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**THE EFFECT OF THE VOTING FRANCHISE ON
PUBLIC POLICY DECISION MAKING AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
SPENDING FOR HIV AND AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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DEDICATION

Behind every great man there is a great woman. This is dedicated to the great women who have unquestionably supported this yet to be great man. To Lizzie Myrick my mother and to Annie Mae Royster her mother and my grandmother, a never ending lifelong debt is owed. I love you both more than life. As well, this work is dedicated to Dr. Puleng M. Ramataboe. Without her support, love and friendship I would never have come to know mother Africa.



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DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

The following definitions are offered to facilitate clarity in reading the following chapters:

1. Unitary State: There are those who would argue that South Africa is a federal state. In contrast, Levy and Tapscott (2001:68) noted that section 1 of the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) describes South Africa as one sovereign democratic state, with power concentrated in the national sphere of government. Generally, provinces accept that national government takes precedence in legislative matters. An implication, however, is that policies that are legitimised by way of legislation could in the future be challenged by the provinces in the constitutional court.

2. Federalism: A key characteristic of federalism is that state [provincial] political systems encompass leadership that will lend its allegiance to central government while retaining some independence from central [national] government. Notably, in the U.S. the mid level sphere of government is referred to as a state – e.g., the state of New York or the state of California. In South Africa, the mid level sphere of government is referred to as the province – e.g., the province of KwaZulu Natal. That a subnational will “lend” its allegiance is highly descriptive in that the subnational will at times subscribe to the will of national government and at times see itself as a sovereign state addressing any policy areas not claimed to be the purview of national government. To merely describe the federal state as being decentralised understates the dynamics of state [provincial] politics – e.g., unity and disunity between state parties and national parties of the same ideology. Key (1959:341-342, 368), for example, aptly discussed the paradox of the



federal state where the state [provincial] government impacts the national government, thus appearing to be decentralised at times and at times highly centralized. In other words, there is the potential in a federal system to appear to be somewhat unitary at times, although Key hesitates to utilize the term unitary in his discussions.

3. *Devolution:* The transfer of rights and power from one higher sphere of government to a lower [subnational] sphere of government. Being a feature of the new public management, Ormond and Loffler (2005) noted that there is a movement away from centralization in public management. Implying greater support for decentralisation, their discussion argued that reform efforts have been centered on devolving authority from central government to lower [subnational] levels of government. Devolution has the potential to achieve greater responsiveness to citizens' demands.

4. *Electorate:* A body of enfranchised individuals who are qualified to vote. Interestingly, Price (1968:114) noted that contested elections and organised parties might be essential for effective government contestability and active political parties. This, however, will not guarantee control by the electorate. Like politicians, “the electorate still manages to muddle through in an appropriate manner.” [*sic*]

5. *Party List System:* Van der Waldt and Helmbold (1995:34) insightfully discussed South Africa's electoral system where, rather than put up candidates in every constituency, political parties alternatively submit a list of candidates for the National Assembly. A voter, therefore, does not cast a vote for his or her candidate but in actuality votes for their political party of choice.



6. Public Goods: A public good is a product or service that is relatively difficult for the private sector to produce or provide. The difficulty is exemplified by the un-profitability of the service or good. In other words, it is not profitable for the private sector to provide a public good; it then becomes necessary for government to provide the service or good – e.g., a standing army for national defence. Gardiner and Le Goulven (2002) go beyond the traditional definition of public goods, thinking in global terms to extend the concept to *global public bads*. There is recognition that the spread of communicable diseases (e.g., HIV/AIDS) is the antithesis of a public good. HIV/AIDS may then be considered a *public bad* that cuts across national and international boundaries.

7. Constituents: Citizens expect to be represented in government by a candidate he or she has voted for. The representative subsequently needs continued support by citizens/constituents who elected him or her into office. Earlier, a research issue noted was voters' potential to influence public policy decision-making and the relevance to public administration. McGarvey (2001) recognized that democracy impacts public administration. This is exemplified in, for example, ministers of parliament having to respond to the grievances of their constituents. Indeed, there is an implicit application of the notion of accountability. Moreover, as an elected body parliament itself has oversight capabilities that serve to scrutinize as well as influence the actions of government.

8. Rational Choice: Rational choice [theory] may be used to choose, evaluate or consider multiple potential courses of action. Moreover, it implies the use of reason and knowledge to decide on a course of action. Rational-comprehensive theory (RCT) in public policy analysis serves as a framework for examining the forms of rationality used to make choices regarding courses of action to resolve public problems (Dunn, 1994:275). Some examples



of RCT include, bounded rationality, comprehensive rationality, and disjointed-incremental rationality. Etzioni (1968:254-268), as well, wrote extensively on rationality and control as well.

9. Median Voter Theory: Median voter theory provides a framework for discussing how decisions are made favouring the majority, especially in providing public goods (Rosen, 1999:118-119). The median voter is one of many voters and all share the same preference for a particular public good, or all will favour a particular public policy. A median voter model advances the notion that if the median voter attains more or less of what is desired then anything that affects their assessment of a public policy in-turn affects political outcomes (Congleton, 2002). In this way that the median voter can be a pivotal voter.

10. Distribution of Preferences: A set (or sets) representing all voters' preferences forms a distribution or group of preferences. The median voter's preference is situated in the middle of a distribution of preferences (Rosen, 1999:119). Gul and Pesendorfer (2004) noted that political candidates determine what the distribution of preferences is prior to selecting a particular policy by taking numerous polls. Consequently, the political candidate is more informed than the voter on the overall distribution of preferences. Notably, this is an assumption that may well hold true under federalism and pure constituency based proportional representation elections. However, under a unitary system and in instances where voters vote for a party list, it should not be assumed that candidates recognise the preferences of voters. Candidates are not directly accountable to the electorate but rather to their party. There is, perhaps, little need to be cognizant of voter's preferences.



11. *Cooperative Government:* Chapter 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), requires that spheres of government (National, Provincial and Local Government Municipalities) exercise their powers and perform their functions in a manner that does not encroach on the geographical, functional or institutional integrity of another government's sphere; and no sphere of government should exercise powers or functions except those conferred on them in terms of the Constitution (RSA, Act 108 of 1996). Implicitly, the implication for provincial government is a conflict between national and provincial governments on HIV/AIDS policies. Provincial government is required to co-operate but at what cost?

12. *Intergovernmental Relations (IGR):* IGR encompasses interactions of all types between the three (3) spheres of government. There is interdependency between each sphere's political system. Importantly, fiscal and administrative processes to facilitate sharing tax revenue are important aspects of intergovernmental relations (Mathebula & Malan, 2002:2). Conflict arises, however, in instances of public policy decision making – e.g., whether or not to spend on HIV/AIDS treatment.

13. *Fiscal Relations:* In South Africa, the most important aspect of fiscal relations is sharing of tax revenue – i.e., revenue to be shared amongst the three spheres of government (RSA, Act 97 of 1997). Key to facilitating equitable sharing of revenue is the budget forum chaired by the Minister of Finance. The forum consists of representatives from the three sphere of government and their deliberations culminate with the introduction and passing of the Division of Revenue Act that stipulates revenue allocations.



14. *Subnational Governments:* Subnational governments of South Africa include provincial and local government administrations. Comparatively, South Africa has rationalised the number of subnational local governments down to 284, as compared to a country such as the U.S. (where although there are 50 states in comparison to South Africa's 9 provinces) that has more than 80,000 local governments (Levy and Tapscott, 2001:144-147). Johnson and Minis (n.d.) referred to the inherent contract that exists between citizens and government. That contract entails government performing functions relating to security, providing public services and dealing with the seemingly insurmountable challenges associated with HIV/AIDS. Importantly, the contract becomes primarily operational at the subnational levels of government.

15. *Civil Society:* This is a colloquial term used familiarly in speech to refer to the population of non-governmental organisations, self-organising community organisations such as the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) that organise based on some common interest, voluntary participation and affiliation that is non-coerced. Importantly, how civil society is defined and viewed is continually subject to changes in local, national and international conditions (Hakkarainen, O., Hisayo, K., Kessey, C.B., Kontinen, T., Kyllonen, T., Rovaniemi, S., & Wamai, R., 2002) – e.g., the role civil society will play in the twenty-first century in influencing public decision making associated with HIV/AIDS.

16. *Voter Collectivism:* Devine (2000) empirically showed that a large number of individuals each and all maximise their utility for some homogeneous good, or choice of a particular policy. Essentially, median voters act collectively. Etzioni (1968:98) described “the collective” by noting that a collective encompasses a broad unit that has the capacity



to act and the unit [collective] has normative bonds that hold it together. Indeed, there are shared values that are evident in their having similar preferences for goods or, say, a particular public policy.

17. *Symbiotic Relationship:* Such a relationship implies that there is a close relationship between two or more dissimilar organisms and both receive an advantage from an association. Of course, in this research this definition extends to there being a relationship between public administration and political science. Notably, the relationship between public administration and political science is manifested in the notion and concept of the state. Since Wilson's (1886) writings, the "politics-administration dichotomy" has all but been rejected. That is, there has since been a rejection of the notion that it is possible to separate the administrative activities of governance from the activities of politics (Spicer, 2001). Thus this dissertation advances the notion that there is a symbiotic relationship between public administration and political science.

18. *Mixed Approach Method:* Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) pointed out that social and behavioral research revealed that mixed methods are being used extensively to solve research problems. Some would argue that a mixed approach to research is merely a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Yet others would argue that a mixed approach is a truly separate and definitive methodology and that its time has come. Whatever the controversy, a plethora of literature has emerged on mixed approaches to research since the paradigm wars or the 1970s-80s. Notably, a "what works" approach to research can be avoided upon review of the work cited above.



19. *Multivariate Analysis:* This is a statistical technique used to analyze the influence of many independent variables on a dependent variable. Moreover, it is a statistical approach and a branch of applied mathematics that involves the collection and interpretation of quantitative data and the use of probability theory to estimate population parameters. Being a byproduct of regression analysis, Dunn (1994:237) viewed such statistical techniques as being useful to estimate linear relationship between variables. Examination of linear relationships includes correlation analysis used to further interpret the intensity of the relationship between variables. Indeed, an objective of this research is to examine the relationship between spending and citizens exercising their franchise to vote. Can they influence [motivate] government to spend and can they influence policy makers [government] to make a firm commitment to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa?

20. *Proxy:* A proxy [substitute] is used in statistical analysis when reliable data for a variable is not available or when underlying determinants are difficult to quantify. There appears to be little or no literature on the development, use and role of proxies in statistics. Yet, proxies are routinely used to replace variables that defy quantification. Nevertheless, see Revesz and Lattimore (2001) where there is adequate discussion and example of the development and use of proxies in statistical analysis.



**THE EFFECT OF THE VOTING FRANCHISE ON
PUBLIC POLICY DECISION MAKING AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
SPENDING FOR HIV/AIDS**

ABSTRACT

Government spending is an important component of public finance that enables government to deliver services and implement policies of the executive. This research examines government spending for HIV/AIDS treatment at the provincial sphere of government and queries whether citizens can influence public policy decision-making for HIV/AIDS treatment. The research considers the nature of the state, it being either a unitary system or a federal system (centralised or decentralised). Importantly, the research examines the effect of citizens on public policy decision-making, as they exercise their franchise to vote. Moreover, this dissertation empirically examines how government has spent in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and measures any influence voters may have on government spending, with spending giving indication of public policy decision-making by the government of the day. The literature review identifies techniques used by other researchers on the matter and previous research on the relationship between voters and government spending. For example, Husted and Kenny studied voters' potential to influence government spending at the provincial [state] sphere of government. The outcome of their research was inconclusive but at the least suggests those variables that might effect government spending - variables that might be used for this dissertation. For example, institutional and latent groups are identified, to examine voting effects and other influences on policy decisions. The literature review discusses collaborative and voter-collective actions, for explanatory effects on policy decisions as



well. Essentially, variables and specifications for a regression model are suggested to facilitate a test of hypothesis that voters do not have the ability to influence provincial government spending for HIV/AIDS policy. The research design for this dissertation is therefore evaluative and generally measures a programme. Indeed, that programme is one of HIV/AIDS treatment in South Africa. Bivariate and multivariate relationships are determined to begin to answer the research question. Can voters effect public policy decision made on HIV/AIDS treatment? Put yet another way, that question is whether the electorate, as reflected by voter turnout, can influence provincial spending on HIV/AIDS treatment? The hypothesis is: The electorate does not have the potential to influence provincial spending for HIV/AIDS treatment. Spending, or lack thereof, reflects a public policy decision of government. Notably, reference to the government of the day implies the ruling [South] African National Congress (ANC) party. Conclusively, after a number of iterations that involved running several bivariate and multivariate regression models, the outcome was that voters could influence provincial spending for HIV/AIDS treatment. The hypothesis was rejected that the electorate does not have the potential to influence provincial spending and HIV/AIDS.