AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS

*Evidence systems for governance
and development*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

3D	Three-dimensional
4IR	Fourth Industrial Revolution
ACRES	Centre for Rapid Evidence Synthesis
AFIDEP	African Institute for Development Policy
AFLI	Africa Leadership Institute
AfrEA	African Evaluation Association
ALP	African Legislature Project
APNODE	African Parliamentarians' Network on Development Evaluation
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BEPP	Bureau of Evaluation of Public Policies
BEPPAAG	Bureau of Evaluation of Public Policies and Government Action Analysis
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CDFs	Constituency Development Funds
CSC	Committee Score Card
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DPME	Department of Performance (later planning) Monitoring and Evaluation
DRS	Department of Research Services (DRS)
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIDM	Evidence-Informed Decision-Making
ETWG	Evaluation Technical Working Group
EVI	Electronic Voter Identification
FES	Friedrich Ebert Foundation
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Government Evaluation Facility
GNPBO	Global Network of Parliament Budget Offices
GPFE	Global Parliamentarians' Forum on Evaluation
GTAC	Government Technical Assistance Centre
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HR	Human Resources
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDS	Institute of Development Studies

IIAG	Ibrahim Index of African Governance
INASP	International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications
IoT	Internet of Things
IPAB	Benin Parliamentary Institute
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
KEWOPA	Kenya Women Parliamentary Association
KEWOSA	Kenya Women Senators Association
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MEJN	Malawi Economic Justice Network
MPs	Members of Parliament
MPL	Members of Provincial Legislatures
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NEDLC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NES	National Evaluation System
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NMETWG	National M&E Technical Working Group
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PARMAN	Project for Support of the Strengthening and Modernization of the National Assembly
PBOs	Parliamentary Budget Offices
PC-EIDM	Parliamentary Caucus on Evidence-Informed Oversight and Decision-Making
PCOs	Parliamentary Constituency Offices
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
POT	Parliamentary Oversight Tool
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PRS	Parliamentary Research Service
RSP	Revolutionary State Party
RTS	Results Transmission System
SADC-PF	Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum
SCOA	Standing Committee on Appropriations
SCOPA	Standing Committee on Public Accounts
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation

UNACEB	State Budget Control and Assessment Analysis Unit
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
VOPES	Voluntary Organisations of Professional Evaluators
WBI	World Bank Institute
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZEPARU	Zimbabwe Economic Policy and Analysis Research Unit

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CONTEXT OF EVALUATIVE INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNANCE

Candice Morkel and Gavin Bradshaw

Introduction

This chapter examines how efforts at building systems of evidence in African parliaments are influenced by historical and contextual factors around the state and state formation, alongside global development imperatives and increasing pressures to strengthen evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM). The history of pre-modern, colonial and post-colonial state formation in Africa and the rise of democratic regimes across the continent as well as their intersection with an increasingly globalised development agenda have carved a pathway for the rising popularity of EIDM in the state. Inseparable from a broader definition of the state, parliaments have experienced a concomitant growing demand to strengthen their use of evidence to execute their roles effectively, particularly in the areas of oversight and representation. Generally, however, insufficient attention has been paid to a critical, contextual and historical view of the role of parliaments as evaluative institutions in addressing the challenges to their effective use of evidence. These challenges include the peremptory nature of the relationship between the executive and parliament and the limits on the freedom of the latter in decision-making, particularly in electoral or Westminster-type systems. This chapter therefore examines parliaments and their use of evidence¹ in their role as evaluative institutions. It addresses the complexity of the challenges that parliaments face in lawmaking, representation and oversight in respect of the political and governance systems to which they are tethered, how these are influenced by national and international development agendas, and the evidence systems they exact.

One of the major concerns associated with the evaluative and objective use of evidence in parliaments is the extent to which party political and electoral systems constrain legislators in their work, and therefore the extent to which they may use evidence to be critical of or question the work of the executive, particularly of an incumbent regime. Parliaments in electoral/representative systems, in particular, are often challenged by party-political patronage and risk falling prey to neopatrimonialism and state capture. Post-colonial African states are often criticised for birthing a bureaucratic elite, fostering party-political allegiances as well as individual interests of private wealth accumulation,

¹ The term 'evidence' is conceptualised broadly in this chapter, and therefore includes a variety of types, including evidence derived from Monitoring and Evaluation [M&E] activities. However, it is acknowledged that M&E has been gaining popularity in state-based EIDM in Africa over the last decade and a half. It also has a particularly close relationship with the international development sector, as well as a visceral relationship with some of the historical aspects around the introduction of performance-based measurement in the public sector.

as evidenced in states such as Sese Seko's Zaire, Amin's Uganda and, more recently, Mugabe's Zimbabwe, as well as South Africa under Jacob Zuma. This chapter examines how the protection of interests (political and private) may affect individual representatives in the execution of their work, pointing to the complexity of the politics of evidence use in parliamentary systems.

This chapter further analyses the intersection between democracy, state formation, the global development agenda, and the institutionalisation of systems of evidence production and use in parliaments. Very few would disagree that evidence systems are important and carry great potential for strengthening governance and democracy by providing information for policy and decision-making. Their potentially positive net effect on development results is often seen as a foregone conclusion, as evidenced by the 2019 award of the Nobel Economics Prize to Duflo, Banerjee and Kremer, for their contributions to evidence-based policymaking using randomised, controlled experimental trials. In particular, the production and use of evidence from M&E activities have been extolled in recent years as intrinsically valuable to achieving development outcomes. The relationship between development and evidence is therefore seen as inextricable, yet scholars and practitioners alike have paid very little attention to the existing critiques of and challenges in the discourse around evidence systems including, for example, their embeddedness in political systems and international development practices that may not necessarily strengthen systems of democracy and governance and may even be harmful. Using Crawley's Six-Sphere Framework (2017) as a frame of analysis, the chapter therefore examines how historical and contextual issues relating to the inter-linkages between state formation, political systems and the international development sector (particularly in Africa) affect parliamentary systems of evidence production and use. It provides a critique around evidence systems as transformative agents for strengthening democracy and governance within parliaments and offers some insights into the implications for fulfilling its potential as a harbinger of the achievement of democracy and social justice.

In closing, the chapter focuses its attention on how building and institutionalising robust systems of evidence and the capacity to use them effectively may help parliaments address the multiple, complex challenges they face. The intention is to look at potential remedies that address more than the techno-legal fixes that the institutionalisation of M&E systems usually provide. These include looking at the political, economic and ideological context of the state, the prioritisation of party-political and individual interests that drive state behaviour, as well as

the preoccupation with authoritarian accountability and compliance within the state, all of which have had an impact on parliamentary systems in contemporary democracies. The ultimate question is: what role can EIDM play in being an agent of transformation and equitable development, within the context of the role of parliament in contemporary systems of democracy and governance?

Framework for analysing the political, historical and contextual influences on parliamentary systems of evidence

In Chapter 2 of this volume, various models and frameworks are described that may provide a useful framework for understanding the propensity of parliaments to adopt and utilise systems of evidence for policymaking and oversight. Three of these frameworks (Crawley, 2017; Weyrach, Echt & Suliman, 2016; Langer, Goldman & Pabari, 2020) each provide especially useful lenses to consider the factors that align with the potential levers of, or obstacles to, evidence use in parliaments discussed in this chapter. Of particular importance in each of these is the role of the macro context on parliamentary systems of evidence, and these include both internal and external characteristics and a spectrum of other influences including the political, the social, values and culture, the economic, and the relational. See below the author's adaptation of Crawley's Six Sphere Framework (2017). This is explained elaborately in Chapter 2.

Crawley's Six-Sphere Framework (2017) is particularly useful in that it acts as both an analytical and diagnostic tool that can help deepen our understanding of the key issues raised in this chapter around the factors that influence parliaments' use of evidence in executing their roles.²

It portrays the various aspects that influence the production and use of evidence in systems as a set of concentric, nested circles or spheres. At the core, the ideological, political, and contextual spheres help provide a frame for understanding the enduring influence of colonial and post-colonial state formation, contemporary political and governance systems as well as the global development context on parliaments and their work. Moving in a hierarchy of significance towards the outer periphery of the framework, the relational and contextual spheres provide a lens through which to view the influence of contemporary (democratic) systems of government and governance in parliamentary systems of evidence use. The outer technical and logistical spheres represent the more visible elements of systems of evidence in institutions; for example, the resources, structures, the technical capacity to produce and use evidence as well as the quality of evidence that is produced. These are the aspects that are also most often prioritised in thinking about, valuing, diagnosing, and designing systems of evidence production and use.

The focus of evaluation capacity development and efforts to institutionalise M&E systems often revolves around interventions that focus on the outer spheres (the technical and logistical aspects) even though the success of M&E systems is often heavily dependent on the condition of the spheres towards the core of the framework. It may be that the focus has remained on technical aspects such as the provision of resources, capacity to produce evidence, and the development of tools and systems as these aspects are easier and less complex than the efforts needed to influence building a culture of evaluation. Technical solutions have continued to shape EIDM capacity development and institutionalisation interventions and this is due, at least in part, to the orthodox application of democracy building, public administration and governance approaches. Their intersections with, and influence on neo-liberal economics are also worth considering and are therefore explored to some extent in this chapter.

² Crawley's Six-Sphere Framework (2017) is discussed comprehensively in Chapter 2 by Rabie and Ajam, and therefore, to avoid duplication, a full depiction of the diagram is not provided in this chapter.

Examination of the ideological and political issues at the core of parliamentary systems of evidence production turns our attention to creating more holistic accounts of the challenges in EIDM in legislatures, and to the designing of more appropriate and impactful interventions as these relate to the outer, technical and logistical spheres. Understanding the ideological, political, contextual, and relational issues helps us to understand the significance of their influence on parliaments' approaches to evidence use today and may help us to design interventions that address issues at the root of the challenge.

One such under-examined core issue is the global preoccupation with economic power and control intertwined with orthodox views on economic growth and development. Indicators of economic growth, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) tend to dominate the narrative on what development means and looks like. Such indicators stem from the history of state-making which itself is entrenched in the history of capitalism. These ties between economic and political systems have governed thinking around growth and development and directed state behaviour in Africa. Several key features of this symbiosis are well documented in political studies and public administration yet are rarely linked to the evolution of Monitoring and Evaluation, particularly in African systems of governance. These features include the wave of New Public Management that infiltrated and influenced systems of governance in developing countries, linked to the growing popularity of modernisation and neo-liberal views on development and the Third Wave of democracy, which upheld Weberian efficiency and private-sector approaches to governance as the ideal bureaucratic machinery with which to govern. This created conditions that facilitated a financial accountability-driven approach to development, financed largely by international finance and Bretton Woods institutions in developing countries in Africa, and a fetishising of performance auditing and financial accountability. Parliaments in newly democratised states, particularly in electoral systems inherently built on patronage and loyalty to the ruling party, consequently acted as agents of this agenda. This trajectory has continued to the present era of African statehood, particularly where democratic consolidation and party-political systems prevail. Parliamentarians, although the most directly linked to the populace through election, are often also constrained by patronage and political allegiances which may take precedence over their accountability towards the citizens of the country and may largely shape which evidence is used, and how. Growing aid dependency for the delivery of public goods, the globalisation of the development agenda, and the powerful hegemony of

Western methods and approaches to science, research and M&E, have also crowded out much of the room for states to self-determine their approaches to EIDM. The result has been a teleological approach to establishing evidence systems by parliaments which acknowledges the need for their existence but fails to harness their potential for achieving development outcomes through improved oversight and lawmaking.

Contemporary challenges, including the global Covid-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, and the widening inequality gap, have pushed states (and, by extension, parliaments) to acknowledge the need for systems of evidence-informed decision-making and mechanisms for effective monitoring, evaluation and action to avert the global crises affecting the very existence of the planet and its inhabitants. There is therefore some optimism that authentic efforts are being made to ensure that parliaments in Africa become real agents for development change as well as champions for justice and equitable development through the use of evidence. Examples of these are the Parliamentarians Forum for Development Evaluation that was established in South Asia in 2013, the Global Parliamentarians Forum for Evaluation, established in 2014/2015 and the establishment of a variety of regional parliamentarians' fora after that in Africa, East Asia, Latin American and the MENA regions.³ The establishment of the African Parliamentarians Network on Development Evaluation (APNODE) at the AfrEA conference held in Yaounde, Cameroon in March 2014 also signified the growing global commitment by parliamentarians to elevating the importance of evaluation to development results.⁴ These efforts demonstrate a growing vision and leadership amongst parliamentarians to elevate the importance of evidence, and in particular, monitoring and evaluation. The Six-Sphere Framework helps to focus attention on the significance of properly situating the challenges in relation to the production and use of evidence in parliamentary systems within the political, ideological, and historical contexts of these institutions of the state and to identify areas of leverage to effect change where needed.

Examining state formation at the core: Ideological influences on EIDM

Parliaments, far from being neutral spaces, are sites of power and contestation that are embedded within the political regimes and systems that helped shape them. They are influenced by the broader political context within

³ <https://bit.ly/3zjCSRW>

⁴ <https://bit.ly/398uXfl>

which they operate which, in turn, influences how evidence is used within parliaments (Latib, 2016, p. 206). The historical foundations of state building in commanding territorial power and control provides an important point of departure for critically analysing the function of parliaments in the institution of the modern state. Historically, states were formed as a direct result of an increase in conflicts over territory and resources, which led to the creation of institutional structures of control and governance, with the ability to use force being borne out of necessity (Hall & Ikenberry, 1989; Hay & Lister, 2006, p. 5). The protection of elites and their property therefore characterises the origin of states more accurately than the securing of the rights of citizens and the provision of public goods, which are relatively recent hallmarks of liberal democratic states. Contemporary research on states (cf. Carbone & Memoli, 2015) re-affirms Charles Tilly's timeless remark that states make war and wars make states (Tilly, 1985) and puts into perspective the centrality of coercive power in modern conceptualisations of the state and its institutions (See also Morris, 2015). These historical roots remain entrenched in parliaments and their actions in the machinery of the democratic state and influence the work of parliaments. The umbilical cord between parliamentary systems, particularly in post-colonial African states, remains connected to the historical notion of the state as agent of power and control. Yet, parliaments remain the most tangible relation between government and the governed and are therefore vital in the alignment of the policies of the former to the basic human needs' satisfactions of the latter.

State power, control and the ability to use coercive force therefore remain distinct markers of state formation, even in modern democratic states (Carbone & Memoli, 2015, p. 7; Rose & Miller, 2010, p. 274). Although this outlook on the state is not without controversy (Hay & Lister, 2006, p. 8), the Weberian definition that states are "compulsory associations claiming control over territories and the people within them" (Evans, 1995, p. 5) remains buoyant. Parliaments are also shaped by the dominance of Western political thought on colonial and post-colonial state formation in Africa. Over the last four decades in particular, newly independent African states often adopted the nature, forms and machinery of governance they had been accustomed to in the narrow interstices between colonial and post-colonial state formation. Building strong states, with the ability to wield both territorial and economic power, as well as the enduring Weberian notion of bureaucratic authoritarianism and efficiency, have continued to determine the nature and role of institutions of the state,

including parliaments, in Africa. Therefore, such orthodox conceptualisations of the state and development in Africa may actually drive parliaments to prioritise performance management and monitoring for the end-goal of bureaucratic control, governance and accountability, and for strengthening the executive. This has come at the expense of learning, reflection and protecting the socio-economic rights and needs of citizens.

The economic and fiscal role of parliaments has risen alongside the increasing complexity of the modern economy and the role of the executive in government, to the extent that the public sector is now a key agent in contributing to and driving the national economy. In South Africa, for example, roughly a third of all economic activity in the country is conducted by government in the form of public goods, service delivery and regulation, employment of civil servants, and state procurement. As a result, the fiscal and economic oversight role of the legislature has become commensurately more challenging. This is even more prevalent in the context of the emergence of a strong pursuit of a developmental state by African nations which has gained traction owing to its massive success amongst what are commonly known as the 'East Asian Tigers'.

The Global Network of Parliamentary Budget Offices (GNPBO), for example, also signals an acknowledgement of the growing importance of the role of parliaments in budget oversight.⁵ The GNPBO is a network of national Parliamentary Budget Offices established in 2013/14 and acts as a forum where knowledge may be shared and lessons learned around improving the effectiveness of PBOs.⁶ The members of the GNPBO include parliaments that have invested in Parliamentary Budget Offices including established PBOs such as Uganda, Canada, Kenya, Liberia and Nigeria.⁷ PBOs extend the fiscal oversight reach of parliaments in that they perform detailed budget analysis, examine the impact of fiscal decision-making by the executive, and provide alternative fiscal forecasts.⁸ This is a much more directive role of parliaments in the economy, rendering them both a product and a producer of its society and its economy.

This historical production of the state in Africa and its various institutions (including parliament) brings into sharp perspective the importance of state orientation and its architecture in relation to the various competing interests

⁵ See <https://bit.ly/2XqzY0F>

⁶ <https://bit.ly/3Ag1M5V>

⁷ <https://bit.ly/3Ag1M5V>

⁸ <https://bit.ly/3Ag1M5V>

in society. This history influences the position of parliaments (more generally) with respect to governance and development and, therefore, with how they have traditionally engaged with evidence in performing their roles. In the context of the post-colonial state in Africa and the need to develop both effective and authentic systems of democratic governance, there is a need for strong, independent legislatures. Yet, parliaments remain the most tangible relation between government and the governed and are therefore vital in the alignment of the policies of the former to the basic human needs' satisfactions of the latter. In this regard, parliamentary systems in Africa can only benefit from a greater focus on evidence-based oversight. However, some might argue that many of the parliamentary systems in Africa have built significant systems of evidence-based oversight through their processes, rules, and procedural codes which have emerged over time as part of innovations introduced over the last half a century since the wave of independence started in the early 1960s. These innovations can be linked to the wave of New Public Management that became a feature of the bureaucracies of post-independent African states and which favoured governance systems based on fiscal restraint, accountability, and compliance. Parliamentary systems of evidence of this nature (that drive a bureaucratic agenda with an audit and efficiency orientation) are embedded within a state that values the production and use of evidence for accountability and compliance, as opposed to being a citizen-focused agent of social justice and equitable development. This is especially prevalent in proportional systems of representation where legislators are representative of the party (and, by extension, the ruling party in the state) rather than of the constituents they are meant to serve. This is the nature of many post-colonial African bureaucracies that adopted the systems of governance they had inherited from their colonial predecessors. Without addressing the ideological and political drivers of development, any bureaucratic, technocratic or administrative-based systems of evidence may simply reproduce the past into the future and maintain the inequalities inherent in the old order. Therefore, perfectly functional, efficient systems of evidence production and use may, in fact, not be citizen-focused or authentically development-oriented.

The ideological, political, relational and contextual spheres of Crawley's framework help us to understand how the history of state formation influences contemporary state institutions in Africa and the ways in which parliaments use evidence. For example, the deeply held values underpinning state institutions' views of the role of the state (i.e. maintaining power and control) may affect

the ways in which parliaments perceive the role of evidence in decision-making. The primary concern with evidence use may be rooted more deeply in maintaining a strong state and, in so doing, override concerns around the achievement of development outcomes. If the beliefs, values and principles of the political system are dominated by concerns over political, territorial and economic power, these will have a direct influence on the driving factors behind the establishment of evidence systems. Such evidence systems will be focused on ensuring that the state maintains power and control at the expense of social policy concerns. In this context, the implications for evidence production and use in the broader state and parliament evidence ecosystem may be framed within the boundaries of the ideological sphere in Crawley's diagnostic framework. The fact that the history of state formation is rooted in the pursuit of power and monopoly over the use of violence and control perhaps explains why building a culture of evidence use for social justice and the promotion of the public good is such a challenge. With all systems of the state at the behest of its ideological posture, in cases where the prioritisation of economic and political power takes precedence over securing development outcomes for citizens, concerns over the latter may not necessarily be the drivers of EIDM.

The link between post-colonial state formation and contemporary positions around evidence use in parliaments

African states continue to be plagued by the shadows of their colonial past. The historical events of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Western Europe laid the groundwork for the adoption of governance systems in African colonies after the scramble for Africa (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009; Hay & Lister, 2006; Poggi, 1990; Lachmann, 1989) which continue to form part of the governance machinery in the modern African state (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009; Hay & Lister, 2006; Smith, 2006). These include territorial control as well as strong bureaucratic centres (ibid.).

The geopolitical conflict over economic power and resources across Europe was exported to African states (Adebajo, 2010, pp. 10 & 17; Bond, 2015, p. 30) and has now taken deep root in contemporary African systems of policymaking and governance. It is a historical fact that parliaments also drove the economic projects of slavery and colonialism. The multi-national Dutch East India Company, for example, drove the project of colonisation in South Africa,

whereas its counterpart, the British East India Company colonised West and East Africa. Many other European countries had their own state- (then monarch) sanctioned private colonising companies which implemented slavery and colonialism. The case study on Ghana in this volume, for example, illustrates how parliament evolved from a colonial legislative council that was specifically set up in 1850 to advise the colonial governor on matters of legislation and was never intended to represent the needs of the people (FES Ghana and HRAC, 2011, p. 5). Colonialism was, therefore, as much an economic project that depended on racial subjugation and slavery to achieve its nefarious ends.

Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006, p. 80) posits that post-independence some African leaders have been “content with playing the neo-colonial role of intermediary between Western capitalism and their people”. However, this is not necessarily an exclusively African problem. Damgaard (1995, p. 308) reflects on how the actions of parliamentarians in Western Europe are predicated on their individual interests in climbing the party-political ranks. Strom (1995, p. 60), in a similar reflection on parliament in Western Europe, draws on neo-institutionalism to illustrate how the agency and actions of members of parliament are scuppered by various conflicting interests.

Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006, p. 72) provides an excellent exposition of the impact of the West on post-colonial state-building in Africa stating that “... post-colonial rulers have not transformed the inherited structures of the state and the economy to serve the deepest aspirations of their peoples instead of the interests of the dominant classes of the world system, with which these rulers tend to identify. In the current context of globalization, in which there is increased pressure to align state policy with the demands of the major world powers and international financial institutions, the challenges of state building in the interest of the majority of the people are even more formidable today than they were thirty or forty years ago”.

In post-colonial Africa, the neo-colonial project of imperialist states was to use the class aspirations of African petty bourgeoisie for their continued dominance and control (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006, p. 74). An authoritarian style of rule was also easier to adopt as the elites to whom power had now been bequeathed were thoroughly accustomed to “legally strong, hierarchically organised and centralized, and economically intrusive governing systems” (Nellis in Herbst, 1998, p. 435). ‘Neo-patrimonial multi-party systems’ (Erdmann & Engel, in Lodge, 2014, p. 4) were created out of the limited options that political elites

had at their disposal in shaping the new post-colonial state and its bureaucratic machinery, notwithstanding the additional allure of self-enrichment, which also required an increasingly authoritarian-style rule (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006, p. 75). Engelbert (2000) argues that the post-colonial African state relies so heavily on political patronage and extensive networks of political support, because of a lack of authentic legitimacy that is borne out of the alienation of citizens from the political system and power relations. Neopatrimonialism⁹ has therefore become commonplace, alongside patronage and corruption (Engelbert, 2000) anchored in and shaped by the legacy of colonial rule.

Political connectedness and patronage, however, still play significant roles in African politics, where private wealth continues to influence party politics and the selection of political leadership (Economic Commission for Africa, 2009, p. 3) effectively reducing citizen participation to electing “representatives of the bourgeoisie and members of illustrious families” into power (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006, pp. 85-86). The rapid transitions to independence facilitated a dependence on political relations and alliances with notable individuals and securing their allegiance to political parties, giving rise (in some cases) to ‘Big Man’ or ‘Big Chief’ politics (Di John, 2010, p. 17). Electoral systems are particularly susceptible to neopatrimonialism where there is an intensity in embeddedness and weaknesses in autonomy between political parties, their leaders, and their parliamentary representatives. In Ghana, for example, the executive appoints the majority of the members of Cabinet from amongst the members of parliament (see Legal Resources Centre and FES Ghana, 2006 as per Chapter 1 of this volume). In a representative system where the majority party wins the majority of seats in parliament, the Head of State (and other senior executives) are essentially the ‘party bosses’ of elected MPs. It is therefore perilous for individual MPs to be seen to be transgressing the ‘party line’, and in the hierarchical system of power and patronage, it is near impossible for them to hold their senior political leaders accountable for their performance – and even more so for corrupt activities. In fact, parliaments themselves were recorded in the 2006 Report of the Global Corruption Barometer as exceptionally corrupt institutions, and ranked second in South Africa, third in Kenya, fourth in Cameroun and Nigeria, and fifth in the DRC, Gabon and Morocco (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2007, p. 17).

⁹ Neopatrimonialism is a hybrid concept that implies the merging of patrimonialism with legal-rational domination, where a patron, who is typically an office holder uses political power and public funds to build a personal following, enabling their continued stay in power. The client parties receive material benefits in exchange. It is useful to think of neopatrimonialism as a continuum between the two poles of rational-legal, and patrimonial government.

Africa's perceived perpetual doom and the failed state narrative is, however, sometimes carelessly applied without considering how the political and economic hegemony of the West is enabled by this kind of analysis (Hill, 2005, p. 139). Indicating a break from its colonial (and post-colonial) shackles and concomitant socio-political challenges, there have been some indications that governance is improving on the African continent, and it is particularly significant that Africa's long-term plan for development, Agenda 2063, has emphasised that one of its primary aspirations is an "Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law" (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019, p. 43). The 2019 African Governance Report (ibid.) reflects this growing consolidation of democratic governance across the continent, where positive trends in the areas of Safety and Rule of Law have been registered since 2014 in more than half (29) of the African states measured by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance [IIAG] (ibid.). The specific areas of Rule of Law and Transparency and Accountability have been at the forefront of shifting the improvements (ibid.) which have been on an upward trajectory from 2014 to 2017.

The ideological and political spheres of Crawley's Six-Sphere Framework help to contextualise post-colonial state formation as a formidable challenge to the propensity of African parliaments to develop effective systems of evidence production and use. The core principles and values at the core of the institution – political leadership and commitment to championing results-based systems of evidence, and ensuring that a culture of evaluation exists – are all affected by the fact that parliaments are embedded within the state and are often unable to separate their own ideological position from the state in general. This is particularly true where parliamentarians owe their allegiance to the political (governing) parties that ensured their position in parliament. Prevailing individual interests and private capital accumulation also define the relational sphere. The degree of trust, commitment and collaboration amongst key stakeholders (as producers, users and 'transmission agents' of evidence) are all influenced by the core ideological position of the state and its emanating structures and institutions (Crawley, 2017).

Waves of democratisation have influenced nation-states for the last four or five decades with the creation of multiparty democracies taking the lead in this mass expansion (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006, p. 71) alongside a growing realisation that political emancipation is tied to economic and social emancipation (Nzongola-

Ntalaja, 2006, p. 76). It is not possible for a country to achieve its development aspirations by relying solely on the political act of democratisation. Democratic consolidation involves the inclusion of the voices of vulnerable and marginalised groups and in securing their fundamental human rights (including economic, social and cultural) (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2006, p. 77). In South Africa, for example, with increasing levels of deprivation spurred on by decades of public service delivery failures, the failure to provide communities with basic services and myriad public sector inefficiencies in all sectors, communities and organised civil society, has resulted in various levels of protest and demands including both violent and non-violent displays of public protest.

There are growing expectations that governments need to do more to ensure that basic human rights, particularly the socio-economic rights of citizens, are upheld. Representatives in parliaments are seen as being alienated from citizens and their constituency work is becoming increasingly difficult. Communities that they visit are desperate for advocates who will act on their behalf and mediate and advocate for improvements in public sector delivery. Therefore, there is significant pressure on members of parliament to demonstrate their ability to perform their oversight duties effectively. The demand for evidence is therefore not only endogenous to the parliamentary system as it responds internally to party-political pressures and public demands for accountability from the state, but also as it represents an outward-facing means of accountability to citizens to drive the need for improvements in oversight. The growth in popularity of M&E within the state is attributable to both external and internal demands and has become the tool recognised for its potential to help parliaments become more adept at their oversight role including the aspects of compliance, accountability and governance, as well as for genuine learning and performance improvement in the state.

Examining context and relations: International development, aid, power and influence

There are fundamental problems with the international development sector that continue to perpetuate a form of neo-colonialism (particularly in post-colonial African states) through the proxy of development aid and its links to power and patronage. An examination of these influences on parliamentary systems of evidence falls within the realm of the contextual and relational rings of the Six-Sphere Framework.

Crawley's contextual sphere consists of three main considerations: structure; linkages and networks; and a culture of evaluation. All three considerations are influenced by the diffusion of what occurs in the ideological and political spheres. For example, the placement and positioning of coordinating units or departments responsible for M&E (i.e. the structures, as well as the linkages between them) are influenced by whether or not evidence systems are shaped by the sole need for information for fiscal control and accountability or if they have a more expansive role in informing policymaking. In the parliament of Zambia, for example, there is a distinction between the work of the M&E unit which is responsible for internal accountability and the research coordinators who are responsible for ensuring that evidence is available to legislators (through the committee system) for their oversight work.

In contemporary geopolitics, where territorial power is tied to economic power, a military-industrial complex has been fashioned that has locked nations into the rules of the game of global capital, located mostly in the North. Much has been written on the asymmetries of the relationship between the Global North and the Global South, in which a set of powerful nations at centre-stage of the world system are in control of capitalist relations, and nations at the periphery are at their behest (Redner, 1990, p. 641; Huntington, 1991-1992). Nations in the Global South are therefore bound by the mechanics of the international capitalist system and encumbered by orthodox conceptualisations of economic growth and development. Poorer nations in Africa, many of whom are highly indebted to international finance institutions and wealthier nations, are barely able to provide public goods to their citizens without external financing. Parliaments, therefore, are also engaged as part and parcel of the instruments of the global capital regime to which states are harnessed and may be compromised by serving an agenda that does not necessarily prioritise the use of evidence for decision-making but is rather for budget control and accountability. Concomitantly, the culture of evidence use that favours fiscal accountability and budget control (or even sees itself separate from such) develops over time and is influenced by the structures, networks and linkages that develop in systems of evidence.

The prevailing global development agenda has therefore influenced the integration of M&E into systems of evidence use in parliaments. The new and exacting demands of the SDGs has placed enormous pressure on most countries to pay attention to how they will measure their progress towards the

attainment of these global goals. The value and impact of addressing the SDGs are not in question as these are unquestionably both laudable and desirable. However, Africa is playing catch-up. Although wealthier nations (largely located in the Global North) and poorer nations (in the Global South) are all exposed to the new concerns (SDGs, climate change, Covid-19), the conditions of under-development place even more pressure on achieving the intended goals. The recognition of the importance of monitoring and evaluation has also placed further pressure on countries to implement measurement protocols. This places African governance systems at risk of isomorphism and designing M&E systems with teleological features for the sake of reporting and compliance. Crawley acknowledges that the linkages and networks between the M&E units or departments responsible for evidence production and use in parliaments can provide a “potential catalyst for demand” (2017, p. 4). This means that the potential exists for the growth and strengthening of evidence production even within this context. However, the impact of these kinds of systems for widespread change in the culture of evidence use is usually limited.

At the level of National Assemblies, for example, there is an innate level of distrust between political parties. The building of collaboration and trust between the users and producers of evidence in parliamentary systems is therefore incredibly difficult. In many cases, parliaments such as those in Kenya and Uganda also rely (at least in part) on evidence produced by the executive. Depending on the political-administrative interface and the inherent power imbalances, the ‘transmission points’ or ‘gatekeepers’ of evidence may be seen in a hostile light by parliamentarians and this also has an adverse effect on attitudes towards evidence which could regard the evidence process as burdensome or punitive (Crawley, 2017, p. 4).

One of the proposed solutions to the challenge of instituting effective systems of evidence use in parliaments is to address the issues around capacity and the need for capacity building. It is held that weaknesses in supply (i.e. weaknesses in the production of evidence) and demand (the ability to understand the value of and use evidence in decision-making) may be remedied through capacity building, but in actuality the problem may be more complex. Building evidence systems is complex and cannot simply be reduced to a single set of conditions (for example an absence of technical capacity, or even historical and post-colonial state formation, culture or ideological posture and political leadership). Each of these serve as multiple, complex and intersecting strands

that contribute to the way in which evidence is deployed in parliamentary systems of EIDM. The implications for systems strengthening and capacity development cannot therefore ignore these complexities and therefore require an appropriate multi-dimensional set of interventions that will address each of these areas.

Implications for EIDM in the context of democracy, governance and equitable development

The increasing demand for evidence has driven governments and public actors towards seeking new and alternative ways to measure and track performance and to provide certainty on the value and impact of investment in development initiatives. All institutions have been compelled to pay closer attention to their ability to gather, synthesise and use evidence for decision-making. This has become particularly important for states which have been at the receiving end of development assistance for decades. Since the era of Structural Adjustment Programming, the ability to account for expenditure and results has been made conditional to the financing package. Countries that have been at the behest of these packages have not had the luxury of designing these financial and non-financial accounting systems for themselves but have had to endure the performance metrics and matrices imposed upon them by donors. These have often been onerous and have had very little to do with a learning agenda and were perhaps overly concerned with accounting for financial expenditure. Moreover, the targeted recipients of such information were largely external (i.e. the donors) rather than recipient states themselves.

Earlier systems of M&E are also to be found in the history of institutions of the state and the political aetiology of these institutions. New public administration replaced the old public administration roughly around the time of the wave of independence in Africa. This also coincided with the popularisation of the modernisation theory of development and a growing obsession with improving the economic growth trajectories of newly independent states which were also heavily funded by Bretton Woods institutions as part of public sector reform processes. They were meant to boost economic growth, address issues of poverty, and ensure that African countries could 'rise from the ashes' of under-development and poverty. Orthodox conceptualisations of the definition of 'development' drove the economic growth narrative, and this found an easy alliance with more Weberian notions of the state which pushed for a lean,

efficient bureaucracy that was more concerned with compliance, administrative and technical efficiencies and financial accountability than it was with human and social welfare. The economic growth theory of development postulated that poverty and inequality would best be addressed if GDP growth remained the point of departure, and was accompanied by obsessions with financial accountability, rather than developmental outcomes. How this has been counter-productive is explained by the assertion of Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006, p. 84) that the efforts to cope with the liberal global agenda, particularly in the shape of its Human Development Index, prompted the weakening of African states engineered by excessive dependence on donor assistance and resulting in high levels of debt. Of necessity, institutions of the state adopted stringent public sector finance management regulations which anchored M&E in a policing/accounting/compliance narrative, rather than in results- or outcomes-focused and learning agendas.

There is a protracted link between the unwavering pre-eminence of principles of New Public Administration in modern democracies and their contribution to systems of accountability, monitoring and oversight throughout institutions of the state. This has bred an output-driven model of accountability which has contributed significantly to defining the concept and use of evidence in parliaments today. With the rising popularity of M&E in parliaments, what can be done to ensure that these institutions of the state do not fall prey to this model?

States (and, by extension, parliaments) are therefore anything but neutral bodies that represent the 'masses'. A strategic-relational perspective rejects the notion that the state is neutral or that it represents the interests of citizens in general, and instead it proffers that the state serves the interests of the dominant, ruling class (Filippini, 2017, pp. 44-45; Hall & Ikenberry, 1989, p. 7) and are, in fact, "manifestations and materializations of power" (Arendt, 1972, p. 140; Ince, 2016, p. 418). The characteristics of interest revolve around the state's monopoly over the use of power, force and coercion with the emergent risk that parliaments begin acting as instruments of the powerful elite.

Such a strategic-relational perspective questions the assumptions of the inherent legitimacy of parliaments in liberal democratic regimes and highlights the likelihood that they may be negatively influenced by the ideological positioning of the state and its leaders. Evidence use is therefore politically embedded and the legitimacy of the role and function of parliaments in terms

of potential abuse of power and evidence use, is therefore always at risk. Any interventions that seek to strengthen evidence use must be cognisant of this and should seek ways in which to legitimise the use of evidence to ensure that the best possible result is achieved for the benefit of citizens, rather than becoming a handmaiden of the political elite and those in power, or simply a matter of bureaucratic form and function.

Implications in respect of trust, commitment and building a culture of EIDM

In light of the political and ideological constraints facing parliaments in the evidence-ecosystem, to what extent is authentic evidence use then possible in African parliaments? Strategic-relational theories of the state which posit that the state operates as an instrument of (and in relation to) the dominant forces in society, help provide an analytical framework to answer this question. Tsolakis (2010, p. 395) contends that the state “reproduces and coercively expresses the power relations between the social forces constituting it and that it necessarily organises; hence it is the organisational and coercive constitution of domination itself”. It is suggested that the state exercises this coercive domination over all its institutions (both state and non-state) with only minor limitations over its power and control (Poggi, 1990). The challenge that parliaments face is to reconcile the pressures of being bound to such power relations with the responsibility of representing the rights of citizens; being agents of people’s power as well as agents of governance, democracy and the rule of law.

Therefore, although there has been a steady rise of multiparty politics and an expansion of democratic regimes across the African continent, the incumbent ruling party remains the dominant force despite the presence of a multitude of opposition parties. Factors such as access to the media and state funds play a significant role in enabling the ruling party’s domination (Economic Commission for Africa, 2009, pp. 1, 2). Parliaments are meant to provide a critical checks and balances mechanism on which legislative democracies depend to prevent the abuse of power within the system of governance. However, parliaments are often thought of as being the weakest link in African systems of government, either due to unfettered authoritarianism or inertia (Economic Commission for Africa, n.d., p. 1). Applying a strategic-relational framework of analysis, parliaments are inherently compromised due to the fact that their members are also members of the ruling party. The electoral systems of parliaments are

particularly exposed to this type of influence due to the fact that parliamentary representatives may be susceptible to patrimonial relations within the party to which they belong. A simple example may be the inability of parliaments to deal with corruption committed by members of the executive who are their political allies or seniors. Ajam's (n.d.) analysis of the role of parliamentary services in supporting effective legislative oversight in South Africa highlights that one salient pre-condition to the effective functioning of parliament is the stability of relations at the political-administrative interface (Ajam, n.d., p. 12). In the parliamentary system of South Africa, the executive is made up of individuals who are generally politically senior to Members of Parliament (MPs) and this creates a degree of discomfort in this relationship. MPs therefore face the difficult challenge of requiring accountability from their political seniors in the executive, who may regard the oversight process as encroachment onto their own turf (Ajam, n.d., p. 10). The view of Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006, p. 83) that "this is a political culture in which opportunism takes precedence over principle" resonates with this challenge in the parliamentary system.

Although these challenges cannot be resolved without addressing systemic issues of power and interest, parliaments have various mechanisms and instruments at their disposal to ensure accountability. These include public hearings, committees of inquiry, oversight visits, constituency outreach committee hearings, hearings in plenary sessions of the parliament, questions, urgent questions, written questions, the ombudsman, auditors-general, and the public accounts committees, amongst others (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2007, p. 13; Ajam, n.d., p. 8). These instruments and mechanisms of accountability ensure that the effectiveness of the state apparatus is placed under scrutiny to function effectively and to ensure the exposure of matters detrimental to public interest such as maladministration and corruption (Carbone & Memoli, 2015, p. 10). However, they are rarely unfettered by disabling political, economic and individual interests.

The modern democratic state is expected to provide public goods to citizens, and part of the definition of 'safety and security' is not merely the ability to protect its citizens from wars and attacks on its security or to wage war in protection of its national interests (although having the monopoly to use such force may contribute to its hegemonic power over other nations). The main concern for citizens is whether or not the state is able to fulfil its obligations in terms of the protection of human rights and thereby allow all citizens to prosper

equally. In the case of systems of parliament as institutions of the state, they are entrusted to legislate, provide oversight and represent the public to that effect. Parliaments need to have the necessary autonomy from other centres of political power to ensure that there are sufficient checks and balances against the abuse of power as they are the first form of defence against the power of the executive. Conditions must be in place to prevent them from being short-circuited by parliament and to ensure that they do not become spaces for party political patronage to be extended. In order to do this, there is a need to address the perception among citizens in most African countries that parliamentarians only engage the public during an election campaign and that once they have been elected that they lose interest in local concerns (Economic Commission for Africa, n.d., p. 4). Improved use of evidence must not simply become a tool that is misused by the ruling elite, or even by the opposition, for the scoring of political points, but should be a mechanism for decision-making to support governance, development, and the protection of the rights of citizens. Crawley (2017, p. 4) illustrates, through the relational sphere, the importance of collaboration and trust between both the producers and users of evidence in addressing this challenge. Although not explicitly stated as such by Crawley, one could extrapolate that users should include the public as consumers of the evidence and information that is used in the representation of their rights and interests in the work of parliament. The Global Parliamentary Report (2012) recorded poor levels of trust in parliaments globally, proclaiming them as less trusted than any other government institutions globally (Power, 2012, pp. 3-4). Crawley (ibid.) suggests that such a low level of trust “is likely to lead to evaluation evidence that is diverted, delayed or even discarded within the system” and potentially even creating hostility to the use of evidence.

The case studies in these two volumes provide insights into how parliaments in a few selected countries on the continent are attempting to address this challenge (recognising, however, that it is limited to English-speaking Africa, and the inherent limitations imposed by this selection). In Kenya, parliamentary committees are mandated to engage with the public through open hearings and public enquiries, and thereby serve as a link between the legislature and the people. The regular inflow and outflow of information is meant to ensure that the public are continuously informed about the work of parliament thereby keeping them informed about matters of national importance. In the case study on Uganda, it is recorded that citizen participation is protected by, in the first instance, the Constitution, as well as other rules and regulations both at

plenary and committee level. Amongst the various initiatives undertaken by the Parliament of Uganda is their 'Annual Parliament Week' which is discussed in greater detail elsewhere in these two volumes. The aim of the event is to increase opportunities for public engagement in the work of parliament. The question remains whether these initiatives are sufficient to address the low levels of trust which the Global Parliamentary Report argues must be addressed through the establishment of mechanisms of engagement between the electorate and parliaments, alongside a sense of awareness of and responsiveness to the needs of the people (Power, 2012).

Crawley's Six-Sphere Framework (2017) helps to highlight how the various traditional, fallback mechanisms of trust-building (e.g. regulatory and procedural) are insufficient in the context of the intervening levels at which change needs to happen (i.e. at the political, ideological and relational levels). It provides a reminder that single-track solutions will not be sufficient to address the complexity of the challenge of EIDM in parliaments and that strengthening the system means that interventions are required at each of these levels of engagement.

In pursuit of remedies and the transformation in evidence use by parliaments

In the first instance, for transformation to happen and EIDM to take authentic hold in parliaments, much more needs to be done to dismantle the hegemony of a Western gaze on knowledge production and the use of evidence in evaluation. While the developments in the 'decoloniality movement' (Cloete & Auriocombe, 2018, p. 1) are a start, a more conscious effort is required to break down harmful ways of thinking and the practices that carry the vestiges of a colonial past. Diagnosing and characterising EIDM systems in parliaments in Africa and the interventions required to strengthen them must take care to adopt a posture of understanding that the external characteristics of such systems are a reflection of the political and ideological core of the state. Building or strengthening evaluation and evidence use in parliaments cannot be instrumental. New concerns prompt the need for greater adaptation and capacity building and require transformation from the traditional use of evidence in parliaments tempered by an understanding of the strategic-relational parameters within which they operate. A re-orientation to the valuable role that evidence can play in politics and governance is needed but should not comprise a purely

technical solution limited to the pursuit of Weberian-esque efficiencies. This is where capacity development needs to adopt a change management approach where the culture of performance, accountability and measurement is linked to concerns around the selection of the best policy options, oversight, and the representation of citizen's rights and the public good. It should not simply take a limited view of oversight being a policing or auditing process. As stated by Ajam (n.d., p. 28), "oversight capability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for oversight effectiveness" and political will remains important. This is also linked to a need for what Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006, pp. 85-86) calls a "paradigm shift on the nature of the state, which needs to be seen not as a private network of relations built around the ruler and his entourage, who have their turn to 'eat' the national cake, but as a set of impersonal institutions serving the general interest".

Turning our attention to the relational features of Crawley's framework, work is needed in the context of ensuring the efficient flow of evidence between 'producer and user' as well as anyone whose role is that of 'gatekeeper' or 'transmission point' of evidence (Crawley, 2017, p. 4). This requires that any shortages of trust or enmity must be overcome. This would require gargantuan efforts to achieve a wholesale sweeping away of any mistrust between inherently agonistic actors with divergent political and ideological positions. As Latib offers, the "political economy of representation" must be considered when designing interventions to build the capacity of parliamentarians and parliamentary officials (2016, p. 207) as there are existing "political antagonisms and related positional contestations" that shape parliamentarians' choices and actions (ibid.). The knowledge and skills required are not purely technocratic and at parliamentary level cannot only be focused on addressing the ability to use and/or produce better evidence for decision-making. While this would be necessary, it would be insufficient in this context. As such, capacity-development programmes need to both acknowledge the limitations placed on the ability to develop complete trust, whilst simultaneously remaining convinced of the value of dismantling chronic shortages of trust which Crawley (2017, p. 4) suggests could lead to "evaluation evidence that is diverted, delayed or even discarded within the system". Crawley (2017, p. 4) states that the creation of "environments that are hostile towards the use of evidence and lead to perceptions that evaluations are tools designed to punish poor performance" must be avoided. Such concerns assume even greater relevance in an age

which has been dubbed the 'post-truth era' when deceit and dishonesty in the public domain assume proportions unheard of in the democracies of the post-war era.

In terms of the contextual, technical and logistical spheres of Crawley's framework, it is clear that there are weaknesses in the capacity for evidence production and use, the institutionalisation (including adequate resourcing) of evidence systems, as well as in the coordination between the various actors in the system. Studies have shown that one of the main challenges in African parliaments is the lack of capacity, especially in terms of human resources such as advisors and research personnel who could effectively support the work of parliamentarians (Economic Commission for Africa, n.d., p. 4). However, the capacity weaknesses will not be ameliorated with the addition of support staff who lack the requisite skills and competencies to provide the kind of support required by parliamentarians. In South Africa, despite interventions to expand the availability and capabilities of human resources to support members of parliament, a review of parliament in 2009 found that MPs were not receiving the type of support they required in order to perform their duties effectively (Ajam, n.d., pp. 15-16). The review found that researchers lacked the capacity or skills to provide MPs with the requisite support and their numbers remained insufficient despite an increase in the number of researchers appointed (Ajam, n.d., pp. 15-16). The types of capacity challenges in South Africa include the lack of a system to track resolutions (although one is in the process of being rolled out), no/poor capacity for monitoring, and poor reporting (Ajam, n.d., pp. 25-26). This situation has been exacerbated by patronage-related phenomena such as cadre deployment and a lack of consequences for poor performance.

Work is also needed to develop effective oversight tools to assist in the improvement of parliament's ability to execute its oversight duties effectively and thereby allow it to both monitor and evaluate the viability of planned government interventions and to optimise the implementation of policies, programmes and plans it has approved (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2007, p. 12). Research has shown that "in African countries the availability of oversight tools is more important than the country's level of democracy in promoting GDP per capita or life expectancy, it is a better predictor of adult illiteracy than good governance, and it is a better predictor of both democracy and good governance in promoting social equality" (Pelizzo & Stapenhurst, 2007,

p. 16); and “the relationship between good governance and development is remarkably stronger and more significant than the relationship between democracy and development” (Pelizzo & Staphenurst, 2007, pp. 1, 2). Capacity-development interventions must be systemic and institutional and the education and training of individuals is only part of the solution (Latib, 2016, p. 205). The creation of strong institutional systems of evidence production and use at the level of processes, structures, procedures and functions is necessary. Parliamentary services should, ideally, also be a model for evidence use in monitoring, evaluating and learning from their own implementation strategies (i.e. M&E of their oversight, lawmaking and representation). Cloete and Auriocombe (2018) recommend “mainstreaming culturally sensitive and responsive, contextualised participatory research and evaluation designs and methodology implementation in all facets and at all stages of research and evaluation projects”.

The evidence-gathering methodology or approach also deserves attention, so that it is not dominated by the purely quantitative/positivist paradigm, or by big data only, and is leavened by more nuanced, triangulated and qualitative data. Banerjee and Duflo (2011, p. 22) make the point in their Nobel prize-winning work that evidence needs to be quite granular and specific and must be supported by randomised control trials. It is important that the voice of the ordinary citizen is heard. The increased use of focus groups, the hearing the opinions of ordinary people, and a generally more reflective/reflexive approach is therefore advised.

Of course, this is not the responsibility of government or parliament alone. Politics is always predicated on struggle. It is beholden on citizens, through civil society, to make their voices heard and to demand reforms to that end. A recent instance is that of the successful efforts of the New Nation Movement in South Africa to overturn the Constitution (Khumalo & Naidoo, 2020) so that parliamentary representation no longer only takes place through the agency of political parties and this outcome is likely, at least to some extent, to reverse the domination of parties and the concomitant executive patronage that all too frequently accompanies it.

Conclusion

Parliaments around the world and in Africa have recognised that M&E is a critical lever in facilitating policymaking, supporting decision-making around

policy alternatives, and assisting in learning and improving for the achievement of development results. Parliamentarians representing the ruling party have a vested interest in the government improving its service delivery performance as this will secure public votes in the election process and will secure parliamentary seats for the winning party. Generally, mechanisms in support of strengthening evidence systems in parliaments have been welcomed. However, despite substantive research on the rise of governance mechanisms in the state and how these operate within government (Jessop, 2010, p. 163), little has been written about parliamentary systems in Africa and their systems of evidence use in oversight. Crawley's Six-Sphere conceptual frame provided a particularly useful scaffolding upon which to begin to address this lacuna. The framework provides a hierarchical series of concentric circles of influence which may be used to 'diagnose' and 'treat' parliaments in relation to their production and use of evidence for oversight, representation and lawmaking. Political and ideological influences are at the core of the framework. As institutions of state, parliaments are not immune to political and ideological influences and this chapter examined how these may influence the work and functioning of these state institutions and, in particular, the use of evidence in parliaments.

The chapter found that current pressing concerns related to the global Covid-19 pandemic, the climate change crisis, as well as protracted socio-economic problems of Africa and the Global South have elevated the need for transformation from the traditional use of evidence by parliaments. Likewise, the way that 'capacity building' of parliamentary services is conceptualised needs re-orientation. Rather than treating capacity building as a purely technical issue, it needs to recognise that issues of trust, collaboration, context, culture, systems, structures, ideology and politics all play an important role in determining the extent to which parliaments, as institutions of the state, would adopt and use systems of evidence.

The strong link between political regimes and the form of the state and its institutions calls into question how the predominance of the monopolistic use of force (and domination of economic power) underpins the way in which we think about institutions of the state and how they behave as well as the evidence systems designed to prop these up. Some of the main ways in which these state institutions are challenged in contemporary African democratic regimes include the bifurcation of economic growth imperatives and social policy objectives which are often in tension with each other. Neo-liberal marketisation of the state

and the focus on managerialism and its links with entrenchment of economic growth (GDP) as the primary indicator of development and modernisation theories of development have supported such notions. Structural Adjustment Programmes in newly independent African states exacted a particularly onerous type of accountability with reporting formats and requirements that resonate with the language of M&E of today (e.g. logical frameworks, performance metrics, results frameworks and logical modelling). This proceeded to breed both the promise and threat of certitude.

The ultimate challenge is to institutionalise evidence systems in such a way as to recognise the inherent complexities in evidence production and use in parliaments and to focus attention on building an appropriate value proposition over time. Although research has shown that the presence of oversight tools is positively correlated with democracy and good governance, it is clear that the weightier influence of politics, ideology, context, culture and relationships have a strong pull on the institutionalisation of evidence systems in parliaments. It is only with continued activism and by recognising this notion and integrating it into capacity- development interventions in deep and extensive ways that change would happen.

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