



The Future of Government: South African Public Value Research Based Reflections

Conversation Focus for the PhD Athenaeum:
School of Social Innovation, Hugonote Kollege, Wellington
Thursday 27 and Friday 28 February 2020

What is the future of government in South Africa? Ambitious plans in 1994 to reform the Apartheid State away from its racist and authoritarian development path have achieved only limited and uneven successes. Central to the reforms of the 1990s were those that targeted public administrations at all levels of the State, national, provincial and local. The intention was to build and transform departments and entities to create institutions well-disposed to progressive new policies and capable of implementing their related programmes. The period of President Jacob Zuma, ostensibly a time of “radical economic transformation”, saw South Africa’s constitutional framework pushed to the limit and key state institutions, from the Cabinet, to criminal justice entities, the South African Revenue Services and State-Owned Enterprises, severely disrupted and undermined.

The future of government in South Africa is at stake.

This two-day workshop is intended to reflect on the current moment, not simply with a view to answer the question of *what went wrong* and *why* but also to answer the question, *what is now to be done* ? The event is hosted in this working spirit geared to practical proposals. We would like this workshop to be the start of a movement linked to a process for workable and positive government reform. This movement and process should be evidence based and grounded on valid and reliable research strategies and methodologies.

We will start with reflections on what has brought South Africa to this point from the perspective of three main themes:

1. Historical: What were the concepts and practices that drove state reform in the 1990s and 2000s? What assumptions did they make about state and society and about the nature of Apartheid? What did they make visible? What did they obscure? What did they say, if anything, about South Africa's political economy and globalisation context?
2. Political-Economy: The structure of inequality in South Africa, coupled with a highly concentrated and white dominated economy, has constrained opportunities for the Black middle class and for Black capitalists. Under these conditions that state has become the privileged route for Black accumulation. In this way, efforts to modernise and professionalise government administration are entangled in complex political economic dynamics.
3. Globalisation: Ubiquitous Globalisation has brought with it wide-ranging skepticism about the role and effectiveness of states in the face of internationalised capital, of patterns of migration, consumption, identification and socialisation that transcend national boundaries, and of multi-national/ international organisations. Related to these developments, scholars of 'governance' increasingly draw attention to the difficulty, if not impossibility of government in *postmodern* society.

We will move from reflection to discuss:

4. The Future of Government: Under these conditions (1-3), what scope is there to build and design purposeful, public organizations able to navigate the dynamics of South Africa's political economy and governance challenges? What will such organisations look like? Which values will drive them? How will they add value? How do we build momentum for reform? What are the public value research implications of these reflections? What are the ways forward?



Provisional Programme:

Note: some speakers and participants to be confirmed. Final programme will be available at the event.

Day 1: Thursday 27 February 2020

Session 1: Morning: 90 Minutes

- 08:30 – 08:45:

- Welcome and Setting the Scene
 - Erwin Schwella and Ivor Chipkin

08:50 – 10:00:

- Opening: Complexity, Institutions, Purpose in Today's World

Dr Luci Abrahams: Director: LINK, Learning, Information, Networking, Knowledge Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand

10:00 – 10:30:

- Networking Pause

Session 2: Morning: 150 Minutes

10:30 – 11:40

- Panel and Floor Discussion: Panel 1: The Future of Government: History, Political-Economy, Governance: Academic and Professional Perspectives
 - Prof Tania Ajam
 - Dr. Ivor Chipkin
 - Prof Patrick FitzGerald



- Prof Geo Quintot
- Dr. Jelena Vidojevic

11:50 – 13:00:

- Panel and Floor Discussion: Panel 2: The Future of Government: History, Political-Economy, Governance: Political and Societal Perspectives
 - General (SAPS ret.) Chris Botha
 - Mr. China Dodovu
 - Mr. Salim Latib (not confirmed)
 - Dr Jan Heunis SC
 - Mr Khaya Ngema (not confirmed)
 - Ms Colette Clark

13:00 – 13:45:

- Network Break

Day 1: Session 3: Afternoon: 100 Minutes

13:45 – 14:55:

- Break-Away Groups: Themes in Transition and Transformation: Group Work
 - Historical View of the Transition as it affected the Work and Organisation of Government
 - The Political Economy of Government
 - Government and Governance in South Africa Today

14:55 – 15:25:

- Break-Away Groups: Themes in Transition and Transformation: Group Work Feedback

15:25- 15:40:

- Network Pause

Day 1: Session 4: Afternoon: 80 Minutes

- Adapted World Café Process: 80 minutes

15:40 – 17:00:

- Knowledge and Research Modalities of Governance Transitions and Transformation: South African Perspectives
- Conclusion Day 1

17:00 – 18:15:

Day 1: Session 5: Dusk: Intellectual and Social Networking Event

Day 2: Session 1: Morning: 150 Minutes

09:00 – 11:30:

- Scenario Exercise
 - The Future of Government: Global and South African Scenarios
 - Group Work: 90 Minutes
 - Scenario Presentations and Conversation: 60 Minutes

Day 2: Session 2: 90 Minutes

- Reflections and Next Steps

11:30 – 12:30:

- Reflections on Work Done and Insights Gained
 - International Reference Group
 - Prof Gerda van Dijk
 - Prof Rob van Eijbergen



- VU Amsterdam PhD Students

12:30 – 13:00:

- Reflections on Work Done and Insights Gained
 - Action Research Agenda: The Way Forward

Day 2: Session 3: Afternoon: 120 Minutes

13:45 – 15:45:

- PhD Athenaeum Business Meeting

Day 2 Session 4: Afternoon: 30 Minutes

15:45 – 16:15:

- Conclusion