





Corrigendum: Rethinking local government, coalitions, and innovation for a capable developmental state



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In the published article Rulashe, T., 2025, 'Rethinking local government, coalitions and innovation for a capable developmental state', *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation* 6, a276. <https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgr.v6i0.276>, Dr Kutu Ramolobe, Prof. Pandelani Harry Munzhedzi and Dr Sareesha Pillay were not included as authors in the published article. The corrected authorship list and associated affiliations appear below:

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Rethinking local government, coalitions, and innovation for a capable developmental state

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The 2026 local government elections in South Africa present a critical juncture for the country's municipal governance landscape. With the increasing prevalence of coalition governments, persistent service delivery challenges and the pressing need for innovation, it is imperative to rethink the structures and strategies that underpin local governance. The submitted manuscripts in this special issue collectively offer a comprehensive critique and analysis of these issues, highlighting the intersections of political dynamics, governance frameworks, financial management, service delivery and technological advancements. This editorial seeks to integrate these contributions, offering insights into how South Africa can navigate the complexities of local government in the lead-up to and beyond the 2026 elections. The growing phenomenon of political careerism and its link to political killings in South Africa's local government system remains a troubling reality. Since 1994, the pursuit of political office has, in some instances, been marred by intense competition, factionalism and violence. This problem is compounded by the instability of coalition governments, which have become an increasingly common feature of South African municipalities. The manuscript '*The nexus between political careerism and political killings: A critical reflection on local government in South Africa since 1994*' critically examines this issue, shedding light on how political ambition undermines democratic processes and ethical governance.

Rulashe (2022) and Booysen (2015) highlight the persistent dysfunctionality of local government, warning that without decisive intervention, systemic governance flaws will continue to erode public trust and weaken service delivery effectiveness. Coalition governments, while theoretically promoting multiparty democracy, have often resulted in administrative paralysis. Comparative analyses of municipal electoral arrangements point to design effects that can interact with party incentives to amplify coalition instability. Stronger coalition agreements, clearer thresholds for executive formation, and more robust policy-alignment frameworks are required to safeguard administrative continuity and accountability post-2026 (Lodge, 2005; Rulashe & Ijeoma, 2022).

Municipal revenue governance remains a decisive determinant of service delivery. Across a range of contexts, weak revenue collection systems, leakage and corruption, and fragile fiscal oversight undermine the ability of local authorities to deliver basic services. Related analyses of financial oversight structures indicate that political interference and administrative capacity gaps can blunt the effectiveness of oversight committees, entrenching cycles of mismanagement. Rulashe and Dyan (2023) provide a critical analysis of the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPAC), arguing that its role in financial oversight is often undermined by political interference and administrative inefficiencies, leading to perpetual financial mismanagement.

The role of local economic development (LED) in poverty alleviation, particularly in rural and semi-urban municipalities, is another focal area of this special issue. The study on '*The influence of local economic development in poverty alleviation within Lepelle-Nkumpi Local Municipality*' illustrates how targeted LED initiatives can spur economic growth and enhance livelihoods. However, LED's success is contingent on municipalities' ability to develop and implement strategic development plans effectively. Miggels and Rulashe (2022) and Rogerson (2010), highlight the need for organisational change within municipalities to facilitate governance transformation, which is critical for the success of LED initiatives. Building technical competence through targeted skills development is equally critical for effective execution; sectoral evidence links structured training to improved employee competence and service outcomes (Gcezengana, Peter, Rulashe & Coka 2022). Infrastructure remains a critical enabler of economic and social transformation, yet numerous municipalities struggle with project delays and inefficiencies. The study on '*Exploring the dynamics of infrastructure project delays in a selected municipality in the Eastern Cape*' sheds light

Note: The manuscript is a contribution to the themed collection titled 'Innovating governance: Revolutionizing local government through innovative research and practices' under the expert guidance of guest editors Dr Tando Rulashe, Dr Kutu Ramolobe, Prof. Pandelani Harry Munzhedzi and Dr Sareesha Pillay.

This article was republished with updated editorial changes. This correction does not alter the study's findings of significance or overall interpretation of the study's results. The publisher apologises for any inconvenience caused.

on the systemic inefficiencies that hinder timely project completion. In addition, the article on *'Investigating ways to improve the MIG implementation strategy in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality'* suggests that structural and procedural reforms in grant implementation can significantly enhance municipal performance.

These insights stress the need for a holistic approach to municipal infrastructure planning, one that integrates fiscal prudence, stakeholder participation and innovative project management techniques (Cloete 2018). Innovation and digital transformation are crucial for strengthening municipal governance and service delivery. Recent work on public-sector innovation and intergovernmental coordination models points to the value of integrated planning and disciplined experimentation to support a capable, developmental local state. Studies of digital governance similarly highlight how smart technologies, e-governance and data-led decision-making can enhance efficiency, transparency and citizen engagement (Meyiwa & Chitiga-Mabugu, 2020), and in this issue, the study on *'Assessing the impact of digital technologies on service delivery in local government'* comprehensively articulates this narrative. Ethical governance remains a cornerstone of an effective local government system. The study *'Ethical nexus: Navigating organisational dynamics for enhanced compliance in municipal procurement processes'* reveals how ethical lapses in procurement perpetuate corruption and inefficiency. Strengthening institutional integrity mechanisms and enforcing strict compliance measures is vital for improving municipal governance (Hondeghem & Vandenabeele 2005; Jam, Bayat & Rulashe 2024).

Public participation is another crucial element in encouraging accountable governance. The study on *'Embedding public participation in service delivery planning in South Africa'* highlights the importance of inclusive decision-making processes. Without active citizen engagement, governance reforms risk being top-down and disconnected from the lived realities of communities. Therefore, strengthening participatory governance structures is key to ensuring that local government remains responsive to citizens' needs (Piper & Deacon 2009). As South Africa approaches the 2026 local government elections, a paradigm shift in municipal governance is urgently required. The insights from this special issue stress the need for a comprehensive strategy that addresses political instability, fiscal mismanagement, infrastructure inefficiencies and the role of innovation in governance. Coalition governments, while inevitable in the current political climate, must be structured to promote stability and accountability rather than administrative gridlock.

Furthermore, municipalities must embrace technological advancements while ensuring that digital transformation

does not deepen socio-economic divides. Ethical governance and public participation must be reinforced to restore trust in local government institutions. By rethinking governance frameworks and leveraging innovation, South Africa can work towards establishing a truly capable developmental state that prioritises service delivery, economic development and democratic accountability. Further research is necessary to explore the long-term impact of coalition governments on municipal stability and service delivery. In addition, deeper inquiry into the role of technology, governance reforms and ethical leadership will be essential in shaping a resilient and adaptive local government system for the future.

A word of appreciation is extended to the contributing authors, whose scholarly insights have significantly enriched this special issue. Sincere gratitude is also extended to the special issue editorial team, the journal editor and team, as well as the publishing team for their dedication and commitment to ensuring the success of this publication:

'Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it,' Frantz Fanon.

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