

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA SINCE 1994

*Leadership, Democracy, Development
and Service Delivery in a
Post-Apartheid Era*

Alexius Amtaika



CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS

Durham, North Carolina

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Amtaika, Alexius.

Local government in South Africa since 1994 : leadership, democracy, development and service delivery in a post-apartheid era / Alexius Amtaika.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-61163-090-9 (alk. paper)

1. Local government--South Africa. 2. Civil service--South Africa. 3. South Africa--Politics and government. I. Title.

JS7533.A2A57 2012

320.80968--dc23

2012023423

Carolina Academic Press
700 Kent Street
Durham, North Carolina 27701
Telephone (919) 489-7486
Fax (919) 493-5668
www.cap-press.com

Printed in the United States of America

Exergi monumentum aere perennius

(Horace, 65 BC – 08 BC)

(I have built this [monument] legacy more lasting than bronze)

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Foreword

This uniquely written and enterprising book reasons that local authorities are created to play two essential roles, namely: (i) service rendering, which is a utilitarian consideration, and (ii) democracy, which is a civic consideration. The utilitarian dimension entails the efficient and effective rendering of services to citizens. It has a bias for recipient-citizens, but also recognizes the fact that citizens, in turn, have an obligation to pay for these services. The civic consideration deals with the values of participation, representation, local autonomy, responsiveness, and fairness. It entails commitment and participation of citizens in the decision-making processes of local government—or contribution of ideas. In this book, Alexius Amtaika develops a compelling form of growing body of knowledge and literature which contend that an effective local government is vital for the provision of goods and services, in partnership with communities, in order to allow the communities themselves to lead healthier and happier lives. He tailors together conceptual issues, classical historical facts, various legislations and empirical data into a single coherent argument, and stresses that the challenges facing local government in South Africa today are historical and systemic, embedded in, and inherited, from the British colonial government's Westminster Model, which was first introduced into South Africa in 1806 and passed on to, and adopted by, various governments in South Africa. He stresses that the changes that took place in South Africa in 1994 were structural changes, and that these changes altered fundamentally the structures of the old apartheid government, but maintained the Westminster Model System of governance and government, which has been in place since the beginning of the 19th Century. His case is animated by provocative discussions of topical issues, such as freedom, equality, order, nation-building, democracy, development, leadership, elections, and service delivery.

Series Editor's Preface

The *Carolina Academic Press African World Series*, inaugurated in 2010, offers significant new works in the field of African and Black World studies. The series provides scholarly and educational texts that can serve both as reference works and as readers in college classes.

Studies in the series are anchored in the existing humanistic and the social scientific traditions. Their goal, however, is the identification and elaboration of the strategic place of Africa and its Diaspora in a shifting global world. More specifically, the studies will address gaps and larger needs in the developing scholarship on Africa and the Black World.

The series intends to fill gaps in areas such as African politics, history, law, religion, culture, sociology, literature, philosophy, visual arts, art history, geography, language, health, and social welfare. Given the complex nature of Africa and its Diaspora, and the constantly shifting perspectives prompted by globalization, the series also meets a vital need for scholarship connecting knowledge with events and practices. Reflecting the fact that life in Africa continues to change, especially in the political arena, the series explores issues emanating from racial and ethnic identities, particularly those connected with the ongoing mobilization of ethnic minorities for inclusion and representation.

Toyin Falola

University of Texas at Austin

Preface

This is a general book on the new local government in South Africa. It is designed to introduce readers to the kinds of problems that political theorists deal with, and to some of the answers that have been suggested. The book is a combination of conceptual, historical, constitutional, and empirical information, to present a coherent form of a growing body of knowledge which aims at providing students, as well as local government practitioners, with a foundation on which they can build by consulting more advanced work in specialist books and journals.

There has been a dramatic increase in the volume of literature concerning local government since the establishment of the new local government in 1994. However, there is no book on local government which gives the theoretical, historical, and constitutional accounts of the development, performance, and challenges, comprehensively, from the political theory point of view or perspective. This handicap has led to the wide perception that the field of local government is infertile, narrow, and lacks depths. This has been compounded by the fact that the major contributions to contemporary local government in South Africa have come from a number of academic disciplines, mainly in public administration, development studies, sociology, economics and law, which played an important role in helping the subject to retain its heterogeneous nature, but equally responsible for complicating better understanding of the precepts and attributes of local government by beginners. It is in this context that this book comes to the fore, to present some important ideas that have emerged from these disciplines before and after 1994, to make them relevant to the interest of students of politics and local government practitioners.

Although the book is animated by a variety of theories, it is simple to read, and it is suitable for individuals that have vast or very little knowledge of the subject matter of local government. In spite of this, it is important that the first four chapters of the book be properly absorbed, since ideas discussed in these four chapters reappear throughout the book at different stages and are employed in a variety of contexts.

The book is relatively longer than normal. Its extra length is attributed to the creativity, vigor, and significance of the wider and deep knowledge I accumulated over a long period of time, dating back to my early university days in the late 1980s. The dynamism of the book is a vindication of my original conception and interest in the discipline and it is clearly evident in my attempts to furnish leaders with conceptual problems involved in the explanation of traditional political and moral issues such as order, freedom, equality, democracy, development, and leadership, as well as classical historical literature on the evolution of the state and local government in South Africa, without losing sight of contemporary South African politics and local government. The book provides tools of analysis and sustentative studies that illustrate their utility. More importantly, in discussing issues, I have tried to avoid bias in favor of any single school, theory, or concept, by instead offering a balanced overview of approaches, both conceptual and empirical. It is my sincere hope that this book will encourage a new generation of readers to explore and analyze major issues and challenges.

I would like to convey my vote of thanks to some few extraordinary individuals who played a major role in the conception and publication of this book. First, I am very grateful to the African Studies Center at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, for offering me the University of Michigan African Presidential Fellowship, which was instrumental in imbuing me with ideas to write this book. I am particularly grateful to Professor Kelly Askew, the Director of the African Studies Center at the University of Michigan, and her staff, for taking care of me and for making my stay in the US a very fruitful one. Second, I am particularly indebted to Professor Toyin Falola of the University of Texas at Austin, for taking a great interest in my work and for encouraging me to publish this manuscript. He is one single, selfless individual who has the interests and the welfare of others at heart. It must be frankly acknowledged that without him and without his interest in my work, this book could have not been possible. To him I say: "*Nonne amicus certus in re incerta cernitur*" (a friend in need is a friend indeed). Finally, my heartfelt thanks should go to my mother and my late grandmother for being pillars of support and reservoirs and founts of knowledge throughout my life. They instilled in me, at an early age, many virtues of life, which played essential roles in my career as an academic, in spite of being an illegitimate son of my mother. Although these women did not receive formal education, their successes as parents are reflected in the quality of ideas contained and presented in this book. I therefore salute all the single mothers of this world. "*Fax mentis incedium gloriae*" (the passion of glory is the torch of the mind). I am very sad and aggrieved that my grandmother passed on before publication of this book. To her I say '*Hamba kahle gogo,*' (go well granny) your words of wisdom shall always guide my consciousness and my ways of life. By iron, iron itself is sharpened. Knowledge shall always govern ignorance, for not only is ignorance a drudgery for men, but it is also the imprisonment of the mind and the vexation of the soul.