

**Mokoko P Sebola (ed), *Local Government: Elections, Politics and Administration*. Polokwane: Batalea Publishers, 2017, 233pp.**

Produced by an apparently commercial and emerging publishing company, this book compilation is composed of fourteen discrete chapters. Individually, they try to demonstrate an apprehension of municipal government elections and administration in the post-apartheid South Africa with a focus on the 2016 municipal government elections. Chapter one contemplates on the African National Congress (ANC) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)'s unspeakable prerequisite to nourish the Democratic Alliance (DA)'s power grip on South Africa's politics for "Die Wit Gevaar" or "White threat" (p 1). More particularly, how the bureaucratic consolation amused by ANC in the last two decades has steadily emanated into persona-bureaucratic and historical self-annihilation led by selfish politicians, and this led to "White threat" (pp 1). Accordingly, these elections signaled the significant weakening of ANC political domination on South African political landscape. This eventuality was escorted by the arrival of DA with expanding voter base with a disconcerting proportion (p 9). The author's insistence that "the future of the ANC is bleak and nothing can be confirmed" (p 12), shows that indeed there is a need to "fear Die Wit Gevaar" (p 11). However, the lack of clarity on the epistemic location of this chapter renders it to me more speculative and scientifically weak.

Chapter two imperatively reviews the "political and socio-economic impact of 2016 municipal election campaign from an Afrocentric perspective" (p 15). In this chapter, the authors fairly make a case on how these elections were not footslog in the playground for ANC as the rise of DA and EFF signaled a turn-off end in South African politics. This occurred even though ANC exhausted R1 Billion, following DA with R350 million and EFF with R15 million. This Money was spent solely on "printing posters, hosting lavish bashes and rallies, paying for their TV and radio adverts, caps, billboards, flags, flyers and leaflets. Badges and car magnets (p 24) as a substitute of adequately attending to the plethora of service delivery complaints in the deep rural communities and elsewhere. Likewise, Chapter three evaluates the governmental and parliamentary representation in the context of South Africa with attention on municipal government. On the query of whether governmental representatives serve their own interests to obtain supplemental state power or people, the author proclaims that they have individual captivates which makes them serve their own selfish interests and often their actions results in protests, national governmental intrusions and factional battles. Chapter four scrutinizes the post-1994 political killings as apparent schemes of South African municipal administrations. In this chapter, the author presents a comprehensive discussion of assassinations in a universal surrounding to a definite South Africa. Conversely, South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) also registered serious concerns relating to the murders associated with political party members "in the build-up to elections" with most incidents taking place in KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga provinces. These killings have ultimately transmuted into clandestine political strategies underlying the South Africa's new democratic dispensation (p 52). Chapter five glances at the fallout of 2016 municipal elections in South Africa as a symptom of fully fledged democracy.

Based on “political choice theory” (p 60) the author of this chapter expostulates that electorates have come to discern the factual connotation of democracy by discharging “their own accountability apparatus through the ballot box” (p 55) and also alludes that these constituencies have begun to redirect their instructions to “political parties which are advocating for their policies to create jobs and transform the public service (such as EFF and DA)” (p 64). While this chapter is a welcome contribution to this book and the evolving discourse on electoral politics in South Africa, its observable major weakness is the gross transversal error. The foregoing analysis should be understood within the context that political choice theory is rooted within the North [ern] angled worldview. As a theoretical and contextual lens, it can only assist in providing a partial understanding to issues pertaining to electoral politics in a country that is situated in the unique continent of Africa.

Chapter six and seven inspects the helix downfall of the ANC voter results during the 2016 municipal elections as piloted by outcomes of self-centered administration and ANC’s “electoral strategies prior elections”. This submission is in total dismissal of the major finding in chapter three which attributes ANC’s recent electoral misfortunes to selfish politicians. In this case, chapter three took an adjacent inspection of the Jacob Zuma led ANC which allegedly devastated the municipal elections end results with misconducts, incomprehension, thoughtless administration that has “obscured the ANC’s values and principles underpinning the ANC as liberation movement” (p 67). Therefore, the election end results were perpetuated by “arrogance, disregard for human rights and the rule of law and also the Nkandla saga” (p 78). Alternative facets encompass election manifesto of the ANC which extended little newsworthy to the people, contravention of Oath of Office by Zuma and his syndicates with the Guptas and also the race cardboard instituted by Zuma into the ANC canvass. The “identity politics” in the semblance of utilizing Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela’s bequest. All of these acts resulted in pessimistic perceptions by the public, province to province which contributed to the losing of power by ANC (pp 90-94). Chapter eight inspects the task of “Integrated Development Plans (IDPs)” in local government leadership, forethought and conveyance as channels to rotate electorate’ desires into actuality. In this context, the author illustrates that “as a principal strategic planning apparatus which guides and informs planning, budgeting, management and decision making in a municipality” (p 97) for a duration of five years can subscribe to aggrandizing service delivery. IDPs also include constituencies in the municipal administration groundwork procedure culminating in the speeding up of service delivery. This chapter also foregrounds unconventional propositions to service delivery as: “contracting-outsourcing, leases, concessions, management contracts, build, operate and transfer” (p 110).

Chapter nine evaluates the “role of new media in the promotion of participatory democracy in the 2016 local government elections” of South Africa. This among others include the guard dog (unmask and compels lawbreakers to be responsible, emancipate the closemouthed and inspect institutions of the state) and schedule setting (molding administrative actuality through trends and hashtags) media capacity. The trio biggest South African political parties: ANC, DA and EFF utilize social media (Facebook and Twitter) platforms to push for conversations between them and their electorate. Chapter ten ties awareness to the

problematization of “elections in the contemporary Southern African countries using South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia” to explore the conditions bound which they clasp applicability or inapplicability (p 128). The latter is done inside the representative composition to inspect their dismissals “in the post-colonial Southern Africa”. In this chapter, democracy is seen as the permissible leadership instead of the electoral end result of dominance (p 129).

In South Africa’s electoral democracy, stats disclosed sadness in the status of governance to be very excessive and dispiriting as the systemic rehabilitates to transform imbalances, and substandard service delivery. The question of land reform, criminality and elections solo did slight to transpose the clear-sightedness of democratic practice in South Africa. In Zambia, majority of the population is still of the view that democracy had not drop-shipped progress and their representative administrations collapsed their own aptitudes. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has repositioned its doctrine of preserving state power and constructed webs with individual business moguls and connected people to retain power and the legatees of these philosophical meanderings are the institutions of the state fed by the then President Robert Mugabe. Nonetheless, elections are active in the African continent but meet their own challenges.

Chapter eleven analyses the “double decentralisation for local governance in South Africa: the case of eThekweni municipality”, as a mechanism that increases representation at the native governmental level (p 154). This is possible through the initiation of “new municipal councils and establishment of ward committees and their election processes and procedures” (pp 159-160). The above can lead to stabilizing substitute-request administration. Chapter eleven traverses on indisposing expertise in South African municipal government by using capacity building application which can be used to deal with municipal challenges such as race-related problems and modified progress proposition installed by the government of apartheid. Chapter thirteen places emphasis on municipal government leadership and governance in South Africa by unloading the two deposits of progress that local governments ought to face in the country: social development and local lucrative development for a provisional municipal administration in which national desires are enumerated. Two principal physiques in these are political heads and managerial and non-theoretical experts. Chapter fourteen explores “Competency Based Training (CBT)” (p 215) in the municipal government as a competence issue compound concerning Human Resources (HR) censorious problems cladding municipal government and proposes CBT as a capable of enhancing HR (municipal employees) abilities to deliver services. Accordingly, they can appropriate and revise CBT for developing expertise in their municipalities, therefore, making it a replica that can do away with calculated risks and ameliorate efficiency.

In the final and overall analysis, the book under review is a compilation of previously published articles authored by the editor (MP Sebola) and/or other contributors. Despite its imperfections that are common in intellectual productions by un-professorial professors, what stroke me in this book is the discerning materiality, backed reasoning, academic and policy recommendations. This compilation unmask episodes before, during and post South Africa’s 2016 local government elections from an innumerable topical

viewpoints, theoretical composition and methods which bestow a convenient content. Regardless of the latter, this compilation especially Chapter 1, suffers from lack of steadiness in editing and style of writing, inaccuracies, repetitions, grammatical errors, contractions, personal pronunciations, the use of less credible scholarly sources such as Wikipedia. The cauldron of the gross scholarly deficiencies in the opening chapter are particularly concerning, because the chapter in question was authored by the editor of this book. To add, some authors were not listed in the reference lists of some of the individual chapters. The lack of cohesion between chapters (i.e. chapter fourteen talks of purely Human Resources matters which do not address the title and substance of the book) makes it difficult for any sound academic to recommend it for students in any academic discipline. Despite its faults and if revisited rigorously, this compilation has a potential to earn a space in the bookshelves of many African academic institutions as it advocates and foster intellectual discussions amongst African scholars whose fate it tied to the African continent.

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