The Assessment of the 7C Protocols for Policy Implementation in Improving Service Delivery in South African Municipalities

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Abstract: This paper attempts to recognise and discuss the assessment of the 7C protocols for policy implementation in improving service delivery in South African municipalities. The paper reviews the literature on the previous 5Cs, and how they partly created policy gaps in local government. The advantages of successful 7Cs are to plan effectively and execute better policy. The main thrust of this paper is to clarify the 7C protocol concepts, and identify the fundamentals of policy implementation in improving municipal services. The paper adopts a desktop study, and reviews literature in order to explore the dynamics of the previous 5Cs towards becoming the 7Cs. It therefore, exposes policy gaps which existed during the application of the 5C protocols. Hence, it recommends what could be possibly be done to apply the 7C protocols to municipal service delivery.

Keywords: Commitment, C protocols, Policy, Policy implementation

1. Introduction

Over the past decades South African has undergone a rigorous policy changes like many other African countries (Wynberg & De Beer, 2018). This contributed towards the phase of improving service delivery both in the public service and public sector. The continuous Policy implementation and service delivery are fundamental to the contemporary society. There are countless cases recorded in the media about service delivery protests or the lack thereof. This has caused the government to place much attention in service delivery and to improve in policy implementation particularly in local government sphere. Therefore, the question that confronts everyone in government is how does one enhances strategies for implementation and ensure successful service delivery. New policy developments have to take place. New strategies have to be adopted since people are experiencing an ever-changing society. The government cannot constantly continue to use the same old strategies for decades. Communities have changed and even their needs have changed. The government need to meet and match the needs its citizens.

Successful service delivery cannot be achieved overnight. It would require policy development, implementation so as to improve service deliver. Lack of policy development should be avoided particularly in improving service delivery (Mokimi, Schneider & de Vries, 2018). The policy development and implementation need to be consolidated in a coherent manner of which match the ongoing policy and strategies system so that performance management mechanisms are developed and reviewed in government.

2. Theoretical Framework

The idea of policy cycle as a model or framework has over the past years received much attention across the field of research. Theoretical framework attacks exist in the theories that guide policy process as a model. This has discredited the application of the policy process as a model or framework. According to Jann and Wegrich (2007:43) the idea of applying policy process as a model was first put forward by Lasswell. Laswell’s initially introduced seven stage which as (1) intelligence; 2) promotion, 3) prescription, 4) invocation, 5) application, 6) termination and 7) appraisal. Laswell’s aimed to establish ‘a multidisciplinary and prescriptive policy science’. However, this approach to use the seven as a model was contested and criticised due to the stage that termination was before the appraisal stage. As time passed by, the three generation of implementation research emerged. Their ultimate aim was introducing different theoretical approaches which include 1) top-down theories, 2) bottom-up theories, and hybrid theories.

The top-down theories were supported by works of Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983), Sabatier and
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However, in defining policy implementation, it is necessary to recognize that policy implementation is a very broad concept that involves the process of carrying out government decisions, which includes the ultimate aim to disregard the impact that such policies had on the actual implementers on policy delivery. As a remedy to the top-down theories, the bottom-up theories emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The bottom-up theories were perceived as a critical response to the ills done by the top-down theories. On the contrary, bottom-up theories have been criticized for their lack of guaranteeing acceptable behavior of local bureaucrats. Thereafter, the hybrid theories were introduced with the ultimate aim to overcome the confusion found between the top-down, and bottom-up theories and other theoretical models which may have existed (Winter, 1990; Elmore, 1985; Ripley & Franklin, 1982; Majone & Wildavsky, 1973).

Given the theoretical framework, the purpose of this paper, the theoretical framework sketches across the stages of the policy cycle, which include amongst others; agenda-setting; problem recognition and issue selection, policy formulation and decision-making, implementation, evaluation and termination. The theories of the policy cycle (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:4554).

3. Conceptualising the Meaning of Policy Implementation

DeGroff and Cargo (2009:47) attest that policy implementation compose of multiple change process. The process where government decisions are transformed into projects, programs, procedures, practices and regulations should at all times focus on improving socio-economic issues. Public policy has to do with the selection of strategies and making choices (Raipa, 2002:10). The policy process includes amongst others (1) agenda setting, (2) issue identification, (3) policy formulation, (4) policy decision, (5) policy implementation, (6) evaluation, (7) maintenance, succession, or termination. In simple terms policy implementation can be defined as a process of carrying out government decisions.

The concept of policy implementation is very broad. However, in defining policy implementation, it is critical to draw a distinction between policy implementation process and policy outcomes. According to O’Toole (2000) policy implementation process and policy outcomes are interactive in practice. DeGroff and Cargo (2009) provides that policy process differs from policy outcomes. The process has to do with action on the behalf of the policy itself, while on the other hand policy outcomes has to do with the ultimate effect on the policy problem. Implementation further includes the process where ideas are shared as policy, then later be transformed into acceptable behavior and expressed as social action. The main purpose of implementation is meant for social betterment and which lead to the transformation of programs, procedures, practices and regulations by government.

The study of policy implementation has gone various changes. It has swung in and out of fashion in the past years. O’Toole (2000) claims that the subject has gained much attention since the Great Society and the subsequent years of the welfare state and budgetary crises in California during an Economic Development Administration project. The Great Society was the initial idea of the former American Lyndon B. Johnson’s presidency in the 1960s; his ultimate aim was to introduce the antipoverty programs with anticrime programs to lay the foundation for the contemporary mass incarceration. This was to fight the inequality experienced in the black American communities through the civil rights movement. The implementation of the programs contributed to certain legislations like the Voting Rights Acts and the Law Enforcement Assistance Act, which later broke ill operations of local police (Hinton, 2015).

Grindle (2017) has a different point of view that the politics of policy implementation has emerged as a public discourse for scholars in public administration, politics, and policy science in the third world. Implementation has drawn attention through a wide variety of issues, ranging from the availability of sufficient resources towards the structure of intergovernmental relations. Policy implementation even when done successfully, it still involves far more than just technical way of achieving goals into a routine project and procedures.

The substantial works of Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) have been studied and reviewed. This works has uncovered many unknown and masked myths about policy implementation. Much literature is
expected to be available and accessible but yet it is not found. In fact, public administration and social science should have countless literature on the subject (Brynard, 2005). There's a gap between public policy and policy implementation even to this day. The insights of significant analytical work of implementation are often lacking. In this context this could be the reason why some government fail to implement public policy successfully. Grindle (2017) argues that policy implementation depends on the program carried out assuming that the program is to be geared towards the attainment of policy goals, whereas this assumption is not often borne into practice. In this context, if the assumption is found to be faulty or wrong, then the policy implementation could fail. Consequently, this partly affects service delivery. Gabriela (2016) raises a question of how can policy implementations be defined if there can be public policy with visions based on the ever-changing of government institutions, organisations and people? In reality there is unreformed public space, aligned to obsolete guidelines. The question that should be actively taken into consideration is; how one chooses the right strategy to synergise policy implementation and improve service delivery.

Brynard (2005) indicate that there's still confusion of where does implementation has to start, how many types of implementation are there and when it should end? The most common meaning of implementation found is similar to that of Webster which means to carry out government decision, to accomplish, to fulfil, to produce or complete what been set by government. Implementation also has to do with how one forges relevant links in line with the casual chain in order to attain the desired outcome.

According to Van Meter and Van Horn (1974:447) "policy implementation encompasses those actions by private or private individuals or groups that are directed at the achievement of objectives set forth in prior policy decisions". Khan (2016) claims that policy implementation involves translation of goals and objective of a policy into an action. In addition, policy implementation is an important process of the policy-making process. "Policy implementation can be viewed as a process, an output and an outcome, and it involves a number of actors, organisations and techniques of control. It is the process of the interactions between setting goals and actions directed towards achieving the" (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973:74).

The variations found in research strategies have contributed to different meaning of implementation (Wheat, 2010). Ferman (1990:152) referred to policy implementation as "what happens between policy expectations and perceived policy results". For the new democratic dispensation, a more precise definition is required. Policy Implementation is the process in which basic policy decisions are expressed, corrected and defined to fit the needs of the concerned citizens through proper evaluation of government officials who are to exercise formal authority with no fear or favour. This definition is influence by Mazmaniam and Sabatier (1983:20-21) definition which say "policy implementation is the carrying out of a basic policy decision made by government officials exercising formal authority".

4. Three Generations of Research into Implementation

As highlighted earlier, variations in research strategies have caused various understanding and meaning of policy implementation. Literature provides partly confusing definitions, meaning, and strategies on policy implementation. This leaves the question how can one choose the best and successful strategy so as to improve service delivery, especially in local government. This sphere of government is where policy implementation is frequently questioned and challenged. In this context, it often leads to community protest due to lack of understanding of when and how policy implementation is to be executed (Sturgess, 2018:155).

Literature shows that there are three generation of research into implementation exists. This three generation have their own focus, own understanding and different ways of doing things (Brynard, 2005:651). The first generation also known as a cog in the administrative machine is of the assumption that policy implementation can just occur automatically as long as relevant policies are established and developed. It questions and challenges the decisions made. It demonstrates how implementation may fail. Case studies are used to show how possible it is to experience policy implementation failure. In other words, this helps in identifying future risks and problems, so that appropriate measures can be measured and applied. The second generation provides that policy implementation is a political process with minor implication as compared to policy formulation. The third generation also known as analytical generation pays little attention
to specific implementation failure. It places its attention on how things work in general and at least tries how prospects may be improved (Brynad, 2005:651-653).

5. The Policy Gap

According to Khosa in Brynard (2005) the policy gap that exists in some South African municipalities is mainly caused by unrealistic and unachievable policies and the lack of proper application of the 7C protocols in those policies. It can be argued that maybe the failure might be partly cause by the fact that most institutions appoint bad managers with lack of managerial expertise. Insubordination of policy implementation contributes to ineffective policy implementation. Case study approach researches are lacking, particularly in municipalities. In fact, if it were possible, each municipality is supposed to be exposed in terms of their weakness and use that in turn as a strategy to implement policy (Nachum, Norouzi, Xu & Schuurmans, 2017). This could assist the provincial government to offer whatever training should be done. Another key finding is that there's a huge gap in matching the job requirements. The inability to link municipal principles and objectives with that of the national and provincial government remains another issue in other municipalities. This creates a space for failure and it hampers the implementation process. Lack of communication amongst government officials has contributes towards poor co-ordination; it has weakened the commitment of employees. It frustrates communities when they do not receive their basic needs, let alone this amount to unending service delivery protests.

6. Making Use of the 7C Protocols as a Tool to Improve Service Delivery in Municipalities

The origin of the 5C protocols was first introduced by scholars like Brynard in the early 2000s. The 5C model is primarily influenced by studies conducted in the Netherlands at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. The opportunity to make use of the 5Cs was to strategically synergize the complex linkages involved in policy implementation. Taking into cognisance policy implementation complexity the 5C critical variables were proposed by Brynard (2000:178-186 and 2005:656-662) with an aim to make sense of the misunderstood complexity of policy implementation. In reality, the 5C critical variable for policy implementation was applied as from 2000s to late 2017. Although, Brynard (2002) suggested in his substantial works for policy implementation the sixth C, such as communication, it seemed like it was somehow neglected, and the 5Cs were the ones accepted and frequently use to improve service delivery. In this context, the 7Cs were later introduced in the early 2018 by Cloete, Coning, Wissink and Rabie, (2018) so as to put emphasis on improving service delivery with a more renewed focus on policy implementation.

It is crucially important to understand the 7C protocols as they can be used a tool for improving service delivery and the betterment of the society. Understanding policy implementation requires sound research as it is not an easy political process. Through time, the studies of policy implementation have become dynamic, their surroundings have changed and the processes itself have changed (Cloete, Coning, Wissink & Rabie, 2018). However, each institution or organisation has its own direction with regard to policy implementation. Therefore, the following sections seek to discuss the 7C variables with an ultimate aim of improving service delivery in municipalities.

6.1 Content

The issue of policy content is an old issue. It was Lowi (1963) who perceived policy as either “distributive, regulatory, or redistributive”. In that broad sense, distributive policies are to yield public goods so as to fit the general welfare and are non-zero-sum in all its entirety. As for regulatory policies, policies should specify on how one is to behave guided by rules of conduct with proper punishment caused by failure to comply. With redistributive policies, it is attempted to change wealth distribution or power of certain groups at the expense of others.

Research supports the fact that policy content has been found useful by various implementation scholars (Edler & Fagerberg, 2017; Mugwagwa, Edwards & de Haan, 2015). However, there’s still a growing concern that some municipalities in South Africa are still confronted issues of policy implementation. This has to be taken into account. Experienced scholars should assist municipalities with capabilities to identify and understand their content. Service delivery can be best provided if the policy content is critically understood as a process of interaction between the setting of goals and actions geared
to achieving them” (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). Policy content is what will help the municipality to draft the best Integrated Development Plan. The content is what makes the institution or organisation. No person can protest if the municipality still to their annual plans.

Principles and objectives affect policy content. It is evident that without principles and clear objective improving service delivery at the local level would be a difficult task. Therefore, municipalities should strive for good environmental principles and objectives. All this principles and objectives must be linked to the national and provincial policies and strategies. Some of the outdated principles and objectives should be scratched out with newly adopted ones guided by those policies and strategies set at the national and provincial level (Rakate, 2006).

6.2 Context

It is widely acceptable that any policy developed and implemented has to be within its initial context, so as to allow relevant theory and practice to match the focused area. This is key since a particular policy may be developed for a certain area with the aim of improving service delivery. Policy context helps in identifying political, social, economic, and legal setting. Policy makers can easy know in which area should be improved (Brynad, 2005).

The focus of this paper is on institutional context, which is likely to be shaped by the social, political, economic and legal circumstances. It is with no doubt that the outer context has to be acknowledged so as to bring about appropriate changes to the policy implementation. In other words, being aware of both the internal and external context might help in strengthening how a particular institution can respond to certain challenges or address them in policy formulation and implementation. This contributes the principal concern as to how policy implementation process can be impacted. The uncommon or unfavourable circumstance in policy implementation such as service delivery protests, threats, gestures of respect, public trust, bargaining and related issues often leads to effective working relations which in turn may partly improve service delivery. This is because; when the municipality is under public scrutiny and pressure it may work harder to maintain its reputation. This would be done in order to avoid failure to fulfil administrative obligations.

Improving service delivery requires policy to be institutionalised. Institutionalising a policy helps with the policy to be positioned at the desired direction. This is what municipalities should take into consideration. Everyone in the local government must be cognisant of which policy should guide them. Active leadership is required so as to provide necessary direction in the implementation process (Abbas & Asghar, 2010:10).

6.3 Commitment

The government may have all the required resources, the policy can be established fitting the cost and benefit analysis and it may have the best structure format, but if those responsible for executing it are not willing to do so, little will happen and government transformation might not be valued (Stephen, 2010:3; Najam, 1995:45 & Warwick, 1982:135). Commitment is the starting point towards the success of any policy. The availability of managerial, financial and political commitment is the beginning for achieving desired outcomes. Commitment is something that cannot be forced onto government officials. It requires an official to be highly motivated and know exactly what could be achieved with proper commitment. Commitment is often influenced by policy content, context, communication, clients, and coalition, and coordination. It is from within that government officials get to develop this kind of aspect (Oyelere, Opute & Akinsowon, 2015:2).

Commitment is needed in all policy process. Those involved in the process should have sense of ownership, and sense of belonging to a particular institution. This could improve their level of commitment. Their ideas should be analysed not negatively criticised. Ideas and strategies about improving service delivery should not be suppressed. The level of commitment amongst government in all spheres should be of high standard, particularly at the local level since it is closer to its constituents. The will to achieve goals and objectives triggers the commitment in government officials to perform better. The variable like that of content, capacity, context, clients and coalitions, communication and coordination cannot be ignore if one aspire for effective policy implementation and improve service delivery in local government (Koma & Tshiyoyo, 2015).

Decision makers are to be committed to their work. There must be enough buy-in from the decision made by municipal officials with regard to the provision of
service delivery. For instance, if a particular municipality has not been up to date with regard to both the national and provincial policy and legislation that would mean it will become difficult to improve service delivery. It will also mean that services provided at a particular municipality do not speak to what has been set by both the national and provincial government.

6.4 Capacity

Capacity is critical for the attainment of policy implementation and better service delivery. It comprises of both tangible and intangible resources. Tangible resources refer to resource like human, financial, material, technological, logistical and transportation, to mention but few. Intangible resources include commitment, leadership, motivation, willingness, guts, endurance, and trust. Segovia and Ramos (2018) advise that institutional capacities should be considered as the first step of establishment in the process of implementation.

It is an actual scientific fact that various municipalities often experience resource constraints. In fact, most municipalities’ especially local municipalities in South Africa find themselves with limited resources such as funding and shortages of qualified staff and change of management issues (Mawela, Ochora & Twinomurinzi, 20017:150; Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2009:4). Shortages of resources or the lack thereof contribute to cases where a particular municipality fail to step out their comfort zone so as to perform better than before and improve service delivery. Therefore, there’s a need for a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift that would help generates enough revenue, and attracts newly and qualified staff. Government should be consistent in investing and training its employees so that policy implementation might progress and services to be rendered successfully (Hamid, Surbaini, Hadi & Zaaba, 2018:283).

In instances where the administrative capacity is questionable, particularly in providing services, one needs to have at their disposal alternative ways of doing things. This is because failure of fulfilling the administrative obligation can lead to provincial intervention in terms of Section 139 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. The Section clearly stipulate that "when a municipality cannot or does not fulfil an executive obligation in terms of the Constitution or legislation, the relevant provincial executive may intervene by taking any appropriate steps to ensure fulfilment of that obligation." This should be avoided at all costs in municipalities that could be affected. The administrative capacity is fundamental to the application of policy and its implementation, hence, to adequately satisfy community needs. Additional support from other stakeholders, including the provincial government should be considered.

6.5 Clients and Coalitions

The application of the newly 7C protocols is critical for any government institution. The previous 5C protocols have been effectively applied in other institutions. For instance, service delivery has been improved in the Western Cape through the Grabouw ELF Non-Governmental-Organization (NGO). Community members became the clients of this NGO as they were provided with training for community project. The project was aimed at developing and improving agricultural firms as small business. The project also included construction development, social development, entrepreneurship, and training of municipal officials. This local initiative is how happy clients are made.

Local councils wishing to play a vital role in improving communities should not be denied the opportunity by both the provincial and national government. Administrators in provincial government should understand and appreciate any effort made to improve the lives of communities. In addition, Brynad (2005:661) emphasizes that coalitions produce good working environment and improves the success of service delivery.

The gap between some municipalities and their clients need to be filled with an effective tool to engage the relevant stakeholders. Engagement strategies include amongst others; community engagement, local government communication forum and district communication forum as a communication coordination point. Hence, the engagement strategies must be actively applied. Stakeholders should be involved before any initiative is to be undertaken, and such must be implemented without any bias. Rondinelli (1997) affirm that policy implementation requires clear and appropriate tools on how to satisfy clients and form relevant coalitions. Formal strategy should be at hand in order to ensure that all clients are treated and fairly engaged in the affair of their government. Moreover, in support of local coalition
the government has done a tremendous task to boost service delivery mechanism in local municipalities through outsourcing, corporatisation, decentralisation, joint ventures, partnerships and alliances, assistance, consultants, privatisation and other means to improve service delivery (Suess, 2013).

6.6 Communication

Communication is crucially important in any institution. The substantial works of Bouah (2016) made a tremendous opportunity to contribute in adding communication as part of the 7C protocol. Brynad (2005) also included communication in his article as the sixth variable of the previous 5C protocols. Although, communication was suggested as the sixth C, one could say it was partly neglected as part of the adopted 5Cs. Policy implementation must be communicated with the implementers; therefore, this makes communication as an integral part of the variable for effective implementation. The role of NGOs and civil society organisation should form part of the communication strategy. Policy information that affects policy implementers and the municipality at large should be neglected. The media including community radio stations, newspapers, and social networks should form part of the communication strategy. It can be singled out that the integral part of all the variables is communication, hence all variables are crucial in policy development and implementation.

6.7 Coordination

According to Burger (2015:94) coordination is the most important tool for ensuring the success of policy implementation. Coordination plays a crucial role because if all variables such as content, context, commitment, capacity, clients and coalitions, and communication are put into place and no one is willing to coordinate then poor policy implementation might partly be experienced. Coordination today is recognised as the 7th C in Najam’s protocols. In this paper coordination is referred to as a variable that can be developed, used and embodied in an organisation as a tool to induce a desired behaviour in policy implementation. Peters (2018:1) claims that coordination became popular in government since the 1980s. The concern over coordination was to try to match the success of the New Public Management (NPM) (Peters, 2018:1). Coordination is critical to the NPM partly because without active coordination the NPM framework or paradigm may fail to fully modernize and re-engineer the public sector (Hope, 2001:119).

Coordination consists of inter-organisational and intra-organisational coordination. Inter-organisation coordination happens whenever two government departments interact to provide a particular service. For instance, this may be in the form of “Public-Private-Partnership (PPP)” (Walwyn & Nkolele, 2018). Public-Private-Partnership is a glimpse of the NPM strategy to allow for organisations to interact with an ultimate aim of enhancing service delivery. Intra-organisational coordination refers to a situation whereby employees try to improve the working relationships with the same department by working together for the betterment of achieving successful implementation and service delivery (Riech & Hershcovis, 2011:11). This kind of coordination may help relief departments and individuals of complex tasks and policies.

When everyone knows what is required of them and such are clearly specified in the content of the policy, then commitment might improve in some organisations. Work with required skills, knowledge, qualifications, and experience should be specified so that individuals and the organisation should take into account in which area should capacity be built and improved. This is important as it gives direction on what kind of staff are to perform a particular task.

Communication should remain effective in policy implementation. Where there’s no communication or the lack thereof, there’s lack of coordination. The communication tools must trigger active coordination. In simple terms, poor communication results in poor content, context, commitment, capacity, clients/coalition, communication, and coordination. Effective communication brings successful coordination (Husain, 2013:43). Peters (2018) argues that policy is a designed task, and a designed task requires a designed coordination. In essence, a good coordination is like a map which show how things ought to be done by others with others.

7. Applying the 7C Protocols to Improving Municipal Service Delivery

Different opinions and views are expressed in research on how the 7C protocols can be used and applied. However, little or no studies exists which shows how various organisations including municipalities are making use of the 7C protocols to better
The Assessment of the 7C Protocols for Policy Implementation in Improving Service Delivery in South African Government where technical committees have had joint meetings at the national, provincial and local government levels. This can be interpreted as the need to share information and coordinate cross-sectoral efforts. In a nutshell, the South African public sector has undergone drastic policy reforms. This can be mirrored at the national, provincial and local government levels.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

In a nutshell, the South African public sector has undergone drastic policy reforms. This can be mirrored at the national, provincial and local government levels. Technical committees have had joint committees to incorporate all effort in improving service delivery. The policy gaps including leadership, politics and administration, commitment, management must be exposed by interdisciplinary teams within municipalities. A municipality must review their existing policies and check if such fit with the 7C protocols. The purpose of reviewing policies helps to re-structure and realise some the flaws in policies. This is a sign that a lot still need to be done in terms of implementation and service delivery. The provincial and local sphere of government can learn from successful lead projects implemented by the national government. The gap in coherence of policy implementation and service delivery requires an urgent response both at the provincial and local level.

References


