professional Nurses Working in Selected Public Health Care Services in the City of Johannesburg*. Master's thesis. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

## Public Sector Communication in the Digital Age

- Waszak PM, Kasprzycka-Waszak W & Kubanek A. (2018). The spread of media fake news on social media: The pilot quantitative study. *Health Policy Technical*, 7(2):115–118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hlpt.2018.03.002>
- Waters T & Waters D. (2015). *Weber's Rationalism and Modern Society*. New York, USA: Palgrave MacMillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137365866>
- Weber M. (1947). *Theory of Social and Economic Organisation*. New York, USA: Oxford University Press.
- Weber M. (1978). *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Berkeley, USA: California University Press.
- Weiss JA. (2002). Public information. In: LM Salamon (Ed). *The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. 611–645.
- Winkler P & Etter M. (2018). Strategic communication and emergence: A dual narrative framework. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 12(4):382–398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1452241>
- Yudof MG. (1979). When governments speak: Towards a theory of government expression and the first amendment. *Texas Law Review*, 57: 865–917.
- Zerfass A & Viertmann C. (2016). Multiple voices in corporations and the challenge for strategic communication. In: M Brown, K Alm & S Royseng (Eds). *Communication and Freedom of Expression in Organizations*. Oslo, Norway: Capperen Damm. 44–63.